JENNIE BAXTER: JOURNALIST

By ROBERT BARR.

IV.—The Search for the Girl.

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Jennie Baxter reached her hotel as quickly as a fast pair of horses could take her. She had succeeded, yet a few rebellious tears of disappointment trickled down her cheeks now that she was alone in the semi-darkness of the carriage. She thought of the eager young man left standing disconsolately on the curb, with her glove dangling in his hand, and she bitterly regretted that unkind fortune had made it possible for her to meet him only under false pretenses. One consolation was that he had no clew to her identity, and she was resolved never, never to see him again; yet, such is the contrariness of human nature, no sooner was she refreshed by this determination than her tears flowed more freely than ever.

She felt that she was as capable of enjoying scenes like the function she had just left as any who were there; as fitted for them by education, by personal appearance or by natural gifts of the mind as the most welcome of the duchess's guests; yet she was barred out from them as effectually as was the lost peri at the closed gate. Why had capricious fate selected two girls of probably equal merit and made one a princess while the other had to work hard night and day for the mere right to live? Nothing is so ineffectual as the little word "why;" it asks, but never answers.

With a deep sigh Jennie dried her tears as the carriage pulled up at the portal of the hotel. The sigh dismissed all frivolities, all futile "whys." The girl was now face to face with the realities of life, and the events she had so recently taken part in would soon blend themselves into a dream.

Dismissing the carriage and walking briskly through the hall, she said to the night porter:

"Have a hansom at the door for me in fifteen minutes."

"A hansom, my lady?" gasped the astonished man.

"Yes." She slipped a sovereign into his hand and ran lightly up the stairs. The porter was well accustomed to the vagaries of great ladies, although a hansom at midnight was rather beyond his experience. But if all womankind tipped so generously they might order an omnibus and welcome, so the hansom was speedily at the door.

Jennie roused the drowsy maid who was sitting up for her.

"Come," she said, "you must get everything packed at once. Lay out my ordinary dress and help me off with this."

"Where is your other glove, my lady?" asked the maid, busily unhooking and untying.

"Lost. Don't trouble about it. When everything is packed get some sleep and leave word to be called in time for the 8 o'clock express for Paris. Here is money to pay the bill and for your fare. It is likely I shall join you at the station, but, if I do not, go to our hotel in Paris and wait for me there. Say nothing of our destination to any one and answer no questions regarding me should any one ask. Are you sure you understand?"

"Yes, my lady."

A few moments later Jennie was in the cab, driving through the nearly deserted streets. She dismissed her vehicle at Charing Cross, walked down the Strand until she got another, then proceeded direct to the office of the Daily Bugle, whose upper windows formed a row of lights, all the more brilliant because of the intense darkness below.

She found her shorthand writers waiting for her. The editor met her at the door of the room reserved for her and said, with visible anxiety on his brow: "Well, what success?"

"Complete success," she answered shortly.

"Good!" he replied emphatically. "Now I propose to read the typewritten sheets as they come from the machine, correct them for obvious clerical errors and send them right away to the compositors. You can perhaps glance over the final proofs, which will be ready almost as soon as you have finished."

"Very well. Look closely to the spelling of proper names and verify titles. There won't be much time for me to go carefully over the last proofs."

"All right. You furnish the material and I'll see that it's used to the best advantage."

Jennie entered the room, and there at a desk sat the waiting stenographer. Over his head hung the bulb of the electric light, its green circular shade throwing the white rays directly down on his open notebook. The girl was once more in the working world, and its bracing air acted as a tonic to her overwrought nerves. All longings and regrets had been put off with the Paris-made gown which the maid at that moment was carefully packing away. The order of nature seemed reversed. The butterfly had abandoned its gorgeous wings of gauze and was habited in the somber working garb of the grub. With her hands clasped behind her the girl paced up and down the room, pouring forth words, 200 to the minute and something more. Silently one stenographer, tiptoeing in, replaced another, who as silently departed, and from the adjoining room the subdued, nervous, rapid click, click, click of the type-writing machine invaded without disturbing her consciousness. Toward 3 o'clock the low drone of the rotaries in the cellar made itself felt rather than heard. The early edition of the country was being run off. Time was flying—danced away by nimble feet in the West End, worked away by nimble fingers in Fleet street (well named thoroughfare.) Play and work, work and play, each supplementing the other, the acts of the frivolous recorded by the industrious.

When a little more than three hours' dictating was finished, the voice of the girl, now as hoarse as it had formerly been musical, ceased. She dropped into a chair and rested her tired head on the deserted desk, closing her wearied eyes. She knew she had spoken between 15,000 and 20,000 words, a number almost equal in quantity to that contained in many a book which had made an author's fame and fortune, and all for the ephemeral reading of a day—of a forenoon more likely—to be forgotten when the evening journals came out!

