Three Meetings

By F. A. MITCHEL

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Three times I saw her, three times I gazed upon her, each time being drawn nearer to her before I knew her sorrow.

I was riding on a railroad train to my home in the suburbs of a great city when looking up I saw a girl who faced me gazing at me with a pair of large brown eyes. There was in her face something like sadness, but not sadness, rather the appearance of one born under different conditions from other mortals—a resignation, yet a contentment in resignation. I have tried by these words to describe it, but am conscious of having failed.

Though her eyes were fixed upon me, there was no boldness in them. Rather she seemed unconscious of meeting my gaze. Perhaps, I thought, she is thinking of something so absorbing that though she is looking straight at me she does not see me, or it may be that she is looking at something beyond me. I have often returned a salute from a person who meant it for one behind me. So I continued to gaze at the girl and she at me till she turned her face in another direction.

She was sitting by a lady double her age, and the likeness between them indicated that they were mother and daughter. Presently the train stopped at a station, and the two left the car together. I had noticed by the affectionate glances the mother gave the daughter that she idolized her, and when they passed out it was hand in hand.

I did not forget the face, and a year later I saw it again. This time it was in a church. She was, as before, accompanied by her mother. I was sitting in a transept; the girl was facing the pulpit. There was the same look, indescribable in words, that had impressed me twelve months ago. Her gaze was fixed on the clergyman, though occasionally she would drop it as though looking into her lap. There was in me a vague feeling—something like a hope—that when I had seen her on the train she had been, at least a part of the time, looking at me, cognizant of my presence; that she had remembered me as I remembered her. I watched to see if she would not look in my direction. Just before the close of the services I was rewarded by seeing her turn, and her eyes rested upon me. I looked for something to indicate that she was conscious of my presence and that she had seen me before. But there was only that strange look of resignation I had seen before. After the benediction she and her mother left the church in the same manner as they had left the train.

The third meeting. Having a law case I was waiting in the courtroom for it to be tried. A criminal case was called—that of Evelyn Bryce. Who should come into court to answer to the charge of forgery but the girl I had seen twice before. She came hand and hand with her mother.

Naturally I was wrapped in the trial. The prisoner's attorney was evidently trying to prove a conspiracy on the part of certain persons against his client. When he made a point in her favor or her case appeared to be going against her I looked to see what effect it had upon her. I could see very little. I was not sure that I could see any. I noticed that the jury—indeed, all those in the courtroom—were looking at her; that they seemed as much impressed with that look of mingled resignation and content as I.

The defendant's counsel exhibited the document that the girl was accused of forging and showed that the name had been written on the line intended for it without the raising or depression of a single letter and without incline either up or down.

"You see, gentlemen of the jury," he said, "that whoever wrote that name must have written it in a bright light, must have written with a pair of eyes that worked thoroughly in concert, for there are defects of eyesight that cause persons so affected to write slanting the lines downward or upward."

"I presume," interrupted the prosecuting attorney, "that defendant's counsel proposes to prove that his client has the defect he mentions. I would call your honor's attention to the fact that the prisoner has a very beautiful pair of eyes. Indeed, I greatly fear that she is using them upon the jury with a view to securing her acquittal."

The accused's counsel received in silence for a few moments this attempt to prejudice the court and the jury against his client. Then he said:

"The prosecuting attorney is mistaken, your honor. I am not intending to prove that my client has this especial defect. I would for her sake that it had pleased her Creator to give her this defect instead of the one with which she is afflicted. Gentlemen of the jury, my client is unable to cast upon you glances calculated to excite your sympathy any more than she could have seen to write her name exactly on the line in that document, for she is stone blind."

The effect produced on the court by this announcement rendered any further process of law unnecessary. The jury without leaving their seats acquitted the accused, and I now knew why when she and her mother left the courtroom they went hand in hand.

This is but the beginning of a story in which I have been long and am still deeply interested.

