

PIPING A SHADOWER.

How a Private Detective was Caught in Mean Business.

One night recently I was at the theatre when the chaperone of the party started nervously forward in her seat, swayed slightly and turned pale. She had been sitting in the front of the box for an hour or so.

The glare of the foot-lights was very trying and the heat oppressive. It was supposed, as she was delicate in health, that these causes led to her distress. She would not hear of other disturbing themselves in the least, smiled a half-pitiful good-night to me. I took her wraps on my arm and we went out of the theatre. I observed that she glanced about in the most extraordinary manner as we hurried through the door, and after we had got into the cab and started at a brisk place she wheeled around nervously in her seat and peered out with an expression of face that was simply fear-stricken. I looked at her with more or less sympathetic curiosity, for I had long since given up any idea of following the queer vagaries of an excited woman's fancy. Suddenly she seized my arm with a grip of iron and shrieked in a voice that rose above the din of wheels:

"There he is!"
 "The deuce he is."
 "He's following us."
 "Who is? What is?"
 "He is," she said, with a tremendous accent on the "he," shaking my arm excitedly.
 "Oh, is he?" I said, vaguely, but firmly loosening the viselike grip of her fingers. "Would you mind telling me who he is?"

"It's the most dreadful thing in the world. For nearly a week I have been haunted like a wretched criminal by one or two men. There is a stocky, red-bearded sort of person who dogs my footsteps by day and another horrid and sinister little monster who follows me at night. It is impossible to get away from either one of them, and I have worried me until I am wretchedly ill as any woman in the world."

It was my turn now. I never was so amazed in my life. I sat up and she sank limp and overwrought in the corner again. It seemed incredible that there were private detectives on the track of a lady who was nearing her 50th year, had been more or less of an invalid all of her life, came of an old and exceedingly respectable New York family and was one of the most rigid and exemplary devotees of the proprieties in New York. She told me more about the espionage under which she had been worrying herself ill, and finally she began to press her handkerchief to her eyes in the good old-fashioned way. It seemed such an intolerable outrage to see that such a woman as this should be hounded by a couple of blackmailing curs that I kept her by my side when the carriage stopped at her door and waited for the man who had been pursuing her. He had rattled up behind us in a cab, but when we turned into a street in the residential quarter of the city he had jumped out of his cab and was sneaking along in the shadow of the houses. I could see him half a block away, with his collar turned up and his hat turned down over his eyes, slouching along in the most melodramatic and absurd manner. He had a dark silk handkerchief wound around the lower part of his face and was otherwise all that the most silly sensationalist could desire.

"To-night," said my companion, timorously, "I had almost forgotten about the trouble I have had with the two men and was enjoying the play when I glanced down the orchestra chairs, and there, in the middle aisle, I saw that wretched and unshaven man watching me as though I were a criminal. It was the shock of this that made me feel so faint."

Meanwhile the mysterious gentleman with handkerchief around his neck was circling nearer and nearer the cab. The lady at my side trembled more and more as he neared her, and as I reflected that she would have a long and serious illness from all the nervous strain that he was causing I began to feel a sort of yearning desire to get hold of him. We waited at least twenty minutes, and each time the detective came nearer and nearer, until finally he passed the door of the cab and peered eagerly in. I jumped for him through the open window, but he was very sly, and I only got hold of his coat sleeve. He struggled and fought like a bull terrier, and was loosening my grip materially when a large and bulky body descended through the air and the detective came to the earth with a terrific crash under the burly figure of my Irish cab driver, who had been watching the whole pantomime and was just about as shrewd as most New York hack drivers. The servants, who had heard the disturbance, opened the front door and ran down and assisted their mistress into the house. The hackman and I then unloaded ourselves. I had added about 200 pounds of the avoirdupois that had already pressed the detective to the earth. We dragged the gentleman with the handkerchief around his neck into the house. On the way the hackman casually hit our friend a clip in the neck with his clenched fist that warmed the cockles of my heart toward the Jehu. The result of all this kindly and gentleman-like treatment was that when we dragged the shadow into the library and dropped him on the floor he was about as pallid, washed-out and thoroughly licked a specimen of a sneak as it has

ever been my good fortune to witness I beamed with gratification and shook hands with the hackman. Then I looked at the detective a second time, when the members of the family came into the library, and I said: "It seems to me that I know you."
 "Yes, sir," said the man, faintly.
 "You was a witness in the Harbeck divorce case, where I was juggled for collecting evidence."