Shortly after the typewriter gave its final click the editor came in.

"I didn't like to disturb you while you were at work, and so I kept at my own task, which was no light one, and thus I appreciate the enormous strain which has been on you. Your account is magnificent, Miss Baxter; just what I wanted and never hoped to get."

"I am glad you like it," said the girl, laughing somewhat dismally at the croaking sound of her own voice.

"I need not ask you if you were there, for no person but one who was present and one who knew how to describe could have produced such a vivid account of it all. How did you get in?"

"In where?" murmured Jennie drowsily. She found difficulty in keeping her mind on what he was saying.

"To the Duchess of Chiselhurst's ball."

"Oh, getting in was easy enough; it was the getting out that was the trouble."

"Like prison, eh?" suggested the editor. "Now, will you have a little wine or something stronger?"

"No, no. All I need is rest."

"Then let me call a cab. I will see you home if you will permit me."

"I am too tired to go home. I shall remain here until morning."

"Nonsense. You must go home and sleep for a week if you want to. Rouse up! I believe you are talking in your sleep now."

"I understand perfectly what you are saying and what I am doing. I have work that must be attended to at 8. Please leave orders that some one is to call me at 7 and bring a cup of coffee and biscuits or rolls or anything that is to be had at that hour. And please don't trouble further. I am very thankful to you, but will express myself better later on."

With this the editor had to be content and was shortly on his way to his own well-earned rest. To Jennie it seemed but a moment after he had gone that the porter placed coffee and rolls on the desk beside her, saying, "Seven o'clock, Miss!"

The coffee refreshed the girl, and as she passed through the editorial rooms she noted their forlorn, disheveled appearance, which all places show when seen at an unaccustomed hour, their time of activity and bustle past. The rooms were littered with torn papers, wastebaskets overflowing, silent, scrappy, abandoned in the gray morning light, which seemed intrusive, usurping the place of the usual artificial illumination and betraying a bareness which the other concealed. Jennie recognized a relationship between her own up all night feeling and the spirit of the deserted rooms.

At the railway station she found her maid waiting for her, surrounded by luggage.

"Have you got your ticket?"

"Yes, my lady."

"I have changed my mind and will not go to Paris just now. Ask a porter to put those trunks in the left luggage office and bring me the keys and the receipt."

When this was done and money matters had been settled between them, Jennie gave the girl £5 more than was due to her and saw her into the carriage, well pleased with the reward. A hansom brought Jennie to her flat, and so ended the exhausting episode of the Dutchess of Chiselhurst's ball.

Yet an event, like a malady, leaves numerous consequences in its train, extending—who shall say how far?—into the future. The first symptom of these consequences was a correspondence, and, as there is no reading more dreary than a series of letters, their substance merely is here given.

When Jennie was herself again she wrote a long letter to the Princes Von Steinheimer, detailing the particulars of her impersonation and begging pardon for what she had done, while giving her reasons for doing it. But, perhaps because it did not occur to her, she made not the slightest reference to Lord Donal Stirling. Two answers came to this—one a registered packet containing the diamonds which the princess had previously offered to her, the other a letter from the princess's own hand. The glitter of the diamonds showed Jennie that she had been speedily forgiven, and the letter corroborated this. In fact, the princess upbraided her for not letting her into the secret earlier. "It is just the jolly kind of thing I should have delighted in," wrote her Highness. "And then, if I had known, I should not have sent that unlucky telegram. It serves you right, and I am glad you had a fright. Think of it coming in at this inopportune moment, just as telegrams do at a play. But, Jennie, are you sure you told me everything? A letter came from London the day before yours arrived, and it bewildered me dreadfully at first. Don Stirling, whom I used to know in Washington (a conceited young fellow he was then; I hope he has improved since), wrote to say that he had met a girl at the Duchess of Chiselhurst's ball who had a letter inviting the Princess Von Steinheimer to the festivity. He thought at first she was the princess (which is very complimentary to each of us), but found later that she wasn't. Now, he wants to know, you know, and thinks, quite reasonably, that I must have some inkling who that girl was, and he begs me by our old friendship, etc. He is a nice young man, if a trifle confident (these young diplomatists think they hold the reins of the universe in their hands), and I would like to oblige him, but I thought first I would hear what you had to say about it. I am to address him care of the embassy at St. Petersburg, so I suppose he's stationed there now. By the way, how did he get your glove, or is that merely brag on his part? He says that it is the only clew he has, and he is going to trace you from that, it seems, if I do not tell him who you are and send him your address. Now, what am I to say when I write to St. Petersburg?"

