

The Making of Jimmie Breen.

JIMMIE BREEN, stared vacantly at the large mahogany desk before him. Two weeks before when he had first seated himself at that desk he thought his greatest ambition in life was about to be realized. Now it appeared as if every little ray of sunshine had suddenly disappeared from life and that he was destined to be a complete failure. He had always wanted to become a great newspaper man; in fact that was his only ambition, and, when he had been received into the office of the Daily Sun as cub reporter, the road to success seemed already paved.

Jimmie was by no means a dull lad. On the contrary he was exceptionally clever but circumstances and the "fates" were against him. He had happened upon several big things that would have given him a name in the office, such as the Morris Burglary, the Southern Trust Scandal and others. But he found that, when he arrived at the Chief's office, they were already turned in by some rival and sent to press. Only two days before, the "chief" had called him into the office and told him quite emphatically that he had only until the end of the month to make good—also enlightening him of the fact that he had not turned in a single story since his newspaper career had commenced.

"Why is it they always beat me to it?" he said gloomily to himself. "Surely I have a right to strike something big just as well as Brown who got the Trust Company story."

Suddenly he became aware that the rest of the staff were filing out of the office and that he had a particularly empty feeling. He rose, closed his desk

and sauntered out. When he arrived in the street the fresh air made him feel somewhat better and he strolled over to the little restaurant he had lately patronized for lunch. As he watched the cars speeding by and the people hustling to and fro, it appeared to him as if everybody was succeeding but himself.

The restaurant, into which Jimmie entered was divided into several partitions. Into one of these he strolled. Then, giving the waiter his order, he lit a cigarette and smoked rather gloomily.

In the next apartment two men sat talking, Jimmie had seen them as he passed by, but had taken no further notice of them. But as the voice of one became louder Jimmie with all the instinct of a reporter, listened. From the tone of voice in which they spoke it was evident that the two men were arguing about something. Catching a few words here and there Jimmie became interested, and, pressed his ear against the thin partition.

"Don't be a fool, Rogers," said one. "If you lose your head now it may mean that we'll be caught."

"But I won't go through with it for that amount," answered Rogers, "it's toorisky."

"Well perhaps he'll give us more if we go the right way about it, but we must be careful. He might make it tight for us you know."

"But I won't do it for that," said Rogers again in a loud tone.

"Don't speak so loud," said his companion gruffly, "you'll spoil everything. You meet me at the Mathew's Munition Works, the north-west corner—near the rear entrance—at eleven-thirty sharp—and leave the money matters to me. I'll fix that part alright."

Then the conversation ceased and the sound of the two preparing to go caught Jimmie's ear. At once

he jumped back to his chair and when they passed he appeared quite unconcerned. His heart beat quickly with excitement. From the conversation he had just heard, he concluded that something was going to happen to the Mathew's Munitions Works, and he had no doubt that it would be disastrous.

His first impulse was to rush out and go to the police. Then on a second thought he decided he wouldn't. Suddenly a great inspiration came to him. Here was his chance to make good; here was something that would put two-inch black letters on the front page of his paper.

While he dreamed about his anticipated victory the waiter came in with his lunch and Jimmie remembered once more that he was hungry. He ate rather quickly and hurried into the street. Everything seemed to have a new aspect now, and he felt himself tingling with excitement.

All afternoon Jimmie tried to content himself with odd jobs around the office, while in his mind he pictured himself struggling with desperadoes, as his favorite hero had done in a play he had recently seen.

At last the six o'clock whistles blew and the staff prepared once more to leave. Jimmie was the first out. He hurried up the street and at the corner caught a belt-line car that would stop a short distance from his boarding house.

About ten-thirty that same evening a young man left that same boarding house and strolled quickly up the avenue. His cap was drawn down shading his face and his coat collar was turned up for the evening was quite cool.

Quietly he walked in an easterly direction for about half a mile and then turned sharply to the left. Down a side street which was practically deserted he

hurried till he came at length to a great structure known as the Mathew Munition Works. Into the doorway of the north-west entrance he stepped, looking up and down the street to see if he had been noticed. Then assuring himself that he had not, he proceeded up the steps leading to the door and slipped into the corner where the shadows were darkest.

For nearly three-quarters of an hour he waited and listened, but could hear nothing except the noise of an occasional truck passing by. His legs began to tire under him from the cramped position in which he stood, and his great chance of success seemed to be fading away.

