

The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Twin Ventriloquists; or, Nimble Ike and Jack the Juggler, by Old Sleuth

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: The Twin Ventriloquists; or, Nimble Ike and Jack the Juggler

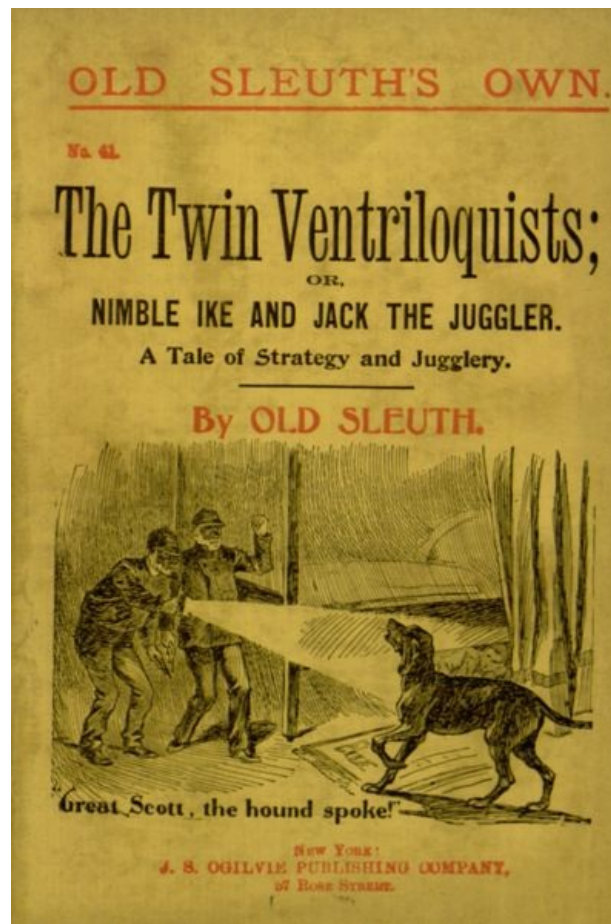
Author: Old Sleuth

Release date: September 18, 2013 [EBook #43765]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Demian Katz and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net> (Images courtesy of the Digital Library@Villanova University (<http://digital.library.villanova.edu/>))

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE TWIN VENTRILOQUISTS; OR, NIMBLE IKE AND JACK THE JUGGLER ***



CONTENTS

[CHAPTER I.](#)
[CHAPTER II.](#)
[CHAPTER III.](#)
[CHAPTER IV.](#)
[CHAPTER V.](#)
[CHAPTER VI.](#)
[CHAPTER VII.](#)
[CHAPTER VIII.](#)
[CHAPTER IX.](#)

OLD SLEUTH'S OWN.

No. 41.

The Twin Ventriloquists;

OR,

NIMBLE IKE AND JACK THE JUGGLER.

A Tale of Strategy and Jugglery.

By OLD SLEUTH.



"Great Scott, the hound spoke!"

NEW YORK:
J. S. OGILVIE PUBLISHING COMPANY,
57 ROSE STREET.

The Twin Ventriloquists;

OR

NIMBLE IKE AND JACK THE JUGGLER.

A Tale of Strategy and Jugglery.

By OLD SLEUTH.

Copyright, 1895, by Parlor Car Publishing Company.
All Rights Reserved.

NEW YORK:
J. S. OGILVIE PUBLISHING COMPANY,
57 ROSE STREET.

Try Murine Eye Remedy

To Refresh, Cleanse
and Strengthen
the Eye.
To Stimulate the
Circulation of the Blood
Supply which
Nourishes the Eye, and



Restore a Healthful
Tone to Eyes Enfeebled
by Exposure to
Strong Winds, Dust,
Reflected Sunlight
and Eye Strain.
To Quickly Relieve
Redness, Swelling
and Inflamed
Conditions.

Murine is compounded in the Laboratory of the Murine Eye Remedy Co., Chicago, by Oculists, as used for years in Private Practice, and is Safe and Pleasant in its Application to the most Sensitive Eye, or to the Eyes of a nursing Infant. Doesn't Smart.

Murine is a Reliable Relief for All Eyes that Need Care.

Your Druggist sells Murine Eye Remedies. Our Books mailed Free, tell you all about them and how to use them.

May be sent by mail at following prices.

Murine Eye Remedy	30c., 60c., \$1.00
DeLuxe Toilet Edition--For the Dressing Table	1.25
Tourist--Autoist--in Leather Case	1.25
Murine Eye Salve in Aseptic Tubes	25c., 1.00
Granuline--For Chronic Sore Eyes and Trachoma	1.50

MURINE EYE REMEDY CO.

No. Nine East Ohio Street, CHICAGO, U. S. A.

THE TWIN VENTRILOQUISTS;

OR,

NIMBLE IKE AND JACK THE JUGGLER.

A Tale of Strategy and Jugglery.

BY OLD SLEUTH.

CHAPTER I.

NIMBLE IKE ENCOUNTERS AN EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURE AND TWO WONDERFUL VENTRILOQUISTS PLAY PARTS AGAINST EACH OTHER WITH ASTONISHING RESULTS.

"Great Cæsar!"

The exclamation with which we open our narrative fell from the lips of Nimble Ike, one of the most remarkable ventriloquists that ever sent a human voice rambling around through space under the most extraordinary inflectional disguises. Detectives disguise their appearance, but ventriloquists disguise their voices, and make them represent at will all manner of individualities,

in the human or animal. Nimble Ike, as we have intimated, was a wonderful ventriloquist; he had played more pranks and worked more wonders with his talent than any other person possessed of the remarkable gift. He had paralyzed professionals and amazed amateurs, and with the aid of his marvelous vocal powers had performed many good deeds on the side of right and justice, forcing rogues to confessions and scaring schemers and roués out of their wits. He was a daring youth, possessing many talents other than the gift of ventriloquism to a remarkable degree. He had never met his match, and when not engaged in aiding some persecuted person or working with detectives he amused himself in various ways by an exercise of his powers. As stated, Ike had never met his match either among professionals or amateurs. He stood number one as a ventriloquist wonder. He had been told of a youth who also possessed the gift in a most remarkable manner. He had never met the youth and was led to doubt the fact that there was another who came anywhere near him. One day Ike, having nothing else to do, determined to visit the Metropolitan Museum in Central Park. He had been there before and enjoyed himself every time, but he had never attempted any of his pranks. On the occasion when we introduce him to our readers, he was standing beside a mummy case containing the linen-bound remains of some poor Egyptian who died thousands of years ago, and he was deeply interested in the description and explanations offered by a sallow-faced gentleman who was a great scientist and Egyptologist. An old maid teacher of an archæological turn of mind had chaperoned her class of young lady pupils and had secured the services of the sallow-faced man with the big spectacles to act as guide and expositor for the occasion. As stated, Ike was greatly interested in what the professor had to say; he felt quite serious and was in no mood to amuse himself, when a most startling, soul-thrilling incident occurred. The professor had all the young ladies gathered close around him like so many serious mourners standing around the casket of a deceased friend. He had been descanting in a very earnest manner and finally said:

[Pg 7]

"Now, ladies, if that mummy could speak he would."

Here the professor stopped suddenly, his spectacles fell from his face, his hands went up and his face blanched, while the young ladies fell back trembling with terror, for, from the interior of the mummy case came the astounding announcement:

"I can talk. What do you want me to tell you?"

The words came clear and distinct, and they came, as appeared, directly from the lips of the mummy; and so realistic was the declaration that one might expect to see the lurid-looking object rise in its thousands of centuries old shroud and look forth from the sunken hollows where its eyes had once beamed forth.

As stated, Ike was standing near the mummy case, but the wonderful ventriloquist was as much amazed as any one. He did not believe the mummy spoke—he was too great an expert in vocal deceptions—but he was amazed all the same, and his amazement arose from the discovery that there was one living person besides himself who could produce such amazing results. He glanced around and there was only the one party who had been standing near the mummy, and that was the professor with the ladies gathered around him. Some distance off a very trimly-built youth stood gazing at the stuffed birds in a case. Our hero had not seen his face; he could not be the vocal deceiver, however, and the question arose, Who had performed this marvelous trick? Meantime the professor had gathered his spectacles from the floor and had to a certain extent recovered from his surprise and bewilderment, and he ejaculated:

[Pg 8]

"That was most extraordinary."

He beckoned the ladies about him once again, but they came forward very reluctantly and our hero, Nimble Ike, scanned their faces to learn which one of the pretty girls was the ventriloquist who had worked the great trick. All their faces wore an expression of surprise and alarm, and he was forced to conclude that the voice magician was not one of them, and his final conclusion was that the sallow-faced scientist was the culprit—yes, the sallow-faced man with the big nose and goggles had made the inviting statement, knowing that he could seemingly make the mummy talk. His surprise and alarm, our hero concluded, was all a pretense and a part of his little joke, and it was then that Ike turning away uttered the ejaculation "Great Cæsar!" His blood was up; the professor was a wonderful ventriloquist, but Ike determined to have some sport and give the professor ventriloquist, as he appeared to be, the surprise of his life. He determined to make the mummy do some tall talking and force the professor to a betrayal of genuine surprise.

"Yes," mentally concluded Ike, "the next time you'll shed your goggles for fair."

Ike was in no hurry, however; he intended first to watch the professor and find out if he were really the vocal wonder.

The young ladies finally gathered around, for the professor's talk had really been very interesting. He said:

"Young ladies, I wish to ask you a question. What scared you?"

The ladies did not answer, and the professor again inquired:

"Were you scared by my demonstration or did you, ah—ah—well, did you hear a voice?"

[Pg 9]

One of the young ladies answered:

"We heard a voice."

"You did?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then it was not a delusion; no, it was not a delusion, but it was one of the most extraordinary incidents that ever occurred since the days of miracles, or, to explain it on scientific grounds, we were all so engrossed on the subject under conversation that by some singular psychologic phenomena, our imaginations were momentarily spellbound by a concentration of all the nerve forces upon a given thought, and thereby our imaginations were abnormally stimulated to such a degree as to make the extraordinary deception possible."

The girls stared, but did not comprehend the professor's explanation, although it was about as plain as scientific and medical explanations usually are.

Ike was unable to decide. The professor appeared to have fully recovered and again became rapt in the subject of his discourse. The young ladies also appeared to have recovered from their alarm and were deeply interested in all the professor said. Ike, however, had lost all interest in the lecture. He was piqued, he did not understand how it could be that there was really another who possessed a ventriloquistic talent almost equal to his own. As stated, he watched the professor and finally the good man again arrived at a point when he said:

"If that relic of the past centuries could speak he——"

"I can speak," again came the voice from the mummy case.

The professor stared, the ladies stared, but the expression of surprise was not equal to what it had been at the first exhibition. The professor, however, came to a dead stop, he looked slowly around and finally in a husky voice remarked:

[Pg 10]

"I do not understand it."

Neither did Ike, for he was convinced that the professor was not the acrobatic vocalist. The latter, however, was a man of nerve, a genuine scientist, and he said:

"Young ladies, do not be scared; that linen-wrapped object, that corpse, that has lain swathed in its funeral habiliments for over thirty centuries, says he can speak. We will let him talk." And from the mummy case came the statement:

"I think a fellow who has been silent for thirty centuries should have a chance to get a word in."

Ike was "on to it." He was too great an expert not to fathom the mystery. He had met his match at last. He was fully assured that the lithe-looking chap who was studying the ornithological department was the ventriloquist, and our hero muttered:

"You are having lots of fun, mister, but now I'll give you a scare."

The ventriloquist stranger was still gazing in the bird case, when close to his ear came the startling announcement, seemingly from the bird case:

"What's the matter with you? Why do you disturb that poor old Egyptian who has been asleep for over three thousand years?"

Ike's test brought its result. He saw the strange youth give a start. He turned about, but he did not look at the talking stuffed bird; he turned around to see who it was that had so cleverly matched him. It was a great game all round. The professor was bewildered, the ladies were bewildered, and the young fellow at the bird case, who had bewildered every one else, was himself bewildered. In fact, Ike, the master, was the only one who at that moment held the key to the whole mystery, and knew just what it was all about.

Ike enjoyed his momentary triumph, and so for a few moments nothing startling occurred.

[Pg 11]

The professor kept repeating, "This is most extraordinary," and the balance of his party evidently thought so.

The young man who had been looking in the bird case, however, as it proved, was a "Jim Dandy," as the boys say. He was not to be kicked out so easily. He also, as our narrative will prove, was an expert and a very brave and resolute lad. He walked around looking into several cases for a few moments and then quietly edged over toward the mummy case around which still lingered the professor and his party, and Ike realized that a most remarkable duel was portending—a duel between two wonderful vocal experts. Our hero had fully identified the young man on whom he had retorted as the individual who had made the mummy speak.

"I'll have first shot," thought Ike, and as the young man passed close to a second mummy case and stood a moment looking at the bandaged face as a "throw off," the relic of a thousand years appeared to say to him in a hoarse whisper:

"Look out, young man, look out, you may get hit with a club made three thousand years ago."

There was a perplexed look upon the young man's face for a moment, and then his bright, clear eyes wandered around and he too fell to a discovery, as he believed.

The professor meantime had become exceedingly nervous and he said:

"I believe I will adjourn the lecture for to-day."

As the professor spoke, there came a voice from the mummy case saying:

"Yes, you had better adjourn it forever, for you don't know what you are talking about."

The professor advanced close to the mummy case to gaze directly at the lips of the three-thousand-year corpse. He was determined to solve the mystery, but as he bent over the venerable object there came an unearthly yell that froze the blood in his veins. He leaped back, the young ladies ran screaming away and there would have been a great scene were it not that at the time

[Pg 12]

there were no other persons in that particular department of the museum.

