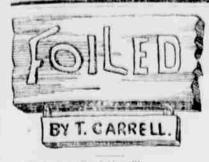
FAMOUS STORY.



Confound the fellow!"

Sylvester Wade said it aloud, and 1 inder my creath. Perhaps I had the more reason, for I had received a nasty knock on the knee from Wade's bag. But, then, it was my fault. I was making a reckless dash for the highlevel platform at Willesden Junction, and I came into violent collision with the detective. We recoiled and recog-nized each other. Then the flash of anger was exchanged for a laughrueful on my side-and we grasped hands.

You are in a hurry, Mr. Curtis," "I was, but I have time to talk to

rou Ab, you are on the lookout for news. But I haven't done much for you The trail of our man is uncomsec. monly hard to find. Still, I think I shall do it. I've word from the north atout it now, and I am taking the express to Liverpool. It is news that has come in an odd way, but I am bound to text it. We musn't let our party slip out of the country without leaving us an address. It is a little awkward for me to go. There has been a robbery at Cadmore Manor-Mr. Gerald Humber's place. Know it?"

"Yes; a little."

"He has wired me to go down at once, and get at the bottom of it. But I can't: or, at all events, that must My first obligation is to youwait to run to earth the rogue who swindled your father so audaciously. 1 will try to effect that, if it is only because the trickster shows such gool sport and has such a bag of ruses. I am on my mettle."

"Which means that we shall win." And, indeed, I have never known a man in the spy business of to-day so elever, so successful, and within so thorough a good follow as Sylvester Wade. It was native aptitude not to terepressed that had put him into his profession and that kept him there. even when as he owned to me, he sometimes leathed it.

"I horie so."

As Wade spoke, a rumble was in the nir. He again put out his hand.

"Time s up-she's coming along," he said. "It's rarely I have many minutes to spare, unless I figure for some reason as a station ghost. But I don't care about driving the thing as close as you do. I can't afford to be cutout of the running by, perhaps, some conspirator in a hurry. Hope to wire you good tidings to-morrow. "Ta-ta."

The express was slowing in: and I had a notion that Wade wanted to follow his own devices in selecting a seat and companionship. I, therefore, accepted my dismissal, and was soon climbing the stairs again. I little thought that this meeting was part of a curious double chance which would shatter an ingenious piece of villainy and help me to my own. Looking back, I see that I met Wade in the nick of time. His ercand on my behalf is easily described: My father had been ruined through the machinations of scoundreis. He was an honest country gentleman-a Curtis, of Paiguton Curis and land values and men farmed to their ruin. He fell a victim to money-leaders, and they sucked him dry. There was cheating in the transactions that made him cankrupt and killed him with the blow. Wade was in pursuit of the rogue who had bagged the spoils. If he could be caught there was a probability that something might be recovered and buy me a minor city partnership. 1 was waiting to see if it would be so. What I had now heard had set me face to face with another old problem. Nobody could mention Codmore Manor to me without giving a fillip to my imagination and causing me see visions. Mirage pictures, I called them, when sober sense began to criticise. But they came constantly, and they were fair, and I fed upon them when my days were full of desolution. I saw the daintiest maiden in all my home shire smiling at me because I called her, with strange, mad daring, Christie. And I saw the small oval face flush through its tints soft olive, and the hazel eyes first droop and then uplift with a glorious wonder of faith in them. Sometimes there followed the vision of a pleasant fireside and Christie Humber, changed into Christie Curtis, seated there, and making home for the luckiest fellow in the great town. When the steady consideration of hard facts wrung the romance out of my mood, I had to admit that few things were less likely than that this should come to pass. My fortunes were under a cloud; and though our old neighbor at Cadmore Manor was outwardly genial when we met, I was aware that the sudden check to our intercourse meant that I was to harbor no foolish thoughts about his daughter. My prospects were not brilliant before the catastrophe; they were now dubious in the extreme. Gerald Humber was a rich railway contractor, who had him elf twice married well, and who would naturally look for a good match for Christie. Whatever words of dangerous regard had been spoken when the storm was only a threat must fall to the ground. He would convince his daughter that as a serious suitor I was more." impossible.

ened me to engerness. The telegram had not been in long, and after reading it I did not lose an unnecessary second.

