

Alice Royce

Girl Detective

The Mystery of the Blue Glove



No. 2 in the Series of Stories of a Clever Girl's Extraordinary Experience.

THIS is a true story, "Alice Royce," the relation of whose remarkable adventures and still more remarkable work began with "The Clue of the Little Horseshoes," is a genuine woman. Her name, like the names of all others concerned in this series, is changed at her own request. This is to protect her business and her clients. The actress about whom this story revolves is now playing on Broadway. "Mrs. Loring" and her daughter are living quietly on the Continent. "Captain Marx" is dead. "Robert King" will be easily recognized by the members of half a dozen clubs; the manner of his death alone will identify him as the central figure of this hitherto hidden tragedy—"The Mystery of the Blue Glove."



He fell back in the big chair grasped the arms of it rigidly, and in the instant was dead.

BY CHARLES SOMERVILLE.
CHAPTER I.

ALICE ROYCE had been working all day at what she laughingly called a "police job." In this instance it had been something in which her heart was concerned—the gathering of evidence against the fortune-tellers, clairvoyants and other charlatans who so persistently prey upon the poor and credulous. At seven o'clock she entered her pretty Riverside apartment to be met breathlessly by Annie, her black-haired, blue-eyed Irish maid.

"All day long the dear lady have been telephoning for ye and could hardly talk for crying," said Annie. "Tis something terrible that's the matter!"

Many such excited calls came to Alice Royce's apartments, but Annie, being actively emotional, never grew hardened to them.

"Of course, you took the lady's name and address?" her young mistress asked.

"Oh, yes, miss. An' who—WHO do you think it is?"

"Well, Annie?"

"Tis Dorothy Anderson, the great actress, Miss Alice. She says please will ye come to her the minute ye get her message—up to the Arlington Hotel, if ye get the message in time, or to her dressin' room at the theatre if it's later."

Lively interest flashed in Alice Royce's fine brown eyes at the mention of this new client, for Dorothy Anderson was a woman of rare beauty and temperament; of a talent that really approached genius. The young detective quickly consulted her watch. It was half-past seven—too late to see Miss Anderson at her home. She would have started for the Palladium Theatre by that time. So Alice Royce threw off her wraps and ate the dinner Annie had prepared for her.

The end of the first act of the new and celebrated society comedy at the Palladium found the girl detective in Dorothy Anderson's dressing room. The curtain had fallen on an audience vastly charmed and smiling over the actress's delightful portrayal of a witty, winsome character. But the dainty smiles with which she had faced the audience, answering repeated curtain calls, fell instantly from the star's lips as she made her way to her dressing room. On the way her maid met her with Alice Royce's card. The famous actress faced the young detective with her magnificently luminous eyes, large and pleading.

"Miss Royce, Mr. Scott, the dramatic agent, has told me of the wonderful cleverness you displayed once in working for him. I hope you can help me. A frightful—a hideous mistake has been made. It must be righted. The memory of a good and splendid man—the man I love, Miss Royce—must be righted. It stands now under

the stigma of self-destruction. I know that's a lie. I know that Robert King did not—could not, have killed himself! Yes—the handsome woman stepped over to her dressing table, took up an afternoon newspaper and handed it to Alice Royce. "Yet you see here," she pointed to the particular headline "that a coroner's jury has brought in a verdict declaring his death to be a suicide. Robert King—a suicide? How can I believe that? A few hours before his death we had named the day of our wedding; we had spent an entire happy Sunday evening planning our honeymoon trip; we had talked every minute of nothing but the future. He was a virile, healthy, brilliant-minded man, intensely interested and in love with life and"—the actress's eyes became suffused and she ended heartbrokenly—"in love with me. It is an outrage to believe that he killed himself!"

"Could there have been any motive? Business troubles?"

"Positively none. He was a man of leisure, a retired British army officer in more than comfortable circumstances. Why, the detectives found by his bank books that he had more than \$100,000 deposited in several New York banks. He had been a lonely man, he told me, until our meeting on the Kron-Prinz Wilhelm when I was returning to America last autumn. He told me there was no member of his family living save some distant cousins."

Gently Alice Royce asked the beautiful, distressed woman to recount to her the circumstances of Robert King's death as she knew them. There was no hint of pseudo-emotion in the manner in which Dorothy Anderson's lips trembled, and her rich, soft voice sank or grew vibrant as she gave this gruesome information.