Good Elderberry Wine

By M. QUAD

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One summer's day in the long ago, when you could meet a lightning rod outfit at every five miles on the highway, one of the craft drove into the town of Plainfield. In showing off his fine horses he ran over a hog, and the hog limped squealing away. It was nothing to make a fuss over, and none would have been made if the hog hadn't belonged to Elder Carpenter.

The elder was a solemn, severe man. He happened to be passing at the time the animal was run over, and he caught a laugh and an oath from the lips of the man of lightning. What does he do but go before a justice and swear out a warrant for malicious injury to a hog. An arrest and trial followed. Of course the lightning rod man testified on his own behalf that no malice existed. He and the elder's hog had never met before. He was driving up to the hotel in a fancy way to show off before the loafers sitting on the veranda, and the hog was unseen until too late.

At the conclusion of the trial the lightning rod man told the elder and about forty others what he thought of them, their town and their fathers and mothers before them, and there was a fight, in which he got badly banged up and driven out of town. Of course he wanted to get even. You must know that there is a fellow feeling between men who are skinning the public, and it was quite natural that the elder's victim should select a tin peddler as his instrument for carrying out his plan.

A shallow river runs through Plainfield. At that time its banks were lined for a mile up and down with elderberry bushes. Toward the last of August the clusters of berries were a sight to see. One could gather a wagonload in half a day. One day a tin peddler stopped to gather a couple of bushels. In answer to inquiries he stated that he was going to make elderberry wine after a recipe brought from China by a missionary. Your mother, if she lived in the country, used to make wine of these berries, but only in limited quantity. It isn't the beverage to make one enthuse. There was considerable talk about the tin peddler and his Chinese recipe, and an excitement followed. He returned to Plainfield with a twenty gallon keg of new wine, and wanted to form a syndicate for gathering the berries and making the wine. He had with him a letter purporting to come from a large wine house and offering him $8 a gallon for all the elderberry wine he could ship.

Six hundred dollars was the cash capital wanted for a press and building and to pay for the gathering. The dividends for the season would be 100 per cent. There was no hayseed in the hair of the population of Plainfield. The peddler's talk sounded all right, but the people said he must show them before they invested. That was why that twenty gallon keg was placed on the tavern veranda, and the public asked to help themselves. Elder Carpenter was a temperance man right down to refusing ginger beer, but he saw no hurt in manufacturing a good brand of elderberry wine and selling it for medicinal purposes.

It was three hours before the keg was empty, and by that time it was the universal verdict that the peddler was a "goo' fel'r" and that the town stood ready to invest not $600, but $600,000,000, in his enterprise. They would buy 6,000 presses. They would gather 60,000 loads of berries. It was in the midst of the greatest good feeling and general hilarity that the town blacksmith said that Elder Carpenter was a hog himself for making the lightning rod man trouble over the other hog. The elder promptly replied that the smith was a born liar and started the row. The peddler made for the tavern barn and hid away, but his example was not followed. Every man got the idea that it was his duty to wade into some other man, and for an hour there was fighting up and down the streets. Fathers whanged away at sons, and brother punched brother. The three local ministers butted in as peacemakers and were early left stranded in the dust.

There were a few men in the town who did not get black eyes and bloody noses and lumpy heads, but they were the old men who had had their fun in other days and were now willing to let the younger generation go in and whoop 'er up. It was these old men who assisted the women when it came to poultices and bandages and to wheeling home those who could not walk.

Only two men knew what was in that keg, and they never told. It may have been Chinese elderberry wine according to missionary recipe, or it may have been a mixture of whisky, brandy, gin, wine and drugs. At any rate, the "feeling" lasted two whole days, and there were fights almost daily for the next fortnight. It was a month later that the lightning rod man came driving up to the tavern again. This time he ran over two hogs instead of one. Elder Carpenter was passing again, but he did not stop or turn. He simply uttered an "um" and held his way. There was the usual crowd on the veranda, but they crossed their legs, spat their tobacco juice over the railing and were mum. The town had been struck by lightning and didn't want any more of it. It didn't even want the empty keg the peddler had left behind him in his flight.

