

"Alias Jimmy Valentine"



Novelized by
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From the Great Play
by **PAUL ARMSTRONG**

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JIMMY VALENTINE, WARDEN HANDLER AND ROSE LANE

PROLOGUE.

You're not so sure about Jimmy Valentine as you might be—until the very last chapter, when he "finds himself" in a scene that is as cleverly conceived as anything ever presented in American fiction or drama. What you are sure of as you read—very, very sure, in fact—is that you are following the story of a most interesting character, one whose doings on the stage have held the interest of many thousands. Jimmy Valentine becomes a "crook," with most of the failings and weaknesses of a man who doesn't recognize the difference between mine and thine, but he winds up as a well, read the story and find out for yourself how he winds up. It will be worth your while, for this absorbing, thrilling romance of both the under world and the upper world as well proves that a man has never sunk so low but that he may again regain the honor he has thrust aside when the true spirit of manhood throbs within him.

barred windows looked out into the prison yard, where at prescribed intervals gangs of convicts were allowed to take a brief outing to breathe in the air from the hills that mocked them, thus to prolong the lives of those who hoped to live as well as of those who hoped to die, thus to strengthen the nerves of the unfortunate whom justice had decreed must some day at sunrise go to a shadowy



"CHICAGO WHITEY" HAD ESCAPED.

CHAPTER I.

THE warden's office in Sing Sing prison is not a pleasant spot in which to linger, whether you may be innocent or whether guilty of a crime. And no more reassuring could be termed the abrupt, dominating personage who presided over the dismal destinies of the office and institution when occurred the events chronicled in this narrative. That a man fated by his choice of occupation to daily associate intimately with criminals of high and low degree and to come constantly in personal contact with all the misery and depravity going to form the life of a state's prison—that a man so fated should find exquisite enjoyment in accentuating these depressing conditions is surely a contradiction of what ordinarily would be expected. Humans of normal mold are generally occupied in ameliorating the evils and annoyances of their surroundings. That is nature's way. Not so with Warden Handler. That which is bad can be made to be worse. Innocence can be shown to be guilt—with the aid of trained witnesses. Repentance is always insincere, and if it is not it can be made so. A murderer should be made to remember always his ignominy. A thief should be reminded of his amateurish clumsiness which led him into the clutches of the central office men. That was Handler's philosophy. That was Handler's way. And underlying all his petty oppression and gross inhumanity was a cause, deep rooted in a system of his own and of a race of jail keepers that went before him. Exposure? Removal? Bah! He had considered all that. And, if worse came to worse, had he not friends in the state senate? Was there not a governor who would need his assistance in the state convention when it came to a question of delegates? Clearly the possibility of removal was the least of his worries. Warden Handler sat at his polished oak desk in the middle of his office. At his left was another desk used by Smith, his secretary. At his back the

little stone room to sit in a sinister wooden chair equipped with stout straps and electric wires. The warden was in his customary pessimistic mood. Good reason for it this time, too, for "Chicago Whitey," a trusty, doing a "bit" of seven years, had got through the guards and dropped over the wall on to the top of a car of an "up bound" freight train the evening before. Not a trace of him yet. Handler's pride in his record as a pen master was at stake, and he blamed himself and the whole universe for the official explanations which must soon be forthcoming. His dark eyes gleamed vengefully; his short cropped black hair fairly bristled with the rage that surged in the thick skull beneath it; his strong, square jaws were grimly set, though now and again his upper lip would curl slightly back as he gritted his teeth, revealing a row of tobacco stained incisors. Yes, Warden Handler was disturbed. He fingered a glistening letter opener impatiently, and his lips seemed to move. "Serves me right for makin' a 'trusty' out of a bloomin' yegg," he muttered. "Might have known one of them wouldn't stay put in one place any length of time, not even in a coffin." The door at Handler's right opened. He half turned and glowered at a trusty who shuffled in, carrying a bottle of drinking water. "It's pretty soft for you around here, eh?" grunted the warden. The convict hastened to place the bottle in the holder at the sound of the official's voice. He then hurried toward the door, mumbling a faint "Yes, sir," as he went. "Suppose he'll be tryin' the west wall next," commented Handler, pounding his fist on the desk. "But I'll trim 'em all yet. I'll!" "A visitor for you," announced his secretary, Smith, entering. "His name is like a roll call in the German navy." He handed Handler a card. The warden took the pasteboard. "Blick-en-dol-fen-bach," he read slowly. "A man with a name like that has no right on the outside of a prison. What's his graft?" "He has a letter from the state board