"Robert," she said, "lived alone, save for a valet. His bachelor apartments were in the Crandall, in Fifth avenue, near the Central Park plaza. He left me at eleven o'clock Sunday night. We had planned for a motor ride and a dinner on Long Island the next day. He showed no signs of depression. When he did not call for me at noon I telephoned his apartments. No answer could be had. The telephone boy said Mr. King's valet had left on Saturday to fetch from Connecticut two saddle horses which his master had purchased. Thoroughly anxious and certain that Robert would not have slighted me, I went to the Crandall and begged the superintendent of the apartment house to have the door forced open.

"It was not necessary. We found that the door opened to a turn of the knob. Robert—the actress covered her horror-stricken eyes with her hands—was sitting in the library. He was fully dressed—in evening clothes—just as he had left me the evening before. He still wore the boutonniere that I had arranged for him from the boutique he had sent me. There was not the slightest sign of a struggle

in the room. He was sitting in the big Morris chair. His mouth drooped queerly. His eyes were staring. I knew instantly that he was dead!

"There was no wound on his body, and, save at his lips, not the slightest discoloration of his face. A faint door, queerly pungent, of peaches was in the air. On a table near his hand were two glasses. One was half filled with a colorless liquid—simply water. But the other glass was empty and over it was the faint yet biting odor of peaches. There was no letter—nothing."

Outside the dressing room door came the piping cry of the callboy: "Miss Anderson—Miss Anderson. Curtain—curtain!"

The actress turned swiftly to her mirror. A dab of powder on her forehead, the swift touch of a pencil to her eyes and she swept out of the room. A moment later Alice Royce heard her clear laughter ringing from the stage.

derating establishment, and the funeral held in a chapel connected with that establishment. There had been a brief ceremony, attended only by such acquaintances as the dead man had made at the clubs and hotels. One of these was his attorney, Alexander Hall. Alice Royce had talked with him that morning over the telephone. He had said that he knew nothing of his client's foreign affairs. King had made no will, the lawyer was sure.

The wealthy bachelor's rooms were carpeted with rare rugs. The library-living room was furnished with massive chairs, a centre table of mahogany, and a splendid old buffet, well stocked with fine wines, liquors and much delicate glassware. There were engravings of battle and hunting scenes on the walls, and Remington and Barry bronzes on the table, mantel shelves and pedestals. Books in fine bindings lined the walls. The bedroom was undisturbed. In her minute search of the rooms the girl detective did not hesitate to go carefully through the contents of the desk. She forced open a locked compartment and found a packet of Dorothy Anderson's letters. She took the liberty of scanning these, but read in them no line to suggest anything but the beautiful young woman's deep love for the dead man.

But the aspect of the big, broad, silver-mounted blotter on the desk caused the searcher to look at it closely. There were several lines of writing criss-crossing each other on it. She picked up the blotter with the idea of holding it before the mantel mirror to decipher the reverse impression. Then she paused. In the spot where the blotter had rested lay a sheet of large, heavy stationery. On it were three lines of large, rugged handwriting. The young detective read:

Sunday, ———

Dearest Dorothy:

"Forgive me for the pain I am about to inflict upon you, my darling. But it is better that you should learn—"

For an instant, as Alice Royce sat studying this significant, incomplete writing of the dead man it seemed only to confirm the police theory of suicide. Robert King had been in trouble; there was something painful, perhaps disgraceful, concerning himself that he had felt bound to reveal to his fiancée. Yet why had he broken off suddenly in the writing of the letter? If he had at first meant to write her a communication before destroying himself and had changed his mind, deciding to leave no word behind, surely he would have destroyed the letter he had begun, and not slipped it into an obvious hiding place under the blotter.

Alice Royce arose, intending to finish her search of the apartment with a close examination of King's bedroom and all the pockets of his clothing. Heavy portieres hung between the library and the bedroom. As she thrust one of them back, stretching out the folds by the movement, a little cry of surprise escaped the girl's lips. She bent swiftly and arose, holding up to scrutiny a glove—a woman's glove! It was a long, soft glove. Most notable, however, was the color, decidedly unusual, the girl detective decided, for the leather was dyed a dark or navy blue. Of course, there were gloves of that color to be pur-

chased in nearly any store, but the choice was uncommon—white, black, tan or gray being the shades generally in use.

The possibility suggested itself that this blue glove might be the property of Dorothy Anderson, something King had treasured as a memento. Alice Royce went to the telephone and was in communication with the actress. Her reply had an unusual interest.

"No," Miss Anderson said, "the glove is not mine. Did you say it was a blue glove? That is strange. One of Mr. King's peculiarities which I failed to tell you about was a marked aversion to the color of blue.

