

The Repentance of Hartz

A TRUE STORY OF THE SECRET SERVICE

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It was sometime in the fall of 1859 that a stranger came trudging along the turnpike. He was short and fat. His round red face was covered with a stubby growth of blonde whiskers. He wore a broad flat blue cloth cap and a long brown linen duster a little out of season. A bundle tightly rolled in black oilcloth was strapped to his back. He stopped in the middle of the road. Looking about, his eyes rested upon a weather-beaten sign board upon which had once been painted the picture of a black bear resting upon its haunches. For more than a hundred years this sign board had been swinging to and fro as if beckoning and inviting passersby to enter the little inn that was standing some 15 or 20 feet back from the road. It took Mr. Herman Weisgarber several minutes to decipher the inscription beneath the faded picture. When he had succeeded, as he thought, he muttered audibly, "Dish ish de place. Der black bear vas inn, und I shust myself vill walk in mit him."

Bracing up a little and stroking his chin he stepped with a lengthened stride into the little front room that served as an office for the Black Bear Inn. Here he found himself in the presence of a pleasant-faced woman who smiled coquettishly.

He greeted her in his own tongue, in which she replied, and the conversation was now carried on briskly in the German language. It was a buxom widow on the one hand and a rascally counterfeiter on the other. He was a long-time rogue, but she was honest and unsuspecting. With her the world was good, with him it was dog eat dog and the devil take the hindmost. The widow Hartz was altogether too unsophisticated to penetrate the dark recesses of the hollow-hearted man that had by chance come suddenly into the affairs of her life. She judged him by her own heart and little dreamed of the misery so soon to follow her chance acquaintance with Herman Weisgarber.

Her husband had died about two years before. At this time her heart was centered on her son, a young man nearly twenty years of age. John Hartz, thanks to the training of his father, was honest and industrious. The Black Bear Inn and the little farm adjoining was a sacred inheritance from his paternal grandfather.

The inn was now somewhat out of date, but was still doing its part towards furnishing the mother and son a living and a little to lay up for a rainy day. John's father had taught him to stand firmly for the right in all things.

Mr. Weisgarber's gray blue eyes were shining brightly beneath his overhanging brows as he stood explaining to the widow Hartz regarding himself. The word tramp, now so aptly applied to the tie-path tourist, had not been coined in that day and men of his like were little understood. He said he was just out on a pleasure tour and that he traveled on foot as a matter of choice. He was moving leisurely along that he might better enjoy the lovely scenery and pure mountain air. His words were well chosen and deeply impressive as he cautiously worked his way up to the point of offering to remain for a time and assist in the work about the inn and farm. He had a smooth tongue.

The turn-pike, winding its way along up and down the sides, over and across the Allegheny mountains was then the popular highway for drovers and wagoners upon their way to and fro between Eastern Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh. The people along this route were principally Germans. Some of them could neither read nor speak English. They lived mainly on what they produced and had little occasion to spend their money. Almost anything that looked like money would pass. In those days much of the paper money in circulation was of the wild cat kind. Between the counterfeit and genuine issue there was but little choice. One passed from hand to hand almost as readily as the other.

Herman Weisgarber, as he called himself, had for many years been dodging about from place to place making a living by showing the queer, under pretence of his inability to understand the English language he was able to deceive the officers and escape arrest. It was always "Nicht-verstehe" with him. "He shust didn't know nothing 'bout basper monies."

To the widow Hartz he appeared a man of honor. She measured his character by her own and could see no farther. Six months had scarcely passed from the time she met him until he became her husband.

When John Hartz came in contact with his step-father he was honest, and had he followed in the footsteps of his own father he would have remained so. It did not take long to prove that he was susceptible and easily drawn into ways that were dark and forbidding. Step by step he was led along and craftily initiated into the mysterious doings of counterfeiters.