The professor led the way down to the office to tell his wondrous tale, while the young man who had first started the joke approached and gazed intently on the face of our hero, the great Nimble Ike. The latter returned the gaze and for a few moments it was a duel of stare; neither appeared disposed to open the conversation, while in the mind of each there dawned a suspicion, and finally the young stranger mustered up sufficient courage to ask:

"Say, young fellow, who are you?"

CHAPTER II.

A MUTUAL RECOGNITION FOLLOWS BETWEEN TWO WONDERFUL VENTRILOQUISTS AND AT ONCE THEY COMMENCE TOGETHER THEIR EXTRAORDINARY PRANKS.

Ike did not conclude to reveal his identity at once, and met the question with a similar one:

"Say, young fellow, who are you?"

"I asked first."

"Did you?"

"I did."

"Well?"

"It's your place to answer."

"Do you want an answer?"

"I do."

"I'll tell you something: you asked the wrong person. Go and ask that stuffed owl who I am." [Pg 13]

The young man stared.

"You want an answer to your question?"

"Oh, come off," said the young stranger.

"That settles it," said Ike.

There came a smile upon the face of the youth and he caused a voice to come like a halloo from away down the other end of the room, inquiring:

"Say, owl, who is this young chap?"

Ike was amazed, but the owl uttered its peculiar hoot and answered seemingly: "He's the devil himself."

The halloo came again.

"I thought so, for he is not square; he don't keep his promises."

"Why not?" asked the owl.

"He promised you should tell who he was."

There came a hoot and an owlish sort of laugh, with the statement:

"His name is Isaac Andro."

"Nimble Ike?" came the halloo.

"Yes;" and the owl added: "Now it's your turn to keep your promise."

The halloo came in answer:

"I am Jack the Juggler."

Ike at once advanced, offering his hand and saying:

"Shake, old fellow, I am glad to meet you. I've heard about you."

"And I've heard about you. I am delighted to meet you."

"And I am delighted to meet you," answered Ike.

"We must be friends."

"Sure."

"We can have a heap of fun."

"We can."

"We are against the deck."

"We are."

"Will you visit me at my home?" said Ike. "Go with me now." [Pg 14]

"I will be delighted."

"Do you live in the city?"

"I did live here, but I've broken up my home."

The two wonderful lads wandered off together—Ike the ventriloquist, and Jack the juggler, also a ventriloquist and hypnotist.

The two soon arrived at Ike's house and the latter showed his guest all through his place, exhibiting his contrivances. Ike ordered a meal sent in and the two remarkable geniuses sat down in a very social conversation.

Ike told his strange, weird story, all about the old necromancer and the mysterious box. And Jack told all about himself, and finally Ike said:

"See here, we are two of a kind."

"We are."

"Let's become partners."

"I am agreed."

"Take up your abode with me."

"On one condition."

"Name your condition."

"I am to share the expense of living in this house."

"Agreed, as it don't cost much to live."

Neither of the lads had told their romance. They had only told the simple story of their lives, and when the meal was over they commenced by mutual consent to practice together, and so several days passed. Ike with his unusual brightness invented a signal code so they could converse with each other and no one else understand their talk. One evening the two lads were playing a game of billiards together in a well-known billiard room, when a very handsome young fellow entered, whom Ike at once introduced to Jack as his friend, Henry Du Flore. Ike and Du Flore held a few moments talk and then Du Flore departed. The moment he was gone the ventriloquist said to his new comrade:

[Pg 15]

"That young man is a detective."

"He don't look like one."

"He is a splendid officer, brave, shrewd and persistent. I have several detective friends, but I've taken quite a fancy to this young fellow and I am aiding him all I can."

"Is he a Frenchman?" asked Jack.

"No, he is an American born. His father was an engineer on an ocean steamer. He was drowned when Henry was quite a lad. Henry was left an orphan at an early age, compelled to knock around and pick up a living as best he could. He got appointed on the police force, won promotion and is now a regular detective. I want him to make a great success, and I am aiding him all I can."

"I took a fancy to him at the first glance," said Jack.

"I am glad of that."

"Yes, I am in with you and when we can do him a good turn we will."

"I am much obliged to you, and we can aid him right now. He has been assigned to run down some burglars who are infesting a section of country over in Jersey. The gang has become very daring. They are very expert and the losses of the people have been heavy; they have raised a fund which is offered as a reward for the capture of the thieves. The chief in New York is anxious to aid the officials across the river and has detailed my friend Henry on the case. It will be a big thing for the young officer if he can run down those thieves."

"We will secure the big thing for him," said Jack. "I've had a little experience in detective work."

"So I've heard."

"When does he start in?"

"I am to hear from him later."

[Pg 16]

The two ventriloquists finished their game and walked over to a table where two experts were playing a great game in presence of quite a crowd of witnesses. Ike and Jack were both very fond of the game, although neither of them could play an expert game, with all their talents; their genius did not run in this direction. It is remarkable that a great many men who are expert in one direction are singularly deficient in others. There was a party of young smart Alocs watching the game. They were very boisterous and demonstrative—really interfered with the players—and they were very unmannerly in several ways, pushing forward and crowding quieter people in a very rude manner. Ike and Jack fixed their eyes on the dudes and then exchanged glances; and that exchange of glances meant a little fun for the tricksters and discomfiture for the boisterous dudes, the sons of rich men who because of their social position were permitted to cut up their capers where better youths would have been kicked out of the place. The dudes every few moments would break through the crowd and go to the bar, and upon their return they would

push through to the front, shoving others aside as though the balance of the beholders were mere serfs; and in pushing through upon one of their returns, Ike became their victim. The young ventriloquist did not submit to be pushed so rudely and said:

"See here, Mister Man, you should wear better clothes. You are such a pusher you should have gotten ahead in the world."

The youth stared and the bystanders laughed. The joke was a good one. Many times it could be applied in a crowd, for there are so many rude people who appear to think there is no one in the world besides themselves.

"Don't you like it?" demanded the pusher.

"Oh, yes, I like it," answered Ike with a laugh. "It's quite an honor to be knocked around by a thing like you." [Pg 17]

"I'll punch you in the head if you say much."

"Oh, I won't say much. I'll be as quiet as a lamb. I won't even bleat. It's all right; excuse me for being in your way. I am proud—very proud—to be knocked aside, certainly."

At that moment there came a voice asking:

"Why don't you rap that dude on the head?"

The dude looked around to learn who had offered the bold suggestion, and then demanded:

"Who spoke then?"

"I did," came a voice, but no one appeared to know just who the "I did" was. But there came the suggestion:

"Don't look so fierce. You're around to swipe pocketbooks, you are. I advise these gentlemen to be on the lookout."

The three dudes all closed in close to each other. Their faces were white with rage and they had just liquor enough in them to be anxious for a brawl, and one of them said:

"I'll give a hundred dollars to know who spoke."

"What will you give?" came the voice.

Ike stood still and apparently as mute as a sexton at a funeral.

"You haven't got a hundred cents; you just hung your last drink at the bar."

"You're a liar," came the declaration from one of the dudes.

"And you're a thief, or let's see your money."

The dude went down in his pockets, drew forth a roll and exclaimed, as he waved it aloft:

"Here's my money. A hundred to ten you are a liar, and a hundred to one you dare not show your face."

"Here I am."

[Pg 18]

The voice sounded as though the speaker stood directly in the midst of the trio of dudes. The "chappies" looked at each other in amazement.

"Send for an officer," came a voice. "I've lost my pocketbook."

It appeared as though the voice came from the opposite side of the crowd to where the dudes were standing.

The dudes were dumfounded; indeed, the game was stopped and the owner of the billiard hall walked over to learn what the row was. Very well, at this point the row commenced. One of the youths, calling the proprietor of the hall by name, said, or seemed to say:

"You go away from here, you duffer. We own this place and don't want any of your interference."

The declaration took the proprietor's breath away for a moment. He just stood and gazed, when another of the youths appeared to say:

"Charley, why don't you smash Decker in the jaw? What business has he to come around here and interfere with our fun?"

"Who are you talking to?" demanded the proprietor, his face white with rage.

"*You*," seemingly came the answer from the dude.

The proprietor could stand no more. He made a rush. He did not care at that instant if the dudes were the scions of the governor of the state. He grasped the chap who it appeared had given him the insolence by the loose part of his trousers and the collar of his coat, and he walked him French fashion toward the door. The youth made a vigorous protest. His friends also joined in, when the bartender rushed from behind the counter and seized another of the "chappies," and a guest who was a vigorous fellow seized the third one; and then commenced a grand march toward the street door, and each one of the dudes was thrown into the street and a kick was administered to each as he was thrust out. Poor dudes! they had not been guilty of the particular sin for which they suffered, but they deserved all they got, just the same, for they had made nuisances of themselves.

[Pg 18]

Jack and Ike left the place. They were delighted with the rebuke they had administered, but the

fun was not over. The three dudes were standing at the corner of the street talking over their grievances. They espied Ike and Jack and one of them said:

"There are the fellows who drew us into this trouble."

"Let's hammer them."

Neither Ike nor Jack were formidable-looking chaps, and the dudes sailed for them. Well, a lively scene followed. The two ventriloquists were both lithe, active athletes, and the way they polished off the "chappies" was a sight to behold, and they were having a heap of fun when suddenly both were seized by the collars of their coats and found themselves in the grasp of two stalwart policemen.

Neither lad was scared. They did not mind their arrest on such a trivial charge at all, and they were led off. Ike asked by signal:

"What shall we do?"

"What do you think?" came the answer.

"Shall we be locked up and raise old Cain in the station house, or shall we make these officers dance right here?"

"Let's make them dance," came the answer.

The lads struck a good chance even as the word was passed. They were passing a tenement house and a man had just raised a window to close the shutters or something, when there came as though from the man a mad cry of "fire!" The officers stopped short, and again there came several cries, seemingly from different parts of the house. The officers let go their hold upon their prisoners. A fire in a tenement house was a far more serious matter than the arrest of two youths for fighting in the street. As stated, the lads were released, and they darted away to secure hiding places from which they could witness the fun and excitement, and there was excitement. One of the officers rapped for assistance and the second one ran to the fire-alarm box to give the signal, and officer number one made a rush to the house. He found the door open and he ran up the stairs shouting "fire! fire! fire!" The tenants rushed from their apartments and there followed a scene of wild confusion, and while the yelling and screaming were at their height two engines arrived, also a platoon of police, and the firemen of the engine company entered the house, but still there was no sign of either fire or smoke. A thorough examination followed. No signs of a fire could be discovered. The sergeant in charge of the platoon of police asked the two officers who had given the alarm where they had seen the fire. They protested they had not seen any fire, but that a man had raised the window of one of the front rooms and had shouted "fire!" The firemen meantime were thoroughly convinced that there was no fire, and they were mad at being called out on a fake alarm. They commenced to abuse the police, who protested that the cry had come from the house. The tenants had all returned to their rooms and they also had been loud in their protests and threatened to make a complaint at headquarters.

[Pg 20]

"From what room did the cry come?" asked the sergeant.

The two policemen pointed out the room. The sergeant, accompanied by the two officers, went up to the room. There were several very respectable men in the room and they all protested that they had given no alarm. All declared that they were prepared to swear that they had not. The sergeant was bothered, and said to the two patrolmen:

"This matter must be explained."

[Pg 21]

"We did hear a cry of fire."

"No one else appears to have heard it."

"We heard it."

"Where is your proof?"

One of the officers said:

"I wish we could find those two lads. They heard it."

"We can't find them."

The two men were ordered to report at the station house to answer charges for their lark, as the sergeant termed it. Other men were put on the beat and our two ventriloquists crawled forth from their hiding-places and Ike said:

"That was a pretty severe joke."

"Yes, it was very amusing."

"We must do something to save those men or they may be broke."

"How can we do it?"

"We can."

"How?"

"We'll rattle the sergeant on the same scheme," came the answer.

CHAPTER III.

THE VENTRILOQUISTS DO RATTLE THE SERGEANT AND HIS PLATOON AND AGAIN RAISE OLD CAIN IN A MOST REMARKABLE MANNER.

The two vocal experts fell to the trail of the sergeant and his platoon, but kept well out of sight. They were determined to set the two patrolmen right after getting them in such a bad scrape. The whole charge against them was having claimed that they had overheard cries of fire. The sergeant was discussing the matter with the roundsman when suddenly from a private house before which at the moment they were passing came a series of wild, frantic screams, and the next instant the screams were followed by cries of "fire! fire!"

[Pg 22]

"Well," exclaimed the sergeant, "it's a fire this time. Run to the alarm box and summon the engines."

The roundsman dashed off to give the alarm and the sergeant ran up the stoop of the house and commenced to bang on the door with his club, and the two ventriloquists were enjoying the joke. The door of the house was opened by a gentleman enveloped in a dressing-gown, who in great excitement demanded:

"What in thunder do you want?"

With equal excitement the sergeant demanded:

"Where is the fire?"

"What fire?"

"The fire in this house."

"There is no fire in this house."

"Then why in thunder did you yell 'fire, fire?'"

"No one yelled fire. What is the matter with you?"

The owner of the house discerned that it was a sergeant of police to whom he was talking. "Have you gone crazy?" he asked.

"Gone crazy! No; but what did you mean by yelling fire?"

"I did not yell fire. Every one in this house has been in bed a long time."

"Who was it screamed?"

"No one screamed."

"Do you mean to tell me you did not yell fire?"

"No one yelled fire."

"And no one screamed in this house?"

"No one screamed."

At that moment the engines reappeared and the owner of the house said:

"I'll have this matter inquired into. If this is a joke you will find it an expensive one."

[Pg 23]

The foreman of the engine company approached and demanded:

"Where is the fire?"

"There is no fire," said the owner of the house.

"No fire?"

"No fire, and I don't know what the officer means by banging on my door and arousing my family at this hour of the night."

"And I can't understand," said the foreman, "what he means by calling out the engines every five minutes on a false alarm."

"There is my platoon of men, there is my roundsman. They will all testify they heard a cry of fire, followed by screams, coming from this house."