Turning then to a further examination of the blue glove, Alice Royce had the satisfaction of finding stamped quite legibly on the inside of one of them the name of the manufacturer. It was that of a domestic firm with main offices in New York City. At the manufacturer's she was told that the consignment of blue gloves had only recently come from the factory and that only one retail firm in New York had as yet any of them on their counter. The name of this firm was readily supplied. Alice Royce, half an hour later, was engaged in questioning the girls at the long glove counter there.

The first three girls were able to tell her nothing save that none had sold a pair of blue gloves. There was no demand for the color, they explained. But the fourth girl, after pondering a little, said:

"Why sure, I remember selling a pair of long blues, the only pair I did sell. I remember the customer well, because—well, the poor lady was blind. She was a pretty, slender woman about forty, I guess, although her hair was almost white. But her face was young, and her big, closed, blind eyes looked awful pitiful. She was with a young girl—her daughter sure. They looked a lot alike. She asked particularly for blue gloves and I couldn't help noticing that the gloves she had on were blue, and that her dress was blue, and her hat was a toque made of blue velvet."

"Did you send the gloves to her home?" asked Alice Royce eagerly.

"No," said the girl. "I'm sure she took the parcel with her."

"Perhaps she charged them. Has she an account with the store?"

"She paid cash," replied the girl, positively.

All that the young detective knew, therefore, was that the woman of the blue gloves was blind, middle-aged and had a daughter about seventeen years old. But surely she had been a visitor to Robert King's rooms—or, that is, at least some woman owning a blue glove had visited there. If it was the blind woman the hallboys must certainly remember her because of her very affliction. The police had said that there had been no visitors on the night of the tragedy. But Alice Royce had decided to inquire more carefully into it, remembering also that the police had missed the letter and the blue glove.

She was wholly unprepared, however, for the startling revelations that awaited her at the Crandall. She went there about nine o'clock that night, that she might see the boy on duty at the telephone and doorway in the hours just before and after midnight on the date of King's strange death.

In the first place, close questioning produced marked confusion in the colored boy. She had found him gossiping with another young negro, whose brown uniform indicated he had come from a neighboring apartment house. The Crandall boy's was green. The other lad stepped aside only a little way and openly listened to the conversation between the Crandall telephone boy and Miss Royce. By the shifting of the latter boy's eyes and his stammering replies the investigator came certain that he was concealing knowledge of importance.

"Jim," she said suddenly to him, "don't you know that if you hide anything you might be suspected yourself of killing Mr. King?"

"Yas'm," said the boy with downcast eyes. "Yas'm, I reckon maybe I better tell. But I'm mighty scared to do it, miss. Jes' about twelve o'clock Saturday night—mebbe a little later—there come a man an' a lady an' a girl askin' for Mistuh King. I phoned to him and he says for 'em to be shown right up. Dey was dere mebbe three-quarters of an hour. You knows de room is jest up one flight, but I didn' hear no loud talkin' or queer sounds or nothin'. When dey come out—de man and lady and girl—de man come up to me and he slipped me ten dollars right in my hand, and he said no matter who asks me I mustn' say nothin' 'bout him and his friends bein' up to see Mr. King. De little girl was lookin' white and scared, too, an' she could hardly walk along leadin' de other lady."

"Leading the other lady?" Alice Royce asked swiftly.

"Yas'm, de other lady was blind."

"Huh!" interjected the boy in the brown uniform with an impressive roll of his eyes, "dat's funny. Dere's a blind lady living where I work."

"Where's that?"

"Right around the corner, lady. De back winders looks right over de

court inter de winders of dis yer house; yas'm."

CHAPTER IV.

Tremulous with anxiety, Dorothy Anderson made her way—at the call of Alice Royce to the Harmsworth apartments in West 7—th street. The girl detective over the telephone had said: "When you arrive at the Harmsworth ask for Mrs. Jane Loring. It is from her lips that a full explanation of Robert King's death is to come. I fear it may be a painful recital to you. However, she refuses to clear the mystery until you get here."

Alice Royce, facing the distressed, blind Mrs. Loring and her slender, beautiful daughter, Grace, awaited therefore the coming of the famous woman who had been betrothed to Robert King.

With the use of a liberal tip it had been an easy matter for the girl detective to learn from the negro hall-boy of the Harmsworth the identity of the blind woman, and, in turn, to have the boy make inquiry of Mrs. Loring's maid. This girl remembered the fact that her mistress had lost a long, blue glove. Possessing this knowledge, Alice Royce had presented herself in the Loring apartment.