Twilight was beginning to close in as I crawled up the Manor avenue in a lugubrious fly, which was all that Henthbury station had to offer in the way of a road conveyance. It was a hilly drive of more than three miles to Calmore Manor. As we stopped, a light form dressed in soft gray, tripped out into the great porch. My heart was leating as if a drum were therea treacherous manifestation I had schooled myself all the way to be matter-of-factand self-possessed, and to let hope finally drift away. But in Christie's presence I somehow forgot good resolutions.

"It is really you-Mr. Curtis," she said, with, I fancied, an odd little break and quaver. "I was almost afraid that the message had missed, or that you could not come. Mr. Wade does not know that we have sent for

you." 'Mr. Wade?' 1 cjaculated, help-

"Yes; Mr. Wade is here. Yesterday was my twenty-first birthday"-the voice dropped to a musical whisper, and the damask kindled on Christic's cheeks-"and papa had intended to give me a ring-a very expensive one, I believe: and it was stolen the day before. He was very angry; and is still set on finding the thief out. Mamma has a new lady's companion, who pleases her very much. Miss Kes-worth has the test testimonials; and she recommended putting the case into the hands of Mr. Wade. Papa decided to do so.'

"Do you mean Mr. Sylvester Wade, Miss Humber?"

"Yes, that is the name, I saw it on the top of the telegram. He wired first to sny he could not come, having to go to the north on urgent duty. Then, afterwards, he came. He had put aside the other matter to please



SEATED THERE. HER EYES UPLIFT WITH A GLORIOUS WONDER OF FAIT I IN THEM. papa-to eara a good fee, I suppose that means. And it transpired that the business he was on was yours. When he found that out, we did not quite like it; and papa sent to you, thinking you ought, at least, to hear what Mr. Wade had discovered in reference to this Levi Colborne, and then, if you wish the affair pressed on, papa will insist on Mr. Wade's fulfilling

tion | might probably see and speak bim at Cadmore Manor within the | had half disclosed the hand we held at | der. We heard the click of a casement, was in an odd form the news came with Caristie, and the thought quick- time. I was at a loss to know what to make of it. The only surmise that seemed to offer a solution of the con-undrum was that Wade changed hismind even as he and I talked; but with a secrecy natural in the circumstances, did not say as much. I could not positively depose that he had taken his place in the train.

However, as we appeared to be both under one roof, as, indeed, I had been brought here to see him, it was likely I should soon have the truth.

"I hate mysteries," growled Gerald Humber, "and I will shrink from no trouble that will reveal the rogue who has made way with Christle's ring. Wade gives me to understand that he has already a promising clue."

"If Sylvester Wade cannot help you I fear the chances of recovery are small," I answered.

"I will tell him that you are here." But when the master of the house rejoined Christie and me. together with Mrs. Humber and Miss Kesworth, in the drawing room his face had appreciably darkened. There was almost a scowl as he glanced across at Christie. It was easy to see that he blamed her. I learned later, what I suspected then, that it was Christie who had skilfully challenged his honor on the point, and had triumphed. But, noting the accord between us, and perhaps a certain gaiety returned after absence to his daughter's mood, he was angry that he had yielded. The more so because of what he had now to state.

"Wall, the plan doesn't work." he said. 'Wade is touchy at the interference. I might have guessed that is how it would be He will not mix up engagements."

'But he has done so." I interjected. The frown remained, but no attention was paid to my remark.

"He has insisted all along on extreme caution and privacy regarding the object of his visit, and he considers that we are endangering everything. There is something in that. Of course the servants have no idea there is a deective in the house. They do not know the real name. Wade is passing as a Mr. Gimble."

1 started. A queer reminiscence had some to me. But a moment's thought seemed to show that any theory founded on this must be absurdly lar-fetched, and I really did not entertain the idea.

"But he has a duty Mr. Curtis," said Christie, with a brave front and kindling eyes.

"I must leave Wade to fight his battles when Mr. Curtis takes him to task. All that I have to do under present conditions is to report Wade's view and proposals. He will have nothing to say to Mr. Curtis here. But if Mr. Curtis remains at the 'Red Lion' till three tomorrow afternoon, he will meet him there.'