of prisons. He has invented a lock, I believe, that—" "Let's have him." The secretary ushered in an earnest looking man with long, wavy black hair. He was short and thin. "I am Gustave Rilckendolffebach, the great inventor," said the visitor to the warden. "I have a lock for you to inkeep the prisoners mit." He bowed to the warden and rubbed his hands complacently. "So I hear. Your lock can't be picked, eh?" The inventor raised his hands in horror at the suggestion. "Picked! Picked!" he ejaculated. "My lock picked? The whole world it haff tried it—Germany, France, England—and even the cleverest thieves in Naples. The whole wide world it all haff not open without they the key haff." "So I've heard, but still it might be picked at that." "It is maybe I don't understand picked—you mean open mit not my key?" "Yes; with a wire or—" "A wire!" exclaimed the inventor. "My lock open—that I haff spend fourteen years to perfect? Nein. It is laughter, yas, but—" Handler was growing impatient. "It will be accepted only on the condition that it cannot be opened with out a key," he pronounced. The inventor drew himself up proudly. "Yaw, und I challenge the world," he cried confidently. "Well, all the world's champions are in America, you know," answered the warden, "and when it comes to genius in mechanics most of them are in jail. We'll have it tried before noon." The visitor took his precious lock from his pocket and laid it on the table in front of the warden, saying: "I keep the key. Now the world cannot my lock open." "It looks good," commented Handler. "If you care to wait I'll have it tested." "I wait. I lofe to see the expert frown und smile und give it up. It is my joy." As the inventor went out to await the test George Doyle, a detective credited with a long list of important captures, entered the office and saluted Handler. "Isn't Bill Avery to be let loose today?" queried the newcomer. "Don't know. Is he?" returned the warden indifferently. Doyle gazed at the other significantly. "Yes," he said. "I hear he's very friendly with Jimmy Valentine. The way Valentine's lawyer is going after a new trial makes things look dangerous." "What about the man you bad make friends with Valentine in order to get him to talk about himself—to give himself away?" the warden asked shrewdly. Doyle shrugged. "Nothing to it. Valentine wouldn't get confidential with him, but if I could get Avery on my staff to work for me and squeal on Valentine I'd get him. I'd be able to keep him from setting a new trial." "Thus did the detective describe in his conversation a small part of the system which his fellow man hunters find of utility in serving their particular ends, whatever they may be—the "stool pigeon" system, which consists of forcing or persuading released criminals to spy on their companions and to convey to the police the information they procure. Sometimes the detective uses the knowledge so gained for the purpose



DETECTIVE GEORGE DOYLE ENTERED THE OFFICE.

