

A Case of Elastic Conscience.

(Original.)
When Truesdale Scott, prominent banker and promoter, was convicted of misappropriation of funds every one said that the eloquence of the prosecuting attorney, Rowland Ruddock, had done the trick. Scott had been caught in a big commercial panic with too great a load on his hands and had to go under. Indeed, to save himself he had placed himself under the ax of the law. Ruddock had a political scheme marked out for himself, and Scott's conviction was a great card for him with thousands of voters who hated "the plutocrats." Ruddock was to be governor of the state, then senator. Scott was convicted just as the gubernatorial contest was coming on. But Scott had succeeded in getting a new trial, which came on just before the election. It was expected that Ruddock would make the effort of his life in this second trial, for whichever way the anti-monopoly vote was cast so went the election. What was the astonishment of every one when he made so weak an effort as to be accused of pandering to the plutocratic interest. Scott was acquitted, and Ruddock was defeated in the election.

About the time that Ruddock left the law school he met Margaret Cushman, a girl of very strong character. She had a conscience of cast iron. Nothing could swerve her from what she considered the right. She was much pleased with Ruddock, as he was with her, but she feared that his sense of principle was not as strong in him as it should be. He strove to convince her that she had mistaken a certain elasticity for something worse, citing the Puritan as an example of a too rigid conscience.

They were engaged, and the engagement lasted until Ruddock defended a notorious rogue and by his brilliant legal tactics acquitted him. Margaret knew all about this case and could not see how her lover could make his action accord with his conscience. In vain he attempted to show her that there can be but one duty of a lawyer toward his client. He must do his best. "This," said Margaret, "makes a courtroom a mere legal arena. It is not justice that decides questions. Victory, irrespective of guilt or innocence,

perches upon the banner of the most brilliant legal knight." "I regret," replied Ruddock, "that this is too largely the condition of our courts, but it doesn't absolve me from doing my best for my client, and I do not see how it can be different." Margaret called this devil reasoning, and, not being willing to tie herself to a man who would clear a client who was a rogue, she broke the engagement.

Twenty years passed. Ruddock was in his prime and was elected prosecuting attorney in a large city. His election went with one of those waves of reform peculiar to our people. It was said that convictions could not be procured on account of political pulls of prisoners. Ruddock was put in by the best men of both parties to see that rascals were sent to prison or the gallows. After his entry upon the duties of his office there was a perceptible difference in the amount of crime perpetrated till at last it reached a minimum.

The night before Truesdale Scott's second trial was to come up Ruddock was sitting in his rooms—he was a bachelor—forming plans to crush the banker. Suddenly the door opened and a woman entered. Ruddock looked up at her in surprise.

"The district attorney, I believe?" she said in a choked voice.

"I am."

"Tomorrow you are to try Truesdale Scott?"

"Yes."

"I come to ask your forbearance. Mr. Scott is in no way a guilty man. Caught in a maelstrom as he was swept along, he grasped methods some of which were not within the law. Upon you rests his conviction or acquittal. Is it your duty to make one of your brilliant efforts against him?"

"A lawyer's duty is to do the best he can for his client. A prosecutor's duty is to send the accused if possible to state prison."

"Inexorable as ever."

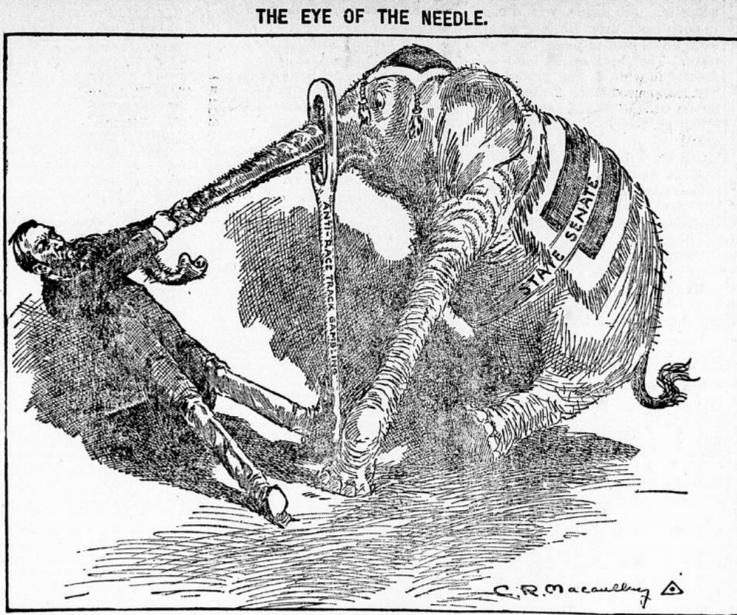
"I inexorable?"

