

Our Strange Lodger.

A DETECTIVE STORY.

CONCLUDED.

MY visit to France, instead of occupying a week, lasted for a fortnight; and during the time I was away Markhallow races took place, the great festival of the year at our little town.

On the third and last day, Mr. Dick Dereham, growing tired of the monotony of road and line, betook himself for a little variety to the race-course. The last race was over, and Dick had just turned his face homeward, and lighted a cigar to beguile the dusty way, when he was accosted by a fashionably dressed individual, who politely requested the favor of a light. Having obtained what he wanted, it was only natural, as they both happened to be going the same way, that the stranger should enter into conversation with Dick respecting the events of the day. Dick was charmed at once with his new acquaintance, who seemed to be thoroughly at home on all matters connected with the turf, and proved by a simple sporting equation how, instead of losing his little bet of eight half-crowns, Dick might just as easily have won as many pounds. In ten minutes they were on the footing of old friends; mutually pleased with each other, and each doing his best to impress the other with the extent and variety of his information and the brilliance of his remarks—a friendly rivalry in which Dick, self-conceited as he was, could not help feeling himself considerably distanced by his affable friend. When they reached the town, nothing would suit Captain Julius—for by that name the stranger had introduced himself—but that they must call in at the first hotel and have a bottle of champagne together. One bottle necessitated another; and by the time the second was half empty, Dick had grown very talkative indeed; and ranging with a loose and glowing tongue from one topic to another, found himself at last, almost to his own surprise, for he could not remember by what pleasant but devious path he had reached that point—dilating to his fashionable friends on the whims, eccentricities, and unaccountable vagaries of that mysterious Mr. Twoshoes. Captain Julius seemed mightily interested in the subject, and cross-questioned Dick upon it in a smiling affable way, and reverted to it again and again whenever Dick felt inclined to wander off into some other mazy streamlet of talk, till there was really nothing more to be learnt. Having finished their wine, they left the hotel, and strolled arm in arm through the streets, now lighted up and thronged with a busy crowd, till they reached the house of Dick's brother-in-law; and then, after a hearty shake of the hand, and an arrangement that Dick should call on the captain at his hotel at eleven the next morning, they separated. Dick, who was still in a somewhat elevated mood, lingered at the door for a few minutes to finish his cigar. While thus standing he heard the Minster clock strike ten, and put his hand to his pocket to draw out his watch. But there was no watch left for him to find,—his pocket had been neatly and dextrously picked of his gold repeater, value twenty-five guineas. Quite sober by this time, and in a very queer humor, Master Dick walked down to the police-station to give notice of his loss. How Captain Julius would laugh at him in the morning for being such a greenhorn as to allow his pocket to be picked! If he could only induce the captain to go fishing with him, he would let him see that with a rod and line he knew a thing or two—that in matters piscatorial he was not altogether a novice! But when he reached the hotel on the following morning, the captain had flown, leaving a message that he had been telegraphed for, and obliged to depart by the six a. m. train; but that he hoped to revisit Markhallow in the course of a few weeks, and would not then fail to hunt up his friend Mr. Dereham. Dick returned home in a pensive mood, and spent a melancholy day in the manufacture of artificial flies.

A certain evening, about a week later, found Dick enjoying his cigar as usual on the step outside the door. Mr. Twoshoes was from home on some mysterious errand; my wife and her aunt were drinking tea at a neighbor's in the next street; the servant was supposed to be gone to see her mother, but was in reality taking a pleasant ramble among the lanes with her "young man," so that Dick had the whole establishment to himself. The shadows were creeping up the streets, and Dick was thinking about turning in, when his attention was drawn to the peculiar movements of a stranger on the other side of the way. Dick had noticed him a minute or two before, staring very earnestly at the house; had then seen him move slowly down the street; then slowly return in a sidling purposeless sort of way; and now for the second time he had plighted himself directly opposite the house, and seemed to be taking a silent mental photograph of it. While Dick was still looking at him, and wondering what he could possibly be about, the stranger, in a cautious manner, beckoned him to approach; and on his repeating the movement, Dick quitted the steps and

plunged across the street, by no means

pleased at receiving so undignified a summons. The stranger was a burly, whiskered man, with shifty quick-glancing eyes, and a mouth that seemed purposely formed for the imbibition of strong waters; his voice being a basso profundo, with a slight chronic wheeze in the lower notes.

