

# The Bishop and the Burglar.

My lord the Bishop of Leomster stood in the pretty garden of Oaklands at midnight and sniffed complacently at the fresh night air. It was the second week of his visit to his old college chum, Dr. Gibbs, a medical man with a straggling practice in a small rural district, and the absence of pomp and ceremony was grateful to his wearied nerves.

With a sigh of content the Bishop walked majestically back to the house. He turned the handle of the door, and to his astonishment he found it was locked. He then remembered that he had left the key of the patent lock on the study table.

The long French windows of the drawing room were also fast, and the Bishop knitted his brows in thought. Then he smiled softly, and, walking round the house, stopped at the study window. He struck a match and looked at the sash, where upper and lower halves met, and from his waistcoat produced a penknife.

Inserting the broad blade between the sashes, he pushed carefully. The catch swung back with a little click, and the Bishop pushed up the window.

He had barely lifted one portly leg over the sill when a strong hand gripped him from behind by the nape of his neck.

"Get along in with yer," hissed a voice in his ear, "and don't forget there's this be'ind yer."

The Bishop, sitting perilously on the windowsill, felt something round and cold against his neck.

"Now, then, in with yer," threatened the voice in low tones.

The Bishop gave a little jump to the floor, and was brought up standing by the hand on his collar. He felt, rather than saw, a heavy figure climbing after him. Twisting himself painfully, he half turned and saw—a policeman.

"Oh," said the Bishop, with a little gasp, "it's you, constable, is it? D'you know I thought you were a burglar, and I suppose you took me for one?"

"Shut it," said the policeman, in a low, curt voice.

"Really, officer, I think you forget to whom you are talking."

"Oh, chuck it," was the brutal reply. A set of bony knuckles dug deep into his neck.

The Bishop wriggled impatiently. "It appears to me you're going beyond your duty, constable."

With a twist the policeman edged him on to a chair and shone a bull's-eye into his face.

"You're makin' me cross, that's what you are," whispered the officer. "Where's the rest of the family? Gorn to bed, or ain't they at home?"

The Bishop tried to push the bull's-eye away.

"I think you must have been drinking," he said, shortly, "and I feel very sorry Dr. Gibbs is not at home."

"Oh, Gibbs ain't at 'ome," said the policeman, slightly raising his voice; "and where's 'is man?"

"If there were any one at all in the house," said the indignant prelate, "I should ring the bell and have you ejected."

"Open yer mouth so wide agen an' I'll shove my bull's-eye down yer throat," threatened the policeman. "Did I 'ear yer say there was no one in the 'ouse at all?"

"No one," snorted the Bishop, wriggling in his chair. "Dr. Gibbs was suddenly called away, and as he doesn't expect to be back till morning he took his chauffeur with him. And now, my good man," he added, conciliatingly, "having convinced you, I hope, that I am not a burglar, will you please go?"

The policeman laughed slightly.

"'Ere, I've had enough messin' about; get up and light the gas, and if yer up to any monkey tricks I'll blow yer brains out."

This appalling threat from an officer of the law well-nigh asphyxiated the Bishop, and he started forward indignantly, almost breaking his teeth on the muzzle of the revolver.

"Now, then, get on with it."

With mingled feelings of terror and wrath the Bishop groped on the mantel-piece and finally lit the gas.

The light shown on a tall, clean-shaven constable holding a lantern and a revolver.

The loneliness of the country beat, the Bishop reflected, had perhaps affected this poor fellow's brain, and he must be humored.

"There we are," he said cheerily; "and now wouldn't you like to come and see the greenhouse?"

It would be easy, he thought, to lure the man into the conservatory, lock him in, and then lustily toll the firebell in the turret, thus rousing the neighbors.

"Oh, take a perch," said the policeman. "Sit down," he explained, impatiently.

"Now, then," he continued, removing his helmet and showing a round,

close-cropped head, "sure there ain't no one else in the 'ouse?"

"Not a soul," groaned the Bishop, miserably.

"That's all right, then. 'Ere, what are them things?"

The Bishop looked down at his gaiters.

"Oh, I always wear them. We all do, you know," he stammered, wondering if a heavy book suddenly thrown down would disable the visitor.

"Oh, do yer? Well, what are yer when yer at 'ome?"

"I'm a bishop."