"It is true that I lost the blue glove," said the blind woman. "But I know nothing of a Mr. King and was certainly not in his rooms. It is highly probable that I dropped the glove in the street and that the gentleman picked it up and carried it into his apartments."

Alice Royce studied the other woman keenly.

"I notice, Mrs. Loring," said she softly, "that you seem invariably to wear blue."

"Why do you mention that?" demanded the blind woman, sitting suddenly erect.

"Robert King hated blue," replied the investigator sharply.

"Hated it?" faltered Mrs. Loring. "Then he remembered—"

Too late she tried to check herself. The girl at her side trembled and began to sob.

"Mrs. Loring," said Alice Royce kindly, "you have betrayed yourself. You knew Robert King. You know something of his death. I have proof that you and your daughter and Captain Marx were in his rooms within an hour of this mysterious tragedy. Miss Anderson, his fiancée, has retained me to clear this matter up. You had better confide in me.

The blind woman had arisen and stood gently swaying, her daughter's arm supporting her. But she was silent.

"Mother," spoke the girl in a husky whisper, "why not speak? It really doesn't matter now. You know the news we received only this morning. Captain Marx has only a few hours to live. He is unconscious even now." Grace looked toward Alice Royce. "We were just about to start to Captain Marx's rooms," she said. "He is dying."

The woman in blue sank slowly back into her chair.

"Grace is right," she said finally. "I had best tell you everything since Captain Marx is dying. But I think it is only just to Miss Anderson that, as the one vitally interested, she should herself hear my story."

"It would be best," agreed Alice Royce. When she returned from the telephone, however, she uttered the question uppermost in her mind.

"Mrs. Loring, did Robert King commit suicide?"

"He did not."

"Then he was murdered?"

"He was, not." The blind woman hesitated. "The law perhaps might call it something like that, but morally, no, he was not murdered."

In brooding silence the woman in blue sat throughout the fifteen minutes that it took Dorothy Anderson to arrive from her own apartments.

"Miss Anderson is here, mother," said Grace in a whisper, bowing slightly to the handsome woman who had been admitted.

Mrs. Loring began immediately to tell the manner of Robert King's death.

"His right name was George Loring," she said, "and I was his wife, Grace his daughter. He was formerly Colonel of the ——— Dragons, stationed in India. My father was a British army officer. I had lived in India from early childhood. At seventeen I was engaged to a handsome, brave officer, Captain Ellwynne Marx. He was slated for promotion, but when Colonel Loring, a dashing young officer of precocious achievement, took charge of the post he evinced a quick prejudice to Marx. He secured the captain's removal to a distant post.

"You may imagine the anxiety I suffered when, from the time of this assignment of Captain Marx, I had no word from him. Then slanderous stories began circulating about him—about his affairs with native women. I turned from all thought of him in disgust, and when Colonel Loring began to shower attentions on me I was flattered by them—in brief, within two years after the Captain's silence had begun I was Colonel Loring's wife.

"Then one day on the piazza of our bungalow—three years afterward—I

was confronted by Captain Marx. It was a frightful, shocking story he had to tell me of Loring's perfidy. The letters of our engagement days had been intercepted by Loring. My husband, during an insurrection, had assigned Marx to lead a scouting party. Bribed hillmen had captured him. For three years he had lived as a slave among savages. His health irrevocably broken, his heart seared by the belief that I had never uttered false to him, he had nevertheless contrived his escape and made his way to our post to reproach me for my unfaithfulness and demand satisfaction of Colonel Loring.

"I was enraged to the point of hysteria when I heard the Captain's story. I did not attempt to dissuade him from his purpose of revenge on Loring, but I demanded that first my husband hear his condemnation from my lips. I was beside myself. I spoke with frightful bitterness. I told him that he was a disgrace to the uniform he wore—his was a blue regiment—and that whenever he looked at it it should remind him of his treachery to me and to Ellwynne Marx, if Marx did not kill him, as he richly deserved. It made no difference to me then that he was Grace's father. I upbraided him fiercely—so fiercely that in wild anger he struck me—struck me across the eyes and I fainted. There came a seizure of brain fever and the awful result was that I suffered paralysis of the optic nerves and was doomed to hopeless blindness.

