

Dad's Downfall.

(Continued from page 3.)

perience in cases that disappearance of the pouch stumped me unless Bobs had a burned it. I'd a certainly suspicioned Dad, but someone told me he was in the cooler that night, which o' course threw me off the track. Had a great deal of confidence in Bobs, but you see, my professional trainin' wouldn't allow me to take cognizance of any such personal contingency. It was the facts and the evidence I was calculatin'."

A full minute elapsed after this burst of legal phraseology before anyone ventured to ask a question. The fat butcher timidly began:

"What time'll Dad get?"

The justice stood up to properly answer this question, and proceeded very deliberately:

"Well, it's a peculiar case, and it'll depend a great deal on the judge. His confession and his age the law'll allow for, of course. First offense, too, is an extenuating circumstance, and they may allow he was drunk. Robbin' the mail's bad, of course. May get five years; may get twenty. If he don't show up the money, too, it may be worse for him. A peculiar case, indeed, peculiar. Beats all I ever seed."

How nearly the justice gauged the sentence, whether his reputation for legal learning would be strengthened or not will never be known, for a cruel Providence intervened. The trial never came off. For Uncle Sam had more than one set of detectives working to protect his interests. Two had appeared at the trial and sat in the audience silent, but watchful. They took the train for Chicago the next morning, but not twelve hours after there appeared in town a drummer selling a new form of soap, and a gambler who made himself agreeable by treating everybody in the saloon and losing consistently to Gambler Pete. They became boon companions, drank together until they were obliged to lie down together in the bullpen of Dug's saloon. The trio led this merry life for three days. On the afternoon of the third day they made frequent trips from Dug's saloon to Pete's shanty in the alley, carrying several jugs and loudly singing coarse songs. Their last trip to Pete's was so bolsterous that the justice in his little office remarked as they passed:

"Wonder the sheriff or Constable Ike ain't upholdin' the law. Queer pass it's come to when a civilized town has a robbin' one week and such disgraceful scenes the next. Somethin' ought to be done. Beats all I ever seen."

But this time there was no noise in Pete's shanty. The trio soon emerged and Gambler Pete was in the middle—hand-cuffed. The soap drummer and

the gambler each wore a bright little star. The soap drummer carried a package of letters in his hand.

The next day Dad was a free man. But the experience had been too much for him. That very night he appeared on the street in front of the postoffice on one of his old-time tears.

The crowd jibed him to start him talking. With hands in his pockets and the little black stiff hat on the back of his head, he faced the crowd, his godlike whiskers bobbing and one little red eye winking involuntarily.

"Say, Dad, how'd yer get in jail?"

Dad turned on him: "To save a man from a place that's fit only fer blackguards like you. Come again, you cigarette stump," and then Dad grew funny.

"When Bobs and I hangs together it takes more'n the law to get us. Found the mail bag inside my door that morning early and I says you bet they don't get Bobs, so it went under the ash pile. But them there lawyers purty near had Bobs fixed, and I nearly thought Bobs had taken it myself. Wasn't in my right mind, though, I guess. So I sez, 'Dad, you old whisk barrel, Bobs can't go to jail. That wife and them younguns 'll starve, and,' says I, 'if them lawyers gets ahead of me they're 'ho, coldaupapp and I says, 'Yer honor, I'm the man that's got the button. The nigger's in my ash pile. But the peelers from Chicago got the 'papers' in old Pete's cellar and now Bobs and—"

But Dad stopped short as the big drayman appeared.

"Come on, Dad, I want to talk to you."

Dad turned on him fiercely: "Go way! Lemme 'lone! I'm all right."

Bobs put his arm around him and half led, half carried the old man away. When some distance from the crowd, Bobs said:

"Say, Dad, what'd you tell such an infernal lie for?"

"Lemme 'lone! Funny you won't lemme have some fun, you big ox. I ain't botherin' nobody."

"I know, Dad, but those kids are botherin' you, and it's cold anyway; but what'd you tell such an infernal lie for?"

"O mehercule! mehercule," growled Dad. "Won't nobody let me alone? Nobody lemme 'lone?"

Thus the two went to the paint shop and Bobs then gathered the old man in his arms and carried him up the creaky old driveway and the doors closed behind them.

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