One day a drover came along the pike with a long string of oxen and stopped at the Black Bear Inn, and engaged a pasture for his cattle over night. The drover was new in that part of the country, and for safety he handed his pocket book, containing several hundred dollars, to John Hartz for safe keeping, in the presence of Weisgarber. Shortly afterwards when the drover was out attending to his cattle, Weisgarber suggested the idea to John of changing the good money in the pocket book for an equal amount of counterfeit that he had on hand. John was easily persuaded. He thought his step-father knew best. In the morning the drover received his pocket book and proceeded to count its contents. He at once saw that the bills were of a different kind than those he had been carrying. He pulled a counterfeit detector from his pocket and examined them. Having satisfied himself that they were bad, he charged John with having substituted them. The accused man's face turned red and he began to stammer, but his step-father who was standing by, came at once to the front and commenced to talk in German to John. Turning to the drover he protested in badly broken English that the young man was honest and hadn't even opened the pocket book. Between the two the drover got a tongue lashing for his accusation that so completely upset him that he was none too sure that he ever had any money. He was now in a bad fix; a long ways from



home with a pocket book full of counterfeit money as his only wherewith to pay his expenses.

After everything had cooled down, Mr. Weisgarber, in a burst of generosity, was good enough to loan the drover one or two hundred dollars to pay his way until he could reach Strasburgh, a little town at the foot of the Three Brother mountains. The drover was silenced but not altogether convinced. His money was all right the day before, but he wasn't quite sure it was of the right stamp when he handed it over to the young man for safe keeping. Here was an exemplification of the little difference between the truth and a lie well stuck to. Time rolled on and John Hartz' career in crime became more and more firmly fixed.

One day the sheriff came with a warrant for the "Flying Dutchman," which meant Herman Weisgarber.

"Gott en Himmel! Vor ish dish?" he exclaimed.

A long explanation ensued and the sheriff was greatly puzzled regarding his duty. He was convinced that the accused man was innocent, and he thought it might be a safe thing to leave him at his home and go back to the county seat and report before making the arrest. When he reached there he was told to return at once and bring his man. When he got back to the Black Bear Inn Mr. Weisgarber was out. He had saddled up and rode away and might not return for several days, perhaps never. But the good-natured sheriff didn't see it that way. He would come back again, or he might present himself voluntarily at the sheriff's office.

The mother had now experienced enough to satisfy her that she had made a great mistake and that she was tied to a bad man. Her life became a burden to her. One day she suddenly disappeared. After a long search she was found dead with a rope tightly drawn about her neck hanging to a stout hook in the smoke house. The scene was too much for

John. He now became dazed with fear and excitement. He left the home of his boyhood on foot and made his way to Philadelphia, where he chanced to meet his step-father who was a member of a gang of counterfeiters. John was easily persuaded and he suffered himself to be led along step by step until he was deep in the mire.

Our Civil war had brought a great change in the finances of the country. Wild cat banks had gone out of existence and a new kind of money was in use. There was a great deal of counterfeiting going on and John Hartz was one of the number engaged in it. Like the most of the men of his stamp he was unsuccessful in accumulating wealth.

A counterfeit beer stamp made its appearance in Philadelphia and I found it necessary to visit that city. The night was dark and stormy and it was about the portentous hour of 1:00 a. m., when ghosts are said to stalk abroad in ghastly white array, that four detectives left their comfortable quarters in the hotel with the expectation of making an important arrest. The man they sought was invisible during the day time and a difficult man to encounter at night. He had frequently been heard of but had seldom been seen by the government detectives. When the officers reached the appointed place they scattered and took up their positions where they would attract as little attention as possible. Their mysterious mission had been fully explained; a deal was expected to be pulled off. One of the detectives was rotund of person. He had, through one of the counterfeiting gang, been introduced as a beer dealer who said he was willing to take his chances with bogus stamps, and he had bargained with one of the counterfeiters for five thousand counterfeit lager beer stamps, and was to receive them at a certain hour at a designated place.

When the man put in an appearance to make the delivery he was to be arrested. This individual, owing to the darkness of the night, was unable to see the detectives stationed about, and he walked with his carpet bag in

the slightest information. I had offered him his liberty and \$1,000 in money as an inducement, but he stubbornly refused. He seemed to have deluded himself into the idea that treachery among a gang of criminals was much worse than the unlawful deeds performed by them.

I learned from the prisoner that he had a family. When this was mentioned he shuddered a little. Coming to the conclusion that I could learn nothing from him I was ready to lock him up. Before doing this I suggested the idea of taking him to see his wife and children. Early in the morning I procured a carriage, and after a 20 minutes' drive we stopped in front of a large tenement house which we entered, ascending the stairs to the second floor.

