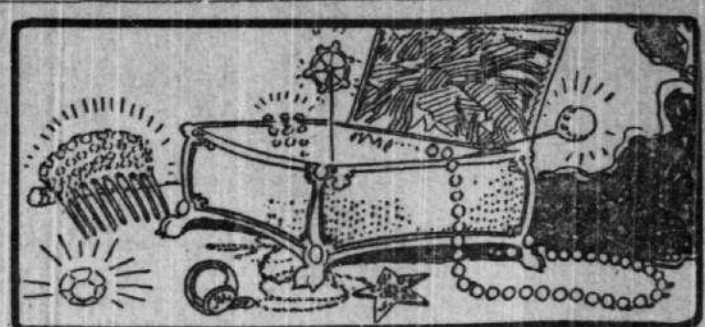


BRITZ OF HEADQUARTERS

By MARCIN BARBER
ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS



SYNOPSIS.

The story opens with a scream from Dorothy March in the opera box of Mrs. Missioner. A wealthy widow, it is learned, she is the only one who has seen the Maharanee diamond. She is a society man in love with Mrs. Missioner, and she is the only one who has seen the Maharanee diamond. She is a society man in love with Mrs. Missioner, and she is the only one who has seen the Maharanee diamond. She is a society man in love with Mrs. Missioner, and she is the only one who has seen the Maharanee diamond.

CHAPTER XIII.—(Continued.)

Britz frowned slightly as he read the message, then with a heavy frown he turned to the Western Union office. "Take it your- self," he said. "It goes at once."

"I was when his thoughts were tangled in the tightest of knots that a man is brought to him by the twin brother of the heavy-footed bluecoat who even then was supposedly on his way to the Western Union office by the cable to Logan.

"Show him in," said Britz after a glance at the name; and, as his visitor entered, he swung his feet from the desk, advancing halfway to the door, and extended his hand cordially.

"How do you do, doctor?" he said. "I know I see you cheerful."

A wistful smile broke the frown of the doctor's countenance for an instant, and he shook his head slightly.

"I don't see how there can be any cheer for me," he said, "as long as that poor girl is a prisoner in the Tombs. When are we going to get her out?"

"I know just how you feel about it, doctor," said Britz sympathetically. "But you'll have to leave that in my hands for the present. Miss Holcomb must stay where she is awhile longer."

"But surely," persisted the physician, "it cannot be necessary to leave her there forever to establish her innocence. You know she is guiltless; I know it; Mrs. Missioner knows it, and it would not take much to bring all her acquaintances to the same view. Why must we wait?"

"Now, let us talk," said Britz. "You and I have fenced long enough along this line; let's get down to business. You know something about chemistry, that's certain. Do you know enough about it to tell me whether any progress has been made in recent years in the manufacture of paste jewels?"

"Can't say I don't haven't been much interested in that line until this outrageous attempt to prove Miss Holcomb a thief."

"Well, it's about time you did," said Britz meaningly. "I don't see what good it is to a girl to have an M. D. for a lover if he can't be of any more use to her in a case of this sort than Blake of the Hardware Club, or Jenks of the Retail Grocers' Association. Now, you know how these false gems are made, don't you?"

"I know pretty well," said Fitch, giving him the formula with which the minute men of the jewel trade were familiar for purposes of self-protection.

Fourth Avenue as fast as the local can take us. Guess we won't wait for a taxi."

"Then you think," said Fitch eagerly, "there may be a clew in what I've told you?"

"What's the use of thinking," almost snapped Britz, "when we can know? There's just one way to know, and that's to go. Come, let's go."

As they walked briskly down the Headquarters building, Britz paused at Manning's office, pushed a button and, when the door swung open, thrust his head in long enough to say:

"See you later, Chief; going up town for a little while."

"Still fighting it out on that line, eh?" was Manning's return.

"Yes," said Britz calmly, "and it may not take all winter either."

The detective and the doctor were so absorbed in the subject as they raced down the subway stairs that they did not notice a dark-faced man who, after a keen glance at their faces, hastened east in Bleeker Street and sprang into a waiting cab at the next corner.

CHAPTER XIV.

Old Friends.

Bruce Sands was as genuinely astonished as a man of deliberateness could be when a clerk entered the private room of his office suite in a Bowling Green skyscraper and told him a lady wished to see him. He was about to instruct the clerk to ask for the lady's card when, glancing over the youth's head, he glimpsed a golden gleam under a big hat with sweeping plumes through the doorway and in an instant was crossing the threshold with both hands extended.

"My dear Doris!" he said. "This is really good of you. Things were getting a bit dull this morning."

