

sagged toward his chin, his chin melted like loops of hot taffy on to his flabby chest. He might have been a traveling salesman who gambled nights, or a gambler who still maintained a foothold in two or three respectable clubs. As a matter of fact, he was neither.

Anderson called the head waiter and swept the room with an all-comprehending glance; and the quietness of the place increased his satisfaction. Two shabby vaudeville actors opening steamed clams in a far corner of the room, a sleepy, gluttonous drummer at a side table, several Micawberish waiters praying for something to turn up, completed the human aspect of the place. It looked good to Anderson who loved to feed alone, like the predatory animal that he was. As he ordered a cocktail his voice came in a rough, bronchial croak, unknown to his glee club days. He smoked with apparent placidity until the waiter had waddled away, then cautiously, very cautiously, drew from his inner pocket a printed card such as detective agencies send around for the identification of felons. And at the top of the card was a photographic reproduction of his own face, brutalized by Bertillon's skill—head thrown back from a collarless neck, mouth distorted, chin stubbed with a three days' growth.

"Hambridge Anderson," read the printed description underneath, "Alias Fred Weeks, alias Syd McGee, alias 'College Sport'; height 5 feet 9 inches, weight 215 pounds, complexion light, slightly bald; red scar over right eyebrow; well educated. Two previous convictions. Forgery."

THE original of the unflattering portrait slipped the card guiltily into his pocket and went on ordering dinner. Rollo's is famous for its onion soup with roquefort *gratin* and Rollo's cook can prepare a red-head duck in such a way as to defy cold storage. Hambridge Anderson ordered well, after the manner of those about to die; for his trip to Atlantic City in the dead of winter was not for health or pleasure. In a word, Anderson was running away from the police, and this stop by the boardwalk was merely another stage in a zig-zag course which he had been cutting for the past few months with intent to deceive pursuing hounds. A bogus check for several thousands of dollars, passed on a rich Philadelphia brewer, had started the trouble. That the law was tightening its circle about him, Anderson knew with a crook's instinct—and absolute advice from his friends justified that instinct. In fact "Red" Bowers, a New York confederate, had telegraphed an hour ago the single word "Pink" which, in the code, signifies "Look out for a detective."

The hour of fear, then, was upon Ham-And Anderson. He knew of a certain farm in Delaware where he could hide himself until the figurative cows came tinkling home. The last available train left in an hour with no obstacle to escape—save one. He had scarce enough money to pay for his dinner. Annoying. To raise the amount required for escape he would have to resort to some extra-hazardous expedient. He hated to pass another bad check at this perilous stage in his flight. However, he was not in a position to be too particular. If he must, he must. Therefore, he brought from his overcoat a checkbook on the Sugar Exchange Bank, New York, and while the waiter still lingered in the distance, executed a skillful check calling for \$150 under the signature of one Marietta Anderson of New York. "In case of fire," muttered the obese forger, folding the paper away. He intended to present the spurious check only in the last emergency, as it would necessitate his appearance in one of the more prominent hotels where the dreaded "Pink" would surely be lurking. Still more annoying. However, the dinner was good, the diner was fat, and help oft comes to those who sit still and pray for prey.

Does heaven heed the prayers of the unrighteous? Perhaps. At any rate, help came reeling into Rollo's

Grill before the duck had reached the table. There was the bump of a wheel chair skidding over the snowy boards outside. The door breezed open and a small, dizzy man in a large, mink-lined coat skated in so recklessly as to upset a large quantity of glassware on the nearest table.

"Hello, Rol!" cried the newcomer amiably with certain vague gestures toward the proprietor of the place.

"How are you tonight?" said Rollo, advancing, professionally pacific.

"Nearly dead, thank God," replied the stranger cheerfully. Rollo led him to a table in a far corner of the room. "Gimme seven dozen steamed clams and two cold cocktails—no, wait minute—gimme seven

Anderson winced. How much he had changed he alone knew.

"Same to you, Tommy!" he crowed, giving his friend an extra slap on the upper vertebrae. "Same old Sentimental. What'll you have?"

"Match you for a bottle wine." The inebriate fumbled a quarter.

"I gocha!" Anderson brought out the coin he always used in such cases. Tommy lost, as a matter of course.