In reply to this Jennie sent a somewhat incoherent letter, very different from her usual style of writing. She had not mentioned the young man in her former communication, she said, because she had been trying to forget the incident in which he was the central figure. In no circumstances could she meet him again, and she implored the princess not to disclose her identity to him even by a hint. She explained the glove episode exactly as it had happened; she was compelled to sacrifice the glove to release her hand. He had been very kind in helping her to escape from a false position, but it would be too humiliating for her ever to see him or speak with him again.

When this letter reached the schloss at Meran, the princess telegraphed to London, "Send me the other glove," and Jennie sent it. A few days later came a further communication from the princess.

"I have puzzled our young man quite effectually, I think, clever as he imagines himself to be. I wrote him a semi-indignant letter to St. Petersburg and said I thought all along he had not really recognized me at the ball, in spite of his protestations at first. Then I saw how easily he was deluded into the belief that I was some other woman, and so the temptation to further cozen him was irresistible. Am I not a good actress? I asked him. I went on to say, with some show of anger, that a quiet flirtation in the gallery was all very well in its way, but when it came to a young man rushing in a frenzy bareheaded into the street after a respectable married woman who had just got into her carriage and was about to drive away it was too much altogether, and thus he came into possession of the glove. As the remaining glove was of no use to me, I had great pleasure in sending it to him, but warned him that if the story of the gloves ever came to the ears of my husband I would deny having either owned or worn them. I should like to see Don's amazed look when the other glove drops out of my letter, which was a bulky package and cost ever so much in postage. I think the sending of the glove was an inspiration. I fancy his lordship will be now completely deluded and that you need have no further fear of his finding you."

Jennie read this letter over once or twice, and in spite of her friendly feeling for the princess there was something in the epistle which jarred on her. Nevertheless she wrote and thanked the princess for what she had done and tried to forget all about everything pertaining to the ball. However, she was not allowed to erase all thoughts of Lord Donal from her mind, even if she could have accomplished this task unimpeded. There shortly arrived a brief note from the princess, inclosing a letter the young diplomatist at St. Petersburg had written.

"Dear Princess (it ran), I am very much obliged to you for the companion glove, as I am thus enabled to keep one and use the other as a clew. I see you not only know who the mysterious young lady is, but that you have since met her, or at least have been in correspondence with her. If the glove does not lead me to the hand, I shall pay a visit to you in the hope that you will atone for your present cruelty by telling me where to find the owner of both glove and hand."

With regard to this note the princess had written: "Don is not such a fool as I took him to be. He must have improved during the last few years. I wish you would write and tell me exactly what he said to you that evening."

But with this wish Jennie did not comply. She merely again urged the princess never to divulge the secret.

For many days Jennie heard nothing more from any of the actors in the little comedy, and the episode began to take on in her thoughts that air of unreality which remote events seem to gather around them. She went on with her daily work to the satisfaction of her employers and the augmenting of her own bank account, although no experience worthy of record occurred in her routine for several weeks. But a lull in a newspaper office is seldom of long duration.

One afternoon Mr. Hardwick came to the desk at which Jennie was at work and said to her:

"Cadbury Taylor called here yesterday and was very anxious to see you. Has he been in again this afternoon?"

"You mean the detective? No; I haven't seen him since that day at the Schloss Steinheimer. What did he want with me?"

"As far as I was able to understand, he has a very important case on hand—a sort of romance in high life—and I think he wants your assistance to unravel it. It seems to be baffling him."

"It is not very difficult to baffle Mr. Cadbury Taylor," said the girl, looking up at her employer with a merry twinkle in her eye.

"Well, he appears to be in a fog now, and he expressed himself to me as being very much taken with the neat way in which you unraveled the diamond mystery at Meran. So he thinks you may be of great assistance to him in his present difficulty and is willing to pay in cash or in kind."

"Cash payment I understand," said the girl. "But what does he mean by payment in kind?"

"Oh, he is willing that you should make a sensational article out of the episode. It deals entirely, he says, with persons in high life—titled persons—and so it might make an interesting column or two for the paper."

"I see, providing, of course, that the tangled skein was unraveled by the transcendent genius of Mr. Cadbury Taylor," said the girl cynically.

"I don't think he wants his name mentioned," continued the editor. "In fact, he said that it wouldn't do to refer to him at all, for if people discovered that he made public any of the cases intrusted to him he would lose his business. He has been working on this problem for several weeks, and, I believe, has made little progress toward its solution. His client is growing impatient. So it occurred to the detective that you might consent to help him. He said, with a good deal of complacency, that he did not know you were connected with the Bugle, but he put his wits at work and has traced you to this office."

"How clever he is!" said Jennie, laughing. "I am sure I made no secret of the fact that I work for the Daily Bugle."

"I think Mr. Taylor will have no hesitation in agreeing with you that he is clever. Nevertheless, it might be worth while to see him and to assist him if you can, because nothing so takes the public as a romance in high life. Here is his address. Would you mind calling on him?"