"Then your platoon of men and your roundsman will testify to a falsehood," said the house owner.

"Is there a fire in your house?" demanded the foreman of the engine company.

"No, sir."

"Is there a fire anywhere around here?"

"No, sir, not that I know of, unless it's in the upper story of these policemen."

"Say, sergeant, let me ask you one question: Have you received orders to test our department by these false alarms?"

"No, sir, I'll swear and prove that there came an alarm of fire from this house."

"That's what your men said down at the tenement house. I reckon it's a night off for the police department, or else they all want a night off. But let me tell you, if you didn't receive orders to give these fake alarms I'll know the reason why you did give them; that's all."

The sergeant was clear beat out. He apologized to the owner of the house, went down among his men and asked: [Pg 24]

"Did you men hear those screams?"

"We did," came the answer.

"Did you hear the cries of 'fire, fire?'"

"We did," came the answer.

"All right; we'll find out about this."

"How are you going to find out all about it, sergeant?" popped in the roundsman.

"I don't know."

The roundsman was a friend of the two men who had been sent to the station house in disgrace, and he again asked:

"How about Jones and O'Brien?"

"I've been thinking about them."

"We heard it; they claim they heard the cries. I don't see how they can be held responsible."

"I don't know what to think of it."

"Can I advise?"

"Yes."

"Send the two men back on post and say nothing about the whole affair. That's my advice."

"Roundsman, it's all very strange."

"It is."

"It's one of the mysteries of the century."

"It is."

"I am not crazy. I'd think so, only we could not all go crazy."

"I'll swear I heard the cries."

The platoon started for the station house. The men were all greatly mystified, but a greater mystery was yet to confront them. The ventriloquists had been witnesses of the result of their pranks and determined to press the matter along. They followed the platoon at a safe distance, one of them going around the square so that they approached the station from opposite quarters. The men were just in the station; the last man was passing the door when right at his ears sounded a wild, unearthly yell, followed by the cry of "Fire! fire! fire!" The man stood like one paralyzed, then the sergeant rushed into the street. Not a soul was near, and yet even while he stood there again right at his ear sounded the weird cry, "Fire! fire! fire!" The man was dumfounded. He stood and gazed in wild dismay. The sergeant at the desk came rushing forth, demanding: [Pg 25]

"What's the matter? Where's the fire? What are you all standing here for?"

"Do you think there is a fire?"

"Didn't you hear the cry?"

"Yes; did you?"

"I did."

"Then go find the fire. We've heard cries of fire all the night, but devil a fire can we find."

Jack and Ike had had fun enough in that one direction and they started off toward Ike's home. They had not gone far, however, when they struck another little adventure—a very peculiar one. Indeed, possessing their singular talents they were continually running into adventures, as their gifts gave them great powers in every direction. A little girl had stopped a crabbed, sleek-looking old gentleman and had asked him for alms. The man had said:

"Go to the station house," and he spoke in cruel, hard tones. The girl with a sigh turned away, and Ike said:

"Let's give that old skinflint a dose."

"Agreed," came the response.

Ike ran forward and dropped a silver dollar in the girl's hand and then slid along and joined Jack. The two secured advantage ground, for the old gentleman had stopped to gaze in the windows of one of the great hotel restaurants. Suddenly there sounded in his ears:

"Cruel, cruel old man!" [Pg 26]

The old gentleman looked around in every direction and saw no one near him, yet the words had sounded, as stated, close beside his ear. While he was still gazing again there came a voice, saying:

"Cold, cold-hearted!"

The old gentleman looked around in an amazed manner, and with anger in his heart, but he saw no one. He became a little bewildered, when again there came a voice saying:

"Go to the station house! Go to the station house!"

The old man turned pale. It was the most mysterious incident of his whole life, and again came the words:

"Go to the station house!"

The admonition sounded close in his ears, and yet there was not a living soul near him that he could see. He began to tremble, and again, even while he glanced around, the voice repeated:

"Please give me money for bread," and there came the response in exact imitation of the old man's tones:

"Go to the station."

"Great Mercury!" ejaculated the man. "I am pursued by a phantom."

"Yes, you are pursued by a phantom, you who refused to give a poor child money for bread."

"I'll give the next child I meet a dollar," murmured the old man in trembling tones.

"You promise?"

"I do."

"All right; I'll leave you until my presence is required again. Good-night."

The old gentleman moved toward his home, and it is to be hoped he became a more charitable man.

The two lads started on their way and were moving on up Fifth Avenue when Ike, who was quick-eyed and observant, saw a man rush out of a hallway. The fellow's actions were suspicious and our hero remarked to his companion:

[Pg 27]

"Hello! Jack, there is something going on here."

The two lads determined to trail the man. They saw him go up the street, where he joined a second man. The ventriloquists stole up close, and both being lithe and active they were able to secure a position very near where the two men stood, and they heard one of them ask:

"Are you sure it's dead easy?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure you have the right house?"

"Yes."

"That woman is very smart."

"She is?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"I've been watching her for weeks. There is something strange about her and her movements, but she's got the stuff; of that I am sure. She lives alone in that big house with only one servant—an old man—whom we can silence in about two minutes. She is a stranger in New York, and does not appear to have any friends. If we can get in there and away again we can make a big haul, and all in good movable swag. I'll bet she's got twenty thousand dollars' worth of diamonds alone, and where there are so many sparks there are other fireworks, you bet."

Ike and Jack appreciated that, indeed, they had "tumbled on to a big thing." The men did not talk in particularly low tones; no one appeared to be near them.

"We need a big haul."

"We do."

"I am run way down."

"I am also."

"We struck a big thing when we followed that woman from Boston."

"We did."

[Pg 28]

"We are not known in New York and the scent will be on natives."

"That's it exactly. We can get away with our haul, return to Boston and read the papers and learn how these smart New York officers are closing in on the robbers."

"Yes, yes."

Both men laughed in a very complaisant manner, and one of them said:

"It will prove the softest trick we ever played. We are in luck to strike a neat, clean affair like this."

"We are, you bet. When will you work the racket?"

"I've got all the points down. We'll jump in and do the job to-morrow night."

"At what hour?"

"Well, about two o'clock is a good time."

"Where will we meet?"

The man named a meeting-place.

"I will be on deck."

"We will have this all to ourselves."

"We will."

"And I tell you it's the easiest job we ever struck, and we'll make a big pull."

"That will suit me to a dot."

"The police here are on the watch, for crooks are running riot in New York just about these days."

"So I see by the papers."

"They are all too noisy about their jobs. We'll go it slow, easy and sure."

"We will."

The two men sauntered away and the two ventriloquists followed them. Ike expressed a desire to learn where they "hung out," as he put it.

The men went down to a small hotel on a side street and then the shadowers once more started for their home.

On the way Ike said:

"Jack, it's a great thing to possess our power."

"Yes, but it does not require our power to capture those fellows. All we have to do is notify the detectives and those men will be gobbled. Any one could do that."

"Yes, but we can have some fun. You must learn that I like to do these things my own way and give those rascals a lesson beyond the mere punishment they will get for their crimes. Do you know, I take a very serious view of housebreaking."

"You do?"

"Yes, I do."

"I am with you there."

"It's something terrible to be securely sleeping, as one feels, and to have one or two of these devils steal into one's house to rob, and if need be do murder. Robbers are a mean class, and I could never understand the sentiment of romance that is thrown about them. I look upon it as the most cruel and cold-blooded method adopted by any class of criminals."

"I am with you, but you said you proposed to adopt a peculiar method in capturing these fellows."

"Yes."

"You may lose them."

"Not if the court knows itself. They feel dead sure. They think they have everything dead to rights. They will move with less caution than usual. It appears there is a lady living in that house practically alone; from what we overheard she has many valuables. The chances are that if discovered there would follow a cruel murder. I tell you, my experience here in New York has been a strange one. Just watch the daily papers and learn the number and variety of crimes that are committed. Already there has been a call for an increase of the detective force, and it's needed; but in our humble way we'll do a neat job in the line of justice; yes, just once at least."

"What is your plan?"

"I'll think it out and reveal the whole business to you; but besides arresting these fellows and saving the lady, I want to give them the surprise of their life."

"It's easy for us to surprise people. We are doing that all the time."

"We'll give these fellows a big surprise—a stunner."

"Then you have decided on a plan?"

"In outline."

The two lads arrived at their home and were soon resting from their singular labors. On the following day Ike revealed his plan and Jack heartily fell into the whole scheme. Jack loved surprises and enjoyed a good joke equally with the inimitable Ike.

Ike owned a variety of animals, all of which were well trained. Had he concluded to appear as a professional performer he would have astonished his audiences beyond all belief. Among other possessions was an immense Siberian bloodhound. He had owned the animal from its puppy days and it was one of the most remarkably trained dogs on earth. Some men possess a peculiar talent for the training of animals. It is a special profession. Ike possessed this special talent to a great degree. He and Jack went forth. They had their breakfast at a near-by restaurant and played no pranks. Both the ventriloquists were very particular; they only played their tricks and exercised their powers where there was a purpose to be gained. After their meal they proceeded down to a point where they met Ike's new friend, the young detective whom our hero was anxious to serve. To him he said:

"Du Flore, we've got a great catch for you."

Ike proceeded and related all that had occurred, and when he had concluded, Du Flore remarked:

"This is very strange."

[Pg 31]

"It is?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"I am already on that case."

"You are?"

"Yes."

"Well, that is strange."

"It is wonderful," said Du Flore.

The latter was a rising man in the profession. He was a powerful young officer, and, as we have intimated, very brave and ambitious.

"I've a strange story to tell you, Ike," he said.

"We are listeners."

"It is a very strange story."

"So you said, and repeating that fact is not opening up your story."

"Well, you see, in these prosaic days we seldom strike a romance just like the one I am about to relate. You remember a great wedding we had in New York about ten years ago?"

"I don't," answered Ike bluntly.

"Well, the daughter of a very rich man married a German nobleman, and a few years after their marriage they separated. She ran away from him. It is the old story: he and all his relatives felt themselves so much better than the young American girl. They insulted her in the grossest manner—and made her life miserable. She bore it for a long time, but being a full-blooded Yankee woman, beautiful and spirited, she determined to stand it no longer. Her father had been smart enough to secure all her fortune to herself during her life, and one bright morning she just dusted and left the count and his high-bred relatives to pay their own bills. She had done so for years and only received insults and snubs in return."

"It's the fate, I reckon, of most of these rich American girls who are marrying foreigners," suggested Ike.

[Pg 32]

"Yes, I reckon they could all tell sad tales a year after their marriage. This case, however, is a refreshing one, for in the end the Yankee girl recovered from her blind adoration of rank and came down to a good common-sense view of the full value of money."

"Go on and tell the tale."

"That is the story. She just skipped, and, as I said, left her high-born relatives by marriage to pay their own bills; and now I come to the American end of the strange romance."

CHAPTER IV.

IKE AND JACK LISTEN TO AN ODD NARRATIVE AND WITH THE DETECTIVE LAY PLANS TO MAKE A GRAND CAPTURE.

Du Flore, continuing his narrative, said:

"The lady has a son who some day will be a count if he lives, and she stole her own boy when she ran away, and she has put that lad up in New England with her Yankee relatives, determined that if he lives there will be one count who has had a proper bringing up. She has just returned from a visit to her son. He is thriving finely, but one day while in Boston she saw her husband and believes he saw her, and she fears he means her some harm. She left Boston immediately, and on the train and boat became conscious that a man was dogging her steps. She believes the man to be a confederate of the count, but the story you tell me leads me to determine that the man was merely a common thief, attracted by her jewels and the prospect of a robbery. It was probably his intention to rob her on the road, but she, thinking her husband was on her track, was very careful and cautious. It appears, however, from what you tell me that the men have shadowed her down to her home and have made plans to rob and possibly murder her."

[Pg 33]

"I reckon," said Ike, "that this is the true solution. The count may show up later on."

"I hope he does," said Jack.

"Why, partner?"

"Well, we'll make his life miserable—make him feel that it is better to be in Germany without a dollar than in New York with a million. We must protect this American woman, that is dead sure."

"Will we? We will, you bet; but now we have those thieves to look after and I have a plan," said Ike.

"What is your plan?"

Ike related his plan. The detective preferred to adopt another course for the capture of the rascals, but he was well aware of Ike's wonderful ability, and for reasons thought it best to let the remarkable youth have his own way.

Later Ike took Du Flore around to show him where the thieves were staying, and as good luck would have it he had a chance to point out one of the rascals.

Later Du Flore called upon the countess, and acting under Ike's orders he let her indulge the idea that her house was to be visited by emissaries of her husband, and she said:

"Then I will flee away."

"Only to be pursued and shadowed again."

"I have managed to keep out of his way for nearly two years."

"That is all right, but we want to put these men out of the way. They are walking right into your power."

"How?"

"We can claim that they are burglars and scare the life out of them almost, and we may scare the whole party—count and all—back to Germany."

[Pg 34]

"I don't think they mean to do me any harm. The count is not a bad man. He believes, however, that he has a right to the child. He has a legal right, I believe, and I propose to keep the child away from him, at least for the present."

"Then the best plan is to let him go back to Germany."

"I do not understand why these men seek to enter my house."

"They may think you have the child here, or it may be that they are thieves who have learned some facts from the count, and they may intend to rob you. At any rate, I have positive evidence that your house is to be invaded and I wish to place a guard here, and I will be at hand at the proper time. In these days, when so many strange crimes are occurring, it is always better to be on the right side every time."

"I believe you exaggerate the danger, but as I am in your hands for my own protection I will agree to any plan that you may propose."

"I will introduce two remarkable youths into your house. They will be accompanied by an immense hound. I ask you to permit them to do just as they think proper in adopting measures for the capture of two men who I am sure will make an attempt to enter your house. Afterward I will have much to reveal to you, but at present I know I am acting in your best interests and in the interests of your son."

