Old John The Carrier

By SCOTT CHALMERS

Rugby stared out into the drizzling twilight. The outlook was no less gloomy than his feelings.

"If it had been any man on the force but old John Compton, I wouldn't take the thing to heart. But to think of old John being arrested, prosecuted, imprisoned! By heavens, I feel as if it were one of my own flesh and blood."

The young inspector dug the toe of his boot viciously into the thick rug. His elder companion and fellow worker tapped the table nervously.

"The evidence is overwhelming, and yet—well, I suppose we'll have to call him in."

Rugby silently picked up his hat and left the room. The chief leaned back in the great revolving chair and reviewed the case.

John Compton was a widower, residing with his unmarried daughter, and had been a mail carrier for over twen-

"I AM AS INNOCENT AS EITHER OF YOU."

ty years. The managers of the Nelson department store, which lay on John's route, claimed that their mail had been systematically robbed of money orders and cash sent loose in letters. Before lodging any complaint they had conducted a small detective campaign of their own. Twenty letters containing money had been sent to as many places to be forwarded to the concern. Only fifteen came to light. It could not be argued that the missing five had been lost in the mails. The Nelson people pointed the finger of suspicion at old John.

John had gained white hair and honor in the postal service. During the first ten years of his work there was not a single mark against him. In the second term there was just one—he had been marked "late" because of the illness of his daughter.

Rugby was detailed on the case and prepared ten decoy letters inclosing marked money. He took them to various points within a few miles of the city and had them directed by strange hands. He saw them arrive in the postoffice, saw them placed in the old man's pouch, saw him start out with them. Then he followed the old carrier with a feeling almost self condemnatory.

After covering half of his route Compton stopped for ten minutes at his own home, which was in a flathouse. He came out whistling and went on his way. Rugby was seated in a dim nook of the Nelson office when Compton reached the little window and handed over the mail. Instantly he counted the decoy letters. Only six of the ten had been delivered.

These were the facts that Inspector Smith was reviewing as he sat in the dull twilight. When Rugby and Compton entered Smith's office there was a look of wonder in the old man's eyes, but no trace of guilt or anxiety. When told of the charge, he smiled almost childishly. When ordered to empty his pockets, he complied without the least hesitation, yet of the $12 he laid on the table no less than $10 was in the marked money. When this was pointed out to him, his confiding smile vanished, and he turned pale as he said:

"Why, I got this money only two hours ago. I gave a ten dollar bill in exchange."

"Then of course you can name the party and clear yourself?" asked Smith kindly.

"Of course I can. It—was—was"—

There he stopped. A queer change came over his face. His lips quivered like those of a trusting child who had unexpectedly received a blow from the hand it loved. Suddenly he drew himself up and looked from Smith to Rugby.

"Do either of you gentlemen believe that I have turned thief in my old age?"

"We don't want to believe it," was the reply, "but letters have been stolen, and you have the money that was inclosed in them."

"And yet I am as innocent as either of you."

"I hope so. Where did you change the money?"

"I cannot say," he replied, with tightly compressed lips.

"Do you know who took those letters?"

A spasm of pain crossed the old man's face, but he quickly recovered.

"I do not know."

Smith and Rugby looked at each other helplessly. Finally Smith spoke.

"You know, of course, Mr. Compton, the gravity of this offense and the penalty?"

Compton shivered slightly. His voice was firm, but so low that the two inspectors could hardly catch the words.

"I know the penalty, yes—prison. It's useless to have any trial. I will plead guilty. The less fuss there's over it the easier it will be for—for—others."

His voice broke on the last word. The inspectors instantly suspected that he was shielding the real culprit. Smith acted quickly. He laid his hand cordially on Compton's shoulder.

"See here, Compton; we can't believe this of you. It's our duty to place you under immediate arrest, but we're going to give you another chance. We're going to investigate further, and we ask only your word that you won't jump the town."

The old man seemed terror stricken. He avowed his guilt in piteous tones and begged to be arrested, but Smith and Rugby were firm and sent him from their presence a tottering, sobbing man.

For the next few days, while John went over his route like one in a dream, Rugby investigated the life of the old carrier's daughter. He quickly discovered that she dressed far above her station and income and indulged in several expensive vices. Marked bills were traced directly to her, and when taxed by Rugby she broke down and confessed. Every morning when her father stepped into the kitchen for the cup of coffee which seemed to strengthen him during the remainder of his route she had rifled the mail bag as it hung on the entry rack. Rugby and his chief realized that the disgrace of the daughter would be as fatal to the old man as his own arrest, and for once they failed in their official duty. They forced the woman to sell her jewels, which were one of the passions of her life. With the proceeds they made good the losses of the Nelson company.

She had been recklessly mad for money, and had neither thought nor cared for the gray haired man who fairly worshiped her and was willing to go to prison for her sake. But now she seemed to dread the sight of his white hair, the loving guze in his eyes. She finally went to Denver, ostensibly to visit friends. She never came back. Old John, who had been simply told that the real culprit had been discovered, lived on the letters he received from Denver. If he realized that the inspectors knew the truth, he never gave any evidence of the fact. He died before the daughter, who had plunged into reckless dissipation in the far west and had sunk too low to write the longed for letter, and he never knew that strange hands, the hands of men who worked with him and loved him, would at last lay him to rest and rear the shaft above his lonely grave.