"I don't know about Avery's release," he said. "Oh, Smith," turning to his assistant, "where's the list?" "On your desk." "A. J. yes. Avery here?" "He's waiting outside." "Let's have him." "He's a tough old boy, this Avery," commented Doyle, "but he's my one best chance in trying to get the goods on Valentine." The secretary brought in Bill Avery, whose gray hair, ashen face and stooping figure indicated that prison fare was not rejuvenating, although there was a strange sharpness in his eyes, in his glance, that a long career of futile watchfulness had developed. "You're finally out, eh?" greeted the prison master. "You've done nice?" "Eight years ten months, sir." "Treated pretty well, weren't you?" Avery gazed intently at Smith, then he replied to his questioner: "You've never heard me complain, have you?" "No, and it wouldn't have got you much." "I saw that the first day in." "Well, now what? Going to turn square?" Handler sneered as he spoke. The released convict looked the warden squarely in the eyes. "You know I am, sir." Handler laughed uproariously. "I know; they all say so. Oh, here's an old friend of yours, Avery." The speaker pointed to Doyle. "I don't remember him," replied the old man after a searching suspicious inspection of the detective. "You don't remember me—eh, Bill?" Doyle laughed. Avery suddenly exclaimed: "I got you now. You're Doyle—still a copper?" "Still a copper, Bill." "You ain't got anything on me to hold over me when I get out." "That's true, Bill. Anyway, this time I'm your friend," said the detective in earnest manner. Avery threw his head back. "My friend?" he exclaimed in astonishment. The warden could barely suppress a grin. "Yes; I think I know where I can get you a pretty good job," went on Doyle engagingly. "Nobody wants me," said Avery despondently. "I think I can arrange it." "A job in a laundry, eh?" snapped the ex-prisoner. "I've been a wash-woman here." "There are lots of jobs where you don't have to know a trade. Can't Bill sit down, warden?" "Why, certainly," responded Handler. Avery, voicing his thanks, seated himself at the warden's table. Doyle came close to the old man. "There's one thing you want to do, Bill, above everything else—keep out of bad company," he warned. Avery hesitated. He glanced from the detective across to the warden. "I'm getting out of bad company today," he replied briefly. Doyle started forward. "Yes, and it's a good thing you are, for you're getting away from Valentine." "Valentine?" "Yes," insisted Doyle. "It doesn't do you any good to know a man like that. I suppose you know he killed Cotton so he wouldn't have to divide the swag with him." The other shook his head decisively. "I don't know anything about it." The detective now spoke sharply. "And what's he got against you? He sent out word that—the questioner suddenly shifted—"what message did he give you to take out to—to—" Avery drew back involuntarily. "He didn't give me any message," he cried out in positive tones. Then both the officials noticed that the ex-convict's eyes slowly drooped and became directed to the floor. "I could do you a good turn—if you trailed along with me," suggested the detective. The released criminal brushed aside the invitation. He rose stiffly from his chair. "I'm on to you, Doyle. If you're to be my friend I know that I've got to be a stool pigeon, eh? Well, I'm old, and I don't know where I'm goin' when I leave here. But I'll take the river out there," pointing over his shoulder with his thumb, "for mine before I play that game. I tell you"—the old man's voice rose to an indignant pitch—"it's only fly guys like you, Doyle, that's too lazy or too ignorant to do their work themselves that has to have stool pigeons on your staff to do your work for you. Why, you couldn't nab a twelve-year-old 'dip' if you didn't have some poor nerve broken sucker of a 'stool' to go out ahead and make the job easy for you." Both Doyle and the warden, enraged at the old man, lunged viciously at him to wreak vengeance upon him for his denunciation.

CHAPTER II. WITH an agility surprisingly in contrast with his former decrepit attitude, the intended victim seized his chair and raised it threateningly over his head. The two officers halted, Doyle, regaining a calm demeanor, through the excellent self control which had become one of his valuable assets in his business, spoke easily. "So you don't want a friend, old fellow?" Avery lowered the chair. "No," he snorted, "nor any friends that are coppers. Thieves are bad enough." The point of the reply did not escape Doyle. "Well," he responded angrily, "you have got me for an enemy all the rest

of your worthless life. You'd better come to see me once a month for fear I grab you by mistake—on suspicion." "To — with you?" snarled Avery, turning away and facing the warden. "I've got the regular state allowance for released prisoners comin' to me, ain't it?" "Yes," answered Handler, "and you take it and get out of here, you crook! Here, sign this!" (he showed him a paper, "if you can write. If you can't, why, make your mark." The warden handed over a bill. The departing man scanned the greenback deprecatingly. "Five dollars," he cried, "and this suit of clothes that a country constable could see the Sing Sing tag on in the night! Pretty good for eight years and ten months' work, eh? And you guys are my friends! For God's sake, let me get out of here, where there are men who don't live on the mistakes of some one else." He wheeled toward the door and disappeared. "There's one more we've got to keep track of," commented Doyle. "He'll be at work in a week," said Handler laconically. "Yes, and I'll nail him and give him back to you." "I don't want him," the warden put in hastily. "I just might make it



MRS. WEBSTER AND MRS. MOORE OF THE GATE OF HOPE SOCIETY.

