

DON'T GIVE A DARE.

A Waltham Boy's Experience.

On a very cold Monday evening, as the story is told, Miss G. and Bert, F. called in spite of the cold. Who hoped Miss A. sing, though he didn't sing loud; he was everywhere noted as a gallant young flirt. But with all his fun few hearts could be hurt. Miss A., as is known, was fairly his equal, and to prove this the reader shall now hear the sequel.

They chit and they chat, the boys they did stay. And had did his best to head off Miss A. Bert and Bert, and Miss Fanny, also of good size. They could not get in a word edgewise. A roaring fire had made the room torrid, throwing out their feet so large and so horrid. Miss G.'s pins were a gift of the heavens; never so surely think so—number eleven.

One thing must be noticed that looked very neat; they're not to be sneezed at—Mr. F.'s feet. Cuffs! All circled around each one a seat. And during the game "was said the girls did cheat. And the boys said "they would play it straight." But very soon the girls they counted eight. Mr. G., soon thereafter did spread his wings and gently requested the girls to sing.

Then had the girl some time to ask. The getting of which was a difficult task. Bert begged for a slice of plum cake. Bert the girls had no time the same to make. Bert's! In Mr. G.'s fortune a wife was spoiled. She was light complexioned and also cross-eyed. And fourteen young-uns, with the nose a very And one open mouth always ready to cry.

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"Papers, miss—papers! Out of the safe!" "Yes. They are papers of no value whatever to the thief, whoever he may be. But they are of the very greatest importance to us. Your master seems to have lost his memory for a while, and cannot help us in finding out who has done this wicked thing. You have been a faithful servant for so long that I am sure you will do what you can for us. Think for us. Try to remember if anybody besides yourself has had access to this room when your master was out of it."

James sat down. He felt that he must sit down, though Lala Roy was looking at him with eyes full of doubt and suspicion. The whole enormity of his own guilt, though he had not stolen anything, fell upon him. He had got the key; he had given it to Mr. Joseph; and he had received it back again. In fact, at that very moment it was lying in his pocket. The worst that he had feared had happened. The safe was robbed.

He was struck with so horrible a dread and so fearful a looking forward to judgment and condemnation that his teeth chattered and his eye gave way.

"You will think it over, James," said Lala Roy, "think it over, and tell us presently if you can remember anything."

"Think it over, Mr. James," Lala Roy repeated in his deepest tone, and with an emphatic gesture of his right forefinger. "Think it over carefully. Like a lamp that is never extinguished are the eyes of the faithful servant."

They left him, and James fell back into his chair with hollow cheek and beating heart.

"He told me," he murmured, "oh, the villain!—he swore to me that he had taken nothing from the safe. He said he only looked in it, and read the contents. The scoundrel! He has stolen the papers! He must have known they were there. And then, to save himself, he put me on to the job. For who would be suspected if not—oh, Lord!—if not me?"

He grasped his paste-brush and attacked his work with a fearful anxiety to find relief in exertion, but his heart was not in it, and presently a thought pierced his brain, as an arrow pierces the heart, and under the pang and agony of it his face turned ashy pale, and the big drops stood upon his brow.

"For," he thought, "suppose that the thing sets abroad; suppose they were to advertise a reward; suppose the man who made the boy went to see the advertisement or to hear about it! And he knows my name, too, and my business; and he'll let out for a reward!—I know he will!—who it was that ordered that key of him."

Already he saw himself examined before a magistrate; already he saw in imagination that locksmith's man who made the key kissing the Testament, and giving his fee in gold and silver, and distinct words, which could not be shaken.

"Oh, Lord! oh, Lord!" he groaned. "No one will believe me, even if I do confess the truth; and as for him, I know him well; if I go to him, he'll only laugh at me. But I must go to him—I must!"

He was so goaded by his terror that he left the shop unprotected—a thing he had never thought of doing—and ran as fast as he could to Joe's lodgings. But he had left them; he was no longer there; he had not been there for six weeks; the landlady did not know his address, or would not give it. Then James felt sick and dizzy, and would have sat down on the doorstep and cried but for the lock of the thing. Besides, he remembered the unprotected shop. So he turned away sadly and walked back, well understanding now that he had fallen like a fool into a trap, artfully set to fasten suspicion and guilt upon himself.