"And you were sentenced for conspiracy, were you not?"
 "Yes, sir," said the man, dismally, "and I served five months, and here I am back in the same old business again like a fool, just for the sake of earning \$15 a week."

"It wouldn't surprise me if you served another term," interrupted the brother of the lady whom I accompanied home. "I don't propose to have a jailbird hounding any members of my family unless I know what it is for."

"Oh, you can wing me easily enough if you want to," said the detective, dismally. "This lady ain't done nothing wrong. We're simply shadowing her for the purpose of gettin' onto the habits of a certain party that handles trust funds."

He told us the agency that he was working for, and the hackman was sent for the head of this delectable institution, who, it appeared, lived within six blocks of the house. The detective wrote a note to his superior which read:

"For God's sake come with the hackman at once. We're snared dead sure this time, and they'll break us in spite of anything."

In a few minutes a flustered, puffy and red-faced man hurried in brimming over with apologies, pleadings and excuses. He laid all the documents before us, and it turned out that an ambitious youngster was disputing his father's will on the ground that one of the executors, a man standing high in social and business circles, was dissipating the trust funds. He agreed to pay the agency \$10 a day for every detective employed, and gave a list of the houses that the trustee visited. All of these houses belonged to people of unimpeachable respectability and prominence, but the mistress of each family was being dogged like a criminal, while the detectives bled the young fool of a litigant. In point of fact, the trustee had not visited the house of my friend since December, 1886, when he dined there with a party of sixteen people. This is a fair illustration of what the New York detective agencies are capable of. Nothing was done, of course. What could be done without arousing any amount of publicity and talk? A statement in writing was taken and duly witnessed, and at 3 o'clock in the morning the detectives were thrust out of the house. A nice system of persecution there, in a civilized country, and the extraordinary part of it is that there is absolutely no legal redress.

BLACKLEY HALL.

Curiosities in Clocks.

"The latest thing in clocks is the imitation of machinery of different kinds," said a salesman of a John street importing house. "We have just received some very odd designs in this line from Paris. Here is a clock that would make a fine present for a railroad man," and he exhibited a beautiful white bronze model of a steam boiler. It had a steam gauge; safety valve and speed regulator, and a thermometer took the place of the water gauge. On the furnace door was the dial of the clock and above it was the barometer. The whole apparatus was about ten inches high and was mounted on a plush platform. The clock was running and the pendant balls of the speed regulator were whirling around merrily and doing the work of the pendulum.

"Now, here is something that would please anybody," said the clerk, and he showed a handsome windmill in bronze and gold, with a clock face let into the side of the tower. The arms of the wind mill were moving in such a natural way, that one could easily imagine that he felt the breeze that propelled them. Another design was a well built of tiles held in place by a gilt frame, and an open-work well-house overhead, in which a bucket was hanging suspended by a chain. The bucket served as a pendulum and swung in a circle most mysteriously; for it did not seem to have any connection with the works of the clock, which were concealed in the well.

"Here is something unique," said the clerk, calling the reporter's attention to an elaborate affair. "This is a perfect miniature of a boiler set in a brick foundation. There are all of the valves, gauges, steam pipes and connections complete. The end of the boiler serves as the dial of the clock, and here at one side is a steam hammer moving up and down with great regularity, and striking a bar of brass that is held by a workman. That is designed as a present for a manufacturer. It costs \$65. Here is a freak of the designer that is very neat. It represents an old-fashioned vertical saw at work. A workman stands at the bench pushing a board against the saw. On the front of the bench is the dial of the clock. The great beauty of these designs is the perfection to which the smallest details are carried. We cannot turn out such work in this country; it would be too expensive, as it is all hand work, and at the wages we pay our artisans, these clocks would cost a small fortune."

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