"A bishop, are yer? I've never met a bishop afore." A broad grin stole over the policeman's face.

"Then, me lord bishop, where's the silver?"

He leaned over and leered at the Bishop, who returned the gaze timidly, till the horrid truth dawned upon him.

"Then you," he gasped, "must be a burglar, not a policeman?"

"Policeman, me elbow!" was the contemptuous reply. " 'E's asleep in the ditch, with my old coat spread over 'im, and no 'elmet; with a quarter o' special Scotch inside 'im and somethin' in it to make 'im sleep."

"Then why," asked the Bishop, instincts of law and order prevailing over terror—"why are you masquerading in his coat?"

"Why am I wot?"

"I say, why are you masquerading in his coat?"

"I don't know nothin' about that, but I know as I've got 'is coat on 'cause it suits me, see? And if you can't see I can't 'elp yer."

"Well, I think it's a disgraceful thing, your coming here disguised as a policeman and expecting me to—"

"That's jest it. Wot I'm expectin' yer to do is to 'elp me find the silver; then I shall tie you up nice and tidy with a bit of 'andkerchief in yer mouth. Arfter which I shall 'op off, and if any one sees me in the road they'll say, 'Good evenin', constable; fine night, ain't it?' and there we are. Now, then, gov'nor, let's get to work."

"No!" almost shouted the Bishop, clutching the arms of the chair; "I will not. I absolutely refuse. Now, once again, will you please go?"

He folded his hands as if to finally dismiss the subject.

The simplicity of the appeal moved the burglar to derisive laughter. He picked up the lantern and moved to the door.

"But," said the Bishop, horrified, "you don't think I'm going with you to help you rob—"

"I don't think—I know!"

The burglar stepped up and gripped him by the collar.

"Now, then, you know the way and I don't; so 'urry up!"

From underneath his coat the man extracted a green baize bag, which he pushed into the Bishop's hands. Urged by that dreadful grip, the Bishop groped his way into the hall and turned to the right.

"Dinin' room," whispered the voice at his back. "'Ere, why don't yer look where yer goin'?"

The Bishop retorted sharply that he had no wish to break his neck.

"Gettin' saucy, are yer? Try that." The butt of the revolver descended sharply on the episcopal head.

The Bishop made a frenzied dash, and almost fell into the dining room.

Quickly the burglar locked the door, and, threatening his prisoner with death if he moved, shone his bull's-eye round the room with professional swiftness.

"'Old the sack, mate," he said at length.

"I decline to be a party to your disgraceful proceedings."

"Gettin' nasty, are yer? I'll talk to yer in 'arf a minute. 'Allo! what's this—whisky? May as well 'ave a drop."

He looked for a glass.

"Now, I know what you're thinkin'," said the burglar, helping himself liberally; "you're thinkin' as I shall take a drop too much, see?—and then you'll 'ave a look in. Not me, gov'nor. I never drink more than once between meals, so now yer know."

Nevertheless, he swallowed the raw whisky without a shudder. Under its influence he developed a cheery vein.

"Ah," he said, unbuttoning the unaccustomed tunic, "this is what I call 'omely. Now, gov'nor, give us a song. Plenty of time afore your pals come back. I feel as if I must be 'umored."

"A song!" expostulated the Bishop.

"What nonsense! I haven't sung for years."

"Then it's about time yer tried. Give us somethin' soothin' and not too loud."

"Well, do you know, I don't think it would be safe," said the Bishop, with a low cunning that almost shamed him; "somebody might hear."

"Artful old cove, you are," at length said the burglar, smiling vacuously; "but blowed if I don't think you're right."

The Bishop involuntarily groaned, hastily correcting himself with a yawn.

"Ain't yer enjoying yerself?" was the suspicious inquiry.

"Oh, yes; quite so, thanks."

"Then why don't yer laugh? I never saw any one look so miserable. You're disappointed at not singing that song, that's wot's the matter with you."

The burglar's mood had changed, and the Bishop noted with alarm that the faster the whisky disappeared the more saturnine and exacting became the odious visitor.

"Go on, 'urry up and laugh," demanded the burglar; "settin' there lookin' as if you 'ad the toothache; 'urry up, laugh!"

He emphasized the order by a thump of the revolver on the table.

The Bishop smiled in a nervous, fleeting manner.

