

## RED MADE A DISCOVERY

By GEORGE PRENTISS, Jr.

(© by W. G. Chapman.)

"PRISONERS' Reformation society!" growled "Red" Lannagan, glancing bitterly after the secretary, Mrs. Hubert, as she swept majestically away, her silken garments trailing audibly along the floor.

"Red" felt aggrieved in his inmost soul. Two weeks before he had come out of state's prison, after serving a term of two years for grand larceny. He had really meant to run straight after marrying Lizzie, but it was hard for the ex-jailbird to get a position, and harder still to keep it, with the police always hounding one. So "Red" had fallen. The temptation was a strong one, for they were both starving. He had gone to the penitentiary, and he had never seen Lizzie since the day he was sentenced.

When he came out he realized that all efforts to find her were doomed to disappointment. Lizzie had disappeared, and it was evident that she would never return to him. She had been a servant, but bred in a community of decent country people, she had no use for a jailbird, even though he had stolen to assist her.

Embittered and hopeless, "Red" had drifted into the Prisoners' Reformation society rooms on the Bowery, where he had heard Mrs. Hubert, assisted by a person, hold forth upon the right of the criminal to redeem himself. The discourse seemed to "Red" so preposterously untrue to life that he could not restrain his indignation. When Mrs. Hubert stepped, smiling, down from the platform, he approached her.

"Say! That's fine dope you been giving us," he sneered. "Maybe it didn't occur to you that a man can't get a job, nor yet hold a job when he's been in the penitentiary."

Mrs. Hubert, sympathetic, turned "Red" over to the committee. The committee investigated his case and announced that he could get a position of trust, to run errands for a store, at fifteen dollars a week.

"What about a raise?" sneered "Red" bitterly. He, who had handled thousands, felt the temptations to honesty miserably inadequate. "Say," he bawled, "could any of you support a wife on fifteen a week? Honest, could you?"

They had not known "Red" was married. The committee investigated that, delaying as committees do. "Red" told them that if they could find his wife he'd try to run straight on fifteen dollars. It was a pathetic offer and significant of "Red's" real desire to reform.

Thereafter Mrs. Hubert took the case in hand and told "Red," with much smiling and bland patronage, that when he had proved his manhood the committee would find his wife for him. So for a whole month "Red" worked at his job, gradually losing the fight against embittered loneliness.

One night he fell. Ike Williams, an old caddy, who had himself been a "victim" of the society, as he expressed it, lured "Red" into an old haunt. A favorite stimulant finding its way into the somewhat cramped recesses of the ex-convict, stimulated his imagination.

"Find your wife!" exclaimed Ike in astonished contempt. "Why, don't you know it's a game with them folks, 'Red'?"

"What's a game?" demanded "Red" ferociously.

"Why, playing with us and writing reports about us for their clubs. You and me's just cases to her. She'll never find your wife. It's part of the game, them promises. Rich as a miser, that old woman is, and as for jewels—say! You been to her house?"

"Once—when I first come out," answered "Red" miserably.

"There's half a million dollars in diamonds waiting there for anyone that wanted 'em," said Ike impressively. And therewith he made a proposition which fell upon "Red's" ears as sweetly as manna on the parched tongues of the desert wanderers.

"Red" went home and thought, and all his anger and resentment paved the way for his acceptance. That rich old woman with the Fifth avenue house and the diamond necklace while he, "Red," worked for fifteen dollars a week! And Lizzie, whom she was to discover for him as soon as he had made a man of himself! He would show her what sort of a man he was.

He talked the situation over with Ike. During the course of his single visit to the house "Red" had, with a true craftsman's eye, summed up the architectural features. To ascend to the second story by means of the ornamental column would not be difficult. He could enter one of the French windows. Ike knew the upper floors—he had gone there in the guise of a gas inspector. If "Red" could get the necklace, Ike could catch it from his hand. In the court below and hold any intruders at bay while "Red" made his getaway along the covered courtway.

"Red" was at the appointed place. He and Ike had worked their way into the grounds through the basement of the unoccupied house next door. Ike was waiting below, and "Red" had shinned up the column and stood irresolutely upon the porch out-

L. J. PETTIJOHN



An especially posed portrait of L. J. Pettijohn, member of the federal farm loan board.

to the right to reach the old woman's bedroom. But his head had never been very good for second story work, and he hesitated an instant before he threw up the window and stepped inside. As he did so the burglar alarm rang loudly through the house.

"Red" was half along the passage. To go back to that window would be fatal. The unexpected alarm struck terror into "Red's" heart, but he kept his head well enough not to yield to the instinct to run for safety and be caught. An open closet with a lot of clothing hanging in it attracted his notice. He plunged inside and pulled the door tight after him. There he crouched minute after minute, trembling in fear of capture. He could hear nothing inside, for as the door fitted tightly, he did not know whether he was being pursued; but it was growing uncomfortably hot.