My pride was in arms. It was cavalier treatment, marked, as I considered, by the coolest effrontery imaginable This was the worst of men who knew that they had no real rivals in their profession or calling. They could te as high and mighty as princelings. But, at least, it agreed with the hypothesis that Wade had tricked me on the Willesden platform. The feeling that he was in the wrong, and had done a mean thing and was trapped. would lead to an openly insolent line of action: There is a defiance that serves for defence. It went against the grain to submit, but where was my choice ?

"Please to inform Mr. Wade that 1

this friendly table. A woman is a gossip and curtous by privilege of sex, and it was quite natural that Miss Kesworth should be interested in what had been a more than nine days' scandal of our countryside. My right-hand companion had a dulcet voice which expressed a soothing pity for me, and, hardening a little, ;waxed indignant with Colborne. "A bad man! And Mr. Wade ought

to be looking for him now instead of wasting time over my ring. I wish



SAT OPPOSITE CHRISTIE AND BY THE SIDE OF MISS KESWORT IL.

papa had never lought it for me," said Christie. And for that sympathy, what risks of premature disclosure would 1 not have run!

"Levi Colborne must evidently be a thorough rogue and a clever one," observed Miss Kesworth.

She rose in obedience to Mrs. Humber's signal, and the dinner was at end. I should have found it unutterably formal and r osy but for my fair girl's presence.

Gerald Humber had already been called away, or perhaps Christie would not have uttered her thought so freely.

I now took farewell, saving that I would meet Mr. Humber, at any rate, before leaving the neighborhood on the morrow. But Christie refused to see her mother in-law's puckered eyebrows and tiny shake of the head. She slipped out with me into the old-fashioned scented garden. It was to be only a step, for auld lange syne. But young hearts direct the feet to other paths than those of prudence, and somehow the memory of our old walks together was with us-walks that had meant so much, though so little was said-and we strayed from the plain track to the gate, and we were on the side of the house that was most in gloom, and the warm, unpremeditated word came. Even so soon the half of my wild dreams was made true. The fact can be succinctly told-a short episole; life at its zenith; Christie won.

We had forgotten Sylvester Wade and Levi Coltorne, and, I greatly feared, Gerald Humber also. But sud-

denly Christie said: "Hugh, Cyril! What does this mean?"

We were standing in the thick shadows of a laurel iush, not above a stone's throw from the library window. A feminine figure was slipping stealthily along the narrow line of the clipped lawn. We both recognized the tall, angularshape of Miss Resworth. She halted at the south corner and stooped low by the window. It was hard to understand her manœuvres unless it were a case of prying or eavesdropping. But the circumstance that the lights were lowered within pointed to an empty room and practically negatived the fancy. My doubt of the woman's purpose did not last long. I touched Christie's shoulder to bid her still watch closely. Miss Kesworth's form showed up distinctly in the faint moon beams. She was fixing a rope ladder. It took perhaps two minutes, and then she flitted back as noiselessly. But as she gained the great path I saw a white handkerchief wave.

and no more was to be seen. The "That is my dressing room.

jewels are there. "Ah!" Dolt that I was not to under-

stand before. "Take a safe circuit and find your father, or, at any rate, the butler, and give the alarm," I said. "Above every-thing do not let Miss Kesworth know that anything is found out."

"And what will you do?"

"Fetch the police. And first spoil the fellow's descent."

I saw how this was possible. I had a stout jack knife. With as grim stealth as even Sylvester Wade could have practiced, I followed the clever secondrel, who now, no doubt, was busy with the casket to which Miss Kesworth had directed him. A yard or so from the window I cut away one side of the ladder and hung by the other. Then my tool frayed through the other above my head until there was the chance of an ugly drop, and I did not venture to continue. I slipped to earth again; a sharp double-handed tug, and the remaining strands, weakened by my weight broke; and the thing was done. And luckily the rogue above did not seem to have heard. He suspected no danger at the moment, or from that quarter.

