



***ARTHUR
CHENEY TRAIN***

***MCALLISTER
AND HIS
DOUBLE***

Arthur Cheney Train

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McAllister's Christmas

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McAllister was out of sorts. All the afternoon he had sat in the club window and watched the Christmas shoppers hurrying by with their bundles. He thanked God he had no brats to buy moo-cows and bow-wows for. The very nonchalance of these victims of a fate that had given them families irritated him. McAllister was a clubman, pure and simple; that is to say though neither simple nor pure, he was a clubman and nothing more. He had occupied the same seat by the same window during the greater part of his earthly existence, and they were the same seat and window that his father had filled before him. His select and exclusive circle called him "Chubby," and his five-and-forty years of terrapin and cocktails had given him a graceful rotundity of person that did not belie the name. They had also endowed him with a cheerful though somewhat florid countenance, and a permanent sense of well-being.

As the afternoon wore on and the pedestrians became fewer, McAllister sank deeper and deeper into gloom. The club was deserted. Everybody had gone out of town to spend Christmas with someone else, and the Winthrops, on whom he had counted for a certainty, had failed for some reason to invite him. He had waited confidently until the last minute, and now he was stranded, alone.

It began to snow softly, gently. McAllister threw himself disconsolately into a leathern armchair by the smouldering logs on the six-foot hearth. A servant in livery entered, pulled down the shades, and after touching a button that threw a subdued radiance over the room, withdrew noiselessly.

"Come back here, Peter!" growled McAllister. "Anybody in the club?"

"Only Mr. Tomlinson, sir."

McAllister swore under his breath.

"Yes, sir," replied Peter.

McAllister shot a quick glance at him.

"I didn't say anything. You may go."

This time Peter got almost to the door.

"Er—Peter; ask Mr. Tomlinson if he will dine with me."

Peter presently returned with the intelligence that Mr. Tomlinson would be delighted.

"Of course," grumbled McAllister to himself. "No one ever knew Tomlinson to refuse anything."

He ordered dinner, and then took up an evening paper in which an effort had been made to conceal the absence of news by summarizing the achievements of the past year. Staring head-lines invited his notice to

A YEAR OF PROGRESS.

What the Tenement-House Commission Has Accomplished.

FURTHER NEED OF PRISON REFORM.

He threw down the paper in disgust. This reform made him sick. Tenements and prisons! Why were the papers always talking about tenements and prisons? They were a great deal better than the people who lived in them deserved. He recalled Wilkins, his valet, who had stolen his black pearl scarf-pin. It increased his ill-humor. Hang Wilkins! The thief was probably out by this time and wearing the pin. It had been a matter of jest among his friends that the servant had looked not unlike his master. McAllister winced at the thought.

"Dinner is served," said Peter.

An hour and a half later, Tomlinson and McAllister, having finished a sumptuous repast, stared stupidly at each other across their liqueurs. They were stuffed and bored. Tomlinson was a thin man who knew everything positively. McAllister hated him. He always felt when in his company like the woman who invariably answered her husband's remarks by "'Tain't so! It's just the opposite!" Tomlinson was trying to make conversation by repeating assertively what he had read in the evening press.

"Now, our prisons," he announced authoritatively. "Why, it is outrageous! The people are crowded in like cattle; the food is loathsome. It's a disgrace to a civilized city!"

This was the last straw to McAllister.

"Look here," he snapped back at Tomlinson, who shrank behind his cigar at the vehemence of the attack, "what do you know about it? I tell you it's all rot! It's all politics! Our tenements are all right, and so are our prisons. The law of supply and demand regulates the tenements; and who pays for the prisons, I'd like to know? We pay for 'em, and the

scamps that rob us live in 'em for nothing. The Tombs is a great deal better than most second-class hotels on the Continent. I *know!* I had a valet once that— Oh, what's the use! I'd be glad to spend Christmas in no worse place. Reform! Stuff! Don't tell me!" He sank back purple in the face.



"What do you know about it? I tell you it's all rot!"

