

The Times' Daily Short Story.

A PRISON MESSAGE

(Original.)
In the olden time a prisoner was lamenting to his jailer that he was kept in captivity away from his wife and little ones. He gave such a touching picture of his home, the wife who adored him, the children who loved to play upon his knee and listen while he told them stories, that the jailer wished it was in his power to free the man and let him go home. But this was impossible. The jailer himself had a family dependent on his pay, and if a prisoner escaped he would lose his position. However, he told the prisoner that he would soon need to go to the place where he (the prisoner) lived and would bear a message to his wife. Not long after this the jailer came to the prisoner's cell and asked for the message.

"Tell my wife to send me word how to recover my liberty."
"That is a foolish message," replied the jailer, "for I who bring the answer will know how to defeat any plan she may send you."

"Very well," said the prisoner. "That is the only message I have. If you will not deliver it I can't help it. I have no other for you."

The jailer went away pitying the poor fool who had no other hope of securing his freedom than a plan of escape brought by the man whose duty and interest it was to watch him. Nevertheless, after reaching the town where the prisoner's wife lived and attending to what business he had to do, he inquired the way to the woman he had promised to visit and went to see her.

"Your husband," he said, "I fear is losing his mind by his confinement. When I promised to see you and give you a message from him he told me to ask you how he might recover his liberty."

When the woman heard this she fell over, to all appearance, dead. A surgeon was called in, who immediately let some blood. The jailer waited in another room hoping that he might carry news to the prisoner that his wife was better, but when the surgeon came out he said that the woman was dead. "Give this to your prisoner," he said and handed the jailer a piece of silver. Then the jailer, wondering and heavy hearted at being the bearer of such news, went back to the jail.

"I bore your message," said the jailer, "and I am sorry to say that your wife was so distressed at your condition that she fell in a swoon and died soon after."

"Alas, alas! My poor wife!" exclaimed the prisoner. And he, too, fell in a swoon.
The jailer ran for a surgeon. This was at a time when the barber and the surgeon were often one and the same person, and the only remedy was blood-letting. The barber came and let some blood, but it only made the prisoner

look whiter, and when he left he pronounced the man dead.
"This is remarkable!" exclaimed the jailer. "I carry a message that kills the poor man's wife, and her death kills the prisoner. Well, there is nothing to do but bury him."

He put the corpse in a box and placed it on a bier in the corridor to await burial. In the morning he called the priest, who read the burial service, and the box was committed to the earth.

The next day the prisoner, alive and well, appeared at the castle of his feudal lord and begged an audience.

"I ask a pardon," he said, "having been in prison for debt and escaped. I wish to go home to my wife and children and not be again disturbed."

"What have you to offer for such a pardon?" asked the baron.
"A story."

"Tell it."
Then the prisoner told of his message to his wife and what resulted. "Her falling in a swoon," he explained, "was a message to me to do likewise. She gave the surgeon money to pronounce her dead and gave him the piece of silver to be given to me to bribe the barber. Thus my jailer carried an inquiry to my wife as to how I might escape and the reply."

"Your wife is too shrewd a woman," replied the baron, "to live in obscurity. Your pardon is granted. Bring your wife to the castle that she may enter the service of the countess. As for the jailer, I pardon him also, since I would have acted as he did if I had been in his place. This I know because I did not understand the device till you told it to me."

The prisoner's family was assigned apartments in the castle, and his wife entering the service of the countess was consulted upon every knotty question arising in both the baron's and the countess' affairs.

The baron, who was an impolitic man, was saved from many troubles by the woman's adroitness. Nevertheless he got into difficulty with a neighboring baron, who marched with all his retainers against him, besieging him in his castle. The siege had lasted many days and starvation was imminent when the countess appealed to her chief attendant, whereupon the woman sent her husband out at night as a deserter with an offer to lead the enemy into the castle by a secret underground passage.

"What's the matter with you?" asked the besieging baron. "What are those spots on you?"

"The plague. All in the castle have it."

"Turn him out!" shrieked the baron. When the day came those in the castle looked out, and no enemy was to be seen. The deserter's wife had painted him with the plague spots.