"Yes. You and I talked over these matters when we were but half our present age. I am Margaret Cushman, Truesdale Scott's wife."

"Margaret!"

"Then you spoke of an elasticity that you said I mistook for something worse."

"I still am subject to such elasticity. I do not consider it my bounden duty to convict your husband, though the masses of the community think that it is. I was elected by them to carry out



—Macaulay in New York World.

a certain programme. To fail to do my best to convict your husband would be to bring down upon me the anathemas of these constituents. Nevertheless that elasticity you have spoken of tells me that the better part for me will be to make a weak fight that your husband may go free."

She stood like a statue, lost in a dream of the past. Now that elasticity she had considered another name for evil stood between her husband and a prison. He advanced toward her, took her hand and pressed his lips to it. Then, turning her gently toward the door, he said:

"Go! This is a dangerous place for you to be seen. If it were known that you had been here it would take away my power to grant your request."

She passed out silently, muffling her

face as she had come in. The next day after the trial Ruddock was ruined politically, and Truesdale Scott went to his family a free and vindicated man.

IRENE C. ADAMS.

The Pleasures of Hope.
"This poem on 'May Day,'" said the editor, "is not at all bad."
The attic poet flushed with delight.
"But, since we have enough material on hand to last us for the next ten years, I am obliged to decline it."
The poet still smiled hopefully.
"But, sir," he said, "you will require something for the eleventh year."
New York Press.

Hewitt—I am not like other men.
Jewett—That's true. You haven't suggested any remedy for my cold.—New York Press.

His Way of Putting It.
A boy came home from Sunday school one morning and said, "Mamma, a Pevlian is going to talk this evening in his clothes."
"Why, of course, dear," mamma replied, with a smile.
"But I mean in his own clothes," declared the boy. "The minister said so."
It was the little fellow's way of interpreting the expression "in his native costume."—St. Louis Republic.

Broder—You can't think how nervous I was when I proposed.
Sister—You can't think how nervous she was until you did!

Proprietor—Can Miss Screech take the high C?
Manager—Not without knocking off some of the bars.—Illustrated Bits.

The Company's Announcer.

(Original.)
Formerly when a railroad employee was killed at his work the officials left it to some of the dead man's friends to inform his family of his loss. Now an especial person is appointed to the position of announcer of calamity. The announcer is usually selected for his tact and benevolent appearance. His duties are certainly not attractive. To go to the home of a woman, to hear her singing at her work, to see her children playing about the cabin, and tell that the husband and father has been mashed between two cars is about as hard a task as a sympathetic person can perform.

Thomas Nolan was announcer at that point on the V. K. and X. railroad where the shops are located and held the position so long and his duties became so well known that his simple appearance at a workman's home was all the announcement needed. Indeed, he could not walk through a street lined with cabins but each housewife would watch him with beating heart, fearing that he was looking for her.

Patrick O'Rourke, a machinist in the railroad company's employ, had been in America ten years, and, having learned his trade and become so proficient as to earn good wages, he sent to Ireland for Mary Maloney, his sweetheart. He had loved Mary when she was sixteen, a raw girl, and found her at twenty-six a full blown woman. When he looked at her he felt that his wait and work had been well rewarded. All went well till children came, and, with the croup and the measles and the constant attention they needed even when well, Mary's nerves began to take on an edge and she lost her equality. When Pat came home in the evening, tired with standing over a machine all day and an occasional digression in lifting some heavy weight, he would find her cross and irritable. He was a good natured chap, full of Irish humor, and would usually try to laugh his wife out of the complaints she poured forth. But such work is harder than handling machinery, he it ever so heavy, and after a while Pat began to get irritable himself.