A FAMOUS LAWSUIT

By M. QUAD

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The town of Bidwell, up in the New England hills, was a town of peace. It had been founded just forty years when its first real sensation came. One day Deacon Goodhue borrowed Deacon Hardman's garden hoe, and after using it a few minutes he broke it off at the shank. While he contended that it was old and rusty and ready to break, he offered to buy a new one to replace it. Much to his surprise, he was allowed to do so, and he went home to say to his wife:

"Martha, I've known Deacon Hardman for thirty years and have just found him out. He's a human hog, and if he ever goes to heaven I want to go somewhere else."

For two weeks after that the two deacons nodded coldly to each other whenever they met, and it gradually became known to Bidwell that their relations were strained. Then one morning Deacon Goodhue set out to drive five hogs over to the weighing scales. He had to pass the other deacon's house, and as he came along the gate was open, and all the hogs made a rush for it. He was trying to drive them out of Deacon Hardman's yard when the latter came out and said:

"By gum, Deacon Goodhue, but this is goin' too fur—too fur! You opened that gate and driv' your hogs in on me a-purpose!"

"I never did, and you know I didn't!" retorted Deacon Goodhue as he paused in his running.

"Yes, you did!"

"No, I didn't!"

"Do you call me a liar?"

"Yes, if you call me one."

"Take it back or I'll mop the ground with you!"

"Come out here and I'll make you see stars!"

Then and there the deacons clinched and rolled on the ground together, and they were choking each other and breathing hard when Moses Schemerhorn came along and separated them. Deacon Hardman went straight to Justice Somerfield and swore out a warrant for assault and battery.

Both men had their friends, and the public was divided. The only person who had witnessed the fracas was Deacon Hardman's wife, but there were other witnesses sworn.

Old Mrs. Taylor swore that she had always suspected Deacon Goodhue to be a man of violent temper and that he only needed to be kicked to become a murderer. Moses Hunt was a mile away that morning looking for his cow, but he swore that Deacon Hardman was the sort of man to lose his temper and do awful things if he found a strange hog rooting up his hollyhocks. Abner Crossman, who had known both parties for thirteen years, swore that he had known Deacon Goodhue to fall off a haystack, get mired in a swamp and fight bumblebees for half an hour without losing the smile on his face, and he could not believe that he had begun this fuss. Opposed to him was Trueheart Johnson, who said he had seen Deacon Hardman kicked head over heels by a cow, run over by a hog and knocked down by a ram and that he preserved a humble spirit throughout and even asked the cow to forgive him if he had hurt her feelings.

Mrs. Hardman's testimony was that she was washing the dishes after breakfast when she heard her husband give a grunt and rush from the house. She followed him to the door and heard and saw all that subsequently passed, though in such a nervous state that she could not be sure of anything. She felt almost sure that Deacon Goodhue said "by gum" and "devil" and "old crank," but she wouldn't be positive of it. She was almost as sure that her husband started to sing a hymn and made some Scriptural quotation, but she might have been mistaken. She was not sure who grabbed the other first, but she could swear on the living Bible that they had trodden all the cucumbers into the earth and broken down most of her tiger lilies.

It took two days to try the case, and meanwhile all business was suspended, including the sawmill. There was no jury, and when almost everybody in town had sworn on one side or the other Justice Somerfield put on his most dignified look and said:

"This case seems to go back to the hoe and to Deacon Goodhue's garden. Was there any need of the deacon working in his garden that day? What had become of his own hoe? Was the borrowed hoe rusty in the shank or was it not?

"Then there were the hogs. Any man who had ever set out to drive one hog along the road, to say nothing about five, knew that the animal wouldn't go straight for a rod at a time. He wouldn't be a hog to pass an open gate without making a rush for the opening. As to whether the lie was actually given and who gave it first is a matter of doubt. The same is true as to who grabbed first, but there can be no possible doubt that many cucumbers and tiger lilies were destroyed and that Deacon Hardman emerged from the conflict with a skinned nose. Taken full and by and back and forth, it was about an even thing. The costs will be divided between them, business resumed at 7 o'clock tomorrow morning, and if either has any root beer in the cellar he will be expected to treat the other and both make up and let hoes and hogs go to grass forever more!"