"Not at all," replied the young woman, copying the street and number in her notebook.

Next day Jennie Baxter drove to the address the editor had given her, and she found Mr. Cadbury Taylor at home in somewhat sumptuous offices on the first floor. Fastened to his door was a brass plate, which exposed to public view the carven words:

"Cadbury Taylor, Private Inquiry Agent."

The detective was quite evidently very glad to see her.

"I intended to call to-day at the office of the Bugle on the chance of finding you," he said, "but I am delighted to meet you here, because we can talk without fear of interruption. Has the editor told you anything of this case?"

"Very little. He didn't seem to know much about it himself."

"It was impossible for me to go into full particulars with him. I could only give him a hint or two in order to convey to him some idea of the interest which the mystery, when solved, might have from a newspaper standpoint. Of course I wished to gain his assistance so that he might, perhaps, persuade you to help me in this matter."

"He seems to be quite willing that I should lend what aid I can," said Jennie, "but I must have full particulars before I promise. I have a good deal of work on hand, and unless this case is interesting from a newspaper point of view, as you have just said, I don't think that I should care to touch it."

"Oh, you will find it of great interest!" the detective assured her, with much eagerness. "It relates to the sudden and hitherto unexplained disappearance of a woman. That of itself is absorbing, for I may tell you, as one having large experience, that there is nothing more difficult to do, but of course it was not my business to tell Lord Donal that."

"So the glove has not been of much assistance to you? Tell me, then, what you have done, and perhaps I shall be better able to advise you."

"We have done everything that suggested itself. We traced the alleged princess from theHotel Bristol in Paris to Claridge's in London. I have a very clever woman in Paris who assisted me, and she found where the gloves were bought and where the dress was made. Did I read you Lord Donal's description of the lady's costume?"

"No; never mind that. Go on with your story."

"Well, Claridge's provided carriage, coachman and footman to take her to the ball, and these returned with her some time about midnight. Now, here a curious thing happened—the lady ordered a hansom as she passed the night porter and shortly after packed off her maid in the cab."

"Her maid!" echoed Jennie.

"Yes; the maid came down in ordinary dress shortly after, deeply veiled, and drove away in the hansom. The lady paid her bill next morning and went to the 8 o'clock Paris express, with carriage and pair, coachman and footman. Of course it struck me that it might be the lady herself who had gone off in the cab, but a moment's reflection showed me that she was not likely to leave the hotel in a cab at midnight and allow her maid to take the carriage in state next morning."

"That doesn't appear reasonable," murmured Jennie. "You made no attempt, then, to trace the maid?"

"Oh, yes, we did! We found the cabman who took her from Claridge's, and he left her at Charing Cross station, but there all trace of her vanishes. She probably left on one of the late trains—there are only a few after midnight—to some place out in the country. The lady took a first-class ticket to Paris and departed alone next morning by the 8 o'clock continental express. My assistant discovered her and took a snap shot of her as she was walking down the boulevard. Here is the picture."

The detective handed Miss Baxter an instantaneous view of one of the boulevards taken in bright sunshine. The principal figure in the foreground Jennie had no difficulty in recognizing as her own maid, dressed in that chic fashion which Parisian women affect.

"She seems to answer the description," said Jennie.

"So I thought," admitted the detective, "and I sent the portrait to Lord Donal. See what he has written on the back."

Jennie turned the picture over, and there under the inscription, "H.—Supposed photo of the missing woman," was written in a bold hand, "Bosh! Read my description of the girl. This is evidently some Paris lady's maid."

"Well, what did you do when you got this picture back?" said Jennie.

"I remembered you and went to the office of The Daily Bugle. This brings us to the present moment. You have now the whole story, and I shall be very pleased to listen to any suggestions you are good enough to offer."

The girl sat where she was for a few moments and pondered over the situation. The detective, resting his elbow on the table and his chin in his hand, regarded her with eager anticipation. The more Jennie thought over the matter the more she was amazed at the man before her, who seemed unable to place two and two together. He had already spoken of the account of the ball which had appeared in The Daily Bugle, of its accuracy and excellence. He knew that she was a member of The Bugle staff, yet it had never occurred to him to inquire who wrote that description. He knew, also, that she had been in quest at the Schloss Steinheimer when the invitation to the ball must have reached the princess. These facts were so plainly in evidence that the girl was afraid to speak lest some chance word would form the connecting link between the detective's mind and the seemingly palpable facts. At last she looked up, the color coming and going in her cheeks, as Lord Donal had so accurately described it.

"I don't think I can be of any assistance to you in this crisis, Mr. Taylor. You have already done everything that human ingenuity can suggest."

"Yes, I have—everything that my human ingenuity can suggest. But does nothing occur to you? Have you no theory to put forward?"