"Oh, of course—if you know!" Tomlinson hesitated politely, remembering that McAllister had signed for the dinner.

"Well, I *do* know," affirmed McAllister.

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"No-el! No-el! No-el! No-el!" rang out the bells, as McAllister left the club at twelve o'clock and started down the avenue.

"No-el! No-el!" hummed McAllister. "Pretty old air!" he thought. He had almost forgotten that it was Christmas morning. As he felt his way gingerly over the stone sidewalks, the bells were ringing all around him. First one chime, then another. "No-el! No-el! No-el! No-el!" They ceased, leaving the melody floating on the moist night air.

The snow began to fall irregularly in patchy flakes, then gradually turned to rain. First a soft, wet mist, that dimmed the electric lights and shrouded the hotel windows; then a fine sprinkle; at last the chill rain of a winter's night. McAllister turned up his coat-collar and looked about for a cab. It was too late. He hurried hastily down the avenue. Soon a welcome sight met his eye—a coupé, a night-hawk, crawling slowly down the block, on the lookout, no doubt, for belated Christmas revellers. Without superfluous introduction McAllister made a dive for the door, shouted his address, and jumped inside. The driver, but half-roused from his lethargy, muttered something unintelligible and pulled in his horse. At the same moment the dark figure of a man swiftly emerged from a side street, ran up to the cab, opened the door, threw in a heavy object upon McAllister's feet, and followed it with himself.

"Let her go!" he cried, slamming the door. The driver, without hesitation, lashed his horse and started at a furious gallop down the slippery avenue.

Then for the first time the stranger perceived McAllister. There was a muttered curse, a gleam of steel as they flashed by a street-lamp, and the clubman felt the cold muzzle of a revolver against his cheek.

"Speak, and I'll blow yer head off!"

The cab swayed and swerved in all directions, and the driver retained his seat with difficulty. McAllister, clinging to the sides of the rocking vehicle, expected every moment to be either shot or thrown out and killed.

"Don't move!" hissed his companion.

McAllister tried with difficulty not to move.

Suddenly there came a shrill whistle, followed by the clatter of hoofs. A figure on horseback dashed by. The driver, endeavoring to rein in his now maddened beast, lost his balance and pitched overboard. There was a confusion of shouts, a blue flash, a loud report. The horse sprang into the air and fell, kicking, upon the pavement; the cab crashed upon its side; amid a shower of glass the door parted company with its hinges, and the stranger, placing his heel on McAllister's stomach, leaped quickly into the darkness. A moment later, having recovered a part of his scattered senses, our hero, thrusting himself through the shattered framework of the cab, staggered to his feet. He remembered dimly afterward having expected to create a mild sensation among the spectators by announcing, in response to their polite inquiries as to his safety, that he was "quite uninjured." Instead, however, the glare of a policeman's lantern was turned upon his dishevelled countenance, and a hoarse voice shouted:

"Throw up your hands!"



"Throw up your hands!"

He threw them up. Like the Phoenix rising from its ashes, McAllister emerged from the débris which surrounded him. On either side of the cab he beheld a policeman with a levelled revolver. A mounted officer stood sentinel beside the smoking body of the horse.

"No tricks, now!" continued the voice. "Pull your feet out of that mess, and keep your hands up! Slip on the nippers, Tom. Better go through him here. They always manage to lose somethin' goin' over."

McAllister wondered where "Over" was. Before he could protest, he was unceremoniously seated upon the body of

the dead horse and the officers were going rapidly through his clothes.

"Thought so!" muttered Tom, as he drew out of McAllister's coat-pocket a revolver and a jimmy. "Just as well to unballast 'em at the start." A black calico mask and a small bottle filled with a colorless liquid followed.

Tom drew a quick breath.

"So you're one of those, are ye?" he added with an oath.

The victim of this astounding adventure had not yet spoken. Now he stammered:

"Look here! Who do you think I am? This is all a mistake."

Tom did not deign to reply.

The officer on horseback had dismounted and was poking among the pieces of cab.

