

Chronicles of Martin Hewitt by ARTHUR MORRISON

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At Windsor & Weekes' information was not difficult to obtain. The houses were destined to come down very shortly, but a week or so ago an office and a cellar in one of them was let temporarily to Mr. Westley. He brought no references--indeed, as he paid a fortnight's rent in advance, he was not asked for any, considering the circumstances of the case. He was about opening a London branch for a large



Hewitt Continued to Pass It Around the Bolt.

firm of elder merchants, he said, and just wanted a rough office and a cool cellar to store samples in for a few weeks, till the permanent premises were ready. There was another key, and no doubt the premises might be entered, if there were any special reason for such a course. Martin Hewitt gave such excellent reasons that Windsor & Weekes' managing clerk immediately produced the key and accompanied Hewitt to the spot.

"I think you'd better have your men handy," Hewitt remarked to Plummer, when they reached the door, and a whistle quickly brought the men over. The key was inserted in the lock and turned, but the door would not open; the bolt was fastened at the bottom. Hewitt stooped and looked under the door. "It's a drop bolt," he said. "Probably the man who left last night let it fall loose and then banged the door so that it fell into its place. I must try my best with a wire or a piece of string."

A wire was brought, and with some manoeuvring Hewitt contrived to pass it round the bolt and lift it, little by little, steadying it with the blade of a pocket knife. When at length the bolt was raised out of the hole, the knife was slipped under it, and the door swung open.

They entered. The door of the little office near the door stood open, but in the office there was nothing except a board a couple of feet long, in a corner. Hewitt stepped across and lifted this, turning downward face toward Plummer. On it, in fresh white paint on a black ground, were painted the words:

BULLER CLAYTON, LADDS & CO. TEMPORARY ENTRANCE.

Hewitt turned to Windsor & Weekes' clerk and asked: "The man who took this room called himself Westley, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"You--an man, clean shaven and well dressed?"

"Yes, he was."

"I fancy," Hewitt said, turning to Plummer, "I fancy an old friend of yours is in this--Sam Ginter?"

"What the--Sam Ginter?"

"I think it's possible he's been Mr. Westley for a bit, and somebody else for another bit. But let's come to the cellar."

"Windsor & Weekes' clerk led the way down a steep flight of steps into a dark underground corridor where they believed their way with many successful matches. Sam the clerk made a turn to the right, and as the party passed the turn there came from the end of the passage before them a fearful yell. "Help! help! Open the door! Let me out, for God's sake!" came the voice, sick and hoarse, from inside. "Let me out!"

"All right!" Hewitt shouted. "We have come for you; wait a moment." The voice sank into a sort of a sobbing cry, and Hewitt tried several boxes from his own bunch on the padlock. None fitted. He drew from his pocketbook the wire he had used for the bolt of the front door, straightened it out, and made a sharp party at the end. "Hold a match close," he ordered shortly, and one of the men obeyed. Three or four attempts were necessary, and several different bendings of the wire were effected, but at length the door opened.

From within a shabby figure fell forward among them, fainting, and knocked out the matches. "Hullo!" cried Plummer, "hold up. Who are you?"

"Let's get him into the open," said Hewitt. "He can't tell you who he is for a bit, but I believe he's Laker."

"Laker? What here?"

"I think so. Steady up the steps--don't bump his head. He's pretty sore already, I expect."

Truly the man was a pitiable sight. His hair and face were caked in dust and blood, and his finger nails were torn and bleeding. Water was sent for at once and brandy.

"Well," said Plummer hastily, looking first at the unconscious prisoner and then at Hewitt, "but what about the swap?"

"You'll have to find that yourself," Hewitt replied. "I think my share of the case is about finished. I only act for the Guarantee society, you know, and if Laker's proved innocent--"

"Innocent? How?"

"Well, this is what took place, as near as I can figure it. You'd better undo his collar, I think--this is the man. 'What I believe has happened is this: There has been a very clever and carefully prepared conspiracy here, and Laker has not been the criminal, but the victim.'"

"Robbed himself, you mean? But how? Where?"

"Yesterday morning, before he had been to more than three banks--here, in fact."

"But, then, how? You're all wrong. He was in the whole round and did all the collection. And then

Palmer's office and all, and the umbrella; why--"

"Don't raise his head," Hewitt said. "And one of you had best fetch a doctor. He's had a terrible shock." Then turning to Plummer he went on: "As to how they managed the job, I'll tell you what I think. First, it struck some very clever person that a deal of money might be got by robbing a walk clerk from a bank. This clever person was one of a clever gang of thieves--perhaps the Hoxton gang--as I think I hinted. Now, you know quite as well as I do that such a gang will spend any amount of time over a job that promises a big haul, and that for such a job they can always command the necessary capital--there are many most respectable persons living in good style in the suburbs whose chief business lies in favoring such ventures and taking the chief share of the proceeds. Well, this is their lay, carefully and intelligently carried out. They watch Laker, and serve one of you he takes, and his habits. They find that there is only one of the clerks with whom he does business that he is much acquainted with, and that this clerk is in a bank which is commonly known as Laker's bank. The sharpest man among them--and I don't think there's a man in London could do this as well as young Sam Ginter--studies Laker's dress and habits just as an actor studies a character. They take this office and cellar, as we have seen, because it is next door to a bank whose front entrance is being altered--a fact which Laker must know from his daily visits. The smart man, Ginter, let us say, and I have other reasons for believing it to be he--makes up precisely like Laker, false mustache, dress and everything, and waits here with the rest of the gang. One of the gang is dressed in a blue coat with brass buttons like a bank porter in Buller's bank. Do you see?"