Du Flore explained to the countess how the two youths would enter her house, and then departed.

Along about six o'clock in the evening, a poor-looking old man applied at the door of the house of the countess. He was admitted, and a little later quite a stylish young man also sought an entrance, and a little later still the poor-looking old man and the stylish youth were alone with the countess, who was disposed to ask them a great many questions. The lads were sorely tempted to give the countess a little initiation, but concluded to reserve their didos for the two thieves.

[Pg 35]

At about eleven o'clock the countess retired to a room on the top floor. She proved very complaisant, doing in all things just as requested, although it was evident that she was a very spirited woman and wondrously handsome, as she was still under thirty.

The two ventriloquists lay around until twelve o'clock, when they entered the bedroom proper of the countess, her vacated room for the occasion, and they went through a very amusing rehearsal with the hound. The lads were both very jubilant, for they were in their element—about to carry out a scheme which was a delight to them.

"The robbers believe they are to have a walk-over," said Jack.

"They will," responded Ike, a twinkle in his eyes; "a walk over to the station house, and then a smooth ride up to Sing Sing Prison."

"Will your man be on hand?"

"If he fails I'll act as his substitute. We are going to capture those robbers, and don't you forget it."

Thus the boys continued to talk until about two o'clock. Both were on the alert, and Ike said:

"We are not to be disappointed, our game is here."

Sure enough, they could see the narrow gleam from a mask lantern. The burglars were at the open door of the room. A moment passed and an arm was thrust forward. The light from the mask lantern shot over the room. Apparently, in the bed lay a sleeper. On the dressing bureau was a box, evidently a jewel case. A mirror permitted the two lads to see the movements and faces of the two rogues, and there came an expression of triumph and gratification to the face of both as their glance rested on the jewel case, and indeed the surroundings all appeared to indicate an "easy thing," as one of the fellows had put it the previous evening.

[Pg 36]

They were very deliberate in their movements, and when satisfied that the road was clear they

stepped into the room, their eyes fixed on the bed where the sleeper was supposed to be lying. They had arrived half-way across the floor toward the jewel case on the dressing bureau when suddenly an immense hound confronted them—arose before them as though he had suddenly come up through the floor. The men were both armed and carried their weapons ready for instant use, but they stood and glared. They were paralyzed, as it were, with astonishment. The thing was not quite so easy at that moment, but one can imagine their bewilderment when, as they stood and gazed, the dog appeared to say in a singularly doglike fashion, after a regular dog yawn:

"I've got my eye on you fellows. Don't attempt to use those revolvers or I'll chew you to mince-meat."

One of the men managed to ejaculate:

"Great Scott! the dog spoke!"

The men were struck nerveless, and their terror and bewilderment increased when the dog appeared to say, with a strange, doglike laugh:

"It's dead easy, old man; it's dead easy."

The men's faces became ghastly and one of them in gasps managed to say:

"It's the devil!"

"No, you are the devils, and I am after you; yes, I am, dead sure. You miserable skunks, to steal into a house to rob!"

The men were struck speechless and they lost all power to move voluntarily. They stood and trembled involuntarily, and the dog continued:

"Oh, isn't it dead easy? What a bully old swag you will carry to Boston! The New York detectives will bark up the wrong tree, but I won't. No, no, you rascals, I'll bark you, and I am a New York detective lying around here for Boston thieves. I reckon Boston became too hot for you, and you thought you'd try your hands here; but, my dearies, when you get out of a New York jail I'd advise you to go to Alaska. There it's dead easy for a good slide, but you can't slide back to Boston from here with your swaggy—no, no. Just watch my tail waggy, you villains."

[Pg 37]

The men were just dead gone, and then the hound appeared to say:

"I told you that you had barked up the wrong tree this time. I'll bark now."

The dog did bark, and the latter was genuine. He had secured his signal and his bark was followed by the entrance of Du Flore, accompanied by a second officer, and the two detectives did not stand on any ceremony. They just clapped their irons on the two nerveless men, and then Du Flore said:

"Well, gentlemen, this was not so dead easy after all."

With men to talk to the thieves to a certain extent recovered their nerve. It was too late to avoid them, but they did ask:

"What is that?"

They pointed toward the hound.

"That is our chief of police," came the answer.

The two burglars were carted off, and we will here state that their "dead easy" thing did land them in Sing Sing Prison, for the proofs were dead against them.

When the lady was informed of all the particulars she was greatly surprised and exceedingly grateful.

A week passed. The two ventriloquists, having no serious business on hand, determined to have a little sport, and one day they visited the Stock Exchange, determined to throw a little confusion in among the brokers. They secured a good position at different points, and having arranged their programme prepared for active work. They saw one man who was conspicuous as a shouter, and as it appeared both formed a dislike for the fellow on appearances. He yelled a hundred of a fluctuating stock for sale. A man close at his arm appeared to make a bid. The fellow turned round sharply to accept. The man who had appeared to make the bid repudiated having done so, and the stock was again offered, seemingly bid in also by the same man, and when the seller again offered delivery the bid was repudiated. The seller had become enraged. He suspected he was being fooled. He became angry, words followed, and a crowd gathered around. The excitement ran high, when suddenly, right in the midst of the crowd, there occurred the loud barking of a dog and there was a general scatter, but no dog was seen. Then there came the grunt of a pig and a dog appeared to attack the pig. The latter squealed and seemed to be running all around the room, and immediately there followed a regular barn-yard chorus. Confusion reigned. All business came to a standstill and the question arose, who was doing the barking, the squealing, the cackling and the quacking? One accused another, rows followed, pandemonium reigned and amid the confusion the two authors of the whole trouble stole forth to the street. They had a heap of fun. An investigation would have followed, for the men believed the trick had been played by some of their members, but so general had been the confusion no proof could be obtained, and later the business of the exchange proceeded.

[Pg 38]

"Well, Ike, that was high," said Jack.

"It was."

The boys started to walk up the street, when they met a veiled lady who was walking rapidly along. Ike stopped short and said: [Pg 39]

"Jack, that means something."

"The veiled lady?"

"Yes."

"What makes you think so? There are plenty of veiled ladies knocking around every day."

"That's so; but do you see that lady's excitement?"

"How can I when she is veiled?"

"But you can see it in her movements. Let's follow her and learn what is up. I tell you we will be on to something before we know it and I'd like to do some one a good turn."

"I'll let you investigate and I will go and do a little business I have on hand."

The youths agreed to meet later. Jack went his way, and Ike, who was a persistent fellow, followed the lady. She turned into one of the large office buildings. The ventriloquist followed and saw her enter a lawyer's office. He remained in the hall, and it was fully an hour before the lady came forth. When she did her veil was raised. Ike recognized that she was very beautiful and refined looking, and he saw also that she had been weeping. As she dropped her veil he fell to her trail. She descended to the street and with slower steps proceeded on her way. Our hero was a good-looking chap. He had increased in strength and stature since first introduced to our readers in a former story, Number 6 of "OLD SLEUTH'S OWN." He determined to follow and seize the first opportunity to speak to the pretty maid, who evidently was in some sort of trouble. While following her he was joined by Jack, and a little later Ike, who, as has been intimated, was observant, saw a man turn to follow the veiled lady.

"Hello!" he muttered, "the game is opening up. I wonder if that fellow is acquainted with the girl, or is merely following her on speculation?"

The girl walked through Nassau Street as far as the City Hall and boarded a Fourth Avenue car. Jack and Ike boarded the same car, and as the latter glanced in at the lady he saw that she was giving way to considerable emotion under her veil, and he also observed that the man who had started in to follow her had secured a seat directly opposite to her and had his evil eyes fixed upon her; for the lad discerned that the man did possess evil eyes. [Pg 40]

"Jack," he said, "we are on to something, sure."

"It looks so."

The lady left the car at the park and started to walk through that great pleasure ground. The man left the car also and followed the girl, and it is needless to say that the two ventriloquists also followed on a double trail.

"The lady acts very strangely," remarked Jack.

"She does."

"And I've a suspicion."

Ike's eyes brightened up as he asked:

"And what is your suspicion?"

"She is going to throw herself into the lake. She is in trouble."

"But why does the man follow her?"

"I believe he is a rascal who means her no good."

"And I mean to see that he does her no harm."

"Suppose she does plunge into the lake?"

"We will fish her out."

From the course that the lady took it did appear as though she really intended to drown herself, as Jack had intimated. She finally, however, sat down on a bench near the water of the lake. The man stood off at a little distance watching her. The ventriloquists also lay off, ready to be at hand in case of emergency.

CHAPTER V

[Pg 41]

JACK AND IKE PLAY A TRICK ON A BAD MAN AND VERIFY IKE'S SUSPICION THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING UP—THE BAD MAN TAKES A SWIM INSTEAD OF THE VEILED GIRL.

The girl removed her veil a moment and gazed into the waters of the lake and her beautiful face was revealed. The man who had been shadowing her had a chance to observe her beauty. Ike had his eye upon the man and arrived at a conclusion. He concluded from the expression on the fellow's face that he was a villain and meant the beautiful girl no good. He was very handsomely dressed, wore diamonds of the biggest sort and altogether appeared like an individual whom a

young girl would have good reason to fear.

"Jack," said our hero, "that fellow is a bad one. He means the girl no good."

We write girl, for the veiled lady was but a mere girl, as revealed when her veil was removed. She had only removed her face covering for a moment. The man advanced toward her and the lads stepped closer, hiding in the shrubbery to the rear of the rustic seat where the girl had placed herself. As the man approached he said:

"Why, Miss Galt, good-morning."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the lady; "you have made a mistake."

It was the old trick—merely a pretense to speak to the girl.

"Is it possible I have made a mistake?" said the man.

"You have certainly made a mistake."

If the man had been a gentleman he would have apologized and have moved on, but he said:

[Pg 42]

"It's so strange. You are a perfect picture of the lady I know as Miss Galt."

"I am not Miss Galt, sir, and you will please not address me further."

"It's a beautiful day," said the man.

The girl betrayed her surprise from under her veil, but made no reply, evidently believing the man would move on; but instead he approached nearer to her. The girl rose as though to walk away, when the man said:

"Excuse me, but are you sure you are not playing me a little trick? Are you really not Miss Galt?"

The girl started to move away, when the man looked around furtively and then boldly approached. The girl was terrified. She attempted to scream, when the man actually grasped her arm. She was paralyzed with fear; she could not scream. Her eyes expressed her terror, her face became deathly pale, and no one can tell what might have occurred if at that critical moment Ike and Jack had not darted forth, and Ike exclaimed:

"Hold on there! you scoundrel, what are you doing?"

The man was large and apparently powerful. He glared at the two slender youths, and evidently concluded that with but little effort he could toss them both into the lake if so inclined. He said:

"You two young rascals, how dare you address me?"

He had released his hold upon the arm of the lady and the latter, woman-like, remained, hoping even in her weakness to be of some service to the two handsome youths who had interfered in her behalf. In a few moments, however, she learned that they did not need any assistance. These two young wonders were perfectly capable of taking care of the big insulter of womanhood.

In reply to his words to them, the two ventriloquists gave him a laugh. He became enraged. He felt mean anyhow, as he had been caught in a contemptible act. He was prepared to become enraged very readily.

[Pg 43]

"You laugh at me, you young rascals?"

"Certainly we do, you mean scoundrel."

"You call me a scoundrel?"

"That's what we call you."

"You two rascals, get away from here or I'll hurt you."

"You will?"

"Yes."

"You can't hurt any one. You're a big fraud."

The man moved toward the speaker, when a dog barked savagely at his heels. He leaped in the air and turned quickly, but there was no dog there. He supposed the fierce animal had skipped away, and with an oath he advanced another step toward the laughing and jeering lads, when again the dog barked savagely at his heels, and again he leaped in the air, but there was no dog visible.

The man was confused, and Ike said:

"You are a villain. You should be lynched or ducked."

"Let's duck him," said Jack.

"It's a go," answered Ike.

The man gazed in amazement at their audacity, and he was about to make a rush, when seemingly there came a gruff voice behind him, preceded by a shrill whistle.

"Hold on there! what are you about?"

The man thought that indeed a park policeman was at hand. He turned. He was standing near the edge of the water, for the ventriloquists had purposely changed their own position so as to draw him down in that direction. As he turned Ike ran forward head first and made a clear dive straight at the small of the man's back. Over he went, face forward, paralyzed by the blow, and then the two lads jumped on him. Over and over they rolled him toward the water. At this instant

[Pg 44]

the lady interfered, but her protest came too late. The man was rolled into the water about waist deep, and the water restored his strength, and there followed a mighty floundering as he struggled toward the shore. The boys roared with laughter. The man crawled out and made a rush for them, when again the dog barked at his heels, and he made a leap in the air; and as he turned and saw no dog, terror seized him, and a sudden impulse, for away he ran like a deer, all wet and dripping as he was. Then Ike advanced toward the veiled girl and said:

"Excuse us, miss, but he got just what he deserved. We saw him seize you and we made up our minds to scare him out. We will bid you good-morning. He will not molest you again."

The girl stood and gazed in silence a moment and then said:

"I thank you," and involuntarily she added: "Oh, what shall I do?"

"Are you in trouble, miss?" asked Ike.

The girl had betrayed herself to a certain extent, and she answered:

"Yes, I am in great trouble."

"Possibly we can aid you."

"No, no, you cannot aid me as readily and manfully as you did just now."

"But possibly we can."

The girl looked the two handsome lads over, and again she murmured, as though unable to control her emotions:

"Oh, what shall I do?"

"We can help you."

"No, you cannot help me."

"Yes, we can."

"No, no; I wish you could. No one can help me; I am ruined."

"Come, we will walk away from here and you shall tell us your trouble. We can aid you. You will find out that we can." [Pg 45]

They were both bright-faced youths. They had just given an exhibition of their nerve and courage.

"Come, do not be afraid. We can aid you, no matter what your trouble."