Fortunately Cadmore village was close, and I had soon routed out the local sergeant of police and his man. Two officers sufficed for the parish. They stared at my tale, but fell in with my directions, and the three of us make a quick march to the Manor. But, as I might perhaps have expected from a schemer of such dashing audacity and brilliant resource. our checkmate appeared to be only a partial success. Miss Kesworth had been on close guard, and Christie was foiled indoors. Her father had been got out of the way by a feint and the butler was too confused to deal properly with the problem. The man's clumsy consternation betrayed to Mrs. Humber's "companion" that an awkward screw was loose. She alarmed the thief, and he walked coolly down stairs with a parcel under his arm and out of the front door, molested by nobody. When my party came on the scene the house was in confusion. The jewels were gone. Miss Kesworth had almost escaped too; but tefore I knew how things stood in

the house I had suggested to Sergeant Pinter that the constable should watch under the remant of the rope ladder. Coles had a sharp ear. He detected sounds of surreptitious retreat from the folding doors of the drawing room. Dashing across the lawn he intercepted and held fast the fugitive. And Miss Kesworth alternately menaced and cajoled him in vain.

"Noa, noa," said honest Coles, who was one of the sturdy and stolid men of the shire, "I've got ee and I keeps ee, leastways till Sergeant says ee mun And he heeded not the lady's go. flights of eloquence.

Nevertheless, it was a defeat. The capture of the cracksman's accomplice would not restore the missing jewels. The plans had been too well contrived,



which took me to Liverpool, Mr. Curtis."

"You did."

"I suspected it then, and inquired farther. I had arranged for another wire to meet me by one of my people at Rugby. This purported to disclose the sender as-yourself. Fortunately, I had met you, and knew at once it was false, and therefore, a trick. I wondered if it had anything to do with affairs here. I changed my route, came back, and on to Hentbury as rapidly as I could. The first man I saw at Hentbury station was the fellow I was scouring England for; and made up to match me, too. He wanted to take the train for London. Didn't he gasp when I gripped ham! There were two of us, for I brought my man on in case I wanted he p. So it was a good and safe take, and Coltorne's under safe guard in the lock-up at Hentbury at this moment. My chum's with him, and he won teasily treak prison."

There is not much more to tell. The scheme had been founded on current knowledge amongst Gerald Humber's acquaintances of the great value of Christie's jewels, and of the date when she was to receive them. This had reached the ears of Colborne, a thoroughly unsrcupious adventurer. An advertisement shortly before for a lady's companion opened the way, and collorne's wife established herself at Cadmore Manor by the aid of forged testimonials as Miss Kesworth. The master-mind of the conspiracy know he was wanted by Wade for a very different set of offences, and knew that he resembled the detective. He conceived the idea of playing an exceedingly bold game by bluffing Wade, sending him on a wildgoose chase, and helping himself in the interim to his identity. By these means, and his wife's theft of the ring, he was officially invited to the house he intended to rifle. The plan broke down, as I said at the outset, by reason of the casual introduction of myself amongst the set of actors. The pen-alty of failure was a long term of imprisonment for both the Colbornes.

Christie's jewels were recovered from the person of the thief, and a considerable part of my own property was also, in the sequel, reclaimed. But the happy thing for me was that, when I bought my City partnership, Gerald's Humber's congratulations took the shape of a free consent that Christie should be my wife. I take it that to any young man such a promise means power at the springs of enterprise - Saturday Night.

She Certainly Would.

Kirby Stone-I hate to mention it, dear, but I must tell you that business has been awfully poor lately. If you could economize a little in dresseswear something plainer.

Mrs. Stone-Certainly, dear; I shall order some plainer dresses to morrow. -Tid Bits.

Benedicts Need Not Read This.

Neightor-1 hear your father intends to put up a new house. Who is his builder? Boy-What's that?

"Why, the-er-one that bosses the job."

'Oh! Why, ma, of course."-Good News.

To Act His Part Naturally.

Judge-How did you come to get drunk and raise such a distur bance? Prisoner-Devotion to my profession, your Honor. I am cast for the star part in 'Ten Nights in a Barroom.

Yet when I reached my rooms in Kensington there was a telegram lying on the table from Christie's father. It said: "If you want to hear of L

C., come immediately."