"Yes, I think so. It's pretty clear now."

"A confederate watches at the top of the court, and the moment Laker turns in from 'Cornhill--having already been mind, at the only bank where he was so well known that the disguised thief would not have passed muster--as soon as he turns in from Cornhill, I say, a signal is given, and the band points to the white letters--'is hung on the hook in the door-post. The sharp porter stands beside it, and as Laker approaches, says: 'This way, sir, this morning. The front way, and I have other reasons for believing it to be he--makes up precisely like Laker, false mustache, dress and everything, and waits here with the rest of the gang. One of the gang is dressed in a blue coat with brass buttons like a bank porter in Buller's bank. Do you see?'"

"(To Be Continued.)"

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"A woman, if she is inclined to talk too much, should time herself just as she would take medicine, and allow herself only just so many minutes of talk. Now, the only reason a woman who is troubled with insomnia came into my office for treatment. She had been taking drugs. She told me about her troubles, and her tongue ran like the clapper of a farmhouse bell at dinner time. I thought she never would let up. Finally I stopped her."

"Do you talk as much as that very often, madam?" I said.

"She drew herself up and said in an offended tone: 'This is no laughing matter, doctor. I am very tired, and I am worn out from lack of sleep, and though my family do all things possible to divert my mind, and I make calls and see people all the time, I get steadily worse. I am worn to a shadow, why, last summer--"

"And so her tongue rattled on until I again had to stop her."

"Now, listen to my prescription, I said. 'Go home and keep still. Don't talk. Time your tongue wagging. At breakfast allow your husband to read the newspaper without interruption."

"After breakfast sew a little in your own room."

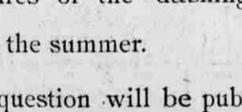
"Read as much as you please. Walk long distances if you are strong enough. Do not make any calls."

"At dinner talk all you please, but spend a quiet evening. If you go to the theater do not talk much during the play. Exercise a little self-denial."

"It will be hard at first, for you are a chatterbox, but routine work, which is quietly done, nobody notices him particularly--it is the bills they fellow is locked up in the cellar here, right at the end of the underground corridor, where he can never make himself heard in the street, and where

ply completes the walk in the character of Laker, beginning with Buller, Clayton & Ladd's, just around the corner. It is so long but routine work, which is quietly done, nobody notices him particularly--it is the bills they fellow is locked up in the cellar here, right at the end of the underground corridor, where he can never make himself heard in the street, and where

From Within a Figure Fell Forward.



next him are only the empty cellars of the deserted house next door. The thieves shut the front door and vanish. The rest is plain. Ginter, having completed the round, and bagged some \$15,000 or more, spends a few pounds in a tourist ticket at Palmer's as a blind, being careful to give Laker's name. He leaves the umbrella at Charing Cross in a conspicuous place, where it is sure to be seen, and so completes his false trail."

"Then who are the people at 197 Hackworth road?"

"The capitalist lives there--the financier, and, probably, the directing spirit of the whole thing. Merston's name he goes by there, and I've no doubt he cuts a very imposing figure in chapel every Sunday. He'll be worth picking up--this isn't the first thing he's been in. 'I'll warrant.'"

"But--but what about Laker's mother and Miss Shaw?"

"Well, what? The poor women are nearly out of their minds with terror and shame, that's all, but, though they never desert him, they've been following us about with a feeble, vague sort of hope of being able to baffle us in some way or help him if we caught him, or something, poor things. Did you ever hear of a real woman who'd desert a son or lover merely because he was a criminal? But here's the doctor. When he has attended to him will you and your men take Laker home? I must hurry and report to the Guarantee society, I think."

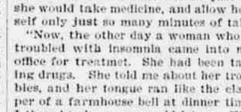
"But," said the perplexed Plummer, "where did you get your cue? You must have been a tip from someone, you know. You can't have done it by clairvoyance. What gave you the tip?"

"The Daily Chronicle."

"The Daily Chronicle. Just take a look at the agony column in yesterday morning's issue and read the message to 'Yob--to Ginter, in fact. That's all."

(To Be Continued.)

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The story in question will be published in daily instalments and will continue six days.



So, whether the game be fish or men, 'The bait be kisses, worms or blinches-- The place at home, by sunny noon, Or tennis ground at evening's hush-- 'Tis the old game the serpent played With Mother Eve in Eden's bowers, And Adam's sons and daughters all Will love the sport to time's last hours. That's fishing. --American Angler.

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