"It's so strange," murmured the girl.

"What is so strange?"

"That you should offer to aid me."

"Well, we can aid you. That's our mission in life."

The girl did not understand the remark, but she was charmed with the two bright-faced, honest-looking lads. She said:

"I am half inclined to tell you my trouble. I am a stranger in New York; I have no one to confide in. Yes, I will tell you my trouble, but you cannot aid me."

"I reckon we can aid you, no matter what the trouble may be."

The girl walked away with the two ventriloquists, but occasionally she glanced back at the lake and both the youths were convinced that she had really intended suicide.

When some distance away from the lake and in a retired part of the park, the girl said:

"Mine is a very strange story. I do not know as you will believe it."

"We will believe anything you tell us," said Ike gallantly.

"A week ago I came on from San Francisco. My father died a year ago; my mother has been dead for a long time. My father knew he was to die, as he had an incurable disease, and he gave me all his savings, converted everything he had into cash and placed it in my hands, and when it came near the last he told me after his death to come on here to New York. He said he once had a brother whom he had not seen or heard from for thirty years. 'My brother may still be living; if so he will be your friend and protector, and you will not be dependent upon him, as you will have five thousand dollars.'"

"After my father's death I remained in San Francisco a year to complete my education, and then I started for New York. The money I had changed into non-registered bonds, and I put them in my trunk. I arrived in New York a week ago and went to a place to board that had been recommended to me by a friend in San Francisco. Last night I opened my trunk to look at the bonds and discovered to my horror that they were gone. I at once informed the landlady, who told me she could do nothing, that she knew nothing about my bonds. She evidently did not believe my story. She looks upon me as a swindler. I saw in this morning's paper the name of a lawyer. I called upon him to consult him, but first I went to the captain of police in my district. He evidently did not believe my story, and then, as I said, I went to the lawyer. I told my tale to him. He said he could do nothing for me—I must depend upon the police. He also, I think, did not believe my story. They look upon me as an adventuress. I have no proofs. I have no way to prove that I ever had the bonds. They have been stolen, and in claiming them I am losing my reputation. I am looked upon as a swindler myself. I tell you the truth. I did have the bonds and

they have been stolen from me. I am ruined. No one will believe me. You do not believe my story."

"Yes, I do believe your story," said Ike, "and we will recover your bonds."

"You will recover them?" exclaimed the girl.

"Yes, we will recover them."

"No, no; never," she said in a despairing tone.

"We will see about that. When did you last see your bonds?"

[Pg 47]

"The night after my arrival in New York."

"Where?"

"In my trunk."

"After you had arrived at your present boarding-house?"

"Yes."

"Is there any one in the house whom you suspect?"

"I know not whom to suspect, but they were stolen after my arrival in that house. The landlady refuses to believe my story; the captain of police refuses to believe my story, and the lawyer to whom I went and offered one thousand dollars as a fee refuses to believe my story."

"And my friend and I do believe your story, and we are the only ones who can aid you in recovering them. One would have to know you to believe your tale. It is indeed a strange one."

"And you do not know me."

"Well, we have other reasons for believing your story. I tell you we will recover your bonds. You can rely upon my word."

"How can you do it?"

"We have our own method for going about it."

"The landlady has hinted that she would like to have me leave the house. I have no money to go anywhere else, for all my money I had placed in my trunk and that is gone also."

"How much money did you have?"

"I had over two hundred dollars."

"And it has been stolen?"

"Yes; whoever took the bonds took my money also, and my jewelry—for all my valuables were in my trunk."

Jack looked at Ike in a dubious sort of way, for the story was becoming quite odd. Ike, however, believed the tale. He said:

"It's hard luck to lose all that way, but you shall have it returned to you."

[Pg 48]

"I don't know what I shall do."

"Did you tell any one else in the house about your loss save the landlady?"

"No, I have not said one word to any one else, and the landlady told me not to do so."

Ike was thoughtful a moment and then said:

"I will find your bonds. In the meantime I believe it well for you temporarily to find another boarding-place."

"I do not know where to go."

"I can recommend you to a very nice, motherly lady who will see to your comfort."

There came a look of sudden suspicion to the girl's eyes and she said:

"I have no money. I do not know what to do."

Ike, as our readers know, possessed wonderfully quick and observant eyes, and he could discern in a most remarkable manner.

"You need not bother about the money part of it. I know this lady well; she is a very reputable person, the widow of a man who was a great detective. She will be willing to wait for her pay until you recover your money and bonds."

"But I may never recover them."

"Yes, you will recover them; on that point you can make your mind easy. When I and my friend here set out to accomplish a thing we never fail, and you shall satisfy yourself that the lady will really become your friend before you take up your home with her."

Ike had organized a great scheme. He was satisfied in his own mind that the money had been stolen either by the landlady or one of her boarders. He had a way of bringing people to a betrayal that was all his own. He held some further talk with the girl, and then asked:

"What is your name?"

[Pg 49]

The girl hesitated.

"You need not fear to tell me your name. I will go with you if you choose to the captain of police

and he shall vouch for my honor and loyalty."

"It is not necessary," said the girl, who was really bright and self-reliant. "My name is Sara Sidney."

"Miss Sidney," said our hero, "we will go to the home of the lady where I propose that you shall board while I am conducting the hunt for your missing bonds. You can satisfy yourself of her respectability before you remove to her home."

The girl hesitated.

"You need not hesitate. I will not only find your bonds, but I will find your uncle for you if he still be living, or his sons or daughters in case any of your cousins may be living."

"Why should you take all this trouble on my behalf?"

"I will confide to you a secret: I am a sort of detective. It is my duty to look out for you."

"I will go with you," said the girl.

Ike arranged to meet Jack later on and proceeded with Sara to the house of the lady where he proposed she should remain. The moment Sara was introduced to the lady the latter won the girl's confidence, and our hero left his charge with his friend, and the latter arranged to go with Sara and have her trunk removed. Meantime Ike met his comrade Jack, and the latter said:

"Well, Ike, I yield the palm to you. Yes, sir, you are the most observant and quickest person I ever met. I thought I was great, but you are the greatest fellow on earth, in my opinion."

"Well, it is strange how we chanced to fall to this girl, so beautiful and so helpless."

"Yes, she is beautiful, and I will say that there are thousands of undeveloped romances in New York at this very moment." [Pg 50]

"Yes, that is true; if a man desires to get into an adventure of a strange character he can easily do it here in this great metropolis."

"Say, Ike, she is a beautiful girl."

"She is indeed. Have you fallen in love with her?"

"I don't know."

"I wish you'd find out," said Ike, with a very meaning smile on his face.

"Hello! is that the case, Ike?"

"Is what the case?"

"Are you dead gone so soon?"

"I don't know how I am, but she is a lovely girl and her case is a peculiar one."

"And you have promised to recover her bonds?"

"I have."

"You have undertaken a big job."

"You think so?"

"I do."

"I'll get them."

"You will?"

"Yes."

"Have you a plan?"

"I have."

"Will you tell me your plan?"

Ike revealed his plan to Jack, and the latter said:

"Well, I'll be shot if you haven't a head for a detective, and it's right here where our gifts come in."

"Yes, sir."

"And you want me to aid you?"

"Sure."

"When will you start in?"

"At once."

The same afternoon that the incidents occurred which we have related, Ike, gotten up in good shape and furnished with a letter of introduction, called at the house where Sara Sidney had been robbed, and he succeeded in engaging board. He pretended to be an art student, and the first night he appeared at the dinner table he glanced around to take in the general appearance of his fellow boarders. He was just the lad to measure human faces. He had questioned Sara very particularly about her fellow boarders in the house, and he was well posted when he sat down to the table, after the usual introduction in a general way. The people he found to be the usual representative class that one finds in a city boarding-house. There was the doctor who occupied [Pg 51]

the rear parlor, a lawyer, two lady typewriters, one a creature who knew it all from A to Z. There were in all about twenty people in the house. Ike went over them all. He studied in his quiet, cute way every face, and did not see one person whom he was led to suspect, and the sequel will prove how unerring was his facial study of those people. When the meal was about half through there came bounding into the room a young man. He was a bold-faced, bumptious sort of a chap, and as he took his seat he ran his eyes over the people assembled and then asked:

"Where is Miss Sidney?"

The landlady said:

"She has left us."

The young man was thoughtful a moment, and then asked:

"When did she go?"

"This afternoon."

"What reason did she give for going?"

There was an interested look in the young fellow's eyes as he asked the question.

"She gave no reason."

"Where has she gone?"

"I do not know."

[Pg 52]

"I must find out," said the youth. "I was greatly taken with Miss Sidney; she was a very charming young lady. We shall miss her."

At that instant there came the announcement:

"Miss Sidney left the house because she was robbed."

Every one started. No one appeared to know who had spoken, but the young man gave a start, turned pale and asked in a voice that trembled perceptibly:

"Who says she was robbed?"

At that moment the landlady returned to the room. She saw that something had gone wrong.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

No one answered, and there followed a moment's awkward silence, broken at length by the bumptious young man, who said:

"Some one stated that Miss Sidney left here because she had been robbed."

The landlady's face flushed scarlet as she said:

"Who made the statement?"

No one answered.

"It's false," said the landlady, "and I should like to know who said she had been robbed."

"I said so."

The voice appeared to come from the old maid typewriter, and the landlady at once exclaimed:

"Miss Gaynor, did you state that Miss Sidney left here because she was robbed?"

"I did not," declared Miss Gaynor, indignantly.

"I said so," came a voice from the far end of the table.

The landlady looked in the direction indicated. An old man sat there and the voice was that of an old man.

"Did you say so, Mr. Smith?"

"I did not, madam," declared the elderly gentleman in an angry tone.

Again there followed a silence, when the landlady remarked:

[Pg 53]

"It's very strange; if any one makes such a charge, I wish they would come out and do so openly."

"Mr. Goodlove made the statement," came a voice.

Mr. Goodlove was the bumptious young man. He at once rose to his feet and in an indignant tone declared:

"It's a lie, I did not make the statement. Who says I did?"

"I do," came the answer, and it appeared to come from the young lady typewriter number two, who was a pretty, delicate-looking young girl, quiet, modest, and least likely to speak out boldly.

The man Goodlove looked at her and demanded:

"Do you dare say I made the statement?"

"I said nothing," she answered timidly, adding, "I did not speak at all."

"What is all this ado about, anyhow?" came a voice. "Mr. Goodlove knows better than any one else that Miss Sidney was robbed; why does he pretend ignorance as to the cause of her leaving?"

The young man turned ghastly.

"Who spoke then?" he asked.

"Oh, it's no use asking who spoke; you know all about the robbery."

"Whoever says that is a liar."

The landlady was becoming greatly excited. She said:

"Miss Sidney did claim that she was robbed, but I have proof that she is an adventuress and a blackmailer. She told me she had been robbed and she really wanted to work upon my sympathies. She did not possess anything to be robbed of, and I told her she had better go away."

"You did right," said Mr. Goodlove. "I did not wish to tell you, madam, but I suspected all along that the minx was an adventuress."

A voice came, saying: "You've changed your mind; you said she was a lovely girl and that you were very much taken with her. Well, I reckon you did take." [Pg 54]

"Who spoke?" demanded Goodlove.

"Oh, you know who spoke, and you know more about this whole affair than any one else. The police are after you."

The man wilted as he asked:

"Did Miss Sidney hint that I was the robber?"

As Goodlove spoke his eyes wandered around to learn who it was who had addressed him.

"No, she didn't accuse any one; you have accused yourself. You were seen, however, to deposit a whole lot of gold."

"She didn't have any gold," came the excited declaration.

Ike had *struck his man* at last.

It was a strange scene in that room at that moment, and the great mystery was who did the talking. No one appeared to know and there was great confusion, and it was because of the confusion that no one appeared to recognize, as stated, who was doing the talking.

There came a voice demanding, when Goodlove said she had no gold:

"How do you know? Were you rummaging in her trunk?"

The man became confused; indeed, he looked as though about going into collapse.

The most mysterious part of it all was the fact that no one knew who was doing the talking. The people looked into each other's faces and could not discern, and yet the voice sounded distinct and clear. Some one was talking. Who was it?

During all this time Ike was as mute as an owl after dawn. He looked around with an inquiring and surprised look upon his face, seemingly as greatly mystified as any one, and the voice pitilessly continued: [Pg 55]

"Better be careful, Mister Man. The detectives have their eyes on you."

Goodlove turned to the landlady and almost yelled:

"Madam, send for an officer. This is going too far."

"I will not have an officer in my house; no need."

"But, madam, who is it insulting me?"

"I do not know."

The landlady was as much dazed and mystified as any one.

The voice, however, ceased—became hushed; but a strange feeling pervaded those who had been witnesses and listeners during the strange scene. One after the other they rose and left the table and the room. Goodlove and Ike remained. The fellow looked over at Ike sharply and said:

"Say, my friend, did you notice who used the insulting language?"

The voice was again heard. It appeared to come from the hall and the words were:

"That young man does not know anything about it. Don't question him, you thief."

Goodlove rushed out to the hall. There was not a soul there. He ran up the stairs, but saw no one. Each one of the boarders had either retired to his room or had gone out. Ike left the table and passed Goodlove in the hall. He did not speak to the man, but went to the hatrack, secured his hat and stepped out to the street. Goodlove meantime entered the parlor and commenced pacing the floor. The landlady joined him.

"Madam," he said, "this is a most extraordinary occurrence."

"It is, sir."

"You were present. You know who made those insulting remarks."

"I do not."

"I will know, madam."

"I hope you will be able to learn, for the occurrence will do me great injury unless the mystery is

explained."

"There is no mystery about it. You have an impudent rascal in your house. Who is your new boarder?"

"He came to me highly recommended."

"It's all very strange, madam."

"Can it be possible," asked the landlady, "that the new boarder is a detective?"