Mrs. Missioner smiled in that per- vading way that long ago had penetrated to the very core of the millionaire's inner consciousness. That smile illuminated Sands' somewhat gloomy sanctuary. He welcomed Mrs. Missioner to a comfortable chair beside his broad desk, swept aside the heap of formidable papers with great gold seals and fluttering legal ribbons, and leaned back in his chair quite content to wait a century for his visitor to speak again, provided her smile should continue to beam upon him.

"No, it is not about investments," said Mrs. Missioner, noting the restrained inquiry in her admirer's eyes. "I felt I had to talk to somebody about Elinor; and Dorothy, you know, is too amiably responsive to be of any use. Bruce, what am I to do about that girl?"

"I'm sure I don't know," he said at length. "I suppose something ought to be done."

dash with her for the freedom beyond the great steel door. For an instant that impulse almost got the upper hand of her common sense. Had not Sands been there, she might have done something so foolish as to complicate her young friend's position still further in the eyes of all the city's newspapers and their readers. As it was, she increased the tenderness of her caresses, and sought to soothe Elinor's agitation with little love words such as had long been common in their daily intercourse. But this tenderness only recalled to Elinor all the affection, safety, and shelter she had left behind her in Mrs. Missioner's home, and at the thought she broke into uncontrollable sobs.

The millionaire's discomfort was augmented a thousandfold by this scene between the women. He shifted his weight from one foot to the other, crumpled the rim of his deer- hat until it bent like the brim of an Alpine, and at length, unable to view the girl's distress with anything like equanimity, he walked to the other end of the reception-room and stood looking through the giant latticework at the tide of traffic in Centre Street.

It was not until the widow had restored Elinor's calmness, not until she had assured the trembling prisoner of her love, confidence, and full belief in her innocence a hundred times, not until their emotion had affected even the matron long inured to human weep, that the girl saw Sands. His sturdy bulk, the square set of his shoulders, the uncompromising fidelity in his strong face, gave her a new sense of pleasure. Surely her case could not be desperate with two such loyal friends to defend her! For the space of a star-flash, she forgot even Fitch, although her lover at that moment was hastening uptown with Britz in quest of the missing thread that should lead to her vindication. Still with her arm around Mrs. Missioner's waist, she extended her hand to Sands, and thanked him in a way more effective than any mere girlish prettiness for the proof of his faith in her that he had given in coming with Mrs. Missioner to see her.

"Not that it would take much persuasion to make you accompany Doris anywhere," she said with a smile, and she was not at all remorseful when she noted the dark flush of pleasure that spread over his features. "But I cannot help taking comfort in the fact that you have come to see me, and that very evidently it had cost you no struggle to do so. If all of you could only know what these long weeks have been to me, you would understand how deeply the sight of old friends affects me. Here I have been in a world apart. The poor creatures who share this dreadful home with me only make my situation worse, for I can do nothing for them, and yet the sight of their misery distresses me beyond words."

Elinor did not know how much she had been spared by the consideration of the warden in assigning her to a tier of cells in which the more brutal inmates of the Tombs never were confined. She had had only a glance of the nether depths. Grave though the charge against her was, the good old man, whom an accident of politics had placed in control of the prison, had recognized from the first that she was of finer mould than anyone who had been entrusted to his custody in his whole term of office, and he had seen to it that her eyes and ears were not assaulted by the sights and scenes of the blacker depths. Years passed, and Elinor was a woman of much graver maturity ere she knew how much of misery she had escaped.

The visit of Mrs. Missioner and Sands did Elinor so much good that, when they went away, it was with a lighter heart she returned to her cell, with renewed courage she awaited the efforts of the good friends and the devoted lover she knew were working to clear her name of the frightful charge Donnelly and Carson had lodged against her.

Her confidence in Dr. Fitch was not misplaced, for in the short time when Mrs. Missioner in her limousine was speeding back to her home in Millionaires' Row, and Sands, in a brougham, was returning to his office in Fitch and Britz were standing on a Fourth Avenue corner a short distance north of Twenty-third Street, gazing with dismay at a twenty-story skyscraper that stood on the site of the little old curio shop to which duty had called the young ambulance surgeon years before.

"You are sure this is the place?" asked the detective.

"Absolutely," said the doctor. "I went over there to get some brandy for the old man when I was working him out of his stupor."

"Well," said the sleuth, "so far as that old curio shop is concerned, we're up against it; or, what is worse, we are not up against it. We are confronted by this steel and stone monstrosity, and I guess there's no use wasting time making inquiries there; but there may be a few old-timers with memories along this block, and we'll see what we can find out. You take that side of the street, and I'll take this."

