

# SIR JASPER'S ADVENTURE.

Sir Jasper Peters was the fortunate son of a man who had made a large fortune in trade, and who had then devoted himself to one of the great political parties with so much doggedness that he had been rewarded by a baronetcy without ever having had to expose the defects of his early education by making a long speech in the house.

Whatever his party did was right; that was his motto, and he had lived up to it with a simplicity which had brought its inevitable reward.

The consequence was that his only son was able to give up any active share in the business, and to play at being a country gentleman of patriarchal descent, while his wife could assume the airs of a Lady Bountiful on the one hand, and, outshine all the great ladies of the neighborhood by her diamonds, on the other.

Peterscourt, the country seat of the distinguished pair, was of course an old place where many generations of ancestors—of somebody else—had lived their little day.

It was a large, rambling, two-storied building, dating from some far away period, and altered in the castellated style in the early years of Victoria's reign.

Beautifully situated in the southern part of the country of Dorsetshire, it was a little too far away from London to be quite to the taste of Lady Peters, who was ambitious of playing a great part in society, and who would often run up to town for a few days at a time, while her husband was enjoying his dignified seclusion within the well wooded grounds and park of Peterscourt.

It was on one of these occasions, when the baronet was sitting in solitary state in his great library after dinner, his little electric lamp on the table behind him and a pile of literature suitable to a country gentleman by his side, that he was disturbed in his leisurely perusal of his paper by the sound of a footstep on the gravel outside.

He had scarcely raised his head, when, to his surprise and alarm, a man in the unmistakable dress of a convict, panting, breathless, with starting eyes and hanging jaw, leaped upon the window ledge from outside, and then fell, exhausted, upon the carpet.

"By Jove!" cried Sir Jasper as he sprang up and made for the bell.

But the man was too quick for him. Panting still, indeed, but recovering himself sufficiently to stagger to his feet and across the floor, the unwelcome visitor threw himself upon the terror-stricken baronet, and stooping at the same moment for the poker, which he was near enough to reach, he growled out between his set teeth a threat to "do for" that unhappy gentleman if he so much as uttered a call for help.

Sir Jasper gurgled out a promise to refrain, which he did not mean keep, and the man thereupon let him down again into the arm-chair from which he had risen, and suddenly altered his threatening tone for one of abject entreaty.

"Look 'ere, guvnor," said he, in a thick, hoarse whisper, moistening his mouth as he spoke, still standing near and holding the poker in his hand, but no longer menacing his unwilling host. "I don't want for to do yer no 'arm. I'm not so bad as what you'd think for to look at the dress I've got on."

"You're a c—c—convict!" stammered Sir Jasper, half timorous and half surly. "You've escaped from Portland!"

The man frowned uneasily. "Well, so's a many more than me been convicts, and a many as deserve it a precious sight was nor what I do," said the man. And as he spoke he threw from time to time an anxious glance toward the window by which he had entered. "But this ain't no time for to throw my fallings in my face. I'm a 'unted man, that's what I am. The warders is after me—"

"What!" cried Sir Jasper, with something so like relief in his face that his guest scowled him promptly into silence.

"Surely, guvnor, you wouldn't go for to betray a 'unted man, a noble gentleman like you, with everything 'andsome and comfortable about him! You wouldn't go for to give up a poor wretch that begs you to give him a change of clothes, would you? Ah—h—h!"

The sound he uttered was an indescribable one, as he suddenly straightened himself and listened with straining ears to the unmistakable sound of a rapid footstep on the gravel.

"They're coming! They've traced me 'ere! For mercy's sake, sir, don't give me up!"

The baronet looked at the close-cropped head, with the ugly ears standing out on each side, and the coarse features distorted with fear, with a disgust he found it hard to hide. He, too, heard the approaching footsteps, and secretly congratulated

himself upon his prospective deliverance from his tormentor.

Before he had time to answer the man's entreaties the noise of footsteps ceased; the convict threw one glance at the window, a second glance round the room, and then he made for the door with all speed. Sir Jasper jumped up from his chair and ran to the window.

Yes, there, at the distance of but a dozen steps, was one of the prison warders, with a carbine in his hand. He was standing still and looking about him. It was evident that for the moment he had lost the track of his quarry.

Sir Jasper beckoned to him quickly. "Warder!" cried he. "Warder! This way!"

The man turned and came rapidly toward him. He was a tall, strong, fine looking man, with shrewd eyes and clear cut features; and, even as Sir Jasper called him, he was smitten by a sense of the inequality of the contest between this stalwart, well-fed, handsome pursuer and the undersized, lean, grizzled rascal of whom he was in pursuit.

Saluting as he came, the warder was under the window in a moment.

"You are looking for a convict who has escaped?" said the baronet.

