

the best of the matter, and took possession of the property which refused to be lost.

He resolved to make just one more attempt to dispose of the opal. If that proved as great a failure as his previous efforts had been, he would keep the ring come what might.

At two o'clock that afternoon he made his way to the Shirley theater, where there was to be a popular priced matinee for children. As he expected there was a large crowd collected before the entrance. Into this seething, pushing mass of humanity Ashton forced his way by slow degrees.

It seemed an ideal place to lose anything, whether one wanted to or not.

When he could advance no farther, Ashton slipped the ring from his finger, and without so much as glancing at those about him, slyly let it fall; then he backed out of the crowd as rapidly as he could, and hurried from the scene.

Early that evening, as he was smoking a lonely pipe, and congratulating himself upon the fact of his having at last lost his unlucky opal, the door was flung open and Ted, the curly headed young brother of Marion Hulbert, entered.

"Door was open down stairs so I just came right up," said Ted nonchalantly. "Got a note from sis," and, making a sudden dive into the depths of his trousers pocket, he drew forth a crumpled note which he tossed to Ashton.

Ashton opened it with trembling fingers and read:

"Please come to me this evening. I wish to restore you something of value which you have lost. Marion."

He got rid of Ted in short order, and then struggled into evening clothes.

"Poor little girl," he thought commiseratingly, as he hastened his preparations, "she's had as hard a time of it as I have had, and now she's given in and sent for me to tell me that she wishes to make up and restore herself to me. It's tough for her to have to own up that she's been in the wrong, so I'll make things as easy for her as I can, by acting as if nothing had come between us."

So when he entered the Hulberts' parlor, Ashton, not noticing or heeding Marion's embarrassed demeanor, sprang forward and clasped her unresisting form in his arms. The quarrel was speedily a thing of the past.

It was not until a triumphant Ashton was bidding a blushing Marion good-night, that that young person remembered to say: "There, I came near forgetting to give you your lost property."

"I supposed that you had already returned it," Ashton replied with a meaning smile.

"Of course not," Marion pouted. "I wanted to give you your opal ring."

"Where on earth did you get it?" demanded the amazed Ashton.

"I took my small niece to the theater and when I reached home