From that time the ex-prisoner and his wife lived at the castle as honored guests, and their children married into the families of the great lords whose possessions lay in that country.
BEVAN YOUNG BELDING.

BLACK'S WAR RECORD.

The Services of the New Grand Army Commander.

HOW HE FOUGHT AT PRAIRIE GROVE

An Exhibition of Heroism Which Endears Him to the Veterans of the Civil War, Who Now Confer Their Highest Honor Upon Him, General Black in Civil Life.

General John C. Black, who has been chosen commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, was a student in Wabash (Ind.) college when the civil war began and upon the opening of hostilities enlisted as a private in the Montgomery guards, which was mustered into service as Company I of the Eleventh Indiana zouaves, commanded by Lew Wallace. This regiment served three months in West Virginia and the Shenandoah valley. Returning home at the expiration of the term of his enlistment, he recruited a company for the Thirty-seventh Illinois regiment of volunteers, of which regiment he became major. He was promoted for distinguished services successively to lieutenant colonel, colonel and brevet brigadier general of United States volunteers. General Black was twice seriously wounded and has almost wholly lost the use of his left arm.

General Black's most conspicuous service was at Prairie Grove in 1862, when with Colonel McNulta, in command of an Illinois regiment, he was commanded to take a strong position held by the enemy. Black was then a captain, but in the absence of the colonel he was in command of the regiment. Both he and McNulta knew that the order meant business. They got their men into shape and started on the perilous march into the face of death, says a veteran who was in the engagement.

They began to see the signs of the enemy at the end of the third day. They were still forty miles from the scene of the probable fight. The men were spurred on to exertions which seem almost superhuman. They plodded for twenty-four straight hours, with only two hours for sleep on the open ground. Their only food was coffee. They walked thirty miles at the last stretch, part of the time at double quick. The enemy met them on the way, and at daylight, two miles from Prairie Grove, the first firing started.



GENERAL JOHN C. BLACK.

There were many dead soldiers left at the roadside. The column forged ahead, its legs weary, its eyes wild from loss of sleep, and its life all gone save the life which comes under extraordinary excitement. Black held the center of the line. The commander sent word for him to march straight ahead, to take the top of the hill and to hold it. This sent his regiment into the very front—into the middle of the enemy's range of guns. There was an Indiana regiment on one side, Colonel McNulta's on the other. It was a most perilous sally—one of the most frightfully murderous undertakings of all the war.

The line moved up the hill. It was not at the brow by a force which outnumbered it five to one. The Confederates came from the woods in swarms, beating down upon the Union forces with fearful effect. The Indiana men held their ground until the Confederates came so close that the explosion of the rifles splattered the uniforms with powder stains. The Confederate commander sent his host pellmell into the lone regiment at Black's left. The men in gray began to beat the Indians down the hillside. It was greater odds than the best of bravery could meet, and the Union soldiers retreated.

Colonel Black had the command next in the line of battle. He was on the crest of the hill with his regiment. The rebels came at him as they came at the Indiana men. They might as well have come against a stone wall. The commander, with his long hair in the wind and his voice ringing clear and shrill above the din, held his men to their work. He had few words. They were to the point, and they simply advised the men to stick close to the ground and shoot mighty low. He alone was the target for the thousands on the other side. One ball brought his horse to its knees. The men brought his left arm. It fell limp. He picked it up with his other hand and hung it in the front of his coat. The blood was streaming from the little hole, but there was no time for bandage or thought of pain.

At the close of the war General Black located at Danville, Ill., where he studied law and was admitted to the bar. He never held political office until he was appointed commissioner of pensions, though he twice ran for congress, once for lieutenant governor of the state and in 1878 received the vote of his party in the legislature for the United States senate. In his race

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for congress in the fall of 1884 he led his ticket by nearly 2,800 votes, his Republican opponent, J. Cameron, being elected by less than 500 votes in a district that had given in presidential years from 2,500 to 4,000 Republican majority.

When Grover Cleveland became president in 1885 the first nomination he sent to the senate was that of General Black as commissioner of pensions. During the Democratic convention held at St. Louis in 1888 the vice presidency was the only feature of interest touched upon, as it was inevitable that Mr. Cleveland should receive the presidential nomination. General Black's name came prominently forward at one time for the former nomination.