When he returned he found the place full of people. Mr. Emblem was sitting in his customary place, and he was smiling. He did not look in the least like a man who had been robbed. He was smiling pleasantly and cheerfully. Mr. Chalker was also present, a man with whom no one ever smiled, and Lala Roy, solemn and dignified, and a man—an unknown man—who sat in the outer shop, and seemed to take no interest at all in the proceedings. Were they come, he asked himself, to arrest him on the spot?

Apparently they were not, for no one took the least notice of him, and they were occupied with something else. How could they think of anything else? Yet Mr. Chalker, standing at the table, was making a speech which had nothing to do with the robbery.

"Here I am, you see, Mr. Emblem," he said. "I have told you already that I don't want to do anything to worry you. Let me be friends all round. This gentleman, your friend from India, will advise you, I am sure, for your own good, not to be obstinate. Lord! what the amount, after all, to a substantial man like yourself! A substantial man, I say. He spoke confidently, but he glanced about the shop with doubtful eyes. "Granted that it was borrowed, your grandson out of a scrape—supposing he promised to pay it back and hasn't done so; putting the case that it has grown and developed itself as bills will do, and can't help doing, and can't be stopped. It isn't the fault of the lawyers, but the very nature of a bill to go on growing—it's like a runaway horse. Why, after all, you were your grandson's security; you can't escape that. And when I would no longer receive, you gave of your own accord—come now, you can't deny that—a bill of sale on goods and furniture. Now, Mr. Emblem, didn't you? Don't let us have any bitterness or quarrelling. Let's be friends, and tell me I may send you the man."

Mr. Emblem smiled pleasantly, but did not reply.

"A bill of sale it was, dated January the 25th, 1883, just before that cursed act of Parliament granted the five days' notice. Here is the bill's man in possession. You can pay the amount, which is, with costs and sheriff's) poundage, three hundred and fifty-one pounds thirteen shillings and fourpence, at once, or you may pay five days hence. Otherwise the shop, and furniture, and all, will be sold off in seven days."

"Oh," James gasped, listening with bewilderment, "we can't be going to be sold up! Emblem's to be sold up!"

"Three hundred and fifty pounds!" said Mr. Emblem. "My friend, let us rather speak of thousands. This is truly a happy day for all of us. Sit down, Mr. Chalker—my dear friend, sit down. Rejoice with us. A happy morning."

"What the devil is the matter with him?" asked the money lender.

"There was something, Mr. Chalker," Mr. Emblem went on cheerfully, "something said about my grandson. Joe was always a bad boy; lucky his father and mother are out of the way in Australia. You came to me about that business perhaps? Oh, on such a joyful day as this I forgive everybody. Tell Joe I do not to see him, but I have forgiven him."

"Oh, he's mad!" growled James, "he's gone stark staring mad!"

"You don't seem quite yourself this morning," Mr. Emblem, said Mr. Chalker. "Perhaps this gentleman, your friend from India, will advise you when I am gone. You don't understand, Mister," he addressed Lala Roy, "the nature of a bill. Once you start a bill, and begin to rent it, it's like planting a tree, for it grows and grows of its own accord, and by Act of Parliament, too, though they do try to back and cut it down as the most cruel way. You see Mr. Emblem is obstinate. He's got to pay off that bill, which is a bill of sale, and he won't do it. Make him write the check and have done with it."

"This is the best day's work I ever did," Mr. Emblem went on. "To remember the letter, word for word, and everything! Mr. Emblem has, very likely, finished the whole business by now. Thousands—thousands—and all for Iris!"

"Look here," Mr. Emblem said the lawyer, angrily. "You'll not only be a bankrupt if you go on like this, but you'll be a fraudulent bankrupt as well. Is it honest, I want to know, to refuse to pay your just debts when you've put by thousands, as you boast—you actually boast—for your grand-daughter?"

"Yes," said the old man, "Iris will have thousands."

"I think, sir," said Lala Roy, "that you are under an illusion. Mr. Emblem does not possess any such savings or investments as you imagine."

"Then why does he go on talking about thousands?"

"He has had a shock; he cannot quite understand what has happened. You had better leave him for the present. He has not these mouldy old books! Here, you see—James—your shopman—come here! What is the stock worth?"

