

nary complications, and last month I finished a case which I feel sure will make my fame and fortune." He beamed on me.

"I suppose you work in absolute secrecy?" I suggested.

"Quite so," he responded. "But last month's case, being now complete, I feel at liberty to tell about it if you are so inclined!"

"Do so," I said wearily. And this is the story he told me of The Girl and the Dollar Bills.

ON THE sixteenth of September last a richly gowned and very charming young woman called at my office in East Fifty-third street and told me that she needed my services to unravel the mystery of a most peculiar and inexplicable stroke of good fortune which had come to her. I relate what she told me as briefly as is consistent with laying the needful facts before you.

"I am singing a leading role in a high-class light opera this coming season," she said. "It will open here at the Fancy Theater next week. Ten weeks ago I had spent my last cent and was absolutely without hope of even getting a hearing. I must tell you that I came to New York after taking singing lessons of a very good teacher in a Middle-Western college. My parents are very poor, I had spent nearly all my savings in paying for my instruction, and I determined that I must come to New York while I still had some money, and support myself on the stage.

"For six weeks I plodded up and down the streets from my little room up town and back again, and was unable to find any opening whatever. Eleven weeks ago I was reduced to my last two dollars, and in order to support life and buy a new pair of shoes I started pawning what few things I had of value. The first thing that went was a small diamond ring of my mother's, on which I got twelve dollars. My shoes—I knew the value of a good appearance—cost eight dollars and other needful accessories were two dollars more. The other two dollars went for rent. That night I walked thirty blocks to my room and the next morning I walked forty blocks to an agent's. I ate nothing that day. The next morning I returned to the pawnbroker's with my watch. I received two dollars and twenty-five cents for it. Now," this young woman went on very earnestly, "as I left the pawnshop I felt the tears coming into my eyes and tried to find my handkerchief. It dropped from my grasp and was instantly picked up by a man whose face I did not see. I didn't even thank him, but hurried into the street and into the Times Square subway station where I had my cry out and proceeded uptown.

"Two days later I was forced to bring down my most precious possession, an old solid gold locket left me by my grandmother, who was also a singer. I knew that it was quite valuable, so I spent some time in bargaining for a good advance on it. I presume my eagerness, led me to speak more loudly than usual, for a young man who had just come in drew a little nearer, caught the broker's eye and held out a fresh, clean one-dollar bill. The broker looked at him and the man said pleasantly: 'I wish to pledge this dollar bill. How much will you advance me on it?'"

The young woman proceeded to explain to me the altercation that took place between the broker and this man, and her own amazement at such a thing as pawning a perfectly good one-dollar bill. She observed that the man had his way and received eighty cents and a ticket. She herself was able to get only five dollars for the locket.

It appeared from her story that she made three successive trips to this same pawnshop within a week and that each time the same young man came in and pawned a one-dollar bill for eighty cents. The fourth

time she went to another broker with her last little possession and the same young man entered and insisted on having eighty cents on a fresh, new one-dollar bill.

It was four days after this, according to her story, that she spent her last penny for a paper and began her long, weary walk down town. She stopped to rest in the lobby of a hotel near Forty-second street and Sixth avenue, being too exhausted to resume immediately her canvass of the agencies. On doing so, however, she found that it was the same story as on all the days preceding—not even a chance for a hearing. Her room rent was due the next day and she decided that there was but one thing for her to do, walk back uptown and try to sleep till the following noon.

On reaching her room she found an envelope addressed to her, which, being opened, disclosed to her astonished eyes a fresh, clean dollar bill wrapped in cheap writing paper but without a single word of writing. Her first impulse was to burn it, but on second thought she determined to use it and went out and spent it all on a hearty meal and two subway tickets for the next day.

By her story I learned that every day she found an envelope awaiting her with a single one-dollar bill in it. For three weeks she subsisted on this strange contribution because, as she told me, her pride was nothing to her ambition to get on in her art.

At the end of the third week these contributions ceased for two days. She then found on her return after an exhausting journey around the booking offices, an envelope containing five dollars, and a leaf that had been torn from a small calendar, with the dates crossed off up to the same day. A rapid calculation showed her that she had received a dollar for every day including Sundays.

The following day the envelope contained the usual dollar bill, a ticket to *Robin Hood* for that afternoon and a small card directing her to appear the next morning at ten for a hearing before one of the leading directors of light opera.

She was quite undecided whether to go to the theater that afternoon or not, but finally went. She could not see anybody that she remembered ever having laid eyes on, and enjoyed the show without interruption. But as she was about to leave her seat at the conclusion of the matinee an usher handed her an envelope which, being opened, she found to contain a five dollar bill and the words in an evidently feminine hand: *Spend this on your voice.*

The rest of her story was that she had appeared, been favorably received and promptly given a small role. The contributions continued for two weeks longer. She was then put under a very favorable contract and promoted to a lead with a two-hundred-dollar advance to cover rehearsal expenses.

WHEN she had concluded this peculiar story the young singer told me that she wished me to spare no effort to solve the mystery. "I shall have money in plenty within a short time," she continued. "This unknown benefactor has helped me wonderfully, and with all possible delicacy, and I will never rest till I know who he or she is."

"It is beyond doubt a man," I informed her. "And I think you are right in connecting your own experience with the man who did so strange an act as to pawn good money for less."

She left with me three of the envelopes, the coupon of the theater ticket and the last dollar bill she had received. "I must have it back," she warned me, and gave me to understand that she held it a most precious possession. She also described to me as fully as possible the young man who had pawned the dollar bills in her presence.