Perhaps "Red" waited there twenty minutes. At last, when he could endure the heat no longer, he opened the door cautiously. Instantly a cloud of smoke rushed in. "Red" plunged into the passage, to find the smoke whirling down it. He heard confusedly the cries of people in the street below.

He rushed to the window through which he had climbed. Looking down into the street across the garden, he saw that the fire line had been formed. He saw the men affixing ladders; he saw the smoke-shrouded building. Flames were bursting from every window, except those of the wing in which he was trapped, and he did not know the way out.

In mad terror he broke along the corridor, plunging into room after room, only to recoil, baffled, before the forty feet of vertical wall that overlooked the garden.

"Red" tried to collect his thoughts. Yes, he saw the situation now. He must reach the front of the house, where the firemen had erected the ladders. He turned back and raced toward a swing door, which seemed to lead on the residential section from the servants' quarters. He passed an open door—somebody stood there in the curling smoke, with arms outstretched, reeling, groping, sobbing.

"Red" did not hesitate an instant. He tore off his coat and wrapped it about the girl. He snatched a blanket from the bed and placed it about her, covering her from head to foot. Then, carrying her in his arms without much difficulty, he turned to find that the whole wing had grown a fiery hell.

And "Red" burst into the furnace. Tongues of flame caught at him, the blinding smoke seemed a contrivance to drive him into that seething, molten chaos of fallen timbers and corroded metal, which had once been an elevator shaft, up which the fire tongues burst with yellow and red banners. They drew at "Red" like beasts with hungry maws. But he evaded them. And now he was panting under his burden at a window, looking down into the street, and behind him the tongues were uncoiling.

The firemen saw him. They yelled. The firemen had left the wall, for it was thought all the inmates were rescued. The hose was playing upon the buildings right and left—no chance to save that one.

A brawny fireman leaped for the ladder, followed by two more. The structure was within "Red's" grasp, but he was too faint to feel for it, too weak to use it. He clung to the window frame and held the girl out toward the mob.

"For God's sake!" he babbled. "I didn't get the necklace. Lemme die, but—"

The safety of this girl seemed the only thing in life to "Red." He had forgotten all about his fears. Death was imminent now, the tongues of fire were licking hungrily at his face. "Red" passed his hand over his singed pate and laughed weakly.

"I guess they've—copped me again," he muttered, and, handing the girl to the nearest fireman, fell fainting back toward the flames. It was in the very nick of time that the second fireman dragged "Red" out and down the ladder to the cheering crowd below.

"Who is he?" the people asked each other, as they pressed round him.

"My husband," were the words that fell upon "Red's" ears. He opened his eyes. Over him knelt the girl he had saved, and he recognized Lizzie looking at him with a new tenderness in her eyes.

# FARM NEWS

## COTTON REPORT

The Department of Commerce, through the Bureau of the Census, announces the preliminary report on cotton ginned by counties, in North Carolina, for the crops of 1926 and 1925. The total for the state was made public Wednesday, December 8th.

(Quantities are in running bales counting round as half bates. Lint-ers are not included.)

County	1926	1925
Alamance	1,710	1,521
Anson	29,929	22,789
Beaufort	9,927	7,641
Bertie	11,223	12,211
Bladen	10,611	7,095
Cabarrus	15,169	12,929
Camden	4,228	4,024
Catawba	12,361	10,541
Chatham	7,666	10,169
Chowan	7,163	5,288
Cleveland	37,607	35,396
Columbus	2,048	985
Craven	2,943	2,602
Cumberland	29,242	28,435
Davidson	1,753	1,958
Davie	3,746	3,829
Duplin	14,423	12,529
Durham	1,353	2,217
Edgecombe	30,215	35,276
Franklin	20,241	28,696
Gaston	9,930	7,861
Gates	5,335	5,335
Granville	1,838	3,882
Greene	10,820	10,677
Hallfax	38,096	46,743
Harnett	46,422	46,366
Hortford	6,723	7,410
Hoke	16,572	18,085
Iredell	18,046	15,078
Johnston	63,376	67,839
Jones	2,493	1,862
Lee	9,230	11,627
Lenoir	12,658	12,344
Martin	5,882	6,740
Mecklenburg	23,800	20,193
Montgomery	6,897	5,826
Moore	8,145	8,001
Nash	29,526	50,649
Northhampton	27,538	32,017
Onslow	3,350	1,835
Orange	1,179	1,615
Pamlico	1,691	1,772
Pasquotank	3,711	2,918
Pender	1,748	1,282

Perquimans	8,148	7,190
Pitt	23,133	22,552
Polk	1,482	3,357
Randolph	1,44	1,723
Richmond	21,435	18,577
Robeson	61,064	58,685
Rowan	13,451	14,311
Rutherford	8,932	12,169
Sampson	33,949	39,150
Scotland	32,860	29,078
Stanly	12,368	9,038
Union	23,475	28,119
Vance	4,837	8,542
Wake	33,017	47,090
Warren	12,675	18,914
Washington	985	1,089
Wayne	34,140	34,770
Wayson	25,918	27,701
All others	3,851	5,327

Much cotton is now in fields as compared with clean fields a year ago.