THE ARTIST OF THE PLAINS

By EDNA ELLEN WEEKS

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Edwin Winston, a New York gentleman, being ordered by his daughter's physician to take her to a southwestern climate, where the air is dry as well as comparatively warm during the winter months, took board in a ranch house in New Mexico, spending his time riding and driving with his daughter.

One day the two met a cowboy be fine work. This excited the owner's curiosity and he brought an expert to look at it.

"It's a Kennard," said the man, stooping to find the artist's name. "Kennard is a queer chap. Sometimes in a freak he will put a mark on his portraits. Here it is—that queried K. in the lower corner."

"And who is Kennard?"

"At present the principal portrait painter in America, and the second or third in the world."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the owner," and what would you consider a fair price for the work."

"Oh, you can get anywhere from $3,000 to $6,000 for it."

"Where is Kennard now?" pursued the astonished Winston.

"Trying to recover his health in New Mexico."

After all Kennard made the buyer pay dear for the portrait, for the price of Miss Virginia was added to the $100 paid.

whose appearance was different from those usually occupied in punching cows. His hair was rather long, and his beard was trimmed to a point. His eyes were large and wore a dreamy expression. He bowed to the couple as he passed them, taking off his sombrero with a courtesy not common among those of his calling.

The next morning the young man rode up to the porch on which Virginia Winston was sitting. He carried before him a box, while strapped behind him were an artist's easel, maulstick and other artistic appurtenances. Raising his hat to Miss Winston, he said:

"I noticed you yesterday when I met you and was seized with a desire to transfer your face to canvas. I have come to beg that privilege."

The young lady did not reply for a few moments. She was flattered at the request, but knew that her father's permission must be obtained.

"I do not know you," she said. "In the east, where I come from, there is a certain formality about such matters."

"I am called the plains artist," he said. "No one here knows anything about me, and I have no intention of informing them. If you will give me the required number of sittings I will come here and do the work on this porch."

"And your price for the portrait when it is finished?"

"It shall belong to you."

"Very well. I will ask my father and will let you know if you will come again."

The next morning the artist of the plains rode up to the ranch house, found the father with his daughter and obtained his permission to paint the portrait. He stipulated that he was to have the portrait when it was finished at whatever price he should himself name, provided he wished it, but it was in no wise obligatory on him to buy it. These details having been settled, the artist set up his easel on the porch and was accorded the first sitting. Mr. Winston took a book and read while the artist put the outline on the canvas.

The portrait grew under the artist's brush not only a likeness of Miss Winston, but a speaking likeness. Sometimes during the sittings Mr. Winston was present and sometimes he was absent. When he was present the painter worked on the girl's dress, her hands, indeed anything but her face. When her father was absent Miss Winston was kept conversing with her portrayer and on subjects that called forth such agreeable idiosyncrasies as were in her. These expressions the plainsman transferred to the canvas. Neither father nor daughter knew anything about art, but they knew that something was being produced which greatly pleased them. When it was finished Mr. Winston said to the artist:

"Now, my friend, I confess that you have painted my daughter just as she is, and I want the picture. What shall I pay you for it?"

"It was understood between us that you were to have it at your own price."

"Suppose we make it a hundred dollars."

"Whatever you choose to give."

The buyer wrote a check for $100 and took the picture. When the artist had departed Mr. Winston said to his daughter, "I suppose a good photograph of the largest size would cost that, and a painting is supposed to be better than a photograph."

The daughter sighed, but said nothing. She was sorry that the sittings were ended. She had never been so entertained in her life—that is, when the plainsman had been working on her features.