"Yes, Sir Jasper."

"You know me, then?"

"Why, yes, to be sure, we all know Sir Jasper Peters," said the warder with a smile. "Have you seen anything of the man, sir?"

"Yes, yes; he's in my house at this moment," answered Sir Jasper, instinctively lowering his voice with a sort of fear of retribution at the hands of the hunted man if he were to learn he was betrayed.

"Where, sir, where?"

Even before the baronet had finished the sentence the warder had put his hand on the window sill and sprang into the room. Sir Jasper pointed to the door.

"He got away through there the moment he heard you coming."

The warder looked at him in consternation as he crossed the room.

"Then I'll be bound he's rifling your strong room, sir," said he. "The man's one of the cleverest safe thieves in England, and he's got some sort of tools with him he's managed to make; and as you have got plenty of stuff to steal, I'll be sworn he's having a shot at it."

"W—w—what!" stammered the startled baronet. "How can he know?"

Already he was leading the warder out of the room and across the hall, in the direction of the strong room.

"These chaps know 'most everything. Goodness only knows how. Else why should he come straight here? It's miles from the prison, your house is, and there's many a place he might have took in on his way, instead of making straight for here! It was my guess to come this way, the only one of the lot to believe he'd got so far."

The baronet was hunting for his keys. They were standing together at the door which led into the basement and as Sir Jasper turned the handle he said,—

"We'd better have the butler with us, had we not?"

The warder smiled, and raised his carbine.

"I think this will be protection enough for us both, Sir Jasper; and I wouldn't call the man if I was you. You're never quite sure, with men servants, whether they'll be a help or a hindrance."

So the two descended together into the basement, looking and listening, but without coming upon any trace of the escaped convict until they reached the strong room door.

Sir Jasper turned up the electric light in the opposite wall, and heaved a sigh of relief as he saw that there was no sign of any attempt having been made to tamper with the lock. The warder, however, was stooping to listen at the tiny keyhole and making a sign to the baronet to keep quiet. Then he nodded and came toward him.

"Will you listen at that door, sir, and tell me if you hear anything?" he asked.

Trembling, and sick with alarm, Sir Jasper took his place at the keyhole.

"I—I fancy I hear a kind of scratching," whispered he at last.

The warder nodded.

"That's it, sir. That's our man at work!"

Sir Jasper stood up.

"But how did he get in?" said he, with white lips.

The warder shook his head.

The baronet took his little key from his watch chain and proceeded to fit it in the lock.

"Have a care, sir!"

Sir Jasper, thus warned, opened the door most cautiously, and flung it wide. Then, hastily pressing the button just inside, he flooded the small apartment at once with light. He drew a long sigh of relief—there was no one there.

"And the jewelry—is that all right, Sir Jasper?"

The baronet advanced into the room

and opened a safe at the father end. Lady Peters' emeralds and diamonds were almost world famous, and a sudden momentary doubt flashed through the baronet's mind as to the wisdom of letting even the prison warder know the exact place where they were kept when her ladyship had them for use in the country.

But a glance at the warder reassured him. The stalwart guardian had his watchful eye, not on the safe where the baronet was busy, but on the dark corners inside and outside the room, and even as he looked about him he held his carbine ready in case of a surprise from unseen enemies.

"It's all right!" cried Sir Jasper, with relief, as he came to the snug velvet nest where the jewels were sparkling.

But even as he uttered the words the warder's cry broke upon his ear,—

"Ah, would you!"

And, looking around, Sir Jasper saw the convict rush past the warder from some unseen corner outside, and, jerking up the arm which held the carbine, make a dash for the jewels. The next moment, before the baronet had time to make all safe, he perceived that the warder's weapon had fallen to the ground, and that his right arm hung limp, while he cried out excitedly,—

"Seize him, Sir Jasper, seize him!"

The convict, even as these words were uttered, was springing upon the baronet, who, good man, living an easy life, was not in condition to grapple on equal terms with the lithe, spare frame of his assailant. In another moment both were on the floor, the convict on the top.

There was a short, sharp struggle, during which the baronet felt himself for some moments blinded, choking. Then the man was pulled off him by the superior force of the warder, who even with one arm disabled, knew a trick or two which made him more than a match for his man.

"Now sir, up with you and help me with him," cried the warder, while the convict muttered curses on them both and vainly struggled to get free.

It was some seconds even then before the warder was able to clap the handcuffs on the desperate prisoner, at the cost of much pain to himself from his wounded arm. But with the baronet's assistance he at last overpowered the wiry rascal and dragged him upstairs, where, with the help of the men servants, who now, hearing the noise of the scuffle, joined their aid to the master's, the convict, still defiant and sullen, was led out of the house and hoisted up into a light cart which happened to be within hail.