Goodlove's face became ghastly. He walked more rapidly, and finally, seizing his hat from the hatrack, stepped out to the street. He had gone but a few steps, however, when a hand was laid on his shoulder—a heavy hand. The man would have shrieked if he had not been actually paralyzed with terror.

"Hello, Goodlove," said the man who had seized him. "Where are you going?"

The man trembled, but could not answer.

"Well, we've got you, mister. But let me ask you, is this your first offense? If it is it's all the better for you, that's all. We may let up on you, but we've got you dead to rights."

The man managed to gasp:

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, come off! We've got you all right. We didn't close in on you until we had all the proof. Where are the bonds you stole from Miss Sidney's trunk, and the money?"

The detective talked in such a matter-of-fact tone, with such absolute assurance, that the culprit was all "broke up." He just wilted.

"Who says I stole the bonds?"

"Oh, come off! don't attempt that. Old man, see here; do you want to be locked up? Turn over the stolen property, and if this is your first offense I'll let you go; but if you attempt to deny or play 'possum I'll lock you up and you will go to Sing Sing Prison; that's all."

[Pg 57]

"How strange!" muttered the prisoner.

"Strange that you were found out?"

"Yes."

"Why, you fool, we knew all the time that you stole the bonds. Thieves always get found out, but it depends upon how smart they are in getting away. Crime never pays; criminals always come to a bad end. This is your first offense. You have learned a lesson that will last you all your life. It always pays to be honest; it's always a losing game to be dishonest. Now what is your decision? Will you go to jail or surrender the stolen property?"

"If I surrender it will you let me off?"

"As this is your first offense I will let you off, and as I do not wish to spoil your future chances I will say nothing about your guilt. But let me tell you, if you ever steal again you will surely be caught and will pay the full penalty."

"I will surrender the property."

CHAPTER VI.

IKE RECOVERS THE BONDS THROUGH HIS FRIEND, DETECTIVE DU FLORE, AND HE AND HIS FELLOW VENTRILOQUIST FALL INTO NEW ADVENTURES.

The property was surrendered—the bonds, all the jewelry and all the money to a cent—and placed in the hands of Ike, who, when he met his "side partner" at their home, said:

"Well, Jack, I didn't need you. I caught my fish easy."

"Yes, 'dead easy,' as the two robbers said."

[Pg 58]

"They missed, I won."

"You did."

"So much for this adventure. To-morrow I will return the stolen property to the owner, and then ___"

"What then?"

"We will lie around for a new adventure. We're having a heap of fun."

"We are, and doing a heap of good even if I say it myself."

On the day following the incidents we have related Ike and Jack in company called upon the young lady for whom they had done so great a service. She received them in the little parlor, but she appeared very anxious and careworn, and she said after the usual greetings:

"I am very unhappy."

"You are?"

"I am."

"Why?"

"I cannot remain here with this good lady when I am unable to pay for my board."

"What will you do?" asked Ike, a pleasant brightness in his eyes.

"I do not know what I will do. I am already in her debt."

"You are?"

"Yes; she paid my board bill at the last place when she went with me to get my trunk."

"And you think you will not be able to pay her?"

"I do not know what I will do."

"You can pay her when you recover your stolen property."

"I will never recover that."

"Did I not promise that I would recover it for you?"

"Yes, in the goodness of your heart you did; but the lady here, with whom I am staying, says the chances are very much against my ever recovering my property." [Pg 59]

"And has she intimated that you had better find another home?"

"On the contrary, she has told me I can remain here as long as I please—until I find my uncle or secure a position that will enable me to earn my living."

"You can set your mind at rest; when I promise a thing I usually keep my promise. I will not keep you in suspense. Here is your property restored to you."

The girl almost fainted, so great was her excitement. She could not speak for a full minute, but when she did find voice she exclaimed:

"And you really have recovered all my property?"

"You can recognize your own property; here it is."

"This is wonderful."

"It's jolly good, that's all. I said I would recover it and I've kept my word; and now you are independent."

"Oh, I am so grateful! How did you do it?"

"Well, we did it."

"Who was the thief?"

"One of the boarders in that house."

"Who was the guilty party?"

"Whom would you suspect?"

"No one; they all seemed good people."

"And you had no suspicion?"

"I did not suspect any one particular person."

"A young man named Goodlove was the thief."

The girl stared.

"He was the thief?"

"Yes."

"I never would have suspected him, he was so kind to me. He was the only one to whom I told anything about myself."

"Yes, and he took advantage of your confidence in him to rob you."

"I did not tell him I had any money."

"He evidently suspected you did have, but all's well that ends well; and now you will remember I made you another promise."

"You said you would find my uncle."

"I said I would find him if he were living."

"And can you succeed as you have in recovering this property?"

"I can and will, if he is alive. And now can I advise you?"

"Yes."

"Make your home here for the present, until such time as we report as concerns the whereabouts of your uncle."

"Now that I can pay my board I will gladly remain here. I propose to take music lessons and become a teacher. I shall be self-supporting. I am pretty well advanced in music already."

"That is good. Can we call and see you occasionally?"

"I shall always be delighted to have you call upon me; you have proved yourselves my real friends. But will you tell me how you managed to recover my bonds?"

"Not to-day; some day we will tell you all about it."

"And Goodlove—is he in jail?"

"No, it was his first offense and we let him off. He will leave New York, however, and start afresh. I think he has learned a lesson and will become honest."

On the day following Ike and Jack were at breakfast in a restaurant when they overheard the proprietor of the place and a customer discussing a great robbery that had taken place under the most startling circumstances. Ike, after the meal, secured a paper and read the account. The robbery was indeed a very startling one. An old miser had lived in a tumble-down house for twenty-odd years. No one knew that he possessed one cent; indeed, his neighbors were not aware that he was the owner of the old tumble-down house in which he resided. He was seldom seen on the streets, then only at night. He never begged alms, lived in the most frugal manner, as was supposed, as no one could tell where he did procure his food. He occupied the little old house alone, and, as stated, had gone on for years, never attracting any attention until one morning through the police the startling announcement was made that the old man was really a possible millionaire. Thieves had broken into his old house, chloroformed him and ransacked his apartments, and according to the old man's statement had carried off gold, bills, silver bonds, and securities to an amount which under all the circumstances appeared incredible. Indeed, as it appeared, the police had been in possession of the facts of the robbery for several days, but they had doubted the old man's story, doubted that he had ever possessed any property at all, but later revelations established the truthfulness of the old man's statement beyond all question. As it also appeared, the old man had gone to South America when a very young man. He had returned to New York twenty years previous to the time of the robbery, and had then purchased the old house where, for reasons of his own, he had lived seemingly the life of a miser. The papers spoke of him in contemptuous tones as an old miser, and said by intimation that it served him right to be robbed. It was a just retribution visited upon a man who for the pure love of possession had denied himself the comforts of life just to accumulate his hoards, which were useless to him and the thousands of needy people whom he might have aided. The robbery had been a very mysterious one. No one had been seen by any one lurking in the vicinity of the house, but some time between midnight and morning three men, as the old miser declared, had entered his house, had chloroformed him and then had deliberately gone all through his apartments and had taken everything of value they could lay their hands on. After the robbery, as it appeared, the old man had refused to take any one into his house as a guard. He did not relish the visits of the police, but declared that everything portable of any value had been taken. He had been very methodical and had the numbers of most of his bonds, and the usual notifications were sent to dealers; but it was well known that quite a number of the securities were unregistered and negotiable. Indeed, as it proved later, the old man was mistaken; the bulk of them were negotiable. Besides the securities, jewels of great value and hoards of gold and silver were taken.

[Pg 61]

[Pg 62]

Ike and Jack read over the account and later met their friend, Detective Du Flore, who knew all about the case, and he said:

"I was coming to see you. I wonder if we can get in on this job with any hope of success?"

"I don't know about the hope of success," said Ike, "but we can get in on the job."

"I will tell you something privately: there is an immense reward offered. It will be the job of our lives if we can run down those plunderers."

"We can try."

"Ike, you are a wonder, and hoping to have your aid I have had myself specially assigned to the case. My reputation for life will be made, and we will all receive a big sum of money. I owe my present reputation to you. The capture of those two burglars has set me away up, and if I can solve this mystery and run down the robbers I am a great man."

"We will see what we can do."

"It's a great case and some of the oldest men on the force are on it. I would like to prove a winner."

"We will do the best we can."

"You have a great head, Ike."

"Thank you; I'll do the best I can."

[Pg 63]

"What is your plan for a starter?"

"I must have a chance to think the matter over. It will take me two or three days to make up my mind, but let me tell you, Du Flore, I have an idea that we can solve this mystery and get on the thieves."

"We are just made for life if we can. When will you see me again?"

"In a few days or in a few hours possibly," said Ike.

The detective and the ventriloquist separated, and as Ike and Jack walked away the former said:

"Jack, we've got a big job on hand. Let's walk down and take a look at the old miser's house, for

to-night we may wish to play burglar."

"What do you mean?"

"I am going to take great chances. I am going to get into that house."

"Sneak in?"

"Yes."

"You will get into a scrape, I fear."

"Eh, Jack, do you fear? I did not think you knew what fear meant."

Jack laughed and said:

"Don't take me so quick, Ike. All I intended to convey was that we should be cautious. That house will be under surveillance. It might prove awkward if you were caught sneaking into the old man's place."

"Would you sneak in if you had a plan?"

"To own up square, I would."

"All right; we won't be caught, and if we do, with your brave aid we'll get out of the scrape. I've an idea—a very funny one. I won't tell it to you now, or even you might call me a crank. But I tell you, I am going to take big chances and get into the old man's house on the sly, in spite of the police, detectives and every one else. I've a scheme."

The two lads arrived in the vicinity of the house and scanned the surroundings very carefully, and as they walked away Ike said: [Pg 64]

"We have a chance for a joke on hand, Jack."

"Yes, I am on to it."

"What are you on to?"

"We have been spotted and a detective is on our track."

"Yes, a snide. We'll give him a lesson."

"When?"

"Oh, we'll shake him now, but to-night we'll show up again and have our fun, and with our fun we'll do some business."

The ventriloquists were right. They had been spotted and a "snide" detective was on their track, and the youths did succeed in giving him the "shake," and they just kept under cover until night, when, having fully arranged for their adventures, they issued forth and proceeded again down to the old miser's house, and just as they suspected the "snide" detective got on to their track again, and the second time he started in to follow them he was satisfied he had struck something. As Ike and Jack walked away the former said:

"Now the fun commences. We will give that fellow a great steer."

Ike and Jack were both well posted all over the city of New York, and they proceeded to a public-house which had been for years under the surveillance of the police. It was a regular thieves' resort and many a bad fellow had been trailed from that very house. Once in the house they sat down at a table and called for their beer, and, as both suspected, in a few moments the "snide" entered. He pretended to be looking at everything else but the two youths, when in reality he was watching every movement. Ike had been revolving in his mind how to give the fellow a layout. He knew the man well. He was a real "snide"—a detective beat—in fact, not a genuine detective, but the agent of a detective agency. He thought himself, however, very smart. Ike, as stated, knew the house well, and knew that a number of very prominent politicians were in the habit of gathering in a back room on the second floor, where they indulged a little game of cards *for fun only*, and discussed their political plans. They were men away up politically, not thieves in the general sense of the word; at least, they were not liable to arrest, and they were very bold and resolute and had a very high idea of themselves. Even while Ike sat there he saw two of these men enter the place and pass through a rear side door to the hall. [Pg 65]

Ike knew these men well. He was aware, as stated, that they met in this room to discuss their political plans. They were in session, and after a little while the "snide" who had been watching the two ventriloquists crossed over to the table where they were sitting and pretended to have met one of them before.

"See here, mister," said Ike, "you are barking up the wrong tree."

The man gazed in astonishment.

"We are not under glances now, but there's bigger game in this house."

The "snide" recognized at once that the two young fellows were "on to him," as the saying goes.

"Who are you fellows anyhow?" he demanded.

"Oh, we're just out, we are. You have no use for us, nor we for you."

"You say there's bigger game in this house?"

"Yes, there is."

"Give me the points."

"Oh, you can't work it alone."

"I can't?"

"No."

"You give me the points and we will see if I can."

[Pg 66]

"Go and get your pard. It will take two of you, and I'll let you on to a big call. I want to get square; that's how I stand."

"You put me on to a big lay and I'll make it worth your while."

"You will?"

"I will. You know me, don't you?"

"I only know you are a cop, that's all."

"Did I ever have any dealings with you?"

"Never; but I want to get square. There are a couple of men in this house who swore us away once."

Our readers will bear in mind that both the ventriloquists were under a disguise that permitted them to play the role they were working at that moment.

"What is the lay?"

"Oh, it's the old miser business. I knew the moment that thing came out who did that job."

"It may be you did," said the detective wisely.

"Do you think we were in it?"

"You may have been."

"Then take us, and we'll have the laugh on you and the real game will skip. I say I can set you on to a dead sure game to prove your arrest."

"You can?"

"I can."

"How?"

"When I agree I can do it easy enough, but you had better get a pard. These villains are wild fellows; they might do you up."

"I'll take chances."

"You will?"

"I will."

"All right; I'll give you the points."

CHAPTER VII.

[Pg 67]

IKE RESORTS TO A VERY CUNNING TRICK AND USES HIS GREAT GIFT IN A VERY REMARKABLE MANNER—HIS JOKE IS FOLLOWED BY STARTLING RESULTS.

The man's face beamed. He believed he was on to a big thing. We have not attempted to go into the full details and describe just how Ike got down to his deception. We have just outlined the conversation, but for the purpose he had in view our hero talked straight to the point and his proposition was not an unreasonable one; it was just the dodge to hook a fellow of the stripe of the "snide." Our hero knew just how to work his trick and adapted his plan to his man.