"L C.," could only mean Levi Coltorne, which was the name (or alias) of the rascally schemer whom Sylvester Wade had gone to Liverpool to seek. It puzzled me already. Of course, my determination was soon taken. I did not understand how Gerald Humber should have news of our man; but policy demanded that I should seize every chance of enlightment. In addi-

your orders The girl paused. But I was wandering in a maze of conjecture, and was

in no haste to respond. "The reason why papa was specially anxious to have the mystery cleared up, and relieve our people of awkward suspicions, is because my jewels were brought here last night." Christie went on. "You remember I told you that my own mother's jewels were to stay in a bank until I was twenty-one, and then were to be given me. A confidential agent came down with them. They are magnificent-far too fine for modest insignificant me."

A happy excitement dominated Christie's manner, and her bright ingenuousness perilously swayed my own feelings.

"No, no," I said, in protest against her self-depreciation. But a change on Christie's countenance stopped me from going further. We were still standing in the hall, and at this moment Mr. Humber appeared.

The master of Cadmore Manor came from the library. His greeting was frigid, and acted like a douche of cold water.

1 mentioned that it had so happened by a small coincidence that I had been occupied on the other side of Hentbury during the greater part of the day. Then I had returned to town, got his wire, and once more made for my old home district.

"It has come about at an inconvenient time," he said, stiffly. "I am sorry, but I fear you will have to put up for the night at the Red Lion in Cadmore village. We are disabled just now, and cannot offer you hospitality. The workmen are in one wing of the We have also enlarged the eshouse. tablishment Mrs. Humber has now a lady's companion. Wade, too, will be staying on the ground, I take it."

Say nothing about it, Mr. Humber," I answered. "A con fortable old Enghish inn is good enough for me, and that is the character I have always heard given to the Red Lion at Cad-

Yes. You will be all right. Deakin will be proud of a visitor from the Manor, particularly one learing your I presume that my daughter name. has told you, Mr. Curtis, how it is that Wade is here?"

"Of course I have, papa." Christie put in.

"It is a bewildering affair." I said. My words had a deeper meaning than my hearers could guess, for had I not seen the detective off for Liverpool? If he really went by the express he could not possibly alter his gourse until Rug by was reached. No energy and no artifice could then have planted

will make it my business to keep that appointment," I said bitterly. 'It is a shame!" cried Christie.

The clatter of a gong broke in opportunely on a strained situation.

You will dine with us, Mr. Curtis?" said Mrs. Humber. She was a kindly. harmless woman, whom rumor said her husband bullied.

I hesitated. But Gerald Humber had to tone down what was disagreeable to his sense of courtesy in the precautions he had taken to ensure my leaving the Manor that night He would hear of no refusal.

When we sat down I missed the detective, but as domestics were present, nothing was said. (I sat opposite Christie and by the side of Miss Kesworth.) To this newcomer in the Manor household I had paid slight heed since the introduction. In the drawing room she had the faculty of effacing herself.



THE MASTER OF CADMORE MANOR GAME FROM THE LIBRARY. HIS GREETING WAS FRIGID.

But, now before I was aware of it, I was drawn out, and had spoken of my father's misfortunes, and of our hope and full expectation that we should lainy of the most reckless type? yet wind the meshes of the law about the feet of Levi Collorne. It was only when the queries were taking me into the domain of our painfully acquired and incomplete knowledge of Colborne's subsequent movements that 1 awoke to the unwisdom of what I was mesaying. I had replied in nearly an automatic manner, my real interest as much concerned with Christie and Christie's looks and Christie's very ocgasional words. Sylvester Wade would certainly have laid an embargo on my With catilks alacrity the pseudo-tongue. Yet what could it matter if 1 Wad, was climbing up the rope lad-

"A signal!" I whispered in Christie's ear.

It was certain that some strange crisis was impending, and everything indicated crime. Was Miss Kesworth the robber?

"Where is Wade?" I asked, under my breath.

"Gone into the village to make inquiries So papa said.

"He should be here."

I had hardly spoken when a sound, like the grating of a foot on gravel, caught my ears. Steps were approaching. We cowered further into the protecting obscurity and were silent again. A man went by between the parterres, and I had a full view. He turned for a second, and stood to listen, and I felt Christie shake from excess of excitement, and, like her, I thought our hiding place was discovored. But he went on; Sylvester Wade, and not Sylvester Wade. It was the same style of pilot jacket that I knew Wade oftenest affected, and the low gray hat, capable of taking many shades, and of suggesting many characters. He was of Wade's height and build, and, so far as I could surmise under difficulties, was like him in face and feature. But I was wholly persuaded that this man was not Sylvester Wade.