"It depends upon whether you are buying or selling," said James. "If you were to sell it under the hammer, in lots, it wouldn't fetch a hundred pounds."

"There, you hear—you hear, all of you! Not a hundred pounds, and my bill of sale is three-hundred!"

"Pray, sir," said Lala Roy, "who told you that Mr. Emblem was so wealthy?"

"Then, sir, perhaps it would be well to question the grandson further. He may know things of which we have heard nothing."

Mr. Chalker went away at length, leaving the man—the professional person—behind. Then Lala Roy asked Mr. Emblem to go upstairs again. He did so without any apparent consciousness that there was a man in possession.

"James," said Lala Roy, "you have heard that your master has been robbed. You are reflecting and meditating on this circumstance. Another thing is that a creditor has threatened to sell off everything for debt. Most likely, everything will be sold, and the shop closed. You will, therefore, lose the place you have had for five-and-twenty years. That is a very bad business for you. You are unfortunate this morning. To lose your place—and then this robbery. That seems also a bad business."

"It is," said James with a hollow groan. "It is, Mr. Lala Roy. It is a dreadful bad business."

"Pray, Mr. James," continued his man with grave, searching eyes, which made sinners shake in their shoes, "pray, why do you run away and where did you go after you opened the shop this morning? You went to see Mr. Emblem's grandson, did you not?"

"Yes, I did, said James.

"Why did you go to see him?"

"I was—was—oh, Lord!—I want to tell him what had happened, because he's master's grand-son, and I thought he ought to know," said James.

"Did you tell him?"

"No, he has left his lodgings. I don't know where he is—oh, and he always told me the shop was his—settled on him," he said.

"He is the Father of Lies; his end will be confusion. Shame and confusion shall wait upon all who have hearkened unto him or worked with him, until they repent and make amonement."

"Don't, Mister Lala Roy—don't; you frighten me," said James. "Oh, what a dreadful liar he is!"

All that morning the Philosopher sat in the bookseller's chair, and James in the outer shop, felt that those deep eyes were resting continually upon him, and knew that bit by bit his secret would be dragged out of him. If he could get up and run away—if a customer would come—if the dark gentleman would go up stairs—if he could think of something! But none of these happened, and James, at his table with the paste before him, passed a morning compared with which any seat anywhere in Purgatory would have been comfortable. Presently a strange feeling came over him, as if some invisible force was pushing and dragging him and forcing him to leave his chair, and throw himself at the Philosopher's feet and confess everything. This was the mesmeric effect of those reproachful eyes fixed steadily upon him. And in the doorway, like some figure in a nightmare—a figure incongruous and out of place—the man in possession sitting, passive and unconcerned, with one eye on the street and the other on the shop. Upstairs Mr. Emblem was sitting fast asleep; joy had made him sleepy; and Iris was at work among the papers, making a paper on emic sections for the Cambridge man, and working out trigonometrical equations for the young schoolmaster, and her mind full of solemn exultation and glory, for she was a woman who was loved. The other things troubled her but little. Her grandfather would get back his equilibrium of mind; the shop might be shut up, but that mattered little. Arnold and Lala Roy, and her grandfather—himself, would all live together, and she and Arnold would work. The selfishness of youth is really astonishing. Nothing—except perhaps toothache—can make a girl unhappy who is loved and newly betrothed. She may say what she pleases, and her face may be a yard long when she speaks of the misfortunes of others, but all the time her heart is dancing.

To Lala Roy the situation presented a problem with insufficient data, some of which could have to be guessed. A letter, now lost, said that a certain case contained papers necessary to obtain an unknown inheritance for Iris. How, then to ascertain whether anybody was expecting or looking for a girl to claim an inheritance? Then there was a half-a-cent-of-aria, and lastly there was a certain customer of unknown name, who had been acquainted with Iris's father before his marriage. So far for Iris. As for the thief, Lala Roy had no doubt at all. It was, he was quite certain, the grandson, whose career he had watched for some years with interest and curiosity. Who else was there who would steal the papers? And who would help him, and give him free access to the safe? He did not only suspect, he was certain that James was some way connected with the deed. Why else did he turn so pale? Why did he rush off to Joe's lodgings? Why did he sit in a blank? At half-past twelve Lala Roy rose.