Knocking at a door to our right we were after some delay admitted by a woman wearing a calico wrapper, and we entered the room which was dark and dismal as a tomb. Two or three broken chairs, a rickety table and a mattress spread upon the floor and covered with ragged quilts, constituted the furnishings. Peeping from beneath the tattered covering I saw the bright eyes and curly heads of two young children.

"Is this your home, Mr. Hartz?" I inquired.

"This is where I stay," he replied. I saw at once that I was up against a species of affliction for which I had no ready-made speech of condolence, and I was just a little embarrassed. There was a depth of seriousness in the affair that I had rarely met with. I was confronted with the genuine woes of humanity and at a loss for the moment to know just what to do or say. After deliberating a short time I came to the conclusion that it was best to explain all to his wife. She looked like an intelligent woman and I proceeded to acquaint her with the facts concerning her husband's arrest and the punishment that was sure to follow. I likewise pointed out the door through which he might escape. I demanded a clean breast without reserve. I was to know all the particulars in regard to the conspiracy, and he was to act in good faith and to assist the detectives in plans to capture the engraver and all others connected with the affair; besides, he was, if it became necessary, to go upon the witness stand and testify against his confederates. Counterfeiters as a general thing are treacherous towards one another when in a tight place; it is anything to save themselves. With John Hartz it was different; he preferred to sacrifice himself rather than to give away his confederates.

When the wife was made acquainted with the proposition that had been made to her husband she appealed to him in language that seemed irresistible.

He hung his head. There was an expression on his face that was indefinable. A fresh link in misery's chain had now reached his heart. The scene was absolutely painful and I soon saw that he was weakening. A man's character varies in accordance with the position in which he is placed. Criminals are human, like our selves, and if we would learn the dangers lurking in our pathway, we should know how they chance to stumble and fall. Some men are weaker and more prone to vice than others. There is a never-ending battle between right and wrong. I never yet found a man so bad that there was not something in his character upon which to base a hope. I never yet saw a man that was so good as to be free from danger. There is a thread of gold running through the character of the worst of men; the difficulty is to reach it.

The prisoner's eyes fell and were filled with tears. We have no pity for the tears shed by criminals. They are deserved, but they are tears just the same, and sometimes come from a heart unjustly pierced. His wife now approached him and said, "Where is the money to come from to pay the rent for this miserable room we are living in? How am I to obtain food and clothing for our children when you are in the penitentiary?"

Accustomed as I was to scenes of this kind my heart was deeply touched and my hand went almost involuntarily to my pocket. I pulled out a roll of bills. It was the government's money. Peeling off five twenties, I handed them to the woman. "Take this, my good woman, I cannot save your husband, but I will give you something with which to supply your immediate wants. Buy these children some clothes."

I handed her an additional twenty. The counterfeiter and his wife stood looking earnestly into each other's faces. Both seemed well nigh broken-hearted. He stepped towards me as he said: "You are the only decent man I have ever seen in the detective business and I am going to tell you all about it."

I have seen crime in its many phases and have noted the effect of a long term of imprisonment upon men as they received their sentence, but John Hartz appeared as the most repentant criminal I had ever met. He had been caught red-handed and could have been easily convicted, but the result of his confession and assistance was many times more important to the government. It led to the breaking up, root and branch, of an extensive group of dangerous counterfeiters. The engraver, procurer and six others were arrested with the evidence of their guilt in their hands. All were convicted and sentenced to serve various terms in the penitentiary.

My promise to Hartz was religiously kept. He was suffered to go at large. What became of him I am unable to say.

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WHO'S WHO AND WHY

IMPRISONED FOR SMUGGLING



To defraud the government of the United States of its customs coming here from the old world has been the darling wish of many women ever since Americans have been able to indulge in the luxury of an ocean voyage. Miss Multimillionaire, secure in her social position, did not like to be held up on the dock and made to pay large sums for being caught trying to swindle the government. But when she is caught finally she chafes under her treatment, but society stands by her and that encourages others to follow her example.

To remove this prop from the fashionable woman the authorities have decided to jail those caught in defrauding Uncle Sam of his dues. This penalty, it is thought, will prevent reputable women from engaging in the business.

