

STORIES BY A DETECTIVE.

A Whited Sepulchre.

CONCLUDED.

ENGAGED upon a business of rather pressing nature, I one day rode in a Fourth Avenue car to the New Haven Depot at Twenty-seventh Street. Two women got into the car at Eighth Street. They might have been taken for fashionably-dressed ladies, if they had not been dirty—an unfailing mark either of low birth or sudden and rapid wealth. The car was full of people with their travelling-bags, going on by the Boston train, and, as no one else stood up, I did so, and gave one of the ladies my place. The feeling of sympathy, or otherwise which sometimes arises, is a curious phenomenon, and I cannot to this day explain to myself how it was; but, before I had even glanced at the dress which this woman wore, it occurred to me that in her I might find the clue to unravel the mystery of the thefts at Mr. Redding's. But so it was. The silk which I had seen at Mr. Redding's, and which struck me at the time as so peculiar in pattern and style, did not recur to me at first. But after a while, when I had noticed somewhat closely the appearance of the lady, I began to puzzle myself with thinking where I had seen a dress like hers before, till at last it occurred to me that it must have been in Mr. Redding's store. Now there was work before me. But the business which I had in hand was of much importance, for I had to go to the New Haven Depot before the departure of the train, to look for a man who was wanted for a burglary committed in New Jersey. It was possible that the ladies also were going by the train; but it was possible, too, that they might alight before we reached Twenty-seventh street, and I must perforce go on. What was to be done? I looked down the rows of passengers in the car, went also on the front platform, but found nobody who seemed likely to answer my purpose. While, however, I was turning it over in my mind, and had in the meanwhile inspected the rear platform, a good-looking black-eyed Italian boy got up on the car with a basket of toys which he wanted to sell. The boy pleased me, and to my question how old he was, he answered "thirteen." And when I asked him whether he would like to earn five dollars that afternoon, his eyes glistened with delight as he replied that he would. I now asked him his name, place of residence, the names of his parents and so on, and noted all down in my pocket-book.

"Now," said I to him, "here is my card. I am a detective, and would like to know where in the city I could find you in the middle of the night. But for a little while you must be a detective too. I will take care of your basket, and you can get it in the morning at my office. Here are two dollars to begin with, and I will give you the other three to-morrow morning. You may bring your father with you if you like. I would like to speak to him; and if you do the errand that I am giving you now very well, it is possible that I may engage you in a place where you will earn a good deal of money."

I had struck the right note and the boy was at my disposal. I now told him in a whisper that he must go on with the car, and watch where the two ladies went whom I pointed out to him, but in such a manner that they could not notice him, and then he was to come back to me. Then I told him he must follow them any distance, and that, in case they separated, he was to go after the taller of the two—the one in the silk dress. If they went into a store or house, he was to wait until they came out, and not to give up following them until he was sure that they would not come out again and that they were at home. He was then to notice the street and the number of the house, so that he would be able to take me there. "Can you manage this properly, so as to not give rise to any suspicion?" I asked him.

The boy's ambition was aroused. "Of course I can," he replied, his eyes beaming with pleasure; "I'll follow her till night, if necessary."

I then wrote my private address on the back of the card which I had given to him, and told him that if he liked he might come and stay through the night at my house. Tears ran down the child's cheeks, for he evidently had never met with any one who had spoken to him as kindly before.

Scarcely had I completed my instructions, when the sound of the bell told us that somebody was going to leave the car at Twenty-second Street. It was the two ladies. They might not see the boy's splendid eyes—which, if they had seen, they must have noticed—I drew the boy's cap over his face, and then took him on with me to the next street, where I put him off and enjoined him to bring me a good report. I told him he was to spend as much of the money as was necessary in riding, and that what he so spent I would repay him—a promise which seemed very much to increase his self-confidence.

In the evening the boy was duly at my house, and he brought me a complete report. The ladies had gone a long distance; fortunately, however, they had not used

any carriages except the street stages and horse cars, so that he had been able to keep them in view the whole day, and finally he had followed the lady in the silk dress to her home.