"It is your dinner hour," he said to James, and it seemed to the unhappy man as if he was saying, "I know all. Is your dinner hour; go eat, refresh thy body. Whom should suspicion frighten except the guilty?" James put on his hat and neared—he felt that he was sneaking—out of the shop.

When he was told about the robbery he expressed the greatest surprise that any one in the world could be so wicked as to rob an old man like his grandfather. Besides his abhorrence of crime in the abstract, he affirmed that the robbery of a safe was a species of villainy for which hanging was too mild—much too mild a punishment. He then asked his grandfather what were the contents of the packet stolen, and when he received no answer except a pleasant and a cheerful laugh, he asked Iris, and learned to his sorrow that the contents were unknown, and could not, therefore, be identified, even if they were found. This, he said, was a thousand pities, because, if they had been known, a reward might have been offered. For his own part he would advise the greatest caution. Nothing at all should be done at first; no step should be taken which might awaken suspicion; they should go on as if the papers were without value. As for that, they had no real proof that there was any robbery. Iris thought of telling him about the water mark of the blank pages, but refrained. Perhaps there was no robbery after all—who was to prove what had been inside the packet? But if there had been papers, and if they were valueless except to the rightful owners, they would, perhaps, be sent back voluntarily; or after a time, say a year or two, they might be advertised for; not as if the owners were very anxious to get them, but cautiously; and presently, if they had not been destroyed, the holders of the papers would answer the advertisement, and then a moderate reward might, after a while, be offered, and so on, giving excellent advice. While he was speaking Lala Roy entered the room in his noiseless manner and took his accustomed chair.

"And what do you think, sir?" said Joseph, when he had finished. "You have heard my advice. You are not an Englishman, but I suppose you've got some intelligence."

Lala bowed and spread his hands, but replied not.

"Your opinion should be asked," Joseph went on, "because, you see, as the only other person, besides my grandfather and my cousin, in the house, you might yourself be suspected. Indeed," he added, "I have no doubt you will be suspected. When I take over the conduct of the case, which will be my task, I suppose, it will, perhaps, be my duty to suspect you."

"He looked round. The watchful eyes were gone. The Hindoo had gone away noiselessly. James breathed again.

"After all," he said, "how are they to find out? How are they to prove anything? Mr. Joseph took the things, and I helped him to a key, and he isn't likely to split, and—oh, Lord, if they were to find it! For at that moment he felt the duplicate key in his waistcoat pocket. "If they were to find it!"

He took the key out and looked at the bright and innocent looking thing as a murderer might look at his blood-stained dagger.

Just then, as he gazed upon it, holding it just two inches in front of his nose, one hand was laid upon his shoulder and another took the key from between his fingers.

He turned quickly and his knees gave way, and he sank upon the floor, crying: "Oh, Mr. Lala Roy, sir, Mr. Lala Roy, I am not the thief! I am innocent! I will tell you all about it! I will confess all to you! I will indeed! I will make amonement! Oh, what a miserable fool I've been!"

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"It will perhaps be my duty to suspect you," Lala bowed again and again, spread his hands, but did not speak.

In fact, Joseph never perceived that he was having the conversation wholly to himself. His grandfather sat passive, listening as one who, in a dream, hears voices but does not heed what they are saying, yet smiling politely. Iris listened, but paid no heed. She thought that a good deal of fuss was being made about papers, which, perhaps, were worth nothing. And as for her inheritance, why, as she never expected to get any, she was not going to mourn the loss of what, perhaps, was worth nothing.

"Very well, then," said Joseph, "that's all I've got to say. I've given you the best advice I can, and I suppose I may go. Have you lost your voice, Iris?"

"No; but I think you had better go, Joseph. My grandfather is not able to talk this morning; he certainly let me use it once, very good, but I have your advisers."

"As for you, Mr. Lala Roy, or whatever you call yourself," said Joe, roughly, "I've warned you. Suspicion will certainly fall upon you, and what I say is—take care. For my own part I never did believe in niggers, and I wouldn't have one in my house."

Lala Roy again bowed and spread his fingers.