"I hope this is the night they have chosen for the big work," he thought to himself, "but perhaps it isn't." Then recalling the speech he had overheard in the restaurant he assured himself that it "was" tonight. At that moment a man stepped quickly into the entrance and stood not six feet away from Jimmie. Evidently he was waiting for some one for he looked continually up and down the street. At last another figure approached and the man in the doorway stepped out on the pavement to meet him.

"Hello, Rogers, you're here on time I see," he said in a low tone.

"Yes. Did you see him about the money?" asked Rogers.

"Oh never mind the money now, we must act quickly you know. Here hold these and hold them tight, if you don't want to go up in a cloud of smoke." While they talked in a low tone for several minutes, Jimmie listened only a few feet away. He was just beginning to realize the foolish thing he had done by not notifying the police. Here were two desperadoes intent on blowing the factory to pieces, with him

standing helplessly by, **almost** afraid to breathe for fear of attracting their attention. If only they would move away from there just long enough to give him a chance to escape. But they did **not** move. They stood there for, what seemed to Jimmie—hours, but which in reality was **only** about ten minutes. Then one **of** the men, having been cautioned to return with the car, walked briskly down the street and disappeared around the corner **of** the building. The other stood a moment looking **around and then strolled** on in the opposite direction.

Jimmie gave a sigh of relief and wiped the cold perspiration from his brow. Then he came cautiously down the steps and peered up and down. Assuring himself that he had not been seen, he literally flew up the street.

Ten minutes later Jimmie burst into the office of the East Side Police Station and, having recovered his breath sufficiently, **he** related what he had just heard and seen. The Chief at once despatched ten policemen and two plain clothes men with instructions **as to the best way of effecting a capture**. Then Jimmie went to the telephone and called **up** the residence of **Mr. James Mathews**. In **less** than a minute he was talking with that great steel magnate.

"What's my factory?" came back over the wire after Jimmie had attempted to relate what was happening.

"Yes Sir," answered Jimmie, "but the police are there **by** now and **will** probably settle everything all right."

"I'll go right down," said **Mathews** in an excited tone hanging up the receiver instantly,

After leaving the telephone booth, Jimmie hustled out of the office and back to the scene of the action. He had forgotten his story amid the excitement but now was as keen about it as ever.

He hurried down the street, and gave a little laugh as he thought of the expression that would come over the face of the night editor when he landed in with a story like this.

"I guess this will make him sit up and take notice," he said to himself. "I'll bet the chief won't be anxious to fire me now."

Then it occurred to him that perhaps the police had failed to capture the men or that they had arrived too late. And even if they did effect the capture would he be able to identify them, if they were not already known by the police? These thoughts made him more anxious to see the result of the affair and so he began to run rapidly in the direction of the factory.

He arrived at the entrance to the munition works just in time to see the police pushing two handcuffed men into the patrol wagon. He went up to the Sergeant in charge and asked him if any damage had been done,

"Are you the boy who brought the alarm?" He was asked.

"That's me, I guess," said Jimmie smiling.

"Well they've got a lot to thank you for. These two men are members of a gang of radicals that the police have been trying to run down for months. You sure did land just in time. Ten minutes more and this factory would have looked like a fourth of July Celebration."

Just then a large limousine drove up and stopped at the curb. A well dressed, elderly gentleman

jumped out of it. He came up to the officer with whom Jimmie was talking.

"You got them, Sergeant?" he asked.

"Yes, but it was a narrow escape; a few minutes more and it would have been too late."

Mr. Mathews gave a sigh of relief.

"Let me thank you officer," he said, stretching out his hand.

"It's not me who deserves to be thanked. I just finished it up. There's the man whose hand you ought to shake. He rushed in and told us just in time," replied the officer.

"Let me thank you then, my boy, I am the owner of these works. Here, give me your hand."

The two shook hands and as Jimmie remarked later, he felt somewhat like a hero.

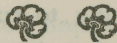
"Tell me all about it. How did you come to over-hear the plot?"

"I just stumbled on it accidentally," Jimmie replied rather modestly. "But I won't keep you here talking this hour of the night; besides I'm a newspaper reporter, and a great deal depends upon this story."

"Here is my card, call and see me tomorrow," said the elderly gentleman.

"Thank you, I will. Now I guess I'll be off. This time, no one is going to beat me to it."

J. Arthur Byrne, '22



It would be well for us all, old and young, to remember that our words and actions, aye, and our thoughts also, are set upon never-stopping wheels, rolling on and on unto the pathway of eternity.—M. M. Brewster.