"Your name is Richard Dereham, is it not?" he said, seizing Dick by a button as soon as the latter got within arm's length.

"I have reason to believe that it is," answered Dick, "but would not like to take long odds on the point."

"None of your chaff, young gentleman, if you please. All I want is a few straightforward answers from you. Attend. Is there not living in the same house with you an individual who goes by the name of Mr. James Twoshoes?"

Dick rubbed his nose; he began to feel interested.

"I cannot answer any of your questions," he said, "till I know what your object is in asking them; and something more about you."

"If you must know, you must," said the other. "My name is Jibble, I am, in Inspector Jibble, of the Metropolitan Detective Force, and I am not asking these questions without a purpose in view."

"Now I can answer you," said Dick. "Mr. James Twoshoes does live in the house opposite."

"Good. Have you noticed anything out of the common, anything eccentric or mysterious in the conduct or habits of this Mr. Twoshoes?"

"I have," replied Dick, eagerly. And without further questioning he told all that he knew, suspected, and surmised respecting the unhappy Twoshoes.

"Quite coincides with the information I have received from head-quarters," remarked the inspector, patronizingly, when Dick had finished. "One or two more questions, and I have done. Is Mr. Twoshoes in his rooms at the present time?"

"He is not—he will probably not be home for several hours; in fact, there's no one in the house at present—and that reminds me that I have left the front door open."

"No one in the house at present, eh?" said the inspector, musingly, as he balanced himself on his heels, and jingled the loose cash in his pocket. "Now, Mr. Dereham, I'll be frank with you. I have in my pocket at the present moment a warrant for the apprehension of James Twoshoes.—You may well start. He is one of the cleverest and most thorough-paced rogues going. I have been on his track for a long time, but he is such a slippery customer that I have hitherto had nothing tangible to go upon. I have never been able to take him in the fact. But I have got something certain to work on at last, and I should have taken him this morning had I not received a telegram from head-quarters requesting me to wait till to-morrow. This little delay will probably enable us to secure the whole gang of forgers with which he is connected, and of which he is the chief. They are all to meet at a certain place at noon to-morrow. At present Twoshoes is out—a fact, by the way, of which I am perfectly aware before I came to see you; and what I now want is to make an investigation of his rooms before he returns, for I have reason to believe that among his papers there is a list of names of which I am exceedingly desirous of having a private view before going on my little expedition to-morrow. Will you, therefore, my good Mr. Dereham, just wait outside the door for a few minutes, while I proceed up-stairs and do my duty? and should Mr. T., arrive in the meantime, you must contrive to detain him for a minute or two, till I have time to get out of the way. I must really compliment you, my young friend, on your powers of discrimination in this matter. You were not deceived by the specious pretences of this clever rogue!"

They walked across the road together, and Dick stationed himself outside the door, while Jibble went about his little perquisition up-stairs. He was not away more than five minutes, and Dick was still on the watch when he came down.

"Just as I expected," he said. "Most valuable information. Must say good-bye for the present. Shall be happy to take a glass of wine with you when this little affair is over. In the meanwhile, silence—secrecy!" and with an affable wave of the hand the burly inspector lumbered rapidly down the street, and was quickly lost to view.

In a happy frame of mind, and perfectly satisfied that he had just rendered an important service to society, Dick lighted another cigar, and still maintained his post of observation outside the door. His thoughts had gone wandering off by degrees towards a certain young lady, and he felt himself getting quite sentimental a most unusual frame of mind for him, when, much to his surprise, he saw the cheery figure of Mr. Twoshoes bearing down on him from the other side of the way. "How innocent he looks—the cunning old fox!" murmured Dick to himself. "He little thinks how neatly the trap is baited for him. I durst wager five yellow boys that he won't look quite so cheerful to-morrow night at this time."

Mr. Twoshoes was evidently in a hurry, for, without pausing, he bade Dick a plea-

sant good night, and then passed rapidly up-stairs to his own room, where Dick heard him the next minute striking a light.

"Mr. Richard Dereham," called Mr. Twoshoes, gently over the balusters, a minute or two afterwards, "will you oblige me by stepping up-stairs?"

Wondering greatly, Dick complied, though not without some hesitation. Mr. Twoshoes was slowly rubbing his chin with one hand as Dick entered the room. His eyebrows were contracted, and there was a perplexed look on his face, such as Dick had never noticed before.