"Used to it!" said the latter with a weak smile. "Always los' like sport, did n't I, Ham? 'Cause I always knew you played square."

Tears sprang to Anderson's eyes as he clasped his old friend's hand with the Yappa Alphabet grip.

"Straight goods," he murmured. "You have n't changed a bit!"

Tommy called a waiter and ordered an expensive vintage.

"What y' been doin' since you left college?" asked Vonnoh thickly.

"Doin' the Gov'nor mostly," was Hambridge's light reply. "It's a long story. And you?"

"I'm traveling for a big New York concern."

Outwardly the fat forger wore a rather patronizing look, as one who merely tolerated commercial pursuits. Inwardly he was pleased to know that his friend was working for a salary—probably a good one. It would be good business to borrow the money outright, if possible, and save the check for a last chance. The notoriously soft-hearted Vonnoh, he knew, would stand for anything if dished up with the proper hard-luck story. He resolved to try for a hundred and fifty.

"Gee, Sentimental!" he exclaimed with feeling, "You don't know how good it is to see you again!"

"Wherever y' see Yappa Alphabet men, y' see brothers standin' shoulder to shoulder," gurgled Sentimental. "All for one, one for all—'tell with the world!"

"You bet! Mutual help—that's the fine thing about the fraternity spirit. Have another drink."

"Here's to the life that was—back there!" The two touched

were happy days, were n't they, Ham-And?"

"The best ever," said the fat man with emotion. "They can horse college all they please, those muckers who never went; but we know it's the only place where our sort come from—the only place where they make Men. Fill up again, Sentimental."

"Lez sing some'thin!" suggested Tommy.

"You have n't changed a bit!" giggled Ham-And. Furtively he looked at his watch. Precious time was flying. "Let's see—what'll we sing? There's *Integer Vitae*. I hollered that song three solid years on the glee club, but never thought to ask what it meant—something about 'All stand together,' ain't it?"

VONNOH was not too befogged to give a superior smile as he chanted the Horatian ode:

*Integer vitae
Sceleresque purus,
Non eget Mauri
Jaculis et arcu—*

"That means," he translated, "If you do the square by your pals there can't anybody get your goat."

"Old Horace had the right idea, even if he could n't write good English," quoth Ham-And. "That's one thing college knocked into us, 'Do the square by your pals'—ain't that so, Sentimental?"

"You bet!" Tommy took another drink.

"We had our mix-ups and troubles when we were undergrads, and we got each other out—"

"Those were happy days—"

"And the chaps in our crowd will never see a brother in the Sea of Trouble without fishing him out. That's the spirit!" A sob was in honest Anderson's voice.

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"This gun's a nine-kicker and the trigger's sensitive like a poet's soul"

dozen steamed cocktails and two cold clams," commanded the small man with a genuine air of alcoholic solemnity.

"Very well, sir!" Rollo smiled indulgently.

"Does he come here often?" asked Anderson of the head waiter, never removing his eager, piggy eyes from the small man in the corner.

"Every once in awhile. But, say—I never seen him with such a load!"

The fat crook chuckled "What luck!" to himself and controlled his features with difficulty. For the helpless individual over yonder was none other than Tommy Vonnoh, known to fame as the easiest mark ever graduated from Elihu University! What god of thieves had sent this lamb to wolfish Anderson in the hour of need?

Ham-And went on eating his dinner, outwardly serene. Years of practical experience, leading up to two previous convictions, had taught him the value of looking before a leap. He waited until his former friend was gormandizing amidst a pile of shells before giving the sign; then he half rose from his seat and began to whistle the tune beloved by every son of old Elihu, *Where Green Hills Meet the Blue*. The effect was magical. Tommy Vonnoh sent a volley of clam-shells rattling along the floor, leaped to his feet and began braying the college yell which he had never forgotten.

"Tommy Vonnoh!" gasped Anderson, advancing. "Palladino—gosh—ghosts!" shouted the little fellow. "Where the—"

"You regular little Indian!" Anderson began pounding him on the back, a trick at which he was adept. "When did you land in this picture post-card Paradise?"

"Been here a week. Lonesome. Say—" His goggle eyes fixed suddenly on his fat friend. "You have n't changed a bit!"