Ike had his fish well hooked, and then he became very confidential. He told his man to go to the rear room and play off so as not to attract attention. The man obeyed and a little later Ike joined him, and then, after looking around furtively, still maintaining his play, he said:

"In the rear room upstairs are the fellows who robbed the old miser. They are discussing a division of the swag. Now, if you want proof I'll go up the stairs with you and you can overhear their talk and get all the points—get your men located."

The detective's eyes bulged. He, of course, recognized the possibility that Ike was giving him a "steer," and then again it was possible he was giving him the real facts.

"You needn't take my word," said Ike. "All you have to do is listen at the door. They are not looking for eavesdroppers. Make sure of your points, then away with your information, get your aids and capture the whole gang. I'll teach those fellows to give it to me in the neck," concluded our wily hero.

The "snide" and Ike stepped into the hall and noiselessly moved up the stairs, and as they approached the door of the room where the politicians were the "snide" heard the murmur of voices. No ventriloquistic trick was ever played better in imitating the murmur of several voices behind a closed door, and as the "snide" drew close to the door a voice was heard to exclaim:

[Pg 68]

"Hold on! that is not a square deal."

"What do you want—the earth?" came the retort.

"No, but I want my share of the negotiable bonds," came the answer. "You fellows are taking all the easy things and giving me the registered ones. They're no good, you know, and I want you fellows to remember I fell to that old miser and it was I who put up the job. We made a good haul without any blood-letting. I want a square deal, I do. Everything is hunky; we've given the police a dead steer away and we're all right. Don't you fellows try to rob me, do you hear?"

The "snide" heard and his face became radiant. He stepped away from the door and said to Ike:

"You go away. It's dangerous to be around here."

Little did the speaker know how dangerous it really was. He was destined to experience the full force of the danger in a most remarkable manner a few moments later, for Ike managed to perform a second marvelous ventriloquistic trick—one of the most wonderful of all. He managed to make, seemingly, a woman scream in a shrill tone:

"Look out, in that room! There's a sneak peeping at the door."

The words had hardly left the woman's lips, as it appeared, when the door opened. The "snide" was actually caught with his ear to the keyhole, so suddenly had the door opened. Well, a scene followed. The politicians were really discussing a very important political matter. They looked upon the "snide" as a sneak who was merely seeking for information to steal it, and they were mad. Indeed, there was danger around there just at that moment. [Pg 69]

As intimated, the politicians were mad; they believed this "ward heeler," as they mistook the "snide" to be, had gotten on to their whole little affair. They did not stand on ceremony—they just broke loose. They were all really toughs, and the way they went for Mister Snide was lovely to behold, especially had any one been present who really recognized what a mean sneak the "snide" was.

"Let me get at him," cried one politician. No one interfered. He was permitted to get at him and the first blow knocked the "snide" to the landing of the stairs. The second blow was a terrific kick which sent him headlong down the steps. He, fortunately for himself, did not break his neck in his descent, and gained his feet and made a rush into the bar on his way to the door to the street, but he did not get there before one of the politicians was at his heels. He received a kick that lifted him clear off the floor, then another man took a rap at him, and at each kick up he leaped involuntarily; so, with kicks and raps, he was knocked clear out to the street, and there stood the two ventriloquists to see him come forth. Ike expected him, and the young fellow's expectations were not disappointed; a worse laying out no sneak ever received. The man fell helpless on the sidewalk, and when a policeman ran to his aid he told his tale and yelled: "Arrest those men. They are the robbers of the old miser."

The policeman believed the man drunk or crazy, and rapped for assistance, and when his mate joined him they toted him off to the station. All the way the man protested, and when he arrived at the station he told his tale to the sergeant. The latter was bound to give the story his attention. He led the man back to the resort and up to the room. The politicians had reassembled. The sergeant knocked for admission and was let in. Well, a scene followed. [Pg 70]

The sergeant knew every man present in the room, knew that none of them were crooks, and he was confirmed in the impression that the man was drunk or crazy. The "snide" was led back to the station house and put in a cell. He yelled and protested, and no wonder. He foamed at the mouth in his excitement. The most partial observer would have counted him crazy.

Ike and Jack, however, had accomplished their purpose. Our hero said:

"The road is clear now; that fellow was hanging around the old miser's house all the time. Now I reckon I can make an entrance and interview the old man."

The two ventriloquists proceeded down to the old house and arrived just in time to meet another embarrassment. A policeman entered the house just as they arrived in sight.

"Hello, Ike," said Jack; "what's that?"

"A disagreeable discovery."

"That fellow is probably going to remain in the house over night."

"It looks so, and yet the papers said the old man had a guard and had declined to go to other quarters."

"We must get rid of that fellow."

"It is possible he will not remain there."

The hour was about eleven o'clock and Jack, after looking at his timepiece, said:

"Possibly he has just entered to see that everything is all right with the old man."

The lads waited around for about an hour, when to our hero's delight he saw the policeman come from the house. The two young men had made a thorough search around the neighborhood and were convinced that there was no one on the watch. After the policeman had been gone some little time Ike bade Jack remain on the watch. [Pg 71]

The daring young man then leaped the gate of the old alleyway and passed around to the rear of the house. He saw the glimmer of a light shooting forth from the windows of the room on the

second floor. He remained a moment studying the rear of the house, then descended the areaway and in a few moments managed to gain an entrance, although the door was bolted on the inside; but the woodwork had rotted and he easily gained an entrance, as stated. All was cold and damp. As he stepped inside the hallway he drew his mask lantern and glanced around. It was a dreary sight that met his view.

"I reckon," he muttered, "the old man never comes down here and it is a wonder he is alive, living over all this filth and decay."

On tiptoe Ike ascended to the parlor floor. He entered the front parlor, and as he flashed his light around he experienced a shock of surprise. There were articles of great value lying around; marble statues had rolled from their pedestals and had fallen to the floor, and on the walls were very valuable paintings, their frames moldy and the pictures apparently ruined. There was one picture that had been covered, and at a glance our hero discerned that it had been cared for—the only article in the room which had evidently ever been dusted or cleaned.

"A picture of the old fellow's wife," thought Ike, and after a moment he added: "I will have a glance at it."

The young man was doing a nervy piece of business, and yet he was as cool and deliberate as though in his own house. He moved about with great care and in a noiseless manner, and he advanced to the picture, removed the cloth, flashed his light upon it and recoiled as though gazing at an apparition. It was the one great surprise of his life.

There he stood, as he supposed gazing upon a portrait of Sara Sidney, the beautiful girl whom he had served in such a signal manner. He stood gazing in rapt attention, and so engrossed was he that he did not observe a counter-light in the room, nor become aware of the presence of another until he was startled almost to a condition of terror when a voice demanded:

[Pg 72]

"Who are you, and what do you want here?"

Ike turned and beheld a strange-looking old man standing within a few feet of him. In his hand the old man held a light, and his deep, sunken eyes were illuminated with a strange gleam as their glance rested on the ventriloquist.

"Are you Mr. Ward?"

"I am Mr. Ward," came the answer. "Who are you?"

"Your friend."

The old man chuckled and said:

"You are here to rob me, I suppose; but, Mr. Burglar, there is nothing left for you. The scoundrels who came here before took everything—yes, everything."

"I did not come here to rob—I came here to aid you."

"To aid me?"

"Yes."

"I don't need aid; if I do there is aid at hand."

"You don't understand me."

"Well, let me understand you."

"I came here as your friend."

The old man chuckled again, and said:

"I need no friends. I've lived many years independent of all friendship. But what do you think of that picture?"

There came an eager light in the old man's eyes as he asked the question.

"That picture is a mystery to me."

"A mystery?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"I hardly dare tell you."

"Do you know anything about that picture?"

"Shall I speak right out?"

"Certainly."

"I know the original of that picture."

"Young man, you lie, and you need not come here with any such wild story. Hark you, I have but to give an alarm—touch a button—and I will have a whole platoon of police here."

"You do not need the police."

"How do I know?"

"I will convince you."

"You will convince me?"

[Pg 73]

"I will."

"Do so."

"I repeat, I know the original of that picture."

"Are you a maniac or a rogue?"

"I am neither."

"Let me look in your face."

Ike stood with his face turned toward the strange old man. The latter thrust his light forward and carefully studied the ventriloquist's features.

"You do not look like a rogue or a maniac."

"I am neither."

"Then why did you force yourself into my house?"

"I came here as your friend."

"I need no friends."

"Yes, you need me."

"I do?"

"Yes."

"How is it I need you?"

"I am going to do you a great service."

"You are?"

"I am."

"How?"

"I will recover your bonds and all the property stolen from you."

The old man again laughed in a strange, weird manner, and said:

"That is what they all told me. I have not yet seen my bonds and jewels."

"We will talk about that later on. What I desire to know is, who is the lady whose portrait I see here?"

"What business is it of yours who the lady is?"

"I tell you I know the original."

"Then why do you ask me who she is?"

The question was a cute one.

"There is a mystery here."

"Is there?"

"There is."

The old man appeared to be a clear-headed, nervy individual, although he might be a miser.

"What is the mystery?"

"I said I knew the original of that picture."

"You did."

"I will say I know one for whom that picture might be taken as a portrait."

"You do?"

"I do."

"Who is the person?"

The old man was again all eagerness and attention.

"I will not say yet, but I would like to know who the real original of the picture is."

"I would first like to know who you are and how you dared force an entrance into my house."

"You shall know all about me later on."

"Oh, yes, that is what you said, but it is not satisfactory. You say you know one for whom that picture might be accepted as the portrait?"

"I do."

"The picture is mine."

"I will not dispute that, but I tell you there is a mystery. I can see now that the party I know is not the original of the portrait, but the likeness is very remarkable—yes, wonderful. The party I know could be a twin sister."

"Say, young man, what is it you are trying to accomplish?"

"On my honor, sir, I am telling the truth. Is your real name Ward?"

The old man showed signs of great excitement as he demanded:

"What business is it of yours who I am?"

"Is your real name Sidney?"

The old man uttered a cry, and advancing toward Ike seized his arm and demanded: "What do you mean? Who are you?"

"We had better settle right down to full confidences, Mr. Sidney. I tell you I am your friend."

"Will you explain your words?"

"I will."

"Do so."

"I asked you if your name was Sidney."

"You did."

"I know a young lady named Sidney who could be taken for the original of that picture. I concluded she must be a family connection; indeed, I am in the habit of putting little bits of evidence together and I arrived at a conclusion, following a suspicion aroused by the strange resemblance; that's all. I am telling you the truth."

"You look like an honest youth. Come upstairs with me. We will talk this matter over. My name is Ward; yes, my name is Ward, but I once knew a man named Sidney. He was the friend of my boyhood. I have not seen or heard from him for many, many years."

"Did he go to California?"

[Pg 76]

"Yes, he went to California. Yes, yes, I remember he did; but come upstairs. I wish to talk to you."

The old man led the way to the room on the second floor, and, remembering what he had seen in the lower part of the house, Ike was surprised to behold the air of comfort and neatness presented in this apartment.

"Sit down," said the old man.

Ike obeyed and the old miser continued in an eager tone:

"Now tell me about this girl who you say is the daughter of my old friend Sidney."

CHAPTER VIII.

IKE MAKES A MOST REMARKABLE DISCOVERY AND ALSO PICKS UP CLUES WHICH ENABLE HIM TO START OUT INTELLIGENTLY ON A SHADOW FOR THE BOND THIEVES.

Ike had his own suspicions, but he did not project them. He was going very slow, as he hoped to draw the old man on and force him to a very startling confession. He told the story of Sara Sidney—told it in a straightforward, simple manner. The old man listened attentively and betrayed considerable emotion, and he muttered:

"How unfortunate I have been robbed! How much I might have done for this daughter of my old friend! But alas! I am a poor man now—yes, a poor man."

"All your wealth can be recovered."

"Oh, they all say that."

"Who says so?"

"The detectives who have been here; but they will never recover one dollar. I will never get my property back." [Pg 77]

"That is what your niece said," projected Ike suddenly.

The old man almost screamed as he said:

"My niece! What do you mean?"

"I will speak plainly. I cannot be deceived—this man Sidney was more to you than a friend. I recovered the stolen property of Sara Sidney; I will recover your property."

"Who are you, young man?"

"You may call me the devil or Tom Walker if you choose, it makes no difference. I will recover your property, and now I tell you I know your name is Sidney and the girl I know is your niece, and that accounts for the wonderful resemblance to the portrait of your daughter."

The old man glared.

Ike, as our readers will observe, was pressing right ahead in his impressions. He had arrived at a conclusion and he was assuming a tone calculated to force the old man to an admission. He said:

"You need not fear. Your niece is independent; she will not become a burden to you. She is a brave, true, energetic young girl. She has some means—enough to maintain her until she is in a

position to support herself by her labor. I tell you, when you see her you will be proud of her."

The old man was very thoughtful for some moments but finally he said:

"Can I trust you, young man?"

"Yes, you can trust me."

"My real name is Sidney. I did have a brother who went to California. This is all very strange. I have not heard from my brother for nearly thirty years. If what you say is true this girl may be my niece. When can I see her?"

"You cannot see her until I have caught the thieves and restored the property or come to you and admit that I have failed."

[Pg 78]

The old man appeared dazed and Ike said:

"Tell me your story. You can trust me."

"I believe I can," said the old man; "I will. I have admitted that my name is Sidney, and that I am a brother of the Sidney who went to California. I went to South America and while there met a young American girl, the daughter of the United States consul. She became my wife and one child was born to us; but alas! my wife died, carried off by fever, ere the child was a year old, and from that moment I devoted my life to my daughter. I am of humble birth, and I set to work to accumulate a great fortune for my child. I brought out masters from Europe to educate her. She was beautiful, amiable, bright and accomplished, and I was happy. But alas! death came stealing along one night and wrapped its cold arms around my child, and I laid her beside her mother. From that moment I lost all ambition, all interest in life. I had heard many years previously that my brother was dead. I had never heard of his marriage and did not suppose he had left a child. Strange fate! I live, but my child is gone; he has gone and his child lives. I converted all my wealth into bonds, money, jewels and securities, and I came home to America. They call me a miser, alas! In my own way, secretly, I have been aiding the poor and needy for twenty-odd years. The portrait you see is a portrait of my child. In the South, you know, girls mature very fast. She was but thirteen when she died. Well, I have had no interest in life. I fear nothing, I have cared for nothing. I have only been waiting for death to come and claim me. His visit has been long delayed and now my wealth is gone. I did not care, but now I do care, for if you are not deceiving me I would have had something for the child of my brother; and you say she resembles the portrait. Well, when my brother and I were boys we greatly resembled each other. And now listen to me: I accept your gage. I will not ask to see my niece until you have made good your promise; either you shall recover my fortune or you shall come to me and say you have failed."