"If yer makes them faces at me," said the burglar, sourly, "d'yer know wot'll 'appen? I shall put a bullet through yer and bury yer in the flowerbed. Gimme the whisky!"

"But you asked me to laugh," pleaded the Bishop, wondering whether an open cheque would persuade the scoundrel to depart.

"Told yer to laugh, did I?" said the burglar, throwing one leg over the other. "Then suppose yer make me laugh for a change. D'yer know any funny stories?"

"Not one," was the prompt and discouraging reply.

The burglar leaned over and picked up the revolver.

"A funny story, I said, and it's got to be one as'll make me laugh, see?"

The Bishop's soul sank within him, and in his anguish he could only think of the multiplication table.

"That story don't seem to be comin' along," was the grim reminder.

Then in a muddled way there came to the flustered Bishop the indistinct memory of something about a curate and an egg.

"Well," he began hesitatingly, with one eye on the window, "there was once a curate—"

"Where?" asked the burglar, densely.

"—and he went to stay with a bishop—"

"Along o' you?"

"No, no, another bishop."

"One o' your pals, I s'pose. All right, get on with it."

"And in the morning he had an egg—"

"Wot for?"

"Why, for breakfast, of course," continued the Bishop, crossly, wondering what on earth came next.

"Well, why didn't yer say so? And wot I want to know is w'en I'm goin' to laugh!"

"Yes, yes, I'm coming to that. Now, the egg was not a good one, but the curate was too polite to say so—"

"'E must 'ave been a cuckoo—beg pardon, go on."

"Suddenly the bishop looked over and said—"

"'Arf a minute—'oo's egg was it?"

"The bishop's—no, the curate's of course. Well, the bishop leaned over and said, 'I'm afraid your egg is not a good one.'"

The raconteur paused and gaped inwardly for the curate's repartee.

The burglar looked up with a start and gazed ferociously at the unhappy Bishop, who continued hurriedly:

"Well, no, my lord," replied the curate; "I'm afraid it's rather bad in parts."

The burglar looked at him with a blank face, then he drew the whisky over, helped himself liberally and addressed the bishop more in tones of sorrow than anger.

"That's wot I call takin' a great liberty," he said, solemnly. "I arsk you in a friendly way to tell me a funny story"—he lurched slightly forward and recovered himself—"and that's wot 'appens. Take off yer boots."

The Bishop moved nervously in his chair and tried to avoid the focus of the unsteady revolver.

"Boots!" came the command. "Take 'em off! Yer've got to dance ter me now. Dance, d'yer 'ear?"

"But—"

"Take 'em off!"

With tears of vexation in his eyes the Bishop stooped and unlaced his boots.

"An' now, inter the middle of the room and dance to me like—like a bootiful fairy," he added, as an encouraging smile.

"I absolutely refuse."

"Absolu—" The burglar tried to repeat the word, and thinking better of it, went on: "Like a bootiful fairy, and if yer say another word yer'll 'ave to take off yer leggin's, too."

With sick despair in his heart the Bishop moved into the middle of the room and stood timorously in his stockinged feet.

"Like a bootiful fairy," was the repeated order, emphasized by the waving revolver.

Then the Bishop gave two little

hops, feeling that he was degraded forever.

"Not a bit like a fairy," said the burglar, shaking his head solemnly. "Music, that's wot yer want, music."

He tried to whistle, but, failing ignominiously, endeavored to renew his powers with whisky.

"Not a bit o' good. You whistle yourself."

The Bishop huskily whistled the first few bars of a voluntary and prouetted laboriously.

"That's better," said the burglar, approvingly. "Now we'll 'ave it just a little bit 'igher."

Only the thought of a distant family prevented the Bishop throwing himself on the waving revolver and risking sudden death.

"Try agen and don't stop, and keep on whistlin'."

Setting his teeth, and feeling that suicide were preferable, the Bishop bounded into the air and curved his legs into unseemly attitudes.

"Oncore! Oncore!"

The dancer, in desperation, thought of throwing himself backward through the window, when, out of the corner of one eye, he saw a motorcar gliding up the drive.

With a wild joy in his heart he pirouetted to the table. Then almost with one movement he seized the water bottle, sent it crashing through the window, and with a wild shriek for help flung himself on the burglar.