"To Portland!" cried the warder, as barely remaining long enough to receive the congratulations of the baronet, he sprang up in the cart and laid a powerful detaining hand on the rascal's shoulder.

Then Sir Jasper, who was somewhat dazed as a result of these unwonted exertions and excitements, turned back to the mansion with a sigh of relief and a distinct consciousness that he was considerably bruised.

He could not, however, wait to attend to his wounds or even to ascertain the extent of them, as he suddenly remembered that he had left the door of the strong room open, and that even the safe where his wife's jewels were kept was still unlocked.

As the lights were burning both inside and outside the strong room, however, it was a matter of a few seconds only to retrace his steps and to regain the velvet nest where the gems lay.

What was his amazement, his horror, to find, on looking into the case which he had previously opened, that the chief treasure of the collection, his wife's tiara of hung emeralds mounted in brilliants was gone!

The unfortunate baronet stood for a moment petrified by his discovery. He could not remember at what point of the hurried proceedings of the last half hour it was that the convict had had the opportunity of seizing the jewels; yet that he had made good use of some momentary chance was only too plain.

A trembling examination of the other cases showed that a magnificent tiara of the rest of the collection was safe. Scarcely able to walk, the baronet made all safe and tottered upstairs.

"Order the phaeton around at once," said he to the first servant he met, and then, as he paced up and down the hall, he debated the chances of his ever recovering the property.

He knew well enough that if the rascal were to take the jewels back to Portland with him the search he would undergo would discover the stolen property; but his fear was that the man, whom the warder had despoiled of getting rid of them on the way. If they were to be flung into a ditch or into the sea, what was his chance of ever seeing them again?

The minutes seemed hours as he drove along in the darkness toward the prison, and when he leaped to the ground and addressed the warder who opened the door his voice was cracked and broken as he stammered out,—

"I—I want to see the warder who brought the escaped prisoner back."

The man stared at him intently.

"What escaped prisoner, sir? There has been no escape of a prisoner."

"Oh, yes, there has," said Sir Jasper, impatiently. "I tell you he was caught in my house—Peterscourt—not an hour ago."

The warder looked at him, recognized one of the magnates of the neighborhood, and begged him to step inside the lodge.

Sir Jasper, with a terrible sinking of the heart, accepted the invitation, gave a minute account of what had taken place, and was shocked to see a more dubious look come over the warder's face. When he paused, the man said,—

"I'm very much afraid, Sir Jasper, that you stand a poor chance of seeing your jewels again. You've been the victim of a very artful robbery, and, by your description of the men, I should think it was the work of Nelherby and Fletcher. If it is them, and they've pulled off a big thing like that, I should think they'll be out of the country before tomorrow morning. They've evidently laid their plans very well, down to having the cart in waiting to carry them off. I'm very sorry for you, Sir Jasper, but you'd better drive to the nearest police station and lodge your complaint at once. It's your only chance, and I'm afraid it's a very poor one."

And so poor Jasper found.

Not only were the police convinced that he had been robbed and that he stood a bad chance of recovering his property, but it even seemed to him that they took a misguided pleasure in hearing every detail of the affair at great length, in order to express something very like admiration of the means by which the two artful scoundrels had possessed themselves of the jewels.

"Then—then it must have been the one that pretended to be a warder that took the things!" he stammered, white with rage.

"That's it, sir," said the officer, cheerfully. "While you was on the floor struggling with the convict—I mean the one dressed like a convict—why, the tall chap was helping himself!"

Sir Jasper groaned.

"He never seemed to look at me or the safe either!" sighed he. "He's the most artful rogue I ever heard of, and I'd give the world to see him in the dock!"

Sir Jasper did have that pleasure some six months later, when Nelherby and Fletcher, after having expatriated themselves for a time, rashly returned to their native land.

The baronet had the satisfaction of seeing them, forlorn and dejected, receive a sentence of some years penal servitude. But neither he nor Lady Peters ever saw the jewels again.—Black and White.

## LAWS OF HEREDITY.

"Three Generations to Make a Gentleman" is Fact, Not Theory.