What, then, could be a-foot but vilgrew queerly rigid and my hands clenched. The detective had once laughed in his cheery fashion, as with the confidence of a man who was sure to swing the odds of a troublesome case over to his side, and had said to

'Here's a photograph here''-tapping his breast pocket- "the odd thing is it shows a feilow who might pass for my double.

'Look!" said Christie, gently,



DASHING ACRORS THE LAWN HE SEIZES AND HELD THE FUGITIVE.

and Christie was the sufferer. But my dear girl did not weep and wail as a fine dame might have done. She thrilled me with a touch and a whisper:

"My dower has disappeared; perhaps papa will not be so hard to persuade now," she said.

She was thinking of our love and plighted promise even in that hour. Miss Kesworth would not open her

lips after it became patent that fictitions indignation was wasted work. But it was obvious that she was greatly cast down

When Gerald Humber came in and heard the story there was a second scene. He raved at the stupid complaisance with which he had received rogues and impostors on the strength of their own representations I saw a sneer on Miss Kesworth's thin face. She still sat silent.

But the real denouement was yet to come. When Sergeant Pinter was for making a move and lodging his prisoner in the station house preparatory to raising the hue and cry for the male swindler the door of the library opened. Sylvester Wade stood on the threshold. I think there was general stupefaction in the room.

"What's this?" he said; and I recognized the voice I had listened to at Willesdon, "Oh, I see; there were two of You've taken one and I've them. caught the other. A queer business altogether. It looked fishy for me at one time. It isn't very hopeful now, I should say, for Mr. Levi Colborne;

and he is his own victim." I never saw a whiter face, a wilder look of alarm, than the wretched woman in our midst presented. Pinter thought she was about to swoon, and called for water. But she wavel it from her imperiously. "Levi Colborne!" I echoed: "was it

Levi Colborne!" And again, I recalled the fact that Gimble, the name taken by the sham Sylvester Wade, was an old alias of the man we had sought so many months in vain.

"Yes; and it was an uncommon sharp run between his wit and mine said the detective. "I told you that it

and I want to learn to act my part naturally. - Texas Siftings.

Kyphosis Bleyc'istarum.

"John," she said, "you must provide yourself with a bicycle costume, unless you give up riding. "Why?"

"Because your best trousers are getting kyphosis bicyclistarum at the knees."-Washington Star.

Our Children Will Live to See It.

"That smacks of equal justice, and I hope to live to see the day," said the president.

"Our children will live to see it, if we don't," prophetically remarked the economist, as he bade the club good evening -- Exchange.

Very Natural.

Physician-What seems to be the matter with Mr. Scribble?

Editor's Wife-I don't know. He's all doubled up with pain.

Physician-Ah, I see. It is doubtless a case of writer's cramp.-Rochester Post-Express.

Well Supplied, Indeed,

The body of a man with a pencil tehind his ear, a pair of shears in his right hand and his pockets filled with gold has been excavated at Pompeii. He is supposed to have been a tailor who advertised well .- Tid Bits.

Sarcastic.

McSwatters-That was a pretty bad cut they gave you in the paper the other day.

McSwitters-What's that? McSwatters-Why, they printed your

picture -- Syracuse Journal.

Encouraging.

Fastidious Customer-The last time 1 was here I found a hair in the soup.

Waiter-Dat's so, sah; but you didn't find none distime. Idone tuck 'em all out before I brung yer der soup -Texas Siftings.

Trashed on Principle.

Fond Parent-I cannot interfere, Bobby: your teacher writes me that she trashed you on principle.

Bobby-Well, she didn't. Don't you think I know where she licked me?-Life.

Mother-in-Law Not a Friend.

Yeast--Who is that lady talking to your wife? Is she a friend of the family?

Crimsonbeak-No. indeed; it's my wife's mother.-Yonkers Statesman.

she Would be More Than a Sister.

He-Would you like to go to the "Wedding Ring." the new opera? She (shyly)-No. I would rather have you bring it to me .- Syracuse Journal