When, a few seconds later, Dr. Gibbs and his chauffeur, bursting open the window, dashed into the room, they saw my lord the Bishop of Leomster sitting astride a man in policeman's uniform and belaboring him with a bread basket.

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"Now," said the Bishop, grimly, "we'll put this gentleman into the car and drive him to the police station—if you have one anywhere near this benighted spot, Gibbs."

The burglar, who was firmly tied to a chair, looked up and grinned.

"Lemme go, gov'nor, and I'll say nothin' about the dancin'."

"Don't let him speak to me, Gibbs," commanded the Bishop, "or I shall strike him, bound as he is."

He nevertheless held a hurried consultation with Dr. Gibbs, and the chauffeur, having received some hurried instructions, left the room.

In a few moments the man returned with the village policeman, looking very much ashamed of himself and wearing an old black jacket.

"I didn't know nothin' till I woke up, sir," he explained to Gibbs.

An exchange of garments was soon made, and then Gibbs turned to the chauffeur.

"Now, Ellis, put this man in the car"—he pointed to the burglar—"drive him out thirty miles as hard as you can, and then put him down—there'll be no traffic at this time in the morning."

"So long," said the burglar, as he was being led away. "If you was a bit slimmer, gov'nor, you'd dance better. Now, then, 'Oratio, lead on!"

The Bishop looked earnestly at the breadknife and then turned away with clenched fists.

When the policeman had sidled out of the room, Gibbs turned to his friend:

"Now, then, old man, tell us all about it."

Next Sunday the little village church was crowded to hear the Bishop of Leomster read the lessons.

To this day the congregation cannot understand why Dr. Gibbs suddenly took up his hat and left, while the prelate flushed and coughed over a verse which stated that there was much dancing.—Frank Howel Evans, in the Stand Magazine.

## WORDS OF WISDOM.

Pity melts the mind to love.—Dryden.

Eaten bread is soon forgotten.—Irish.

He is lifeless that is faultless.—Latin.

Whom the cap fits, let him wear it.—Latin.

He serves all who dares be true.—Emerson.

Good and bad make up a city.—Portuguese.

The handsomest flower is not the sweetest.—Spanish.

No one is a fool always; everyone sometimes.—French.

Let him who is just become justified still more.—Bible.

Riches serve a wise man, but command a fool.—French.

Nothing overcomes passion sooner than silence.—French.

Much water runs by the mills while the miller sleeps.—Danish.

Seasons may roll, but the true soul burns the same where'er it goes.—Moore.

Habit may be either a blessing or a curse, therefore one should be careful in forming one's habits.—Times-Union.

He who is his own monarch contentedly sways the scepter over himself, not envying the glory to the crowned heads of the earth.—Sir Thomas Browne.

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## An Animal Sanctuary.

About a mile away from Ahmedabad, in the Bombay presidency, there is a small lake called Kankaria, where all animal life is strictly preserved. The fishes are almost tame, and will come close to the edge to be fed, and a turtle will take food out of one's hand.—Strand Magazine.

## Saved Old Lady's Hair.

"My mother used to have a very bad humor on her head which the doctors called an eczema, and for it I had two different doctors. Her head was very sore and her hair nearly all fell out in spite of what they both did. One day her niece came in and they were speaking of how her hair was falling out and the doctors did it no good. She says, 'Aunt, why don't you try Cuticura Soap and Cuticura Ointment?' Mother did, and they helped her. In six months' time the itching, burning and scaling of her head was over and her hair began growing. To-day she feels much in debt to Cuticura Soap and Ointment for the fine head of hair she has for an old lady of seventy-four."

"My own case was an eczema in my feet. As soon as the cold weather came my feet would itch and burn and then they would crack open and bleed. Then I thought I would flee to my mother's friends, Cuticura Soap and Cuticura Ointment. I did for four or five winters, and now my feet are as smooth as any one's. Ellisworth Dunham, Hiram, Me., Sept. 30, 1909."

## Old, But Ever New.

A man recently died in the west and his relatives telegraphed the florist to make a wreath with the inscription, "Rest in Peace," on both sides, and if there is room, "We shall meet in heaven." It was a handsome piece that turned up at the funeral, and the ribbon bore the inscription, "Rest in peace on both sides and if there is room we shall meet in heaven."

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