"None that would be of any practical advantage. Is Lord Donal certain that it was not the princess herself whom he met? Are you thoroughly convinced that there was really an impersonation?"

"What do you mean, Miss Baxter?"

"Well, you met Prince Von Steinheimer. What did you think of him?"

"I thought him an overbearing bully, if you ask me. I can't imagine what English or American girls see in those foreigners to cause them to marry them. The prince was very violent—practically ordered me out of the castle, spoke to his father-in-law in the most peremptory manner and I could easily see the princess was frightened out of her wits."

"A very accurate characterization of his highness, Mr. Taylor. Now, of course, the complexion of a woman at a ball! Of course she put it on for the occasion."

"Of course," agreed the detective. "But that merely shows you how deeply in love he is. Lord Donal is quite a young man. He came up to this room to consult with me, and of course he doesn't know the difference between a complexion developed in a Surrey lane and one purchased in New Bond street."

"Still, the blushing would seem to indicate that the complexion was genuine," retorted Jennie, apparently quite unflattered by Mr. Taylor's agreement with the theory she herself had put forward.

"Oh, I don't know about that! I believe modern science enables an enameled woman to blush at will. I would not be sure of it, because it is outside of my own line of investigation, but I have understood such is the case."

"Very likely," assented Jennie. "What is that you have at the bottom of your packet?"

"That," said the detective, drawing it forth and handing it to the girl, "is her glove."

Jennie picked up the glove—which, alas, she had paid for and only worn on one occasion—and smoothed it out between her fingers. It was docketed "G—. Made by Gaunt et Cie, Boulevard Hausmann; purchased in Paris by one alleging herself to be the Princess Von Steinheimer."

"You have found out all about it," said Jennie, as she finished reading the label.

"Yes; it is our business to do so, but the glove has not been of much assistance to us."

"How did he say he became possessed of the glove?" asked the girl innocently. "Did she give it to him?"

"No; he tore it from her hand as she was leaving him in the carriage. It seemed to me not a very gentlemanly thing to do, but of course it was not my business to tell Lord Donal that."

"So the glove has not been of much assistance to you? Tell me, then, what you have done, and perhaps I shall be better able to advise you."

"We have done everything that suggested itself. We traced the alleged princess from theHotel Bristol in Paris to Claridge's in London. I have a very clever woman in Paris who assisted me, and she found where the gloves were bought and where the dress was made. Did I read you Lord Donal's description of the lady's costume?"

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"Well, you met Prince Von Steinheimer. What did you think of him?"

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"A very accurate characterization of his highness, Mr. Taylor. Now, of course, the princess, being a woman—and a young woman—would naturally be very anxious to attend the Duchess of Chiselhurst's ball, wouldn't she?"

"One would think so."

"And, as you have just said, she has a bear of a husband, a good deal older than herself, who does not in the least care for such things as the function to which the princess was invited. Is it not just possible that the princess actually attended the ball, but, for reasons of her own, desired to keeep the fact of her presence there a secret? And you must remember that Lord Donal Stirling had not seen the princess for five years."

"For five years!" said the detective sharply. "How did you learn that, Miss Baxter?"

"Well, you know," murmured the girl, with a gasp, "that he met her last in Washington, and the princess has not been in America for five years; so, you see—"

"Oh, I was not aware that he had met her in America at all! In fact, Lord Donal said nothing much about the princess. All his talk had reference to this lady who impersonated her."

Jennie leaned back in her chair, closed her eyes for a moment and breathed quickly.

"I am afraid," she said at last, "that I do not remember with sufficient minuteness the details you have given me to be able to advise. I would merely suggest that Lord Donal met the princess herself at the Duchess of Chiselhurst's ball. The princess naturally would wish to mislead him regarding her identity, and so, if he had not met her for some time—say two years, or three years, or five years, or whatever the period may be—it is quite possible that the princess has changed greatly in the interval, and perhaps she was not reluctant to carry on a flirtation with the young man, your client. Of course she could not allow it to go further than the outside of the door of the Duke of Chiselhurst's town house, for you must remember there was her husband in the background, a violent man, as you have said, and Lord Donal must have thoroughly angered the princess by what you term his rudeness in tearing off her glove, and now the princess will never admit that she was at the ball, so it seems to me that you are wasting your time in a wild goose chase. Why, it is absurd to think, if there had been a real disappearing woman, that you, with all your experience and all your facilities, should not have unearthed her long ago. You said at the beginning that nothing was more difficult than to disappear. Very well, then, why have you been baffled? Simply because the princess herself attended the ball and there has been no disappearing lady at all."

The detective, with great vehemence, brought down his fist on the table.

"By Jove!" he cried, "I believe you are right. I have been completely blinded, the more so that I have the clew to the mystery right here under my own eyes."

