

A NARROW ESCAPE.

[CONCLUDED.] You are the man, and I cannot allow you to be hung. Overpower the keeper, take his clothes and leave. Go to the old rookery, No. 1, first floor, where I will await you. I will be there, and God help you, for you must conceal yourself.

Lloyd, with a wildly beating heart, concealed the articles and tried to think. The keeper did not enter the cell, till he brought his tea, and how could he accomplish his purpose then? There would be too many eyes in the prison then, and he might be detected.

"Defeated now with the weapons of deliverance in my hands. No, indeed, Lloyd Fletcher, you know that according to the prison rules you are not allowed to stay alone to-night. It would be barbarous to leave a cell without good company his last night on earth," said the turnkey, an hour or two after Mrs. Lancaster's visit.

"You'll have to take your pick between old Fiedler, Wink and myself, but I suppose you will take me, as you hate me, more than the other two."

"Why can't I have my wifester?" asked Lloyd with a voice full of bitterness. "Oh, wifester ain't allowable on such occasions. She'll be around in the morning an hour or two; but talk quick—which will you have?"

"What difference do you think it makes to me, you heartless wretch, who watches with my last moments on earth, when my only friend is denied me?"

So it was arranged. The turnkey was to occupy his cell, and Lloyd went to work with his little instrument to file the handcuffs and chain which bound him. It was slow and tedious, but in an hour's time he had the satisfaction of one free hand, and had the power to remove his limbs from the galling, rattling torments which had so firmly held him.

"I must be able to throw these fetters off, or I am lost." So he worked away industriously until the obstinate link was displaced, and he could wear or leave them off at his pleasure. It took a long time, and the turnkey had his clock brought in to the cell.

"When are you going to turn in, Fletcher? I'm as tired as an East India nigger. Plaguy afraid I shan't be much company to-night; better had the priest. You wrote all your letters yesterday. Fletcher, didn't you, and the keepers yawned deeply, turned over once or twice, and in five minutes was snoring profoundly."

"Now is my time," thought Fletcher. "It won't do to wait. Heaven help me."

Not hesitating he stepped from the chains and drew off the torturing handcuffs. It was but the work of a moment to estimate the handkerchief with the mixture, and in less time than it takes me to tell it, Lloyd had stripped the hardened wretch.

The difference in the height, but Lloyd lacked the aldermanic proportions of the jailor. However, he managed that quickly and easily, unlocked the door of the cell, stepped into the corridor, looked it again carefully, with the key, and hurried as best as possible to the dull, heavy tread of the keeper. The jail physician was just leaving the building, and Lloyd walked along after him, as if to see him safely out.

Only one subordinate gaiter, the entrance, and the doctor walked out together, without exciting the slightest suspicion.

He reached the old rookery, donned his attire, which proved to be a soldier's uniform, removed the black cap of the keeper, and substituted a light, curly one, and before 12 o'clock had reached the house of a friend, two or three miles from the city, and his story and was warmly received and promised protection. Lloyd felt sure he had left no clue by which he could be traced to this spot, and almost overcame by his great happiness, he fell on his knees and thanked God for his previously forewarned for his miraculous escape.

The next morning all was quiet early in the prison, but our turnkey did not make his appearance, what could it mean? A watch was produced to open the cell door, and the nude, insubstantial figure of the fat keeper was presented to their astonished view. In the middle of the cell was the prisoner's wardrobe, all he could spare from the make up of the turnkey's lusty proportions. A little cold water and fresh air revived him, but he could throw no light on the mysterious disappearance of Fletcher. He had seen nothing, knew nothing, and remembered nothing. Mrs. Fletcher was arrested on suspicion of assisting her husband to escape, but nothing could be proved, and a few days saw her at liberty. She was confident that her darling was safe, but could form no idea of the mode, or where he was concealed. However, now that so much was gained, she felt that she could afford to wait for the rest. Large rewards were offered for the prisoner's apprehension; large posters were placarded everywhere and the detectives were set to work to ferret out his hiding place, but in vain. When the excitement was at its height, the anti-mortem statement and confession of a dying man were brought before the court, entirely exonerating Lloyd Fletcher from complicity in the murder. The man was Mrs. Lancaster's foster brother. He had dragged and beaten poor Fletcher the night of the perpetration of the crime, stolen his pistol, and committed the deed himself. Mrs. Lancaster had been from the first exceedingly suspicious of him, but proofs were not in her power, she had used every means possible to restore Lloyd his liberty, trusting to time and the merciful God for the rest. How well she acted her part and succeeded in her endeavors, the reader is aware. Fletcher was immediately pardoned, and drawn by the excited Londoners to his residence.

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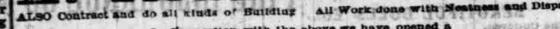
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Salt Lake City, U. T., Dec. 26, 1912.

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