Professor Karl Pearson, F. R. S., who has taken a leading part in founding the doctrine of evolution on a statistical basis, explained to a deeply interested audience at the Royal Institution some of the results, says the London Telegraph. Two of these are of special importance. It is shown by examination of large numbers of persons that mental and moral as well as physical qualities are inherited, and to the same extent. Taking school children and examining them minutely with respect to curliness and color of the hair, length, breadth and height of the head, color of the eyes, the cephalic index and health on the one hand; and on the other testing them for intelligence, vivacity, conscientiousness, popularity, temper, self-consciousness, shyness and handwriting, the degree of inheritance in the two categories came numerically as close as 521 to 522. Secondly, it is proved that two or three generations will suffice to create a new stock. Statistics of large numbers show that there is more than is often supposed in the saying: "It takes three generations to make a gentleman," and in the expression, "Visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation." Pedigree in humanity, as in the lower animals, is a vital factor. Thus a family or a nation will certainly progress or degenerate as the issue of heredity. It needs but to repress the numbers of the better and higher and to multiply the numbers of the lower and less fit for two or three generations to make national degeneration terribly real. Professor Pearson's tabular results showed the universality of the laws of inheritance, not only in animals like horses and dogs, but in lowly insects and even in plants.

## Women Notaries in Virginia.

The first official act of the Governor under the new Constitution of Virginia was the appointment of a number of women notaries, an innovation provided for by the new instrument. There was strong competition for the first appointment, and several ladies were here trying to secure the honor. It was awarded to Miss Carrie N. Gregory, of Lynchburg, who was the prime mover in securing the privilege for her sisters.—Baltimore American.

Japan has 150 varieties of rice, many of which are adapted to American soil.

# Farm Topics

## Lambs in the Market.

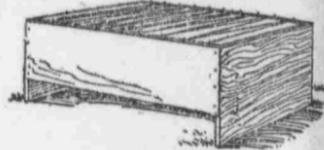
Lambs bring twice as much in market as sheep, including the wool derived from the sheep, and the market is seldom overstocked with lambs.

## A Profitable Crop.

It is safe to say that the market gardeners near our large cities realize greater profits from lettuce than from any other vegetable. It is a very hardy plant, and when well under way withstands not only quite a degree of cold, but also the heat. If the plants are partially protected by being set out on the sunny side of ridges, they progress much more rapidly in growth than when not so carefully managed, and the quicker they can be grown the better the quality. If the plants are set out in rows wide enough to admit the free use of the hoe, and well manured, they will become solid, but when sown broadcast on rich beds they also furnish a large quantity of tender leaves.

## Feeding Large and Small Chickens.

Where large and small chickens run at large in the same lot the feeding of



A FEEDING BOX.

them becomes a difficult matter, as the larger crowd the weaker and take most of the food.

Get one or more big but low dry goods or grocery boxes and remove a part of each side, as shown in the cut, making the opening just high enough to permit the smaller chicks to enter. Stretch a wire from side to side at the top, and throw feed inside for the younger broods. They will quickly learn to start for their own quarters when the feed dish appears.—New England Homestead.

## Where the Hog Leads.

For quick returns the hog is far ahead of the steer or sheep. He is easily fitted for the slaughter at six months old, and at that time, if he has been well fattened, eighty per cent of his live weight is in dressed meat. But, as the saying goes, every part of him excepting the grunt and the squeal is utilized. The bristles, the intestines or sausage casings, the blood and the bone, all play their parts, while the liver and heart are favorite food with many. The steer will need about three crops of corn to fatten him, and often not more than fifty per cent of his weight is dressed meat, while it is unusual to find one that does not shrink over forty per cent. One crop of corn will fatten both the fall and the spring pigs each year. All of this is a decided advantage in favor of the keeping of swine, and those who have done so and avoided the attacks of cholera and swine plague have been successful and prosperous in their business.—Kansas Farmer.

## Farmers and Breeds.

The breeds of sheep are being improved every year, and farmers who have not familiarized themselves with the characteristics of sheep should bear in mind that they are behind the buyers, who can distinguish at a few moments' examination exactly what kind of a sheep from which the wool was sheared, and its fitness for the purpose for which it is desired. The buyers know the breeds, the kind of wool peculiar to each breed, and all about them, for it is "business." A farmer would sneer at a carpenter who professed to be a carpenter and yet could not do a piece of work in that line; and yet, it may be claimed, there are hundreds of farmers who profess to be farmers, and who would rebel if their knowledge of the business should be questioned, but who, at the same time, cannot tell as much about the products of the farm as many of those who know nothing about farm life. There are hundreds of farmers who are not able to distinguish breeds of sheep, and who do not know the particular purposes for which a breed is most suitable, and still they pride themselves on their calling as a business which they intend to make profitable. If such farmers could be brought to a realization of the fact that they are really deficient in knowledge it would be to their interests. Every year we witness the shipment of the products of the farm to market, where the buyer fixes the grade, although he has no experience on the farm. Farmers as a class are not business-like, for they rely too much on the judgment of others. It is not intended to imply that they should not seek the advice of others, but when the farmer surrenders everything to hard work he should begin to educate himself in every possible way to improve his chances.—Philadelphia Record.

The telephone girl says a ring on the finger is worth two on the 'phone.