At the opening of the warm season Mr. Winston took his daughter back to the east. In New York they sent the portrait to a shop to be framed. The proprietor looked at it critically and ask the name of the artist, since it was not on the canvas. Mr. Winston asked him why he wished to know, and the reply was that it seemed to

The Superintendent's Daughter

By ALEX VEERHOFF

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I was at work in Moscow distributing revolutionary documents. This is a bald statement of a very intricate work. To distribute revolutionary documents is to place oneself in most frightful jeopardy. First, the matter must be written; second, it must be printed, and, third, it must be distributed. To be caught doing any of these meant to be loaded with chains and sent on the long march to Siberia to live a horrible prison life and probably never return. But before beginning to get out matter a society must be formed for the purpose. We had an admirable secret organized circle under the direction of a single head.

My part was in distributing. I was given small packages of printed documents, which I was to leave at various places without being seen doing so. I had done considerable of this work without exciting, as I supposed, any suspicion, when one day, while carrying one of my little packages, on crossing a street I saw a man on the opposite side standing on the sidewalk looking at me intently. I went on without appearing to notice him, passed him, but refrained from going where I had intended. I knew that if he were a government officer who was on my track he would not arrest me till I had reached by destination, where he hoped to find confederates. I stopped several times to look at something by the way, in order that I might partly turn and look back without appearing to suspect being followed. In this way I satisfied myself that the man I had noticed was shadowing me.

The problem that confronted me was how to get rid of the package I carried. I dared not drop it, for my shadower would secure it and it would surely convict me. And yet if arrested with it on me I would meet a like fate.

How quickly one's mind will work on the eve of a great trouble which may possibly be averted! One thing took possession of my mind immediately—I must enter an inclosure where I could remain long enough out of sight of my follower to get rid of my package. Members of our circle were well instructed in the location of police offices and in the residences of the officials. I determined to play a bold game. I would go to the superintendent of police, give him the package and tell him I had found it on the street. This was certainly a desperate game to play as well as a bold one. But there was a chance in it for me.

I went to the superintendent's house instead of his office, rang the doorbell, and the door was opened by a servant. I asked if the superintendent—Alexis Sherloff held the office at the time—was in. The servant was a stupid creature and knew nothing about her master, but a young lady came down the stairs and told me that the superintendent was at his office.

"I am sorry to hear that," I said. "I have something to turn over to him, something that it is dangerous for me to keep in my possession."

The young lady looked interested.

"In passing through an alley," I continued, "I noticed a package neatly wrapped and tied. I picked it up and on opening it found that it contained revolutionary documents. I realized at once the danger into which I had fallen. Possibly some one was watching me. I was tempted to drop it, but even in this there was danger. Then I resolved that I would do what it was my duty to do—turn it over to the government. I have brought it to the superintendent."

"Father will be at home in about an hour," she said. "You might wait for him or you can go to his office."

"I would not dare to go to his office for fear of being arrested before reaching it."

"Then you had better wait."

I noticed that the young lady was suppressing emotion. She showed me into a waiting room and left me, but soon return, her manner changed.

"If these documents are found here," she said, "they may implicate me, and you will be under suspicion. Better destroy them. Give them to me."

She hurriedly snatched the package from me and disappeared. In a few minutes she returned and showed me to the door. There across the street stood the man who had followed me. I walked boldly past him and saw on his face a very bewildered expression.

I concluded that there was no use trying to shake him off and that I might as well go home. I did so, and the man followed me, for, looking out between the window blinds, I saw him loitering on the opposite side of the street. I wished to report my adventure to the head of my circle, but dared not attempt to do so. I had not been at home an hour before a lady called at the house and asked for me. As soon as she saw me she said:

"Your adventure this afternoon has been reported to the director of the circle. Tonight at 11 go out and walk westward on the street. A carriage will draw up at the sidewalk and take you in. You will go to America."

She handed me a package of bank bills and left me. I did as directed, was taken into the carriage, run off beyond the border and am here in America. I was sent away, being suspected, and that I might not implicate others.

The superintendent's daughter was a member of a revolutionary circle.