He fumbled for a moment and brought forth a letter from his pile of documents.

"Here is a note from St. Petersburg, written by Lord Donal himself, saying the princess has sent him the companion glove to the one you have now in your hand. He says he is sure the princess knows who her impersonator was, but that she won't tell, and, although I had read this note, it never struck me that the princess herself was the woman. Miss Baxter, you have solved the puzzle."

"I should be glad to think so," replied the girl, rising, "and I am very happy if I have enabled you to give up a futile chase."

"It is as plain as daylight," replied the detective. "Lord Donal's description fits the princess exactly, and yet I never thought of it before."

Jennie hurried away from the detective's office happy in the belief that she had not betrayed herself, although she was not blind to the fact that her escape was due more to good luck than to any presence of mind of her own, which had nearly deserted her at one or two points in the conversation. When Mr. Hardwick saw her he asked how much space he would have to reserve for the romance in high life. But she told him there was nothing in the case, so far as she could see, to interest any sane reader.

Here matters rested for a fortnight. Then the girl received an urgent note from Cadbury Taylor, asking her to call at his office next day promptly at 4 o'clock. It was very important, he said, and he hoped she would on no account disappoint him. Jennie's first impulse was not to go, but she was so anxious to learn what progress the detective had made in the case, fearing that at last he might have got on the right track, that she felt it would be unwise to take the risk of not seeing him. If his suspicions were really aroused, her absence might serve as an excuse to confirm them. Exactly at 5 o'clock next afternoon she entered his office and found him, to her relief, alone. He sprang up from his table on seeing her and said in a whisper: "I am so glad you have come. I am in rather a quandary. Lord Donal Stirling is in London on a flying visit. He called here yesterday."

The girl caught her breath, but said nothing.

"I explained to him the reasons I have for believing that it was actually the Princess Von Steinheimer whom he met at the Duchess of Chiselhurst's ball. He laughed at me; there was no convincing him. He said that theory was more absurd than sending him the picture of a housemaid as that of the lady he had met at the ball. I used all the arguments which you had used, but he brushed them aside as of no consequence, and somehow the case did not appear to be as clear as when you propounded your theory."

"Well, what then?" asked the girl.

"Why, then I asked him to come up here at 4 o'clock and hear what an assistant of mine would say about the case."

"At 4 o'clock!" cried the girl in terror. "Then he may be here at any moment."

"He is here now; he is in the next room. Come in, and I will introduce you, and then I want you to tell him all the circumstances which lead you to believe that it was the princess herself whom he met. I am sure you can place all the points before him so tersely that you will succeed in bringing him around to your own way of thinking. You will try, won't you, Miss Baxter? It will be a very great obligement to me."

"Oh, no, no, no!" cried the girl. "I am not going to admit to any one that I have been acting as a detective's assistant. You had no right to bring me here. I must go at once. If I had known this I would not have come."

"It won't take you five minutes," pleaded Cadbury Taylor. "He is at this moment waiting for you. I told him you would be here at 4."

"I can't help that. You had no right to make an appointment for me without my knowledge and consent."

Taylor was about to speak when the handle of the inner room turned.

"I say, Detective," remarked Lord Donal in a voice of some irritation, "you should have assistants who are more punctual. I am a very busy man and must leave for St. Petersburg to-night, so I can't spend all my time in your office, you know."

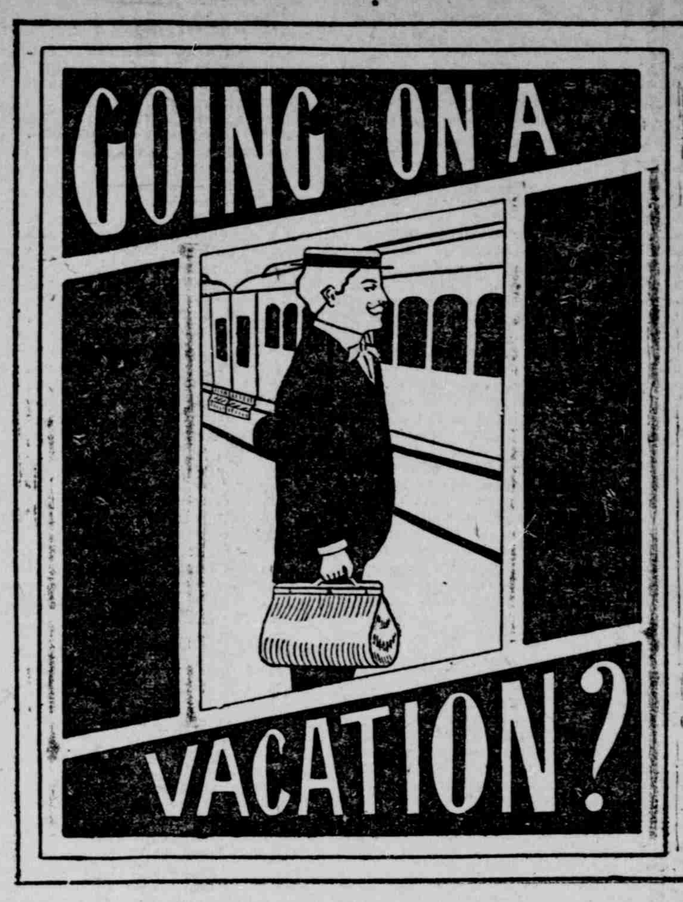
"I am sure I beg your pardon, my lord," said the detective with great obsequiousness. "This young lady has some objections to giving her views, but I am sure you will be able to persuade her"—