At last there came a breach. The pair had quarreled most of one night, but in the morning Pat tried to make it up with his wife married the wrong man. "Yer havin' a hard time of it, Mary, I know, with the constant cookin' and sewin' for the children and havin' to keep 'em from doin' the thousand things they shouldn't do all day long till they're asleep at night, but don't the wife of every workin' man who has children have to bear the same? And them as hasn't children are awful envious of men that has. Try and take a more reasonable view of it, Mary. Think of how well yer off to have a man to earn a livin' for you and the children and how bad it would be if I were takin' away from you and you had to work for a livin' as well as look out for the children."

She turned away from him in a huff, and he was obliged to go to his work with the breach still open. Mary spent the morning brooding. She considered that she'd married the wrong man. She recalled the hot words he had said to her during the night and either forgot the hotter words she had said to him or considered them justly spoken. Toward noon she began to cool down. Pat never came home to dinner, and perhaps it was as well to-day that he did not, for she was not in a condition to avoid treating him harshly. By evening she would be ready to at least drop the quarrel, though she never went through a process of making up. Pat often wished they could end their misunderstanding as they used to, by lovers' kisses, but the time for that seemed past.

When the hour for Pat to come home for the evening drew near Mary began to feel uncomfortable. She wished to go to him and throw her arms around his neck and say that she had acted "foolish" and all that, but somehow she couldn't. Perhaps she thought that if she did it would only encourage Pat to "gratitize" over her in future. But she made a nice dish of beefsteak and onions for Pat's supper. He was very fond of the combination and by giving him the dish she could get the comfort of a confession without really making it.

She was standing over the supper when something, she knew not what, prompted her to turn her head and look out through the open door. The cabin stood alone, and she had an unobstructed view. There came Tom Nolan, the company's announcer, making straight for her cabin.

A few minutes later there was a step

on the threshold. Mary did not hear it, for she lay on the floor in a swoon. It was not Tom Nolan's step, for he had passed on without entering the cabin. It was Mary's husband, who entered and saw her lying, white and rigid, on the floor. He was terribly frightened.

"Mary, darlin', what's happened to ye?"

Whether it was the sound of her husband's voice or the time for a revival had come, Mary opened her eyes.

"Oh, Pat," she cried, "is it you or your ghost?"

"It's me, Mary. Why d'ye think it's me ghost?"

"It's only a bit ago that Tom Nolan was comin', and I thought he was goin' to tell me that you'd been killed."

That she was blessed with a husband and a good one had been forcibly brought home to Mary, and from that day she was a model of patience. Soon after the episode the railway company appointed a new announcer.

FLORENCE NORTON.

Kipling and the Widow.
"Rudyard Kipling, when he died with me," said a literary Chicagoan, "told me about Simla."

"It seems that Simla is up in the mountains—the hills, as they say in India—and the ladies go there in the hot weather to escape the heat of the low country."

"Well, Kipling said that one lovely cool morning at Simla he was presented to a 'grass widow.' They call those ladies 'grass widows' whose husbands are detained by work in the hot cities of the plains."

"She was awfully pretty and charming, and as they talked together in the pleasant coolness Kipling said: 'I suppose you can't help thinking of your poor husband grilling down below?'"

"The lady gave him a strange look, and he learned afterward that she was a real widow."—Washington Star.

"Once in a small town Eddy Foy and I went into a barber's to get shaved," said an actor. "When the barber got through with him Foy applied his handkerchief to his face and said: 'Young man, you have missed your vocation. You ought to be an oyster opener.'"

Teacher—What is an excuse?
Little Willie—An excuse is something you can't think of when you want it.

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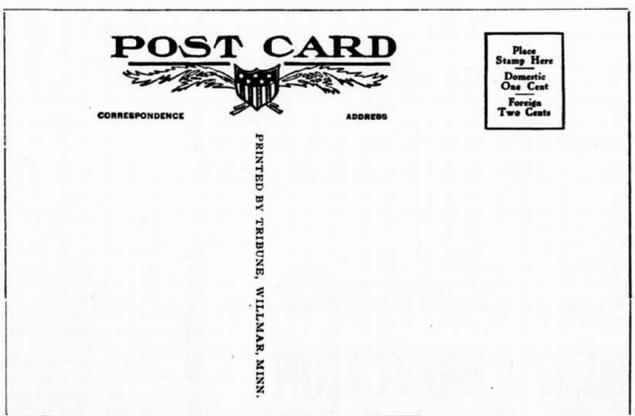
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