

# TOM WOOLFOLK

## A TALK WITH HIM IN HIS CELL TO-DAY.

### HIS VISITOR A JOURNAL REPORTER.

What Woolfolk Has to Say for Himself—How He Spends His Time—What He Will do if He Ever Gets Free Again—How He Looks.

*Special Telegram to The Evening Journal.*

Macon, February 4.—To-day I grasped the hand of the man who is supposed to have wantonly murdered his whole family. I expected to find it chill, fishy, of a deathly feeling. But it was warm and soft, and could not be distinguished from the hand of a philanthropist or a martyr.

I had imagined that Tom Woolfolk would have the stare of a bull, the horn of a rhinoceros, a forehead on which "murder" would seem to be written in red letters, and that the very sight of him would fill my mind with horrible pictures. He has an amiable countenance, calculated to excite sympathy rather than prejudice.

He is about five feet, nine inches tall, weight one hundred and fifty pounds, has a dark complexion, black hair and eyes, round regular features which would indicate cheerfulness but for a feeling of regret, which seems to crop out between the lines. He wore a black silk traveling cap—his beard was of three days growth, the gold filling in his teeth glistened through a smile of mournful cast.

Before ushering me up, Jailor Birdsong, who is the impersonation of cleverness, told me that Tom had a great dislike for reporters and that if a pencil was seen or a formal introduction given which might lead him to think that he was again to be advertised, a steam engine could not draw an interview out of him. So I sidled up to his cell as one impelled by simple curiosity, and said:

"Mr. Woolfolk, I am glad to see you, and hope you are well and happy to-day. How goes the world with you?"

"Oh," replied he, in smiling tones, "about as well as could be expected in a place like this. You would hardly expect a man to be happy behind these bars. I tell you, I'm awful tired of living in jail."

"I should think you would have become used to it by now. It is said, you know, that a man can get accustomed to anything."

"No, he can't. There is too much noise in him. Jail air isn't pure, my cell is uncomfortable small. I am getting very sick of it; I can't keep up with what is going on in the world. I feel like Rip Van Winkle after his long nap."

"Can you not learn to take things as did 'The prisoner of Chillon,' whom Byron describes as loving his very chains and being unwilling to leave his dungeon when the door was open?"

He listened with interest to the story told in Byron's poem, but replied: "I am not built that way. I love the fresh air too well ever to flee from it. But still, I don't complain. I have really grown case-hardened. I never expect to attempt another escape and do not even care to get away."

"You don't mean to say that you wouldn't run if you had a chance, wouldn't leave if the door were open?"

"I would not. I am reconciled to whatever comes, and am willing to stand my trial. I am innocent, and if the people want to shed innocent blood I can meet the fate like a man. I wish they would make haste and decide what they are going to do with me."

"How would you like a game of cricket this afternoon, or a stroll up by Wesleyan or out to the park?"

"It would be fine; but," he added with a twinkle of the eye tinged with merriment, "they will hardly let me go, so there is no use in talking about it."

"You are right comfortably housed and well fed, as it is, are you not? It seems to me that I would coil up on my bed, read Emerson, write letters and forget all about the outside world."

"I buy most of my food. They feed us as well as they can, but it is pretty tough for a man always used to plenty."

"But I have not written a letter in three months, and as for reading, there is too much fuss here for that."

"Don't the boys occasionally join in a game of seven-up for amusement? The mind governs the feelings and a man with perfect control over himself ought to be as happy in a prison as in a palace. You fellows might have a regular picnic in here."

"Some of the boys play cards, but I don't believe it is right—and as for that prison and palace doctrine, I can't swallow it."

"Your relations still stick by you and visit you, don't they?"

"Mr. Cowan, my brother-in-law, came to see me about a week ago. I guess they feel all right towards me."

"What do you think of the appeal for a new trial now pending in Atlanta? Of course you are up with the proceedings."

"Yes. Colonel Rutherford's speech for me was fine, but the speech against me was hard."

"Well, what of the future of the whole business?"

"I think I'll get a new trial and that will yet leave this place a free man. When that mob was howling around her with 'lynch' for their watchword I was badly scared, but now public prejudice has reached its normal state, and I am hopeful that the people will give me justice."

"What is your theory of the killing? On man could not have done it all?"

"No, it would have taken half a dozen. I explained the whole thing in my statement before the court. Get a paper and read that and you will get a correct view of the affair."

"When you are free, Mr. Woolfolk, what will you do with yourself and where will you make your future home? You will not remain in Macon, I suppose?"

"I'll go to work in some adjoining town or county. If I stayed in Macon and as devilment was done, I might again be an innocent sufferer; and I assure you that I've got enough of iron cages."

"You know, Mr. Woolfolk, when an innocent sufferer at least gets justice, the is a powerful upturning of public sentiment in his favor. Might not Macon be quiet you like Chicago did Robert James?"

If you had a position in some dry goods store, everybody in the country would there just to look at you, and you might become the lion of the town."

"If I get cleared I don't care for any of or glory, though I would gladly accept