He has served in congress as representative at large from Illinois. During recent years he has practiced law in Chicago.

THE AURORA BOREALIS.

A Spectacle That Is Magnificent in Its Impressiveness.

It was a trifle past the afterglow of sunset, and the sea was a deep rich purple, with long flowing swells. The sky, a fine light turquoise blue at horizon, gradually deepened into a rich cobalt, in which a few stars twinkled. A majority of the men were absorbed in various occupations below when a call of enthusiasm brought all up on deck. At a point low on the southwest horizon a faint film had arisen, which quickly, silently assumed the form of a curtain, waving and mounting upward in two stately columns past a group of finely shaped cirrostratus. In a few seconds it was across the zenith, displaying beautiful pale yellows, greens and delicate pink and blue lights, with edgings at intervals of faint purple and red. The columns descended rapidly in ever varying spirals of perspective until the avant garde was lost behind the far northwest horizon.

We were about off the Danish port of Godthaab, Greenland, a sufficiently southern latitude at this season for the alternation of day and night, and as the heavens darkened the stars shone with increasing brightness through this great shimmering veil of light.

The heavens and the sea grew darker and darker, and the aurora brighter and brighter in lightning changes of form and color, with the green and yellow and blue rays predominating and the delicate sheen from the aurora's light writhing in fiery serpent forms over the face of the moving waters. What impressiveness, what magnificence! It held the soul as in a spell. There was not much talking. Splendid as it was, I afterward witnessed auroras which produced a deeper impression, due doubtless to the presence of the long night of the far north.—Century.

Arizona Sunshine.

To one who has been there, says Caspar W. Hodgson in Sunset Magazine, the name Arizona, first of all, suggests sunshine and plenty of it. Nowhere on the globe is sunshine more abundant, more appreciated or more harmless. Indeed, a sunstroke has never been recorded in this territory. Though all good Arizonians have crossed the Husayampa river, which act, according to tradition, divests one of the power to tell the truth, I believe their records are accurate as to sunstroke. The explanation is found in the fact that heat is not so much a matter of thermometer as of humidity.

The dry, hot air of the Arizona desert is invigorating to the initiated. One can learn to love the desert. There the sunrises and sunsets are intensely beautiful and nowhere on earth richer in color. This is sometimes called Sunset Land. It might also be called Land of Sunrise.—Sunset Magazine.

Retraction.

"Look here, Mr. Editor," exclaimed an irate caller, "you referred to me yesterday as a reformed drunkard. You must apologize or I'll sue your paper for libel."
"Very well, sir," replied the editor. "I'll retract the statement cheerfully. I'll say you haven't reformed."

Sensoned Wood.

An average stick of wood when green contains 33 per cent of water and loses 22 per cent of it in seasoning, during which process its strength is nearly doubled.

THE WRITERS.

Josephine Daskam, the well known writer, was married at Stamford, Conn., recently to Selden Bacon, a New York lawyer.

D. H. Carpenter, a well known genealogist and a writer of several books dealing with the history of the early settlers of the colonies, died at his home in Maplewood, N. J., recently.

The fiftieth birthday of Waldimir Korolenko was generally commented on by the press of Russia, where he is as popular as a novelist as Gorki, whom he resembles in choice of topics.

Count Tolstol's handwriting is a terror to printers. It requires some apprenticeship to decipher. He writes his stories two or three times over, occasionally altering whole pages after the story has been set up in type.

POULTRY POINTERS.

Do not try to winter more hens than you can care for well.

As a rule, the last eggs of a clutch are not nearly so fertile as the first.

Lined meal brightens the plumage, regulates the bowels and promotes digestion.

Poultry are not large bodied birds. They are much smaller than they appear, and it will not pay to raise them for their flesh.

Give the hens all possible freedom and there will be less trouble with soft shelled eggs, for the hens will get the exercise and pick up the lime they need.

In selling geese, it is best in nearly all cases to sell the young ones, for while the older will produce the strongest offspring, the younger will sell for the best price.