Chinese Can Sleep.

Generally speaking, the Chinaman is able to sleep anywhere. None of the trifling disturbances which drive us to despair annoys him. With a brick for a pillow he can lie down on his bed of stalks or mud bricks or rattan and sleep the sleep of the just, with no reference to the rest of creation. He does not want his room darkened, nor does he require others to be still. The "infant crying in the night" may continue to cry for all he cares, for it does not disturb him.

In some regions the entire population seem to fall asleep as by a common instinct, like that of the hibernating bear, during the first two hours of summer afternoons, and they do this with regularity, no matter where they may be. At two hours after noon the universe at such seasons is as still as at two hours after midnight. In the case of most working people at least and also in that of many others position in sleep is of no sort of consequence.

In would be easy to raise in China an army of a million men—nay, of 10,000,000—tested by competitive examination as to their capacity to go to sleep across three wheelbarrows, with head downward, like a spider, their mouths wide open and a fly inside.—"Chinese Characteristics."

The Grace of Abhorrence.

The duty of abhorring evil is one that is general in its nature. It admits of no exception of favored vices. We are very liable to excuse the sins which we "are inclined to" while roundly condemning those we "have no mind to." It is one of the weaknesses of poor human nature that if a sin is agreeable to us we discover or invent excuses for it. It is not so bad as some other sins; indeed, in our case, it is not certain that it is a sin at all. We have a certain right to do what we would blame others for doing or we even say to ourselves that it is merely conventional wrong, but is in fact no real wrong. Whatever is wrong without exception in our own favor we ought to cultivate the grace of abhorring it, for we may be certain that if we allow ourselves an easy sentiment of allowance for any sin we have taken down the bars to its commission and one sin being made easy opens the way to another and another until the conscience is seared as with a hot iron.—Pittsburg Press.

She'd Been There Before.

Gerald—I am afraid I shall forget some parts of the marriage service.

Geraldine—Fear not. I shall be with you.—New York Press.

Remember the Baker.

At the court of assizes in Venice, when sentence of death is about to be passed, a man clothed in a long black robe enters the court, and advancing to the bench bows profoundly to the judges, saying, "Remember the baker!" Then he bows again and retires. Here is the explanation of the custom: Three centuries ago a baker was executed at Venice for a crime of which he was not guilty. When his innocence was fully proved, the judges who condemned him invested a sum of money, the interest on which serves to keep a lamp perpetually lighted in the palace of the doges, this being called the "lamp of expiation." In addition, their fatal mistake has for 300 years been held up as a warning to their successors on the bench when they are about to inflict the extreme penalty of the law.

An English King's Death.

William Rufus was killed by an arrow, either accidental or with murderous intent. He died in the New forest, his body was stripped by tramps and the next day was found by a charcoal burner, who placed the naked corpse on his cart, hoping to receive a reward. On the way to Winchester the cart was upset, and the king's body fell in the mire. Covered with filth and black with charcoal, it arrived in Winchester, where it was buried in the cathedral. A few years later the tower fell and crushed the tomb, and 600 years after the Puritans rifled the grave and played football with the king's skull.

Cruikshank's "Fagin."

There is an interesting story very little known of how Cruikshank conceived his picture of Fagin, the Jew. During the time he was illustrating "Oliver Twist" he spent days traversing the east end of London in search of a face that would correspond with his conception of the character. One day while standing before a mirror in his dining room "pulling faces at himself," so to speak, for the want of something better to do, he accidentally made the features for which he was looking. The picture therefore of Fagin is really that of Cruikshank himself.

Some people take care of their money and neglect their stomachs.—Atchison Globe.

CHICAGO GRAIN AND PROVISIONS

Features of the Day's Trading and Closing Quotations.

Chicago, Aug. 14.—Ragged grain markets, the result of renewed manipulation, were the rule today. Traders thought that with the end of the July deals and with excellent harvests in sight, trade would get back on a natural basis. But the middle of August finds the floor in a tumult again. One firm is supposed to have all the No. 2 red wheat in sight and consequently the wheat trade today was erratic. Four big houses are moving in the December corn and some of the same people have out long lines of oats. The new harvests to date have done nothing to relieve the danger of manipulation. Adverse weather has worked against the grading to such an extent that contract stocks are low. All these conditions had turns at the markets today and the result was a seesaw of wide and inconsistent fluctuations. At the close crop figures had some weight with speculators and September wheat closed ⅛@⅝c lower, December wheat ⅞c down, September corn ¾c lower and September oats ¼@⅜c up. Provisions closed 12½c higher to 20c lower. Closing prices:

Wheat—Sept., 69⅝; Dec., 66⅝; May, 69⅝.
Corn—Sept., 51⅝c; Dec., 41½; May, 39¼.
Oats—Sept., 31⅜c; Dec., 28⅝c; May, 29⅝.
Pork—Sept., $15.95; Oct., $16.05; Jan., $14.20.
Lard—Sept., $10.30; Oct., $9.35; Jan., $8.20.
Ribs—Sept., $9.65; Oct., $9.15; Jan., $7.40.