He turned, but the place at his side was vacant. The door in the hall was open, and the girl had escaped as she saw the handle of the inner door turn. Taylor looked blankly at his client with dropped jaw. Lord Donal laughed.

"Your assistant seems to have disappeared as completely as the lady at the ball. Why not set your detectives on her track? Perhaps she will prove to be the person I am in search of."

"I am very sorry, my lord," stammered the detective.

"Oh, don't mention it! I am sure you have done all that could be done with the very ineffective clews which, unfortunately, are our only possessions, but you are quite wrong in thinking it was the princess herself who attended the ball, and I don't blame your assistant for refusing to bolster up an impossible case. We will consider the search ended, and if you will kindly let me have your bill at the Diplomatic Club before 6 o'clock to-night I will send you a check. Good afternoon, Mr. Taylor."



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HUMOR OF THE DAY.

He Thought He Knew.

Cleveland Plain Dealer.

"I guess, my man, you don't understand the nature of an oath."

"Don't, eh? Why, I druv a team of army mules fer four months."

A Proverb Applied.

New York Journal.

"Are these goods pure and unadulterated?" inquired the customer.

"To the pure all things are pure," replied the grocer, evasively.

Looking to the Future.

Brooklyn Life.

"The widow seems to take great interest in old Goldthwaite."

"She thinks that if she takes interest now she'll have the principal later."

They Can't Keep a Secret.

Stray Stories.

Mamma—Johnny, I fear you were not at school yesterday.

Johnny—H'm! I know the teacher told you. A woman can never keep a secret.

Woes of the Cultured.

Chicago Record.

"Your daughter seems to be suffering from the heat.

"No; she's just home from college, and she prostrated by the family grammar."

Information Wanted.

Life.

The Grocer—Yes, sir; this grano-grino is the best breakfast food on the market. It is predigested—

Mr. Fadsby (shuddering)—Bless my soul! By whom?

The Wrong Front.

Detroit Free Press.

"Clara, you must dress better."

"Well, Harold, you told me to economize."

"Yes, but I was mistaken; since you have been going shabby five men have refused to lend me money."

A Second Thought.

Cleveland Plain Dealer.

"Faugh! he is of ze canaille! I hate heem. Louee, hear-r-r me—I vill smash hees hat!"

"No, Henri, do not do eet. Zey vill send you to ze prisone for four-r-r years!"

"Ah, zen I will smash a hat zat ees like hees!"

Wished Some of It.

Richmond Dispatch.

Customer—Howd' do? Have you any time to spare this morning?

Tradesman—Certainly; plenty of it.

Customer—Glad to hear it. I'd like to have thirty days more on that little bill I owe you.

Two Views.

Photographic Life.

She—Just look at this magnificent sunset; it makes the most beautiful picture that one can possibly imagine.

He (an amateur photographer)—Oh, I don't know; all you get on the plate is a white spot.

Rivalry.

New Voice.

Marmaduke—My papa's in the mining business.

Hennery—So's my paw, too.

Marmaduke—My papa's is gold mining; what's yours?

Hennery—Kalsominin'.

Foiled Again.

Catholic Times.

"Rehfuse meh proffered love, proud gerrul," cried the heavy villain, "and by meh halidome I'll dash yeh over yondeh beetling cliff!"

The girl gazed in the direction designated by his grimy forefinger.

"Huh!" she said. "That's only a bluff." For she was up in topography as well as some other things.

A Useful Pawnshop.

New York Times.

