

Mignon's Political Instinct

By BELLE MANIATES
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Ruth's retinue of ex-schoolmates were paying her a visit at the executive mansion, the home of her uncle, Stephen Thorn, governor of the state, likewise guardian of Ruth. Sometimes it was difficult for him to determine which of these positions presented the more intricate complications.

It was a source of delight to the others that even Mignon felt the influence of their host's demeanor and refrained in his presence from indulgence in frivolous conversation.

To Mignon it was a matter for regret. She fortified herself continually by impressive reminders that she was not the people, for the people, by the people, even as she, and that a governor was not so much anyway, but the gubernatorial dignity hung round him still, and her forced courage oozed away whenever he addressed her.

Presently there emerged from the executive mansion a quaint little figure clad in an old fashioned flower sprigged skirt, a lace mantilla, a neat straw bonnet and a lace edged veil.

The capitol was only a short distance from the executive mansion, and Mignon met few persons. The guards who stood in the broad corridor as she entered did not vouchsafe her a second glance as she directed her to the executive office.

Mignon did not follow his directions. Ruth had told her how she gained his private apartment when she was in a hurry and did not have time to ring the telephone secretary and messenger. She slipped into the "governor's parlor" and boldly opened the door from there into his private office.

The governor chanced to be alone, and he turned in surprise to see who was so bold in intrusion.

"Did you wish to see me, madam?" he asked in courteous manner, placing a chair for the visitor.

"You are the governor?" asked a queer, high pitched voice.

"I am," he admitted.

"I came to see if you would give me a position in the capitol. I am the widow of a soldier—and I pay taxes."

"A soldier's widow?" asked the governor, with interest. "In what war did your husband serve, civil or Spanish-American?"

There was a moment's hesitation before Mignon decided to locate "her husband" in the civil war.

"What was his company, and in what regiment did he enlist?"

Schemes of Thieves

TRICKS OF THOSE WHO OPERATE IN JEWELRY STORES.

The Way One Place Was Completely Cleared Out—How Shop Windows Are Broken—Getting a Safe That Was Bolted to the Flooring.

A number of jewelers were dining together with the cigars the talk turned on jewelry thieves and their methods.

The first story was told of an individual who was seen looting about the plate front window of a jewelry store. No particular attention was paid to the man at the time, but the clerks recalled the incident after the robbery.

In this instance the man appeared a number of times in front of the store. One evening soon after dark there was a sudden crash, and a robber was actively engaged in scooping in jewels with a hooked stick.

In thirty seconds he was done and away. Bystanders stood as if petrified until the man struck out at a run. Then the store people and the bystanders realized what had occurred.

The man dropped his bag. The pursuers stopped and seized the bag. They returned to the store with the bag in high glee, remarking incidentally that there was no need in chasing the thief because here were the goods.

The proprietor of the store and all the clerks had followed, but having farther to go than the crowd, were about to give up. In this instance the man appeared a number of times in front of the store.

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Silas of Hebron Valley

By M. J. PHILLIPS
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John G. Davidson, with his cleanly shaven, comely face, light blue eyes and firm jaw, might have been, from appearances, an actor. He might have been mistaken for a popular preacher or a professional baseball player.

He had the air of good living and prosperity which the man of the world is supposed to wear.

All guests at his profession, however, would probably have gone wide of the mark. He was senior member of the firm of Davidson & Cole of Wall Street, a firm which bore a rather shady reputation.

Even now he was hurrying home from a hunting trip in Maine, which had been cut short by the tip, irregularly received, of a big "killing" to be made the next day on the Stock Exchange.

In other words, Davidson & Cole were preparing to garner several hundred thousand dollars because the Hillmans and the Silvers were about to be crushed in their struggle for the control of the New York and Western. Each faction held about one-third of the stock.

Speculators and investors held the other third, mostly in small blocks. The Silvers needed the road, it was said, to stifle its chances of becoming a dangerous competitor. The Hillmans desired it for those very possibilities.

The stock was down to 37, but, according to the information gleaned by the brokers, the Silvers were prepared to pay 150 if necessary for the shares constituting the balance of power.

A policeman on duty said that after the proprietor and clerks of the store ran for the departing thief a neatly dressed gentleman, with all the airs of a member of the firm, gave directions to two other men to get the stuff out of the windows and told him the officer that this was being done as a precaution against theft while the store was broken.

In some first class stores there is a regular danger signal arranged, and the men are drilled each week. When the danger gong sounds one man takes his place at the door, another at the telephone to send word to the police, another with running qualities makes for the door in readiness to pursue, and so on.