The first to suffer the imprisonment and the odium which attaches to it is Mrs. Roberta G. Hill, divorced wife of Major Hill of the English army. She pleaded guilty to smuggling in a sable coat and jewelry valued at \$8,000, pleading in extenuation that she was ignorant of the law. Judge Martin in New York fined her \$2,000 and sentenced her to serve three days in a cell in the Tombs. Mrs. Hill became hysterical when imprisonment was added to fine. She is a daughter of Morris Menges, a horseman of Brooklyn. Mrs. Hill is given to the romantic. At sixteen she married Halsey Corwin of Brooklyn, but she soon after divorced him.

Discovery after discovery of those attempting to smuggle valuables into the ports of our country, chiefly at New York, have resulted only in fines, and this has failed to stop the practice. Exposure and consequent disgrace proving ineffectual, the courts finally determined on imprisonment. This seemed the only way to make the rich and influential and society belles come to a realization of this kind of offending—that it was a real crime.

HUNGARIAN STATESMAN HERE



One of the most eminent of European statesmen, Count Albert Apponyi, member of the Hungarian parliament and ex-minister of public works and education of Austria-Hungary, is now on a visit to this country in the interest of international peace. He has come to deliver a series of lectures on the difficulties of the peace problem in Europe and to urge this country to become the world's leader in the efforts to abolish war. This is not his first visit to the United States. He came here in 1904 to attend the peace conference held at St. Louis. He has been active in the cause of the world's peace for many years and has attended interparliamentary conferences on the subject at Brussels, Christiania, Paris and London.

Count Apponyi is a member of a Hungarian aristocracy which traces its descent in an unbroken line back to 1235. He was born in 1846, was educated in schools conducted by the Jesuits and has been in public life since 1872. He was a conservative when he first entered politics, but is now the leader of the nationalists, or the Kosuth party, in Hungary. Although an aristocrat by birth and heredity, he is noted for his democracy and years ago relinquished the seat which was his by right in the Hungarian house of peers in order to sit in the lower house. The count is the owner of magnificent estates in Hungary and is wealthy. His wife is related to the royal family of England, her grandmother having been a sister of Queen Victoria's husband, the prince consort.

IMPORTANT COMMITTEE HEAD



One of the figures of the Sixty-second congress will be Representative Oscar W. Underwood of Alabama, selected by the Democratic caucus to head the all-important ways and means committee. Mr. Underwood will be the Democratic floor leader, succeeding in that position Representative Seneca E. Payne of New York, and will give his name to the new tariff bill which the Democrats propose to put through.

Mr. Underwood never held an office or was a candidate for such a position until 1894. Then he ran for congress, the entire issue being the tariff, and he had a bitter fight. Speaker Crisp came into the district to help him and when the votes were counted he had won by 1,000. Since that time he has never had an opponent for the nomination. He has been elected to congress eight times, three times without a Republican opponent. He has always been a close friend and confidential adviser of Champ Clark and is only forty-eight years old. He was born in Louisville, Ky. His grandfather was a colleague of Henry Clay in the senate. Young Underwood attended the University of Virginia, graduating in law in 1884. It was there that he began to get his Democratic ideas. He has been married twice, his first wife dying in 1900. In 1904 he remarried. Mr. Underwood is a prominent member of the Birmingham Country club and spends all of his spare time in the summer playing golf on the slopes of Red mountain.

MOUNTS HIGH IN THE ARMY



Another step in his steadily upward career has been taken by Col. Enoch H. Crowder, whose enviable army record is one to stimulate emulation. Gen. George W. Davis, judge advocate general of the army, was retired on account of having reached the age limit, and to the vacancy thus created Colonel Crowder has succeeded in the ordinary course of promotion, as he was the senior colonel in the judge advocate division.

Colonel Crowder is a native of Missouri, where he was born April 11, 1859, the son of John Herbert and Mary (Weller) Crowder. He graduated from the Military academy in 1881, and in 1886 he received the degree of LL. B. from the University of Missouri. Colonel Crowder served in the Philippine islands in 1898-1901. During the war between Japan and Russia he became conspicuous as an observer of the field maneuvers, being with the Japanese army from April, 1904, until April, 1905. In Cuba, 1906-'07, he acted as financial advisor of the Cuban government, his services being greatly valued.

Warrior that he is, however, there is one conquest which the colonel has never made. No womanly heart has yet capitulated to his superior tactics, a willing prisoner; at least he is not married.