What some cyclists may consider an important problem has been effectually solved by their fellow-wheelmen in Paris. During the past winter the number of bicycles pledged at that beneficent institution of Paris, the state pawnshop, better known as the Mont-de-Piete, has far exceeded the number pledged in former years. Sociologists were at a loss to account for the reason. Then the warm days of spring came and with them the unraveling of the mystery. The bicycles were nearly all taken out. They had simply been stored; that is all. Keeping a bicycle in one of the regular storage warehouses in Paris is quite an expensive matter. It is also manifestly inconvenient to pack it away in the small suite of rooms that many French families occupy. On receiving the wheels the officers of the Mont-de-Piete have, of course, been unable to discriminate. They could not tell whether the bicycle they took in was in search of a loan or in search of a warehouse. They could not be sure that the machine they might neglect and allow to rust might not some day have to be put up at auction. Then they would be held accountable to their superiors. In consequence, all the bicycles confined to their care have been kept in the best possible condition. Several plans of discrimination have been suggested for the expected rush of business next December, but they have all been declared impracticable.

OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

More newspapers are printed in the United States than in England, France and Germany combined.

For the first time in a decade every board of the Presbyterian Church begins the fiscal year without debt.

Recently a ship of only 2,500 tons carried from Para, Brazil, to New York a cargo of rubber which was insured for $3,000,000.

Mahogany is said to have been brought to England by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1595, but not to have come into general use till 1720.

The income tax is levied in India on all incomes of £33 and upward, and then only one man in seven hundred comes within its scope.

A book published in Japan 1,000 years ago notes at that time good silk was already produced in twenty-four provinces of that country.

The population of the South African republic consists of 63,000 Boers, 87,000 other whites called uitlanders and 600,000 Kaffirs and Zulus.

Professor Darwin, of Cambridge, prophesies that the moon will ultimately return to the earth, whence it was cast off in the remote past.

Peas and beans are the most nutritious of vegetables, containing as much carbon as wheat and double the amount of muscle forming food.

Smoking goes on in the Philippines everywhere but in church. Even your cab driver will offer you a cigar if you are not smoking and he thinks you have none.

The dogs in Bamwell county, South Carolina, are returned at a valuation of $12,830, while the assessed value of the entire property of the county in sheep and goats is $301.

Livery stables in New York city, without exception, it is stated, refuse to house automobiles, and this is well urged as a strong reason for the formation of an automobile club.

According to bulletin No. 95, just issued by the Department of Agriculture, New Jersey is building more roads and better roads for the money than any other State in the Union.

Charcoal is the great Italian fuel, Naples alone consuming forty thousand tons of wood charcoal, at a cost of from $16 to $20 per ton, the national consumption being 700,000 tons.

Spanish beggars do not think it necessary to conceal their cigar when asking for alms. Smoking is considered as necessary as breathing to every human being out of the cradle.

The best and healthiest color for bedroom blinds is dark green. It is always recommended by both brain doctors and oculists. Dark blue is next best, but not nearly so good as green.

Some authorities hold to the idea that a child's disposition is largely governed by his diet, citing the gentleness of the rice-eating races against the quarreling of meat-eating children in Europe.

The United States has about 450,000,000 acres of forest, but this is being rapidly depleted by the ax and by destructive fires. The government is now investigating means to prevent or control the latter.

The secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Health has issued the statement that codfish is as nutritious as sirloin steak or oleomargarine. It is plain that locality sometimes influences even the scientific judgment.

There are great forests of costly woods in the Philippines—mahogany, sapan wood, log wood, iron wood, ebony and cedar, besides about fifty varieties not known to European markets, but eagerly sought for by merchants from China.

The Advocate of India tells of a curious way of rejoicing. The Nawab of Rampore being blessed with a daughter, rejoicings were taking place in his state, and a week's pay was deducted from every state official in connection with the event.

More ships sail the Detroit river than enter Liverpool or London. The Suez canal, which carries the commerce of the world, passed last year 8,500,000 tonnage, while there were floating through the locks of Sault Ste. Marie 16,500,000 in eight months.

A new system of advertising is in vogue in San Francisco. A poultry dealer has an intelligent rooster which parades up and down the street before the market with his owner's business card displayed in his bill, and commands attention by frequent crowing.

Near Grobogana, Java, there is a lake of boiling mud about two miles in circumference. Immense clouds of steaming mud are constantly ascending and descending, and on the western edge the gigantic bubbles are continually forming and exploding at the rate of three a minute.

Bathing with alcohol will prevent injurious effects from poison ivy, or, if the poison has taken effect, wetting the affected part with alcohol to which sugar of lead has been added until a milky appearance is obtained will give relief. The wash is poison and for external use only.

It is claimed now that strawberries as a beautifying tonic cannot be equaled. Skin specialists advocate their use invariably. A dish of them for breakfast every morning and another at luncheon are the directions. They contain more iron than any other fruit and are particularly good for any one suffering from nervousness.

A native funeral in Manila is an interesting sight. The hearse is a rude wagon drawn by white horses. A most melancholy looking person is the driver, who, clad in black and a high beaver hat, sits aloft in mournful dignity. In front is a brass band playing a lively march, while a long line of carriages follow slowly behind.

A New York justice has decided that a wife does not constitute a family. The case