"What's this here?" he inquired, as he dragged a large bundle covered with black cloth into the circle of light, and, untying a bit of cord, poured its contents upon the pavement. A glittering silver service rolled out upon the asphalt and reflected the glow of the lanterns.

"Gee! look at all the swag!" cried Tom. "I wonder where he melts it up."

Faintly at first, then nearer and nearer, came the harsh clanging of the "hurry up" wagon.

"Get up!" directed Tom, punctuating his order with mild kicks. Then, as the driver reined up the panting horses alongside, the officer grabbed his prisoner by the coat-collar and yanked him to his feet.

"Jump in," he said roughly.

"My God!" exclaimed our friend half-aloud, "where are they going to take me?"

"To the Tombs—for Christmas!" answered Tom.



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McAllister, hatless, stumbled into the wagon and was thrust forcibly into a corner. Above the steady drum of the rain upon the waterproof cover he could hear the officers outside packing up the silverware and discussing their capture.

The hot japanned tin of the wagon-lamps smelled abominably. The heavy breathing of the horses, together with the sickening odor of rubber and damp straw, told him that this was no dream, but a frightful reality.

"He's a bad un!" came Tom's voice in tones of caution. "You can see his lay is the gentleman racket. Wait till he gets to the precinct and hear the steer he'll give the sergeant. He's a wise un, and don't you forget it!"

As the wagon started, the officers swung on to the steps behind. McAllister, crouching in the straw by the driver's seat, tried to understand what had happened. Apart from a few bruises and a cut on his forehead he had escaped injury, and, while considerably shaken up, was physically little the worse for his adventure. His head, however, ached badly. What he suffered from most was a new and strange sensation of helplessness. It was as if he had stepped into another world, in which he—McAllister, of the Colophon Club—did not belong and the language of which he did not speak. The ignominy of his position crushed him. Never again, should this disgrace become known, could he bring

himself to enter the portals of the club. To be the hero of an exciting adventure with a burglar in a runaway cab was one matter, but to be arrested, haled to prison and locked up, was quite another. Once before the proper authorities, it would be simple enough to explain who and what he was, but the question that troubled him was how to avoid publicity. He remembered the bills in his pocket. Fortunately they were still there. In spite of the handcuffs, he wormed them out and surreptitiously held up the roll. The guard started visibly, and, turning away his head, allowed McAllister to thrust the wad into his hand.

"Can't I square this, somehow?" whispered our hero, hesitatingly.

The guard broke into a loud guffaw. "Get on to him!" he laughed. "He's at it already, Tom. Look at the dough he took out of his pants! You're right about his lay." He turned fiercely upon McAllister, who, dazed by this sudden turn of affairs, once more retreated into his corner.

The three officers counted the money ostentatiously by the light of a lantern.

"Eighty plunks! Thought we was cheap, didn't he?" remarked the guard scornfully. "No; eighty plunks won't square this job for you! It'll take nearer eight years. No more monkey business, now! You've struck the wrong combine!"

McAllister saw that he had been guilty of a terrible *faux pas*. Any explanation to these officers was clearly impossible. With an official it would be different. He had once met a police commissioner at dinner, and remembered that he had seemed really almost like a gentleman.

The wagon drew up at a police station, and presently McAllister found himself in a small room, at one end of which iron bars ran from floor to ceiling. A kerosene lamp

cast a dim light over a weather-beaten desk, behind which, half-asleep, reclined an officer on night duty. A single other chair and four large octagonal stone receptacles were the only remaining furniture.

The man behind the desk opened his eyes, yawned, and stared stupidly at the officers. A clock directly overhead struck "one" with harsh, vibrant clang.

"Wot yer got?" inquired the sergeant.

"A second-story man," answered the guard.

"He took to a cab," explained Tom, "and him and his partner give us a fierce chase down the avenoo. O'Halloran shot the horse, and the cab was all knocked to hell. The other fellow clawed out before we could nab him. But we got this one all right."

"Hi, there, McCarthy!" shouted the sergeant to someone in the dim vast beyond. "Come and open up." He examined McAllister with a degree of interest. "Quite a swell guy!" he commented. "Them dress clothes must have been real pretty onc't."