"Are you aware, Mr. Dereham, that during my absence this afternoon my room has been rifled of various articles belonging to me—among other things, of a set of gold studs, a silver lever watch, and a portemonnaie containing two five-pound notes?"

"Rifled?" gasped Dick. "Really I was not aware of it!"

"I don't suppose you were. But are you aware whether any one, not an inmate of the house, has had access, either directly or indirectly, to this room while I have been out?"

"As far as my knowledge goes, there has only been one person here beyond the ordinary inmates of the house."

"And who may that one person have been?"

"Inspector Jibble, of the London police."

"Inspector Jibble! And what might be the fellow's business in my room?"

"Why, to tell the truth, he said he had got a warrant out for your apprehension, and came up to search the room for some document or other which he wanted."

"Mr. Twoshoes gave a long, low whistle. "And where were you, Mr. Dereham, during the time this person was in my room?"

He looked very grim as he asked this question, and Dick quaked in his shoes as he replied, "Outside the door—keeping watch, in fact."

"Just so—to prevent his being disturbed. Neat, by Jove! uncommon neat! Perhaps it will be as well to see how you yourself have fared, Mr. Dereham. Oblige me by taking the light, and leading the way into your own room."

Dick complied in fear and trembling; and on looking round his room, found that a ring and a breastpin had vanished—the only available property there.

"Then you have contrived to save your watch?" said Mr. Twoshoes.

In sorrow and humiliation Dick related the story of his meeting with Captain Julius, and how he had taken more wine than was good for him, and had had his pocket picked as he came home through the crowd.

"And served you right, too!" was the comment of Mr. Twoshoes. "Here comes Mrs. Starling. It will be as well to inquire whether she has lost anything."

Search was made down-stairs, which resulted in the discovery that our few silver spoons and forks had been taken; as also, sorrow of sorrows!—the silver teapot, my rich uncle's wedding gift.

"A tolerably clean sweep," remarked Mr. Twoshoes, when the search was ended; "and—I say it again—an uncommon neat stroke of business! As for you, sir," turning to the disconcerted Dick, "like the man in the play, you may ask your friends to write you down an ass. You have been most transparently duped, and if you had been the sole sufferer, it would only have taught you a useful lesson. Your particular friend, Captain Julius, was without doubt a member of the swell mob; he it was who took your watch; and the impudent rascal who came here to-night was probably instructed by him, and will hand over to him a fair share of the plunder."

"I see it all now! What a fool I have been!" groaned poor Dick. "But you, sir," turning on Mr. Twoshoes—"had it not been for your mysterious going on—had you only acted like any other reasonable man—this would never would have happened."

"So long as my good friends, Mr. and Mrs. Starling, are satisfied with their lodger, I do not recognize your right to interfere in my concerns. As, however, my business in this neighborhood will be over in a few days, I will at once give Mrs. Starling that explanation which, under the circumstances, she has a right to expect; and which you, Mr. Dereham, are at liberty to listen to, if you think well to do so. Know, therefore, all persons whom it may concern, that I, James Twoshoes (though whether that is my real name or not does not in the least matter), am a member of the Metropolitan Detective Force—not a sham officer like your friend Jibble, Mr. Dereham; that I came down here to hunt out a certain nest of forgers, whose handiwork we had traced to this part of the country, without being exactly able to lay our fingers on the rogues themselves; that, as a natural consequence, a certain amount of secrecy and mystery were essential to my plan, which plan, I am happy to say, has proved completely successful. And now, Mr. Dereham, you and I had better step down to the police station, and furnish the details of the robbery. Perhaps we may succeed in tracing the rascals. Anyhow, we have been charmingly sold."

Mr. Twoshoes had quite recovered his

good humor by breakfast time next morning, and could afford to laugh as heartily as any one at his mishap; but Dick was nowhere to be found. He had, in fact, risen with the lark, and set out for London by the first train; and from that day to this we have never seen his face in Markhallow.

Of Captain Julius and his confederate, it is only necessary to say that they were captured some three months later, in consequence of a second robbery in which they again acted as partners; and that they finally met with the reward which their peculiar talents merited so well.

Too Fond of Books.