A HISTORIC CHEESE.

THE MONSTER THAT CHESHIRE SENT TO PRESIDENT JEFFERSON.

Nearly Every One in Town Contributed Curd, and Elder John Leland Housed the Job—The Formal Presentation at the White House.

The story of the great cheese made at Cheshire in 1801 and sent the following winter to President Jefferson as a New Year's present has been many times told in prose and verse, but is worthy of repetition as an interesting bit of local history, showing, as it does, the patriotic spirit by which the good people of Cheshire were moved and the novel manner they chose for its expression.

In those days Cheshire was famous for three things—its exceptionally fine dairying interests and products, the well nigh universal adhesion of the voting population to the Democratic party and Elder John Leland, an able, eccentric and witty Baptist divine, whose fame is a part of the history of Cheshire. Elder Leland and most of the other people of the town were ardent admirers of Thomas Jefferson, and when he was elected president of the United States their joy was unbounded. It was finally decided that it would be proper to give to their esteem a tangible expression in the form of a mammoth cheese, which should show to the president the quality of their material resources and something of the extent of their admiration for him.

The announcement of this plan was made by Elder Leland from his pulpit one Sunday morning and was received with pleasure by the people. July 20, 1801, was the date set for the making of the cheese, and the plan was to have all the owners of cows in the town, with the exception of the few federalists there were, to make their curd and carry it to a central place for pressing. Of course there was no cheese press large enough for the pressing of such a cheese as was proposed, and Elisia Brown's cider press was consequently selected for the work.

When the day came for making the cheese the people gathered from all parts of the town. Those who had curd to contribute brought it with them, some in large quantities and some in small, but all extremely proud to contribute to the monster cheese that was to be sent to the president. Besides being a busy day it was also a gala day for the inhabitants of Cheshire. The farmers and their wives and families turned out en masse to witness the construction of what proved to be the most famous cheese in all history, for, though a still larger cheese was made

in the town at a later date, this was the president's cheese, and the great Elder Leland, who in the estimation of the people of Cheshire was second in importance only to President Jefferson himself, was leading and directing the enterprise. Most of those present were arrayed in their Sunday best, though the women who superintended the mixing of the curd were obliged to wear protecting aprons.

The hoop in which the cheese was pressed was made for the occasion. It was four feet in diameter and eighteen inches deep and was secured with strong bands of iron to enable it to stand the pressure. When all of the curd had been mixed and salted it was placed in this hoop, a follower which had also been made especially for the purpose was placed upon it, and the ponderous wooden screws of the old cider mill were turned down on the most precious body they had ever compressed. After all was done a hymn lined off by Elder Leland was sung by the assemblage, and the people separated for their homes, highly satisfied with and very proud of their day's work. Some days after it was made the cheese was taken to Captain Daniel Brown's cheese house to be cured. Its weight one month from the time it was pressed was 1,235 pounds. The moving of the cheese from the cider press to Captain Brown's was made a great occasion. The people turned out again, and the cheese was followed by a big procession. Moses Wolcott, who kept the "tavern," gave a feast to all present and thereby linked his name to this part of the town's history.

The following December the great cheese was sent to Washington in charge of Elder Leland and Darius Brown. There were no railroads in those days, and it was drawn on a sled to Hudson, N. Y., and shipped from there by water. The presentation of the cheese to the president was an event of moment in Washington. The presentation was made at the White House in the presence of the cabinet, foreign diplomats and other notables, Elder Leland serving as spokesman and assuring the president in suitable terms of the great esteem in which he was held by the people from whom the gift had come.—Springfield Republican.

Fish and Cold.

Fish have been resuscitated after freezing at 12 or 14 degrees F. below freezing point, but do not survive zero temperature.

Greenland's Ice.

The ice in Greenland is melting more rapidly than it is formed. Comparison of the descriptions of the Jacobshavn glacier shows that its edge has receded eight miles since 1850, and it has lost twenty to thirty feet in depth.

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	\$1,089,296.76
Capital Stock,	\$50,000.00
Surplus and Profits,	27,949.74
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Dividends unpaid,	15.00
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