McAllister stood with soaked and rumpled hair, hatless and collarless, his coat torn and splashed, and his shirt-bosom bloody and covered with mud. He wanted to cry, for the first time in thirty-five years.

"Wot's yer name?" asked the sergeant.

The prisoner remained stiffly mute. He would have suffered anything rather than disclose himself.

"Where do yer live?"

Still no answer. The sergeant gave vent to a grim laugh.

"Mum, eh?" He scribbled something in the blotter upon the desk before him. Then he raised his eyes and scrutinized McAllister's face. Suddenly he jumped to his feet.



"Do you know who you've caught?"

"Well, of all the luck!" he exclaimed. "Do you know who you've caught? It's Fatty Welch!"

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How he had managed to live through the night that followed McAllister could never afterward understand. Locked in a cell, alone, to be sure, but with no light, he took off his dripping coat and threw himself on the wooden seat that served for a bed. It was about six inches too short. He lay there for a few moments, then got wearily to his feet and

began to pace up and down the narrow cell. His legs and abdomen, which had been the recipients of so much attention, pained him severely. The occupant of the next apartment, awakened by our friend's arrival, began to show irritation. He ordered McAllister in no gentle language to abstain from exercise and go to sleep. A woman farther down the corridor commenced to moan drearily to herself. Evidently sleep had made her forget her sorrow, but now in the middle of the night it came back to her with redoubled force. Her groans racked McAllister's heart. A stir ran all along the cells—sounds of people tossing restlessly, curses, all the nameless noises of the jail. McAllister, fearful of bringing some new calamity upon his head, sat down. He had been shivering when he came in; now he reeked with perspiration. The air was fetid. The only ventilation came through the gratings of the door, and a huge stove just beyond his cell rendered the temperature almost unbearable. He began to throw off his garments one by one. Again he drew his knees to his chest and tried to sleep, but sleep was impossible. Never had McAllister in all his life known such wretchedness of body, such abject physical suffering. But his agony of mind was even more unbearable. Vague apprehensions of infectious disease floating in the nauseous air, or of possible pneumonia, unnerved and tortured him. Stretched on the floor he fell at length into a coma of exhaustion, in which he fancied that he was lying in a warm bath in the porcelain tub at home. In the room beyond he could see Frazier, his valet, laying out his pajamas and dressing-gown. There was a delicious odor of that violet perfume he always used. In a minute he would jump into bed. Then the valet suddenly came into the bathroom and began to pound his master on the back of the neck. For some reason he did not resent this. It seemed quite natural and proper. He merely put up his hand to ward off the blows, and found the keeper standing over him.

"Here's some breakfast," remarked that official. "Tom sent out and got it for ye. The city don't supply no *aller carty*." McAllister vaguely rubbed his eyes. The keeper shut and locked the door, leaving behind him on the seat a tin mug of scalding hot coffee and a half loaf of sour bread.

McAllister arose and felt his clothes. They were entirely dry, but had shrunk perceptibly. He was surprised to find that, save for the dizziness in his head, he felt not unlike himself. Moreover, he was most abominably hungry. He knelt down and smelt of the contents of the tin cup. It did not smell like coffee at all. It tasted like a combination of hot water, tea, and molasses. He waited until it had cooled, and drank it. The bread was not so bad. McAllister ate it all.

There was a good deal of noise in the cells now, and outside he could hear many feet coming and going. Occasionally a draught of cold air would flow in, and an officer would tramp down the corridor and remove one of the occupants of the row. His watch showed that it was already eight o'clock. He fumbled in his waistcoat-pocket and found a very warped and wrinkled cigar. His match-box supplied the necessary light, and "Chubby" McAllister began to smoke his after-breakfast Havana with appreciation.

"No smoking in the cells!" came the rough voice of the keeper. "Give us that cigar, Welch!"

McAllister started to his feet.

"Hand it over, now! Quick!"

The clubman passed his cherished comforter through the bars, and the keeper, thrusting it, still lighted, into his own mouth, grinned at him, winked, and walked away.