A SINGULAR CASE

By MARGARET BARR

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Ellen Graham and I had been schoolmates. We had separated after school days, and I had neither seen nor heard anything of her till one morning, taking a newspaper, I had read an item with the heading "Jumped His Bail."

I read that Edward Jenks, a well known confidence man, had been arrested some time before, charged with innumerable swindles. He had procured bail, the case had been called for trial, and the bail had been forfeited. A singular feature of the case was that Jenks had found a young woman who moved in the best social circles, Miss Ellen Graham, to marry him. A private wedding had taken place a few days before the day set for the groom's trial, and the couple had gone on a wedding journey. "This," remarked the facetious reporter, "was certainly preferable to court ceremonies, followed by a journey to the penitentiary."

There was a mystery, and I am a woman. The consequence was inevitable. I put on my walking costume and went out to satisfy my curiosity.

I felt assured that the person most likely to give me the inside of the case was the crook's lawyer. I noted his name as given in the article and called on him, telling him that I was a friend of Miss Graham and I should be obliged if he would tell me how she had come to demean herself by marrying a confidence man. The lawyer smiled, invited me to be seated and told me the following strange happening:

"One day Edward Jenks, who was a resident of another city, came to town late at night during a political convention and finding all the better class of hotels full was obliged to seek a night's lodging at a cheap house. He went to bed, and an hour later was awakened by a knock at his door. Opening it in walked several men, one of whom ordered him to put on his clothes and come along. No explanation was given him. When he took up his clothes to put them on he was astonished to see that they were entirely different from those he had taken off. His protest that they were not his own produced no effect upon his captors, and he was ordered to put on the clothes, which fitted him indifferently. One of the men rifled the pockets and took out several letters addressed to Edward Jenks. Then the prisoner was handcuffed, marched to the police station and locked up.

"The next morning Jenks, who was engaged to Miss Graham and whom he had come to town to see with a view to arranging for their wedding, sent for her father to come to the jail at once. When Mr. Graham saw his son-in-law to be and learned that the police had long been looking for him, he was profoundly affected. His daughter had met Jenks while traveling abroad, and the acquaintance between the two families had been short. Jenks putting up at a cheap hotel, his apparel, the letters found in his pocket, which plainly proved that he was working certain confidence games, was too much for the old man's faith. He turned on his heel and left the jail.

"Jenks sent for me and told me the story as far as I have told it to you. I told him that the first thing to do was to get bail. This was done. Jenks went to a clothing store, where he bought a new outfit and came to my office. I can tell a gentleman from a crook very easily, and I knew that some mistake had been made in Jenks' case. But before we attempted to solve the mystery my client insisted that I go to his fiancee and induce her to come and meet him in my office. She did so, and the two were brought together in this room. Jenks was not long in convincing her that some strange coincidence had happened to him, and she was much affected at his position. She went home thinking that she could bring her father to her own views, but she failed. She was forbidden to see Jenks again.

"The evidence against the accused was so strong that I saw no hope of clearing him. I was convinced that he had been made a victim of some rascality, but I couldn't explain it. Both he and Miss Graham were in so deplorable a condition of mind that I feared one or both would break down under the strain. I dreaded the wear and tear of trial for both of them, and I didn't see how I could get Jenks off, at least not without spending months in hunting up evidence, and then how is any one going to tell how a jury will decide any question?

"A few days before the trial I proposed a plan that was a great relief to both the lovers. 'Marry,' I said, 'go abroad on your wedding trip.'

"They jumped at the suggestion, were married secretly and under assumed names sailed for Europe. Jenks left the money to reimburse the forfeiture of his bail.

"A long while afterward I learned the explanation. The night Jenks stopped at the hotel where he was arrested a hunted crook of the same name entered the house and saw his own name on the register. He took a room, but went to Jenks' room, turned the key with a pair of tweezers and left his clothes in Jenks' room, taking Jenks'. Then he telephoned the police that they would find the man they wanted at the —— hotel."

As soon as the bride and groom could be found I called on my old friend and heard the story from her own lips.