## Fire Starts Easily From Candles On Xmas Trees

Many fires are caused by candles on Christmas trees. The tree should be fastened firmly, so that it cannot be upset, and should not be decorated with paper, cotton or other inflammable material. Cotton, which is used to represent frost or snow, catches fire very easily. The same effect can be secured by the use of asbestos or mineral wool, which is safe. The candles should be placed on the tree so that they can not set fire to branches above them, and should not be lighted by children. Before the gifts are distributed candles should be extinguished. Electricity is much safer than candles for lighting Christmas trees. Doors should remain closed while the candles are burning, because of the danger from drafts swaying the branches or blowing curtains against the tree. The floor under the tree should be protected by a piece of zinc or iron.

A diary is sometimes allowable, an autobiography almost never.—Philip Guedalla.

## Why's and Other Why's About



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## Farm Briefs

The cotton farmer who has his food and feedstuffs in his pantry and barns will be the one who will have a happy Christmas this year.

Thirty farmers are strengthening their terraces and otherwise improving their fields this winter.

Better balanced farming will reduce cotton acreage by thirty percent next year and will place North Carolina farming on a business basis.

Plant a bushel of black walnut seed this fall. The wood is one of the two finest cabinet woods known to the world. The logs or stumps have a value of from \$150 to \$200 per thousand feet.

Swap the cotton seed for meal and use the meal for cattle feed and fertilizer.

Farmers in Rutherford County are setting many peach trees this fall. G. W. Willis is setting 4,767 trees; Chas. W. Swafford and A. C. Swafford are setting 1,000 each and F. E. White is setting 1,000.

The Bird Mountain Nursery will be known hereafter as The Hub City Nursery, operated and owned by L. M. Gentry, located on the Asheville Spartanburg Highway, 1-2 mile north of Southern Shops.

## L. M. GENTRY

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT Associated With A. A. MERRICK, Engineering Concern.

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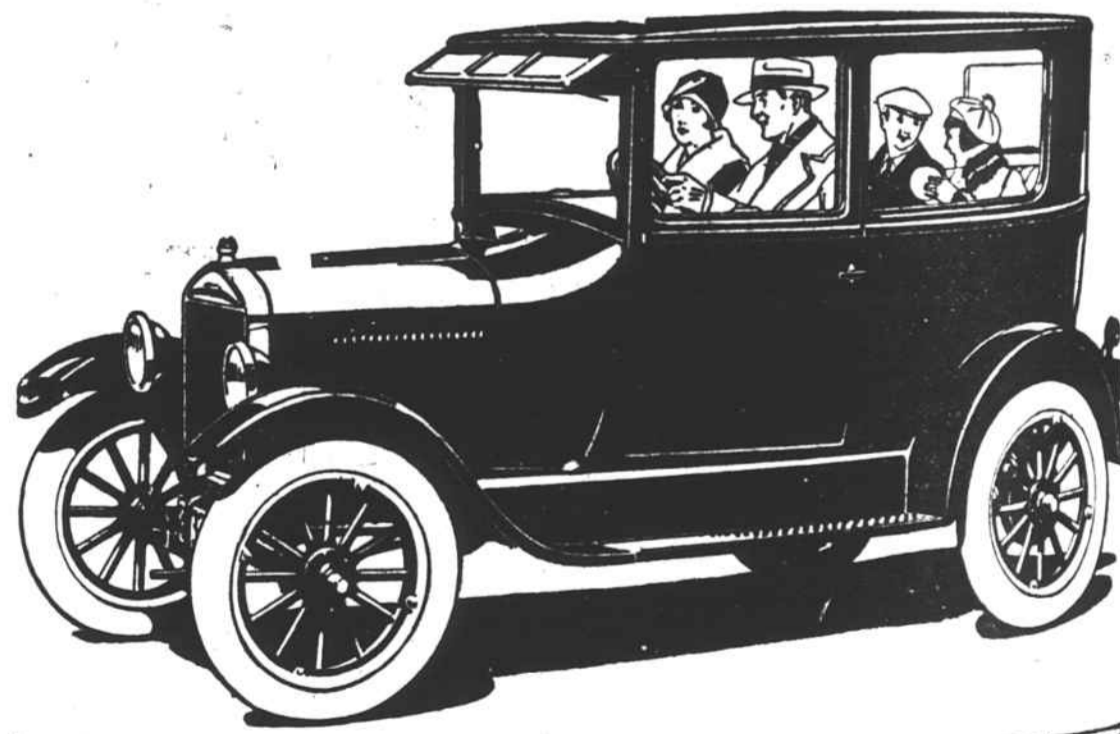
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