Considering how the ladies were overdressed, I had been fearful lest the pursuit should lead to a house of prostitution, for as the inmates of such houses are practised in deception, it was very likely that, if the clothes they wore really were a part of any stolen goods, it would be very difficult to prove it and to follow out the traces thus far obtained. But the ladies lived in a respectable place in Nineteenth Street.

The boy went to his father to tell him what he was doing and to take him the five dollars, and then he returned and passed the night at my house. At a very early hour next morning we were both in Nineteenth Street, where I surveyed the house and took a note of the number, and two hours later, when the shops were open, it was easy enough to go to the grocer's and a druggist's in the neighborhood, and to learn the names and the position of the residents.

*At the end of two days I had seen the gentleman who lived in the house, one William Bruce, in whom I recognized an old acquaintance and who was a speculator in Wall Street, leave the place twice in the morning and return twice in the evening. But I had not sufficient facts in hand to take any decided step in the matter, so I went to Mr. Redding to refresh my memory concerning the pattern of the stolen goods; but I did not let him know that I had even the smallest clue. His partner and Mr. Phillips had gone to Cincinnati to make arrangements with a house which owed them a considerable amount of money, and had recently failed. Unfortunately I now wanted the assistance of Mr. Phillips in directing me to the necessary proofs, but learned to my satisfaction that both would be back in a couple of days. In the mean while I received some useful information from Mr. Redding, and the next forenoon saw me busy with the tools as a workman under the Croton Water Board, which was just then engaged in laying the water pipes and looking after the connections with the houses.

A sprightly Irish girl opened the door when I went to the house and let me in, as soon as I told her what my pretended business was. I said that she must tell the lady that after I had finished in the basement I would go up stairs, as we wanted to examine all the places; upon which she replied that the lady had been on a visit to a friend for a few days, and that Mr. Bruce was out. So I found that I could take my own time, and after doing a little joking and flirtation with Sarah—for that was the girl's name—all of which she took very kindly, she let me go over the house from top to bottom and examine it thoroughly. I induced Sarah to show me her mistress's wardrobe, which, indeed, was splendid, and made me a little envious, when I bethought myself, with what a comparatively poor wardrobe my wife had to be contented. And I found, in the course of this inspection, among a number of silks not yet made up, some from which the private mark of Mr. Redding's house had not yet been removed. These I contrived to get hold of without Sarah knowing it. And with a pair of scissors, which I found in Mrs. Bruce's room, I cut a little piece from the silks, also without Sarah noticing me. But in a closet there were a dozen more dresses, each apparently handsomer than the last, and among them I found the dress with the peculiar pattern which Mrs. Bruce had worn on the day when I saw her in the street car. I now continued my flirtation and bantering with Sarah for a long time, till at last an opportunity offered to enable me to slip into the closet, and to shut myself in long enough to enable me to cut a piece of the silk from a broad seam on the inside of the sleeve. Having finished my inspection—still of course retaining the character of a Croton Water man—and having found out all I wanted, I saw that Sarah had been taking all my jesting in earnest, and verily believed that she had discovered a very desirable sweetheart. For, returning to the basement, I found a splendid lunch set out for me, all of which assured me when I left the house that the damsel would not be very likely to say anything to her master about the visit of the "Croton Water man."

After I had changed my dress, I went to Mr. Redding, took him into his private office and told him my story; cautioning him not to let the faintest whisper leak out, not to mention the least word to anybody, not even to his partner nor his confidential clerk, Mr. Phillips who on the same day was expected back from Cincinnati. I begged him to speak absolutely to nobody until I saw him again, "for," said I, "the thief is one of your old clerks, and Mr. Phillips has so good a heart and will feel so much for the man, that he will be above all astonished, and perhaps unable to control his better judgment, might give the thief an opportunity to abscond."

"Mr. Redding could not very well understand that, but he promised me to do as I wished, for I convinced him that for a secret to be well kept it must be known as little as possible, however trustworthy people may chance to be."

