

A MAN OF TRICKS

By Cecille Langdon.

An antique ring had been stolen from a jewelry tray in the case under my charge, Goldstein & Co. had acted promptly. I was notified that my services were no longer required. The senior partner of the firm took great pains to inform me that my dismissal carried with it no implication of personal dishonesty. There had been so



"I Am Certain of It."

many of such thefts recently, however, that an example of presumable carelessness must be made. Unfortunately they had begun with me.

If it had not been for the stenographer, Miss Lura Vesey, I think I should have packed up instantaneously to return to my native town, disgusted with jewelers in general and justly indignant at Goldstein & Co. After I had parted with several good friends among the clerks, who honestly regretted my departure, I was surprised to find Miss Vesey at my side, just as I was leaving the place. She was in

tears. She placed a sisterly, affectionate hand on my arm in a pleading, sympathetic way that softened me.

"You will not get discouraged?" she said.

"Does it matter much?" I jerked out, still wroth at my summary dismissal.

"It does to me," she replied earnestly, "more than you think. It matters to my brother, too, Mr. Winthrop. You found him a good position, and he will always be grateful. If I can help you—"

But I shook my head dejectedly.

"At least let me hear how you get along," she added, and there was a tremor in her voice that inspired me with the idea that I had one sterling friend in the world.

So I promised her, and went on my way. Then my thoughts began to crystallize to some coherency. I set my teeth hard. I clenched my fists with determination.

"I'll see this thing through!" I said to myself—"if it is only to set at rest any possible imputation of wrong doing that may follow me."

You see, I remembered all about that missing antique ring. In fact, I knew the man who had stolen it. At least I thought I did. Aye, I knew him twice! That is a strange thing to say—but even thrice! I mean: disguised. I was sure, as I reflected, that the sleek thief had twice before visited the store on occasions after which articles of value had been found missing.

I am not much of a story teller, but, to look ahead a little, my hard thinking assured me that I might make a good detective. That reflection led to action. I discovered my natural forte, and that is why I have become a secret service man, where I have an easy case about once a year, plenty of time to work on it, and good pay.

My first step was to go to the Jewelers' Board of Trade. That was where they kept the records of the trade, and I knew mine would follow