Among other stories told were some relating to the tricks and devices of the jewelry thieves. The robber often works at night or sometimes during the day by cutting out a disk of glass near where some costly goods are shown.

He may reach in and seize the goods, and be off before detected if he is quick. Sometimes he has a long instrument hidden under his coat, so that he can reach in and pick up a watch. Often again he uses a simple stick with a slightly turned end, looking into a ring.

The process of crushing in a plate front during the intervals of the patrol of the police, at the same time making no noise, is done by pasting cloth or heavy paper on the glass. A wood mallet is used, the hammer end being securely bound up in a heavy woolen fabric stuffed with excelsior or kindred material. With this soft headed mallet it is possible to bang away noiselessly at the glass until the pane begins to crumble.

Unless the plate is usually thick an opening can be made without much trouble.

In recent years jewelry thieves, like bank robbers, have rented quarters near the city, and have lived there long enough to study the situation. In one case a room was hired over a jewelry store and entrance effected to the store by means of a rope ladder dropped from the window of the room to a window leading to a hall in the store portion.

THE PALACE OF DOOM

STRANGE LEGEND OF A MYSTERIOUS STATUE IN ROME.

It pointed the way to a scene of silent and dazzling splendor—the Fate of the Man Who Solved the Enigma of the Finger Message.

There stood in Rome many ages ago a beautiful marble statue the mystery of which attracted the attention of all the wise men from far and near. Nobody could remember when it had been erected, and nobody knew what it meant.

It was the figure of a woman, tall, straight and supple. She stood erect, with her right arm outstretched, her mantle falling in graceful folds about her figure, on her face a look, half smile, half frown, lurid, yet appealing, but always holding the observer by a strange feeling that it possessed mystery, glory and horror.

But even all that, written so clearly in the mystic signs that art uses, might have been overlooked by the people had it not been for a more material puzzle presented by the statue. On the third finger of the outstretched hand was written in unfading letters, "Strike here." And therein lay the mystery.

Years came and went, and wise men puzzled their brains to find the secret. Seers from faroff lands came to Rome, attracted by the statue, and still it stood, mute, cold, inexplicable.

One day a young man stood before it. He had grown up with the idea of solving the mystery, and each day since he was a little child he had come for a few moments and stood silently gazing at the strange countenance.

He had learned to love the face, the wise lips that looked as if they might part and tell the secret that ages had yearned to know, but through these ages only he had been sincere in his search. Effortful through all disappointments he had gained strength and wisdom, and now as he stood before the statue the sun, halfway up the eastern sky, shone full upon the image.

A strange thrill passed through the man, and, looking in the direction indicated by the pointing finger, he saw, some yards away, the shadow of the outstretched hand on the ground. He gave a low cry, and, after noting the spot, went to the place.

That night at midnight he went to the place and began to dig in the ground where the shadow of the hand had fallen. A long time he worked, until his spade struck something hard. Then his zeal increased, and, clearing a space, he saw beneath him a trapdoor, with a great stone ring. Grasping the ring he pulled open the door and started back, dazzled, for a flood of light burst upon him from out of the depths.

Quickly recovering, the young man looked again and beheld a wide marble staircase descending from the trapdoor. Throwing down his spade he passed through the door, down the steps and found himself in a vast hall. The floor of this room was of marble, pure white, while the walls and ceiling were of the same material in many colors. The huge pillars upholding the vast dome shone like alabaster. Rare paintings hung upon the walls, and rich rugs lay strewn upon the floor.

In the center of the room a fountain stood. The water in its basin was as pure as crystal, but not a ripple stirred its surface, and no pleasant lapping claimed the ear as it does when water falls from an inch, for, though the fountain was apparently perfect, no water rose from it to fall again.

On seats running around this silent fountain were many men in rich brocades and costly fur robes. Lifelike they looked, but to the touch they were as marble. It was as if in the midst of life death had come and petrified these beings in mockery.

Arched on tables and benches were scattered piles of gold and precious stones. Delicate enameled vases and swirled inlaid with gems added their wealth to the place.

But rarest of all the gems was a great carbuncle, which stood in a corner of the room and from which came the sole light by which the place was relieved from darkness. In the corner opposite to this stone stood an archer, his bow bent, his arrow on the string, aimed at the carbuncle. On his bow, shining with reflected light, were the words:

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THE MORNING NEWS.

No. 11 E. Mahoning St., DANVILLE, PA.

Published Every Morning Except Sunday at

Subscription 6 cents Per Week.

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