"I knew now that I would have to take

the fortress by storm, so on the next day I went with my badge of authority, and accompanied by a police officer, to the house in Nineteenth Street and asked for Mrs. Bruce. When she came into the parlor I said to her that I had some business with her husband and I asked her where I could find him? She gave me a card with his address:—"William Bruce, Dealer in Stocks, &c., 64 Wall Street," which I took, rose from my seat and walked towards the door, near to my companion, as though I were going away;—when I locked the door. I had remarked that when Mrs. Bruce came in she changed color at the sight of the police uniform, and she was now perfectly pale when I locked the door and said to her:—

"Mrs. Bruce I have come with my friend here as servants of the law to search your house. Your husband is, as you very well know, not that which his card represents. He is a clerk in the house of Mr. Redding, and a thief. The greater part of your splendid wardrobe, which I inspected yesterday, is stolen property, and I am here to seize it, but do not desire to make any demonstration with it before the neighborhood. I do not think that you participate in his guilt. Very probably he has never informed you of his secret, and I do not wish to inflict upon you any annoyance. But the firm must have their goods back again, and as I see that you have much jewelry and many articles of value, I must ask you to hand all over to me, until your husband shall have settled with the firm."

She was speechless with amazement. When she had recovered herself a little, she said that she could not believe that Mr. Bruce was any other than he had always represented himself to be; that she had received letters from his sister, who lived in Pennsylvania; that she had always taken him for an honorable man; and that he was always ready to give where it was required, if, by so doing, he could render any assistance.

The end of it was that during the day many large trunks full of beautiful and valuable goods left the house in Nineteenth Street. Sarah helped to do the packing without any misgiving as to my being the Croton Water man, and her fond sweetheart. When I was about to go away, happening to be alone with her for a moment, I whispered a word into her ear. Astonished and flurried she seized my hand, drew it towards her convulsively, and to my request that she would tell nothing, said: "I'll hold my tongue." The truth was she had had many season lovers before.

The trunks were first deposited in a safe place, and then sent on to Mr. Redding. Most of the goods were at once identified as having been stolen from his house, especially a number of silks that were still unmade; also a very valuable shawl of which description only three had been imported; and Mr. Redding knew where the other two had been bought.

Mr. Redding now pressed me to tell him without any further delay the name of the clerk who had committed the robberies, but I did not do that, preferring rather to wait till the two gentlemen from Cincinnati had returned; and accordingly I requested him, to send for me as soon as that occurred. At the end of two days he sent for me. Luckily I was at home, and went to him immediately. I found his partner and Mr. Phillips there too, they having returned, within an hour only, from Cincinnati; having settled their business there satisfactorily, they were being very cordially received by Mr. Redding.

"Now, Mr. Redding," I began, "I think we have advanced so far that I can tell you all my story."

"One moment," he said to me, and turning to his partner and to Mr. Phillips, he continued: "I have also some good news to tell you. Our friend here has at last been successful. He has discovered the thief, and we have got some of the goods back again." Then turning to me again, he said: "Now tell us all about it, for I have not yet had the least idea who the thief is."

The partner and Mr. Phillips looked at each other in astonishment and called out together: "Yes, yes, let us hear it all."

"But first," said Mr. Phillips, "let us know the name of the rascal, if you have it, and then you can go on with the rest of the story."

"Very well, Mr. Phillips," I replied. "His name is William Bruce, Dealer in Stocks &c., 64 Wall Street, so his card says."

Mr. Redding and his partner looked at each other in bewilderment (because I had told Mr. Redding that it was one of their old clerks). Mr. Phillips also looked very much surprised, but from altogether a different reason. But their bewilderment increased yet more when I turned specially to him, and continued: "But Mr. Bruce has an alias, another name, and that is—Charles Phillips; and you, sir, are the rascal to discover, whom you worked so strenuously with me."

Phillips was deadly pale. He wanted to speak, but his voice forsook him.

"Mr. Phillips," I now continued, "the house in Nineteenth Street has given up its treasures. They are in my keeping, together with the diamonds, pearls, watches, and all the other valuables which were in

the possession of your mistress; who, as your "wife," consented to hand them over to me. You, too, are now my prisoner, without the remotest probability of being able to escape the fullest penalty of the law. And now I wish Mrs. Bruce to be sent for. She, I think, is not a party to this crime, and will be surprised to see again her returned husband in the person of Mr. Charles Phillips, the, for many years past, confidential clerk of this house."