I will not take your time in relating my first steps, but within two days I had myself pawned two fresh dollar bills at the same broker's. I then communicated with the young lady and directed her to return to the pawnshop and redeem one of her pledges at a specified hour. I waited outside for her arrival and when she was engaged with the broker I entered and insisted on having eighty cents on a third bill. Of course neither she nor I exchanged even a glance. When the broker asked me for my name I merely said, as if embarrassed, "Same name," and was duly rewarded by receiving a ticket with the name *T. Warrington* on it.

Further than this I could not get for a week, when the young woman called on me in great excitement and told me that she was again in receipt of an envelope containing bills to the exact number of dollars, which made one dollar for every day since the remittances had stopped, and the words: *Gloves and such.* The letter was postmarked at Madison Square at 10 a. m.

I took the envelope, had it marked by her "Not at this address," resealed and deposited in a mail box. Two days later it was delivered to her at the theater. As we had removed the money and substituted paper to make the same bulk, we found that it had been opened and twenty-five fresh dollar bills put in.

WITH this to work on I promptly reported to the post office inspector that a letter containing money addressed to a certain place in the city had been tampered with, and within an hour found that a similar report had been made by Thomas F. Warrington of 2—Central Park West. Before proceeding to this address I made inquiries that plunged the affair into more mystery than ever. Thomas F. Warrington was a newspaperman formerly connected with a Chicago trade journal and now working at a small salary in a Spruce street commercial office. He had been in New York one year, had few acquaintances and was supposed to be of steady habits, but without much initiative.

Having learned his hours of work I waited until eight o'clock that evening and then rang the bell of a rather pretentious house at the Central Park West address. I was informed that Mr. Warrington was in, and was shown into the reception room.

Presently he appeared with my card in his hand, and I realized that he answered precisely the description of the man who had pawned the one-dollar bills. He seemed surprised to see me, and after taking another look at my card, he inquired, "What can I do for you, Mr. O'Patrick?"

"You pawned several one-dollar bills," I informed him, "and I have come to inquire the reason for such an extraordinary procedure."

"It could be of no possible interest to any one," he replied promptly. "It certainly is not criminal."

I had observed that the room and hall were tastefully, even handsomely, furnished. I also saw that Mr. Warrington himself was well-dressed. So I ventured further.

"I represent my client, Miss O. As you are aware, she is soon to open in a light opera at the Fancy Theater. She has commissioned me to discover to whom she owes the sum of one hundred and fifty-five dollars and her present position. I trust that you will not occasion her any more expense in proving the identity of the man who has put her so deeply in debt."

Within ten minutes I had convinced Warrington that it was useless for him to deny the authorship of this extraordinary benefaction, and that while I was a detective, I was a detector of good deeds and of well doers only.

"If I admit that I did do these unusual things, what will happen?" he finally asked.

"Miss O. will repay you," I said promptly.

"This is provoking!" he exclaimed impatiently. "Why could not she be reasonable about the matter?"

"I presume no lady likes to be under obligations to an utter stranger," I returned. "I know that she feels this way about it." Then to get his mind off the immediate question I inquired why he had done such a thing and how he had found out her circumstances. He replied, grudgingly enough, that he had observed her entering the pawnshop, had been sure that she was ill-fitted to struggle along in New York penniless and in actual want, and had therefore arranged (being a saving fellow) to provide for her secretly until she could be placed. A rather close acquaintance with a theatrical manager had enabled him to get her a hearing and so the affair had successfully proceeded.

"How did you know her name?" I interrupted.

"She gave it to the pawnbroker."

"And why the dollar bills?"

"Because I had nothing on my person of any pawning value," was his reply.

"But you seemed to be perfectly aware of her movements," I insisted.

"She gave both her name and address to the pawnbroker," he responded. "The rest was easy."

"But why did you go about helping Miss O. in such a strange way?" I pressed, curiously.

He became suddenly reticent, however, and I left him and duly communicated to my client the facts so far ascertained. She handed me the money to repay him, wrote a note of thanks and commissioned me to close the affair. But Mr. Warrington refused to have anything further to do with me, and I was obliged so to report to Miss O. She considered the matter for a week and then told me to make an appointment for Mr. Warrington to meet her at my office the following evening. He was agreeable, and at half-past eight appeared. With him was another man, in evening dress, whom he introduced in my outer office as his principal.

"This is really the man responsible for the present situation," he said. "He is a publisher, and a near friend of mine. I did all this in order that he might not appear in the case. But as things stand now I have insisted that he come down and explain."

MARIE-JEAN ceased and stared at the liqueur which he had barely tasted since it was set before him. I said sharply, "Is that all? What happened?"

The detector of well-doers rose and put away his wallet, which contained various memoranda he had consulted. "Oh, when I left the office with Warrington—three minutes after we entered—Miss O. was crying on the other man's shoulder and saying, 'Oh, Tom, Tom, Tom!'"

"Her brother?"

Marie-Jean looked at me with contempt. "You would never succeed as a detective," he snapped.

Easy Money

CHAMP CLARK tells of a Bowling Green, Missouri, youngster who asked his mother for a nickel.

"You should earn some of your spending money," reproved the mother, "and not always come to me for it."

The boy went away. That afternoon his mother saw him on the street surrounded by a crowd of boys. She went to him, and tacked on a fence-post behind him was a card, neatly printed, which bore this announcement:

"Willie Jones will eat
1 small worm for 1 cent
1 large worm for 2 cents
1 butterfly for 2 cents
1 caterpillar for 3 cents
1 hop toad for 5 cents
And the boy, his mother plainly saw, was doing a good business.