"My husband did not stay to face Captain Marx—could not. He deserted his regiment, fled from India, never appeared in England and appears to have found refuge in America. All these years Captain Marx sought trace of him and finally found him. He sent for me then, saying that it was a matter of life or death between him and Loring, and it was only right that I should see Loring before he died in order that my daughter, Grace, should not suffer in the inheritance of her father's fortune. So I came. Captain Marx apprised Loring of my presence in this country late Saturday night—when he returned to his apartments. This conversation was over the telephone, Loring not knowing who his informant was. The Captain waited until that late hour so that we would be sure of an interview undisturbed."

Alice Royce remembered the unfinished note found under the blotter in Loring's rooms. Realizing his wife's presence in America meant the end of his new romance, he had evidently decided to make a clean breast of affairs to Dorothy Anderson.

"I don't remember—I can't remember all that was said. I could not, of course, observe the expression in my husband's eyes when he recognized in our escort the man he had wronged mercilessly and wretchedly. I heard his cry of astonishment at sight of his daughter, and I know he kissed her and I heard him sob.

The men spoke lowly together for a while, but then Captain Marx's voice, thin and strident from his long illness, rose:

"You know, by God, Loring, what is expected of you as an officer and a gentleman. You know what the men of your command in India would have done if you had remained to face your just dishonor. They would have sent you a revolver in silence. If you are not lost to all sense of shame, of honor among soldiers, you will make now the reparation that I demand!"

"But, Marx, before my own child?"

"Then I heard the Captain speaking very slowly, each word measuredly spoken:

"On the child's account alone I will give you one chance with me for your life. I have here a bottle of deadly poison. Get me two glasses of water. Put them here on this table."

"Loring obeyed, spellbound by the other man's intensity.

"Turn your back," said Marx coldly. "In one of these glasses of water I will pour a poison that will mean certain death. When I give the word, Loring, if you are not utterly a coward, you will turn and choose one of these glasses, drinking its contents to the last drop. On the other hand, I will promise you to drink the glass that's left. If you escape you will no longer have me to fear."

"It wasn't death I feared when I ran away from India," Loring retorted. "I simply could not face the hatred and shame of you—and Jane. I'll show you, Marx, now whether or not I can meet death like a man. Give the word."

"Now!" cried Captain Marx, and Loring wheeled and faced the table on which stood the two glasses—one containing harmless water, the other deadly poison. He hesitated only the small fraction of a second over the choice—so infinitely brief a time that as my daughter Grace ran toward him with arms outstretched, uttering a little, piteous cry, she was too late to stay his hand. He had taken up one of the glasses, lifted it to his lips, and in a single gulp had poured its contents down his throat. He fell back in the big chair, grasped the arms of it rigidly and in that instant was dead."

"Alice Royce," said the actress, Dorothy Anderson, unsteadily, "please take me home!"

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"Then one day on the piazza of our bungalow—three years afterward—I

was confronted by Captain Marx. It was a frightful, shocking story he had to tell me of Loring's perfidy. The letters of our engagement days had been intercepted by Loring. My husband, during an insurrection, had assigned Marx to lead a scouting party. Bribed hillmen had captured him. For three years he had lived as a slave among savages. His health irrevocably broken, his heart seared by the belief that I had never uttered false to him, he had nevertheless contrived his escape and made his way to our post to reproach me for my unfaithfulness and demand satisfaction of Colonel Loring.

"I was enraged to the point of hysteria when I heard the Captain's story. I did not attempt to dissuade him from his purpose of revenge on Loring, but I demanded that first my husband hear his condemnation from my lips. I was beside myself. I spoke with frightful bitterness. I told him that he was a disgrace to the uniform he wore—his was a blue regiment—and that whenever he looked at it it should remind him of his treachery to me and to Ellwynne Marx, if Marx did not kill him, as he richly deserved. It made no difference to me then that he was Grace's father. I upbraided him fiercely—so fiercely that in wild anger he struck me—struck me across the eyes and I fainted. There came a seizure of brain fever and the awful result was that I suffered paralysis of the optic nerves and was doomed to hopeless blindness.

"My husband did not stay to face Captain Marx—could not. He deserted his regiment, fled from India, never appeared in England and appears to have found refuge in America. All these years Captain Marx sought trace of him and finally found him. He sent for me then, saying that it was a matter of life or death between him and Loring, and it was only right that I should see Loring before he died in order that my daughter, Grace, should not suffer in the inheritance of her father's fortune. So I came. Captain Marx apprised Loring of my presence in this country late Saturday night—when he returned to his apartments. This conversation was over the telephone, Loring not knowing who his informant was. The Captain waited until that late hour so that we would be sure of an interview undisturbed."