Confidence

By F. TOWNSEND SMITH

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I never wear a ring—few men do nowadays—but if I were inclined to do so there is an incident in my life that would prevent it. I was visiting my friends Mr. and Mrs. Jim Peabody at their country place. Another guest was Miss Virginia Wotherspoon, to whom I had taken a desperate fancy. One afternoon after a game of tennis I went into the bathroom on the floor where my room was located for a bath, and on the marble basin I saw a ring set with four large diamonds, which I recognized at once as one I had seen on the finger of Miss Wotherspoon. I took it to my room, intending to hand it to her when we met at dinner. Jim called me to his room to tell me about some amusements he was arranging, and I left the ring on the mantel in my room. He kept me half an hour, and when I returned the ring was gone.

I was liable to be considered a thief and of having appropriated to myself the property of a girl to whom I had already given the biggest part of my heart. I was sufficiently cool to think before acting. What would be the safest course for me to pursue? While weighing the pros and cons of different courses dinner was announced.

I once knew a very successful man who said, reversing a common adage, "I never do today what I can put off till tomorrow." I was much impressed with the idea, and rather than decide hastily in this instance I concluded to defer decision till after dinner.

I decided dead wrong. I should have brought the matter out at once. While I had been in Jim's room the housekeeper had gone into mine to leave some towels and had seen the ring on my mantel. Miss Wotherspoon missed it and ran to the bathroom. Not finding her property, she made her loss known to the hostess. The hostess communicated with the housekeeper, who said she had seen the ring on my mantel. Had I, on going down to dinner, made the facts known my story would have been believed. But, not saying a word about the matter, it all looked very singular to my friends. Nothing was said about Miss Wotherspoon's loss, and at first there was no constraint at the board, but before the dinner was finished I noticed a considerable coolness toward me on the part of every one.

Knowing well the cause and beginning to realize the position I was in, I grew embarrassed. I saw that I had made a mistake all around and did not see any way to vindicate myself. I did not know that the ring had been seen in my room, but it was plain to me that my connection with it was in some form known. I had but one theory as to the disappearance of the property—that some one, probably a servant, had gone into my room and, seeing the ring there, had stolen it.

After dinner I took Jim aside and told him the whole story. He looked very serious. He said that he didn't doubt a word of what I had told him, but he didn't see how we were to convince the women of the family. "They don't take the same views of things that we do," he said. "They judge in accordance with their feelings. That's the reason we men don't let them into the jury box. The main trouble in this case is that all our servants have been with us a long while, and, although we have left valuables where they could have been easily stolen without detection, we have never missed anything. But I'll do the best I can for you."

You never know what different views different persons will take of a mystery in which you are implicated until you are the subject of it. The only person in that whole household who thoroughly believed my story was—who?

I'll tell you.

After talking with Jim I went out for a walk in order to leave him to tell my story to the others and to get quieted down. When I returned no one was about, but on going into the drawing room Miss Wotherspoon advanced and, putting out her hand and fixing her honest eyes on mine, said:

"I have heard your explanation and have not the slightest doubt that every word of it is absolutely true."

By Jove! What do you suppose I did? I opened the sprinkler in my eyes.

Pretty soon I went up to Jim's room to tell him the good news. He listened to me, but without that enthusiasm I had expected. When I had finished he said:

"We must find the thief. That's the only way to exonerate you. I told you that women are prone to decide such questions in accordance with their feelings. I am not surprised at Miss Wotherspoon's action, for both my wife and I have noticed a decided partiality on her part for you."

"Thank God for that!"

"My wife is more unprejudiced. I wish her to feel perfectly satisfied in the matter and shall take measures to discover the thief."

I left the next day under a cloud—at least with Mrs. Peabody. Six months from that time the thief had not been discovered. Miss Wotherspoon and I were married, but Jim and his wife were not invited to the wedding. In another six months the thief turned up in a servant to whom they gave a confidence they denied me. They tried hard to wipe off the slate, but I have never had anything to do with them since.

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