Then Joseph went away. The door between the shop and the hall was half open, and he looked in. A strange man was sitting in the outer shop, a pipe in his mouth, and James was leaning his head upon his hands, with wild and haggard eyes gazing straight before him.

"Poor devil!" murmured Joseph. "I feel for him, I do indeed. He had the key made for himself; he certainly let me use it once, very good, but I have your advisers."

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lison, pick up secrets, put two and two together, and pry curiously into everybody's affairs being never so happy as when he gets an opportunity of going to the rescue of a sinking man. Thus among those who lived in good repute about the lower end of the King's Road none had a better name than Mr. Emblem, and no one was considered to have made more of his chances. And it was with joy that Mr. Chalker received Joe one evening and heard from him the dismal story, that if he could not find fifty pounds within a few hours he was ruined. The fifty pounds was raised on a bill bearing Mr. Emblem's name. When it was pressed, however, and the circumstances explained, the old gentleman, who had at first refused to own the signature, accepted it meekly, and told no one that his grandson had written it himself, and withdrew the polite formality of asking permission to sign for him. In other words, Joseph was a forger, and Mr. Chalker knew it, and this made him the more astonished when Mr. Emblem did not take up the bill, but got it renewed quarter after quarter, substituting at length a bill of sale, as if he was determined to pay as much as possible for his grandson's sins.

"Where is he?" asked the money-lender angrily. "Why doesn't he come down and face his creditors?"

"Master's up stairs," said James, "and you've seen yourself. Mr. Chalker, that he is off his chump! And oh, sir, who would have thought that Emblem's would have to come to ruin!"

"But there's something, James—come, think—there must be something."

"Mr. Joseph said there were thousands. But he's a terrible liar—oh, Mr. Chalker, he's a terrible liar and villain! Why, he's even deceived me!"

"What! Has he borrowed your money?"

"Worse—worse. Do you know where I could find him, sir?"

"Well, I don't know—" Mr. Chalker was not in the habit of giving addresses, but in this case perhaps Joe might be squeezed as well as his grandfather. Unfortunately that bill with the signature had been destroyed.

"I don't know. Perhaps if I find out I may tell you. And, James, if you can learn anything—this rubbish won't fetch half the money—I'll make it worth your while, James, I will indeed."

"I'll make him take his share," said James to himself. "If I have to go to prison, he shall go too. They shall send me without sending him."

He looked round. The watchful eyes were gone. The Hindoo had gone away noiselessly. James breathed again.

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"Upon the heels of Folly," said the Sage, "treadeth thine name. You will now be able to understand the words of wisdom, which say of the wicked man, 'The curse of iniquity pursue him; he liveth in continual fear, the anxiety of his mind taketh vengeance upon him.' Stand up and speak."

The man in possession looked on as if an incident of this kind was too common in families for him to take any notice of it. Nothing, in fact, is able to awaken astonishment in the heart of the man in possession, because nothing is sacred to him except the "sticks" he has to guard. To Iris the event was, however, of importance, because it afforded Lala Roy a chance of giving Arnold that photograph, no other than an early portrait of Mr. Emblem's grandson.

[To be Continued.]

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Are prepared to do all kinds of Gas & Steam Fitting. Wrought Iron Pipe, Fixtures, Fittings, &c., furnished at LOW PRICES.

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Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad. NEW TIME TABLE. GOING EAST. No. 3, Pacific Express and Mail, 11:25 A.M. No. 4, Night Express, 10:30 P.M. No. 5, Kansas City Express, 2:30 P.M. No. 6, Kansas City and Havana, 10:30 P.M. No. 7, Havana Accommodation, 7:00 A.M. No. 8, St. Paul Express, 11:50 A.M.

Chicago, Alton & St. Louis Railroad. On and after April 23, 1883, trains on the C. & A. R. R. pass Joliet as follows: GOING NORTH. Express Mail, 5:30 A.M. Lighting Express, 6:00 P.M. Denver Express, 10:00 P.M. R. C. and St. L. Express, 11:30 A.M. Joliet Accommodation, 1:30 A.M.

Chicago, Burlington and Quincy R.R. TIME TABLE. October 13th, 1883.

Going South. Pass. No. 71. B. 10:29. Chicago. 10:30. Aurora.