Chicago Cash Prices—No. 2 red wheat, 70¼c; No. 3 red wheat, 66@67½c; No. 3 spring wheat, 70c; No. 2 hard wheat, 70@74c; No. 3 hard wheat, 65@67c; No. 2 cash corn, 56@57c; No. 3 cash corn, 55@57c; No. 2 yellow corn, 59@59½c; No. 3 yellow corn, 58½@59c; No. 2 cash oats, 28c; No. 2 white oats, 36@37c; No. 3 white oats, 34@35c.

Chicago Live Stock.

Chicago, Aug. 14.—Cattle—Receipts, 8,500, including 500 Texans and 1,200 westerns; steers steady, cows lower; good to prime steers, $8.00@9.00; poor to medium, $4.50@7.50; stockers and feeders, $2.50@5.50; cows, $1.50@5.50; heifers, $2.50@6.25; canners, $1.80@2.50; bulls, $2.25@8.00; calves, $3.50@7.25; Texas fed steers, $3.00@5.00; western steers, $4.75@6.50. Hogs—Receipts today, 20,000; tomorrow, 15,000; left over, 3,000; 10@15c lower; mixed and butchers, $6.40@7.05; good to choice heavy, $6.90@7.15; rough heavy, $6.35@6.80; light, $6.30@7.00; bulk of sales, $6.50@6.85. Sheep—Receipts, 13,000; sheep steady; lambs steady to 10c higher; good to choice wethers, $3.50@4.25; fair to choice mixed, $2.50@3.75; western sheep, $2.50@4.25; native lambs, $3.50@6.50; western lambs, $6.40, top.

Kansas City Live Stock.

Kansas City, Aug. 14.—Cattle—Receipts, 10,500; steady to 10c lower; choice beef steers, $7.50@8.25; fair to good, $4.65@7.35; stockers and feeders $2.25@5.00; western fed steers, $2.50@5.75; Texas and Indian steers, $3.00@4.70; Texas cows, $2.00@2.90; native cows, $1.50@4.75; native heifers, $2.85@4.75; canners, $1.50@2.25; bulls, $2.65@3.40; calves, $2.00@5.50. Hogs—Receipts, 6,600; opened weak to 5c lower, closed steady at yesterday's prices; top, $7.00; bulk of sales, $6.75@6.90; heavy, $6.87½@7.00; mixed packers, $6.70@6.85; light, $6.60@6.75; yorkers, $6.70@6.75; pigs, $6.40@6.55. Sheep—Receipts, 3,000; strong to 10c higher; native lambs, $3.40@5.75; western lambs, $3.10@5.15; native wethers, $3.60@4.50; western wethers, $3.00@4.00.

South Omaha Live Stock.

South Omaha, Aug. 14.—Cattle—Receipts, 8,000; active, steady; native steers, $4.75@8.50; cows and heifers, $3.25@5.25; western steers, $4.50@6.50; Texas steers, $4.25@5.40; range steers, $2.80@4.40; canners, $1.75@3.00; stockers and feeders, $2.75@5.00; calves, $3.50@5.50; bulls, stags, etc., $2.50@4.50. Hogs—Receipts, 7,000; slow, 10c lower; heavy, $6.65@6.85; mixed, $6.70@6.75; light, $6.75@6.90; pigs, $6.00@6.60; bulk of sales, $6.70@6.75. Sheep—Receipts, 3,500; weak to 10c lower; yearlings, $3.65@4.00; wethers, $3.40@3.85; ewes, $2.50@3.40; common and stockers, $1.75@3.50; lambs, $3.50@5.75.

St. Joseph Live Stock.

St. Joseph, Aug. 14.—Cattle—Receipts, 2,512; dull, but steady; natives, $4.50@8.85; cows and heifers, $1.50@6.00; veals, $3.00@6.25; bulls and stags, $2.50@6.00; stockers and feeders, $3.00@5.75. Hogs—Receipts, 5,582; steady to 10c lower; light and light mixed, $6.50@6.82½; medium and heavy, $6.70@7.00; pigs, $3.75@6.70; bulk of sales, $6.70@6.90.

Road Notice.

To all Whom it May Concern: The commissioners appointed to view and locate a road, commencing at the southwest corner of section thirty-three (33) township twenty-one (21) range two (2) west of the 6th P. M., and running thence east one mile and terminating at the southeast corner of said section thirty-three (33) township twenty-one (21) range two (2) west 6th P. M., has reported in favor of the establishment thereof and all objections thereto, or claims for damages, must be filed in the county clerk's office on or before noon of the 20th day of September A. D., 1902, or such road will be established without reference thereto.

Dated at Madison, Nebraska, this 18th day of July, 1902.

EMIL WINTER,
County Clerk.