tough for him if he was sent back. I thought he had come to his senses and would help you against Valentine, but he's just a plain fool." "And all alike—all blaming us for their fail." The detective seated himself as he spoke. "He can't work now; he's too old. The game as he knew it was the yegg game." Handler also had resumed his seat, and he leaned over his desk and said significantly: "So you're afraid Valentine will get a new trial, eh? There's some class to Valentine. Have a smoke." The prison master held out a box of perfectos, from which Doyle gratefully extracted a weed. "Thanks," mumbled the detective. "This Valentine is the only high class crook I ever knew that I couldn't reach and put away for keeps. There's something of a mystery about him. He'd get away with the Raffles game in high society in a walk. The swell dames would go daffy over his good looks and his tony manners and his pleasing voice. Yet he has trailed along with the toughest gang in the business." Doyle paused, then said, "And yet he says he is innocent. I suppose—" "Yes," put in Handler, leaning comfortably in his chair. "Said so last time I talked with him. This prison is killing him. He doesn't like it. He can't stand it. His nerves will stick out through his skin if they jump much more." "He's the one fellow I think this life would cure. He's a wonder." "At safes, you mean," was Handler's sarcastic rejoinder. Little did the warden and the detective realize as they sat and schemed to bring about the further and complete ruin of Jimmy Valentine that "there's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will," and this influence is not denied to those who languish forlorn and hopeless in prison cells. Little did they know that it might be Jimmy Valentine, No. 1289, who was to teach them that the soul of a man is an unquenchable spark that not even years of oppression and degradation can lastingly dim when the spirit wills that they shall not. And just now there came a knocking at the warden's door that portended much for No. 1289. The warden's secretary went to the door opening from the office into a waiting room where visitors were received. He returned to announce, "Some members of the Gate of Hope society, and they have the lieutenant governor and his niece with them." "The lieutenant governor?" ejaculated Handler. "Fay." "Yes." "What's the Gate of Hope?" asked Doyle. "A gang of women tryin' to release from prison convicts they believe are innocent," said the warden. The detective smiled. At Handler's order Smith summoned the callers, Doyle making his exit. "The lieutenant governor," pondered Handler. "I wonder if there's any leak about those contracts for supplies." Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Webster of the society, middle aged women of pleasing appearance, came in, followed by Rose Lane, the lieutenant governor's niece, and that official himself, Miss Lane, a young girl of unmistakable

charm and beauty, held close to her uncle's side. "Mr. Handler," spoke Mrs. Webster, "we come today with a famous humanitarian, Lieutenant Governor Fay," she pronounced, inclining toward that official. "Governor," said the warden, bowing. The lieutenant governor shook Handler's hand and presented his niece. The party seated themselves, facing the warden. "We have come here today," said Mrs. Moore, "to again ask that men be not forced to make confessions while imprisoned here that may be used against them when they leave here. We understand that through the pressure that can be brought to bear on the inmates in these institutions they can be made willing to confess to crimes they never committed." "What do you mean?" queried Handler. "Oh, we understand that by depriving prisoners of their proper allowance of food and of small privileges they are allowed, and by bullying conduct on the part of the men in charge of them the inmates can be led to make false confessions involving themselves or others. This information is used against the men after they are released as well as against men who are at large whom the police desire to incriminate." "No one is ever forced to confess anything here, madam," protested Handler. "But I know—" "Pardon me, Mrs. Moore," interrupted the lieutenant governor, rising. "I do not think that in your zeal you realize what you are saying." He addressed the warden. "It seems, however, that these well meaning ladies have evidence that a certain man here did confess some offense to a—" "To a stool," commented Handler. "Am I responsible for the detectives who have men working inside the prison for them?" "By a stool you mean—" "A stool pigeon, a decoy. They win the confidence of prisoners and tell what they learn to the detectives." Mrs. Moore here went on to state that in Sing Sing and in all prisons were confined many innocent men and that in any event released men should be encouraged to live honestly, should be given a chance. They ought not to be pursued and hounded into being spies by detectives anxious to make a record for securing convictions regardless of the truth of the testimony. One reason the woman advanced for her stand was that a man who became a spy or decoy must associate continually with men and women of questionable character, thus rendering it impossible to secure or much less remain in honest employment. "Bosh!" exclaimed Handler as she ceased. "These folks we get don't want to live straight, won't live straight, can't live straight when they get on the outside. First, they're all lazy; second, most of them are insane." "What would you call a man," continued the warden, "who does some-



LEUTENANT GOVERNOR FAY WAS ANNOUNCED.

thing the law forbids, does it whenever the opportunity offers without a chance of gain? What do you call a man who does that for the love of it?" "An artist," answered Mrs. Webster. "Artist! Then I've got a lot of them," laughed Handler sarcastically. "Well, to me they are insane." To Rose Lane the adventure was extremely interesting. Finally succeeding in gaining her uncle's consent to her accompanying him on a visit to the great prison, she was now seeing a little section of the darker side of life which appealed strongly to her imaginative nature. Her cheeks flushed with the excitement of the occa-