Britz and Fitch went into one shop after another, patiently repeating persistent inquiries as to what had become of the veteran curio dealer. Blank stares and equally blank answers were the result until Britz, in a tiny tobacco shop that was the center of all the old-times places huddled together for protection against the encroachment of progress, unearthed a memory incarnate in a man, who, Fitch said, might have been the twin brother of the amateur alchemist.

"Yes," said the man, "I remember him, and it's a funny thing to me that anybody who ever saw him could ever forget him. He was the queerest little old duck I ever ran across."

Britz thought if anyone could be queerer than the ancient tobaccoist he would have to step out of a page of Dickens.

The incarnate memory recalled that the curio dealer had been taken away a week or two before his shop was torn down to clear the ground for the foundation work of the great skyscraper. No, he didn't go away. He was taken away.

"Anything wrong with him?" asked Britz.

HINTS FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

An idea worth passing on is to have a large safety pin fastened to the outside of place bags and whenever a new piece or pieces are added to it put a sample in the safety pin, so that a glance will tell what pieces are in the bag, much time will be saved in rummaging and disarranging the pieces.

It is a good plan to have silks, woollens and cotton pieces by themselves. After washing and drying woolen blankets, beat with a carpet beater and they will renew the light and fluffy look that they had when new.

Moisten grease spots with cold water as soon as possible, it keeps the grease from soaking into the wood. Soda sprinkled on to grease spots with a little warm water before scrubbing aids the removing process.

Milk that is scorched need not be thrown away, but if set into cold water in a clean dish, in a short while the scorched taste will disappear.

A good way to warm rolls is to lay them in a clean cloth in a collander and place over steam on the teakettle. Small pieces of toilet soap if kept in a glass jar, can be made into soap jelly by boiling with soft water. This jelly is a nice soap for washing the hair.

Sour milk is a good mild silver cleaner. Place the silver in the milk and let stand for an hour, then wash in hot soapsuds.

If one has a small closet partitioned off in the cellar with a window for ventilation, vegetables and fruits of all kinds may be kept indefinitely. If windows stick and are hard to open, grease the cord with a little oil and pour a little around the window frame.

If a small piece of zinc is burned in stoves and furnaces the soot will not form in the pipes or chimneys. If blood stains get on woolen cloth, rub while fresh with a dry starch, this absorbs the blood without leaving a trace.

SOME USES FOR SOUR CREAM.

There are not many who have never tried it would believe that sour cream makes a delicious white sauce to serve with codfish. Prepare the white sauce just as usual, using the cream instead of the milk.

Sour cream, if not too old, makes a delicious dressing for shredded cabbage. Add a little sugar and vinegar and pour over the cabbage.

Sour cream makes a fine shortening for apple cake and for small cup cakes, to be baked in gem pans.

Sour cream is one that is hard to beat. Use the cream, raisins and eggs and bake with two crusts.

Sour cream makes the best shortening for doughnuts, as they do not dry out as soon as when baking powder and sweet milk are used.

Sour Cream Dressing.—Beat a half pint of sour cream with an egg beater until smooth, thick and light. Mix two tablespoonsful of lemon juice, two of vinegar, a teaspoonful of salt, a tablespoonful of sugar and a pinch of mustard and pepper, and add to the cream, beating all the while.

This dressing may be modified to suit different vegetables. Any seasoning may be added that is desired. Onion juice, nutmeg, catsup or any different flavor liked.

Sour cream and nuts with brown sugar boiled together makes a delicious filling.

Sour cream stirred or beaten until butter comes will give a fresh lump of pure, sweet butter, of which many are so fond.

Cookies of all kinds are improved by using sour cream to shorten them. Sour cream added to cream cheese or cottage cheese adds to its palatability.

Sour cream dressing is liked by many used on sliced cucumbers. This is simply sour cream with a little salt, pepper and sugar added.

Nellie Maxwell.

His Point of View.

"Gerald, dear, papa thinks we ought to postpone our wedding awhile, on account of the shortage in the money market."

"Great Scott, Mildred! That's why I want to hurry up!"

Not a Connoisseur.

Butler—"I've got the boss 'as been an' bought another o' them old masters."

Chef—Bah! He gave me ze pain. He knows nothing of art. He can not tell ze Meissonier from ze mayonnaise.—Life.

Editor's Mean Revenge.

An editor who was courting a woman of uncertain age, but positive bank account, was cut out by a gentleman from a neighboring town, who married her and took her home. Whereupon the editor sought a mean revenge by heading account of her wedding: "Another Old Resident Gone."

Carried Their Own Spoons.

The cry is now for the individual drinking cup. In Queen Elizabeth's time every guest at a banquet brought his own spoon with him.