Alice Royce remembered the unfinished note found under the blotter in Loring's rooms. Realizing his wife's presence in America meant the end of his new romance, he had evidently decided to make a clean breast of affairs to Dorothy Anderson.

"I don't remember—I can't remember all that was said. I could not, of course, observe the expression in my husband's eyes when he recognized in our escort the man he had wronged mercilessly and wretchedly. I heard his cry of astonishment at sight of his daughter, and I know he kissed her and I heard him sob.

The men spoke lowly together for a while, but then Captain Marx's voice, thin and strident from his long illness, rose:

"You know, by God, Loring, what is expected of you as an officer and a gentleman. You know what the men of your command in India would have done if you had remained to face your just dishonor. They would have sent you a revolver in silence. If you are not lost to all sense of shame, of honor among soldiers, you will make now the reparation that I demand!"

"But, Marx, before my own child?"

"Then I heard the Captain speaking very slowly, each word measuredly spoken:

"On the child's account alone I will give you one chance with me for your life. I have here a bottle of deadly poison. Get me two glasses of water. Put them here on this table."

"Loring obeyed, spellbound by the other man's intensity.

"Turn your back," said Marx coldly. "In one of these glasses of water I will pour a poison that will mean certain death. When I give the word, Loring, if you are not utterly a coward, you will turn and choose one of these glasses, drinking its contents to the last drop. On the other hand, I will promise you to drink the glass that's left. If you escape you will no longer have me to fear."

"It wasn't death I feared when I ran away from India," Loring retorted. "I simply could not face the hatred and shame of you—and Jane. I'll show you, Marx, now whether or not I can meet death like a man. Give the word."

"Now!" cried Captain Marx, and Loring wheeled and faced the table on which stood the two glasses—one containing harmless water, the other deadly poison. He hesitated only the small fraction of a second over the choice—so infinitely brief a time that as my daughter Grace ran toward him with arms outstretched, uttering a little, piteous cry, she was too late to stay his hand. He had taken up one of the glasses, lifted it to his lips, and in a single gulp had poured its contents down his throat. He fell back in the big chair, grasped the arms of it rigidly and in that instant was dead."

"Alice Royce," said the actress, Dorothy Anderson, unsteadily, "please take me home!"

chased in nearly any store, but the choice was uncommon—white, black, tan or gray being the shades generally in use.

The possibility suggested itself that this blue glove might be the property of Dorothy Anderson, something King had treasured as a memento. Alice Royce went to the telephone and was in communication with the actress. Her reply had an unusual interest.

"No," Miss Anderson said, "the glove is not mine. Did you say it was a blue glove? That is strange. One of Mr. King's peculiarities which I failed to tell you about was a marked aversion to the color of blue.

Turning then to a further examination of the blue glove, Alice Royce had the satisfaction of finding stamped quite legibly on the inside of one of them the name of the manufacturer. It was that of a domestic firm with main offices in New York City. At the manufacturer's she was told that the consignment of blue gloves had only recently come from the factory and that only one retail firm in New York had as yet any of them on their counter. The name of this firm was readily supplied. Alice Royce, half an hour later, was engaged in questioning the girls at the long glove counter there.

The first three girls were able to tell her nothing save that none had sold a pair of blue gloves. There was no demand for the color, they explained. But the fourth girl, after pondering a little, said:

"Why sure, I remember selling a pair of long blues, the only pair I did sell. I remember the customer well, because—well, the poor lady was blind. She was a pretty, slender woman about forty, I guess, although her hair was almost white. But her face was young, and her big, closed, blind eyes looked awful pitiful. She was with a young girl—her daughter sure. They looked a lot alike. She asked particularly for blue gloves and I couldn't help noticing that the gloves she had on were blue, and that her dress was blue, and her hat was a toque made of blue velvet."

"Did you send the gloves to her home?" asked Alice Royce eagerly.

"No," said the girl. "I'm sure she took the parcel with her."

"Perhaps she charged them. Has she an account with the store?"

"She paid cash," replied the girl, positively.

All that the young detective knew, therefore, was that the woman of the blue gloves was blind, middle-aged and had a daughter about seventeen years old. But surely she had been a visitor to Robert King's rooms—or, that is, at least some woman owning a blue glove had visited there. If it was the blind woman the hallboys must certainly remember her because of her very affliction. The police had said that there had been no visitors on the night of the tragedy. But Alice Royce had decided to inquire more carefully into it, remembering also that the police had missed the letter and the blue glove.