Samuel Alexander, of Rensselaer Institute, Troy, N. Y., was arrested for stealing, and tells the cause of his fall in the following narrative: The students do not lodge in the Institute, and Alexander had a room by himself over a book store. Late one night while sitting at his window he dropped a gold ring, which struck on a roof below. It was a young lady's gift, for the young student was a favored and flirting beau, and he disliked to lose it. So he took the cord from his bed, made a sort of knotted ladder, and climbed down to the roof. The ring was found, and just as he was going to reascend he caught a glimpse through the crack of a shutter of the lighted but uninhabited interior of the book store. He saw costly volumes lying around and the sight ruined him. He pried open the shutter and went in. There he found scientific instruments used in his studies of the handsomest patterns. Making up a bundle of what pleased him most, he climbed back into his own room with the plunder. His adventure kept him awake all night, but on visiting the store next day he found that the theft had not been discovered. His own social position would in any event have protected him from suspicion. He might have stopped here, had not his love of female approbation asserted itself. The stolen books made excellent gifts for his fair acquaintances, who belonged to families of high social position. Three more midnight visits to the book store were made, and Alexander soon got a reputation for princely liberality and elegant taste.—The book store folks, too, finally connected that liberality with their losses, and a patient investigation exposed the amateur thief.

Loaded with Grape Shot.

Mr. Lewis C. Austin, of N. Y., received from Adams Express Company, some time since, a wooden box about two feet long and eighteen inches wide, from Boston.—The only man he knew there, was one who was not inclined to pay him a debt of \$10,000, and he concluded that the box contained an infernal machine. He thought of the matter over night, and the next day he concluded to turn it over to the police. It was taken to the Thirty-fifth street police, and one of the sergeants proceeded to investigate. Procuring a chisel he cautiously cut a small hole in one end of the cover, and seeing nothing but sawdust inserted his fingers to feel for the contents, close to the side and top was something about as large as a lead pencil which seemed to run all the way around the box. The Sergeant's hair began to stand on end. He had found the fuse. But he continued his work with the chisel, though with an unsteady hand. At length the cover was removed without an explosion, and a removal of the sawdust disclosed fifteen bunches of grapes, averaging in weight three pounds each. Mr. Austin received two bunches.

Another chapter is added to the romance of the life of Luther Bryant, the old coin dealer, noticed week before last. He has instituted a suit against a pretty blonde of 18 named Lizzie Neugebauer for \$3,000 worth of furniture, carpets, ornaments, and other things, which, he alleges, she wrongfully detains. Bryant, who is 74 years old, it appears, has long known and fancied the girl, and foolishly thought she would join fortunes with him.

Out of friendship she visited him while he was in the Tombs, and he, in a fit of generosity, drew up a paper and giving her all his furniture and effects, and gave her \$25 to pay the expense of removing them. When he was released he called upon her and bluntly asked her to marry him, and because she repeatedly refused to so tie the future to the past, he has brought suit to recover his gifts, and has attached them. In the schedule given to the sheriff 520 articles of furniture, carpets, etc., are enumerated, among them the costly album, silk umbrellas, and other things which were stolen at the time he says the gold was carried away.

An Accommodating Judge.

Mary Glennon, a bad woman, was arraigned in the police court at Boston, and the judge was just writing down her sentence "four months at the house of industry," when Miss Glennon sung out, "Make it six." "Six months, then, Mr. Clerk," quietly replied his honor. To this Mary answered, "Oh! don't be mean, judge, give us eight, and we'll call it square."—The judge said six months was all that he could give, and he was sorry.

Professional Cards.

J. E. JUNKIN, Attorney-at-Law, New Bloomfield, Perry Co., Pa. Office—Next door to the residence of Judge Junkin.

M. MARKEL, Attorney-at-Law, New Bloomfield, Perry Co., Pa. Office with Chas. A. Barnett, Esq., Centre Square, adjoining Mortimer's Store.

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W. M. SPONSER, Attorney-at-Law, Office—adjoining his residence, on East Main street, New Bloomfield, Perry Co., Pa.—32 1/2

CHAS. A. BARNETT, Attorney-at-Law, New Bloomfield, Perry Co., Pa. Office—adjoining Mortimer's Store.—32 1/2

J. BAILY, Attorney at Law, New Bloomfield, Perry Co., Pa. Office opposite the Court House, and two doors east of the Perry County Bank. Refers to B. McIntire, Esq. June 27, 1871.

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