"Merry Christmas, Fatty!"

"Merry Christmas, Fatty!" he remarked genially over his shoulder.

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Half an hour later Tom and his "side partner" came to the cell-door. They were flushed with victory. Already the morning papers contained accounts of the pursuit and startling arrest of "Fatty Welch," the well-known crook, who

was wanted in Pennsylvania and elsewhere on various charges. Altogether the officers were in a very genial frame of mind.

"Come along, Fatty," said Tom, helping the clubman into his bedraggled overcoat. "We're almost late for roll-call, as it is."

They left the cells and entered the station-house proper, where several officers with their prisoners were waiting.

"We'll take you down to Headquarters and make sure we've got you *right*," he continued. "I guess Sheridan'll know you fast enough when he sees you. Come on, boys!" He opened the door and led the way across the sidewalk to the patrol wagon, which stood backed against the curb.

It was a glorious winter's day. The sharp, frosty air stimulated the clubman's jaded senses and gave him new hope; he felt sure that at headquarters he would find some person to whom he could safely confide the secret of his identity. In about ten minutes the wagon stopped in a narrow street, before an inhospitable-looking building.

"Here's the old place," remarked one of the load cheerfully. "Looks just the same as ever. Mott Street's not a mite different. And to think I ain't been here in fifteen years!"

All clambered out, and each officer, selecting his prisoners, convoyed them down a flight of steps, through a door, several feet below the level of the sidewalk, and into a small, stuffy chamber full of men smoking and lounging. Most of these seemed to take a friendly interest in the clubman, a few accosting him by his now familiar alias.

Tom hurried McAllister along a dark corridor, out into a cold court-yard, across the cobblestones into another door, through a hall lighted only by a dim gas-jet, and then up a

flight of winding stairs. McAllister's head whirled. Then quickly they were at the top, and in a huge, high-ceiled room crowded with men in civilian dress. On one side, upon a platform, stood a nondescript row of prisoners, at whom the throng upon the floor gazed in silence. Above the heads of this file of motley individuals could be read the gold lettering upon the cabinet behind them—Rogues' Gallery. On the other side of the room, likewise upon a platform and behind a long desk, stood two officers in uniform, one of them an inspector, engaged in studying with the keenest attention the human exhibition opposite.

"Get up there, Fatty!"

Before he realized what had happened, McAllister was pushed upon the platform at the end of the line. His appearance created a little wave of excitement, which increased when his comrades of the wagon joined him. It was a peculiar scene. Twenty men standing up for inspection, some gazing unconcernedly before them, some glaring defiantly at their observers, and others grinning recognition at familiar faces. McAllister grew cold with fright. Several of the detectives pointed at him and nodded. Out of the silence the Inspector's voice came with the shock of thunder:

"Hey, there, you, Sanders, hold up your hand!"

A short man near the head of the line lifted his arm.

"Take off your hat."

The prisoner removed his head-gear with his other hand. The Inspector raised his voice and addressed the crowd of detectives, who turned with one accord to examine the subject of his discourse.

"That's Biff Sanders, con man and all-round thief. Served two terms up the river for grand larceny—last time an eight-year bit; that was nine years ago. Take a good look at him. I want you to remember his face. Put your hat on."

Sanders resumed his original position, his face expressing the most complete indifference.

A slight, good-looking young man now joined the Inspector and directed his attention to the prisoner next the clubman, the same being he who had remarked upon the familiar appearance of Mott Street.

"Hold up your hand!" ordered the Inspector. "You're Muggins, aren't you? Haven't been here in fifteen years, have you?"

The man smiled.

"You're right, Inspector," he said. "The last time was in '89."

"That's Muggins, burglar and sneak; served four terms here, and then got settled for life in Louisville for murder. Pardoned after he'd served four years. Look at him."

Thus the curious proceeding continued, each man in the line being inspected, recognized, and his record and character described by the Inspector to the assembled bureau of detectives. No other voice was heard save the harsh tones of some prisoner in reply.

Then the Inspector looked at McAllister.