Phillips instantly stretched out his hands to me in a most pathetic manner, and besought me not to send for Mrs. Bruce, adding "It serves me right, I am ready to confess all."—And then he began to cry bitterly.

It is hardly possible to describe the astonishment of Mr. Redding and his partner. Never in my life have I seen such a sudden change in any man as there was in Mr. Redding.

He, who for several weeks past had been quite broken down, stood in full vigor and strength, firm and decided. He spoke very few words, but these were to the point. There was something sublime in his scorn for Phillips.

"You hypocritical scoundrel!" he said, "you detestable whited sepulchre! You most miserable wretch, of all who ever betrayed the confidence reposed in them! I am more annoyed to think that I have allowed myself to be deceived by your canting hypocrisy, than I am at all the loss and anxiety you have inflicted upon me. But, as it is in the Bible you are so fond of quoting "With the measure that you measure withal shall it be meted to you." So it shall be. You thief! You libertine! You hypocritical Sunday School teacher!"

Phillips was silent for a moment; and, as I considered the woman to be innocent of his crimes, I was anxious to know what he would say in reply to my previous remark; but hardened sinner as he was, he still had enough manliness left in him to take all the guilt upon himself. He replied:

"Oh! no, she knows nothing of my offence. She has not misled me, and I have been brought to the position of a criminal only by my wicked affection for her. I am indeed what Mr. Redding called me, a whited sepulchre, and unworthy to have entered even any church. But, if you insist upon it, I have now to suffer the penalty which the law imposes; although I wish that for the sake of my wife and children they would release me, and so enable me to go and begin a new life far away from New York."

After the lapse of a couple of days Mr. Redding's disposition had softened, and he decided to let Phillips go, on condition, never again to return to New York. And thus the thief, the confidential clerk of the establishment, who so long had betrayed the confidence of his principal in the most infamous manner, escaped the punishment he so justly merited.

Now how had Phillips managed to carry on these depredations so long without detection! He was a cunning, crafty fellow. He packed up such goods as he wanted with his own hands, and then sent them out with other things by the carrier. One of the porters remembered that he had often had packages for Mr. or Mrs. Bruce put into his charge. Then Phillips addressed the packages himself to different hotels, to be left "till called for," as though intended for some stranger staying there, and so he sent them away. Then he used to go round and take them himself from the various offices, a matter in which of course he had no difficulty, since knowing the contents of the parcels, he could always identify them.

"A wolf in sheep's clothing" is the title appended to this case by Mr. McWalters' in the collection of experiences which under the general head of "Knots united" is to be found in his notes; and truly an admirably suitable title it is. But how many more such wolves in sheep's clothing are there not even now sneaking about New York!

Wants her Bean to Come.

A young lady poet, who ought to be repressed and who evidently wants to be repressed, thus advertises for her young man:

"Come in the evening, come in the morning, Come when you are looked for, or come without warning; Kisses and welcome you'll find here before you, And the oftener you come the more I'll adore you."

There are several stanzas more of this sort of thing, but we should think these four lines were sufficient to "fetch" the young man right away. If this invitation were addressed to us, we would go before breakfast.

What a Fool Found Out.

The man who answered an advertisement to the following effect, says his curiosity is satisfied:

"If you would learn how to make home happy, send a postage stamp and twenty cents to P. O. Box, No.—, Cincinnati. He did send the necessary cash and soon received the answer:

"If you are as big a fool as we think you must be for giving us your money, you can make home happy by leaving it and going West by yourself."

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New Pension Law.

UNDER an act of Congress approved March 3, 1873, widows of officers who were killed, or died of disease contracted in the service, are now entitled to \$2.00 per month for each of their children.

The guardian of a minor child of a soldier who heretofore only received \$8.00 per month pension is now entitled to \$10.00 per month.

Soldiers who receive invalid pensions can now have their pensions increased to any sum or rate between \$5. and \$15. per month.

Soldiers who have lost their discharges can now obtain duplicates.

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