"Welch, hold up your hand."

McAllister shuddered. If he refused, he knew not what might happen to him. He had heard of the horrors of the "Third Degree," and associated it with starvation, the rack, and all kinds of brutality. They might set upon him in a body. He

might be mobbed, beaten, strangled. And yet, if he obeyed, would it not be a public admission that he was the mysterious and elusive Welch? Would it not bind the chains more firmly about him and render explanation all the more difficult?

"Do you hear? Hold up your hand, and be quick about it!"

His hand went up of its own accord.

The Inspector cleared his throat and rapped upon the railing.

"Take a good look at this man. He's Fatty Welch, one of the cleverest thieves in the country. Does a little of everything. Began as a valet to a clubman in this city. He got settled for stealing a valuable pin about three years ago, and served a short term up the river. Since then he's been all over. His game is to secure employment in fashionable houses as butler or servant and then get away with the jewelry. He's wanted for a big job down in Pennsylvania. Take a good look at him. When he gets out we don't want him around these parts. I'd like you precinct-men to remember him."

The detectives crowded near to get a close view of the interesting criminal. One or two of them made notes in memorandum books. The slender man had a hasty conference with the Inspector.

"The officer who has Welch, take him up to the gallery and then bring him down to the record room," directed the Inspector.

"Get down, Fatty!" commanded Tom. McAllister, stupefied with horror, embarrassment, and apprehension of the possibilities in store for him, stepped down and followed like a somnambulist. As they made their way to the elevator he

could hear the strident voice of the Inspector beginning again:

"This is Pat Hogan, otherwise known as 'Paddy the Sneak,' and his side partner, Jim Hawkins, who goes under the name of James Hawkinson. His pals call him 'Supple Jim.' Two of the cleverest sneaks in the country. They branch out into strong arm work occasionally."

The elevator began to ascend.

"You seem kinder down," commented Tom. "I suppose you expect to get settled for quite a bit down to Philadelphia, eh? Well, don't talk unless you feel like it. Here we are!"

They got out upon an upper floor and crossed the hall. On their left a matron was arranging rows of tiny chairs in a small school-room or nursery. At any other time the Lost Children's Room might have aroused a flicker of interest in McAllister, but he felt none whatever in it now. Tom opened a door and pushed the clubman gently into a small, low-ceiled chamber. Charts and diagrams of the human cranium hung on one wall, while a score of painted eyes, each of a different color, and each bearing a technical appellation and a number, stared from the other. Upon a small square platform, about eight inches in height, stood a half-clad Italian congealed with terror and expecting momentarily to receive a shock of electricity. The slender young man was rapidly measuring his hands and feet and calling out the various dimensions to an assistant, who recorded them upon a card. This accomplished, he ordered his victim down from the block, seated him unceremoniously in a chair, and with a pair of shining instruments gauged the depth of his skull from front to rear, its width between the cheekbones, and the length of the ears, describing all the while the other features in brief terms to his associate.

"Now off with you!" he ejaculated. "Here, lug this Greaser in and mug him."

The officer in the case haled the Italian, shrieking, into another room.

"Ah, Fatty!" remarked the slender man. "I trust you won't object to these little formalities? Take off that left shoe, if you please."

McAllister's soul had shrivelled within him. His powers of thought had been annihilated. Mechanically he removed the shoe in question and placed his foot upon the block. The young man quickly measured it.

"Now get up there and rest your hand on the board."

McAllister observed that the table bore the painted outline of a human hand. He did as he was told unquestioningly. The other measured his forefinger and the length of his forearm.

"All right. Now sit down and let me tickle your head for a moment."

The operator took the silver calipers which had just been used upon the Italian and ran them thoughtfully forward and back above the clubman's organs of hearing.

"By George, you've got a big head!" remarked the measurer. "Prominent, Roman nose. No. 4 eyes. Thank you. Just step into the next room, will you, and be mugged?"

McAllister drew on his shoe and followed Tom into the adjoining chamber of horrors.

"No tricks, now!" commented the officer in charge of the instrument.

Snap! went the camera.