[Pg 79]

"It will be strange if I ever come to you and say that I have failed. You can trust me. I seek no reward, but I believe I can recover your fortune, and now I have a double motive for doing so."

There came a quick, searching glance to the old man's eyes, but he said nothing until after an interval, when he declared:

"Recover the fortune and you shall not complain of your reward."

"Have you talked much to the detectives?"

"I have not, because until now I was indifferent."

"If I can secure the slightest clue I will promise success. Have you any recollection of the appearance of either of the men?"

"Yes; I had a struggle with them before they chloroformed me."

The old man proceeded and gave quite an accurate description of one of the men.

"This is great!" said Ike, and he asked:

"Where did the struggle take place?"

"Down in my parlor. I heard them down there as I heard you, despite your care, and there I met and fought them until overpowered."

Ike went down to the parlor. He spent one minute gazing at the portrait and then set to work. He had associated so much with detectives he had their methods down to a fine point; and besides, as our readers know, he was naturally a perfect wonder in shrewdness and cunning. He drew his mask lantern and the old man asked:

[Pg 80]

"Are you a detective?"

"A sort of amateur," came the answer.

Ike got down on the floor, face forward, and flashed the light of his mask lantern over every inch of the carpet, asking questions of the old man as to just where the first grapple commenced, and soon he cried, "Eureka!"

The old man had become eagerly interested.

"What have you found?"

"All I need, added to your description."

Ike had come across several strands of hair. He rose from the floor and held the threads under the full glare of his lantern, and the old man exclaimed:

"I remember; yes, I did grasp one of them by the hair and must have pulled a few locks."

"Hardly a few locks, but enough," said Ike.

The young ventriloquist obtained what he most desired. He had the description, as stated, and he knew the color of the hair of at least one of the robbers. Let him find one of them and he well knew he would not only run down the men but the "swag." He felt quite jubilant, and after a long talk with Mr. Sidney, in which he gave the old gentleman very minute instructions, he passed out the front door, and as he did so a man seized him.

"Hello, young fellow! what are you doing in there?" came the question.

"I am not in there; I am out here," answered Ike coolly, and at the same instant Jack ran up and said:

"Look out for that fellow, Ike. He's a bad one."

"I want you," said the man.

Ike suddenly drew his mask lantern, which he had not extinguished, and flashed the light straight in the fellow's face. The man uttered an oath, drew a revolver and made as if to strike Ike a blow, but instead he received a rap on the head which felled him as though he had been hit with an iron bar. As the man fell Ike leaped over his form and he and Jack sped away. Our hero had reasons for speeding away, for he believed he was on to a great thing.

[Pg 81]

Once out of sight Jack asked:

"What happened; Ike?"

"Wonders upon wonders, Jack; it's a night of wonders. I can't stop to tell you now; but who is that fellow? You said he was a bad one."

"I'll tell you. While I was waiting for you I saw him and another man come stealthily down the street. I stole behind them and overheard their conversation. They were not looking for you, but some one else. I think when you came forth they mistook you for the man they were looking for."

"They are not officers?"

"No."

"We must trail that fellow. He is probably associated with the robbers."

The two ventriloquists worked a transform and separated, but both were making for the one objective point and both got on to the trail of the man whom Jack had so opportunely knocked over just as he aimed a blow at Ike.

As intimated, they got on the trail of the man and followed him until he met a second man on the Bowery. The latter had come from a saloon—a brilliantly illuminated gin palace. He stood right under the glare of the electric lights and Ike had a clear, full view of him.

"There's our man," said Ike.

"What do you mean, Iky?"

Quickly Ike stated that he had received a clue and that he identified the man standing in the doorway of the gin palace beyond all question as one of the burglars.

"This is great!" said Jack. "Let's close in on him, and I'll try a little hypnotism on him."

[Pg 82]

"You may have plenty of chance yet for the exercise of your mysterious power, Jack."

We will here state that Jack had given Ike an exhibition of his wondrous gift as a hypnotist. Ike was the greater ventriloquist, but he did not possess the hypnotic power; while Jack possessed it, as the readers of his former adventures as recorded in Number 19 of our series are aware, to a remarkable degree.

Ike was not naturally excitable. He was singularly cold-blooded, but upon discovering his man so soon his blood did course rather rapidly through his veins.

There is one other fact we wish to state: burglars, as a rule, do not leave the great cities. They find them safer hiding-places than anywhere else, despite the great number of detectives hovering around. There are all sorts of burglars—the bunglers and the accomplished chaps who proceed on almost scientific principles. These men are strategic. They study out all their plans weeks in advance. They calculate all their chances, both to accomplish their burglaries and also to prepare for their retreat and hiding. Ike calculated that the man who had robbed Mr. Sidney were accomplished and veteran crooks who would be likely to remain in the city, especially after making such a big haul; and when he secured the specific clue he calculated upon finding his man, but certainly did not hope to drop on him so soon.

"What shall we do?" asked Jack, after a few moments.

"We will follow this fellow. He will go home by and by, and—"

The lads did follow the man, but he did not go home, and they were destined to have quite a long shadow ere they ran their game down. They located him in his haunts, but did not trail to any permanent abiding-place; and finally, well on toward morning, they returned to their home well wearied out but hopeful. Ike was sure the man would remain in the city and that he could locate him almost any time when he needed.

[Pg 83]

It was late on the following afternoon when our hero visited Sara Sidney. He listened to a long and hopeful talk of the girl's plans. He did not say anything direct, but did project:

"Suppose you should find your uncle, and he should disapprove of your plans?"

"I do not expect ever to find my uncle."

"Well, now, I once made you a promise."

"I know you did, but remember, it is thirty years since my father saw his brother."

"Well, some men live to a pretty old age. I am sure I will find your uncle."

"What makes you so certain?"

"Oh, it came to me in a vision. Yes, I will make you a positive promise: I will find your uncle. I know that he is alive, or was a few weeks ago."

The girl became quite interested, and she looked very animated and beautiful as she urged Ike to tell her how he had learned that her uncle was living a few weeks previously.

Ike, however, did not tell his tale, but he hoped to tell her in the near future, and with it also add the wonderful narrative of the recovery of a great fortune.

Three weeks passed, and during that time either Ike or Jack or Detective Du Flore was on the trail of the light-haired man whom our hero had identified as one of the robbers.

One day Jack asked:

"Ike, are you sure you have the right man?"

"Yes, I am sure, and we'll get down to him."

"Possibly the fellow knows we are on his track."

"No, but he is well aware that detectives are liable to be on his track and he is playing away from his lair; but he'll go home sure." [Pg 84]

On the day following the conversation recorded Ike was on the trail. All three did not "dog" the man at one time—they did so alternately. It was Ike's "tour," as boatmen say, and the ventriloquist struck his "lay" at last. Hope is the propelling force of energy, and it was constant hope that made our hero so persistent on the track of his man. Often during the three weeks he had visited Sara Sidney. He enjoyed her importunity as she urged him to explain what he meant when he told her that he knew her uncle was still living. It was delightful to him. The girl was a constant charm to him when in her presence, and a memory of her sweet personality haunted him when he was away from her. Yes, he had a strong motive for sticking to the trail, and, as intimated, he at length fell to a great lead. He had followed his man to Staten Island, or rather followed him on board one of the Staten Island boats, and then a great game commenced. He saw the thief wander all over the boat scanning the face of every man and woman on board, and the ventriloquist made a second discovery. He had seen the man exchange signals with a fine-looking lady on board, and as the burglar wandered around Ike saw the lady watch him in a most intent manner, and he muttered as a great suggestion came to him: "At last! At last!"

CHAPTER IX.

[Pg 85]

IKE'S PERTINACITY IS REWARDED IN A MOST REMARKABLE MANNER—HE PROVES ALL THEORIES AND REDEEMS ALL PROMISES.

The exchange of signals between the burglar and the woman was an incident of great significance to our hero. The burglar was a very gentlemanly looking and acting man—a fellow far above the usual personality of robbers. Ike was after him, however, and in his own mind had arrived at a conclusion. A little time passed. The man made the circuit of the boat, appeared to be satisfied and returned to the cabin where the woman sat. He walked boldly up to her and they engaged in a very earnest conversation, while our hero muttered: "At last! At last!" When the boat reached the landing the woman went ashore alone, and Ike was in a dilemma. He did not wish to lose sight of either of them. He believed he was not only on to the burglars, but also going direct toward the hiding-place of the stolen property. He decided to follow the woman, but knew how necessary it was to be very careful.

We will here state that nearly all burglars have women confederates, and we will also state that the most romantic dénouements have time and again followed the running down of an expert burglar. Burglars are not all vulgar, rough men. Some of them are rascals possessing æsthetic tastes. The police records will show that many burglars have been married to very reputable women whom they have kept in total ignorance of their criminal life. It is upon the records that burglars have been known to be very fond of their families. Of course, these cases are exceptions, as the usual housebreaker is a vulgar rascal. Ike, however, knew of many singular romances connected with criminals and believed that he had fallen to one, a romance of a peculiarly exceptional character. [Pg 86]

As stated, he desired to follow the woman, but did not dare show his hand. He left the boat, however, and a few moments later saw the burglar pass around to the returning boat. It was evident he had met the woman and was about to return to New York.

Ike boarded the Staten Island rapid transit train. He had seen the woman go on the train and she rode to the third station, where she alighted. Our hero was on the alert. He alighted from the train also. His disguise was a good one. Again, in a rural district he could lay away back. He

followed the lady until to his surprise he saw her enter a very handsome villa house, and then he remembered he had overheard just one word between the lady and the burglar. As he saw her enter that villa residence he fell to the significance of the man's words. He intended to visit the house that night, and our hero was put to his wits' end to decide upon his course in the emergency. Two propositions were presented to him: Was the stolen property in the villa, and did the man intend to come that night and take it away, or did he intend to remove it from some other place and hide it in the villa? The ventriloquist meditated a long time and finally decided he had the burglar located. He had the villa located. He had reason to believe the man was to visit the villa that night. The chances favored a double catch—the burglars and the "swag."

Ike determined to return to New York, notify Jack and Du Flore and with them return to Staten Island and stand ready for a grand dénouement. Before returning, however, he "piped" the house a bit and saw a man greet the woman as she stepped upon the grand piazza. He then returned to the station, muttering as he went:

"It will be great luck if we capture both burglars and all the swag. Great ginger! what a man the young Detective Du Flore will be!" [Pg 87]

Our hero arrived in the city, got in communication with his detective friend and told his story. Du Flore was all excitement. He said:

"Ike, you have got on to the whole business, sure, and you've done it all yourself. Yes, that property is in that villa. We will have a great sensation for the public, who are never tired of great sensations, but we will give them a dandy this time, sure."

Ike, Jack and the detective got themselves up in first-class disguises, and taking different boats proceeded singly to the Island, where they all arrived just about dark. They met and our hero indicated the road to the villa, and some time later they were all laying low and on the watch near the house where they expected to make the capture of the season.

It had been arranged between Ike and Jack to exchange signals, but it was some hours before they had the opportunity and then Ike signaled that their man had arrived. Our hero recognized his gait. The rogue went straight to the villa, which was illuminated on the first and second floors, and the woman evidently heard the step, for she came to the door to meet her friend. The ventriloquists and detective came together and held a few moments' conversation, and it was decided that Ike should steal into the house, as he was the one most experienced in that sort of work. Ike started right in. He had reconnoitered the house earlier in the day and knew just where to effect an entrance. He succeeded, and once in the house he went very slow. He saw no servants and decided they had all retired; or, as it proved later, had been granted a holiday, for only one servant was in the house. As it also proved, this servant was really a confederate and had retired. Ike observed that all the lights on the lower floor had been extinguished, and he ascended to the second floor and fell to his old game of peep and listen. The man and woman were seated at a table. The latter was a sharp, shrewd-faced woman. Ike heard the man say:

[Pg 88]

"Mosely will not be here to-night."

"Then what do you propose to do?"

"Look over the swag."

"Do you not think it risky?"

"No, the detectives have given it up as a bad job."

"How do you intend to make a division?"

"The jewels are all yours. The money and bonds we will take."

The woman's face betrayed her delight.

"All right," she said; "such a division is agreeable to me. I will bring the bonds and let you count them over."

"Are all the windows tightly closed?"

"We can close them."

"Do so."

The woman did close all the windows, and then going to an adjoining room returned in a few moments, bearing in her arms, we will say, a bundle of bonds. Ike well recognized the documents. He had seen so many bonds—indeed, had captured so many at different times from thieves. The woman laid the certificates on the table and the man said:

"Where are the jewels and the money?"

"I thought they were to be my share."

"Certainly, but I wish to look them over. I wish to see the full amount of our great capture."

The woman's face displayed a little disconcertion, but she went to the adjoining room and soon returned, bringing with her a jewel case and a bag which clinked, showing its contents to be gold. The man opened the bag and tossed gold and bills on the table, and his eyes glittered as his glance fell upon the wealth.

[Pg 89]

Ike had seen enough for the time being. He slid down the stairs, gave a signal and was joined by his friends. To them he told the wondrous news. He said:

"We've got it all. It's right to our hands." As stated, he told the tale and then led his companions

into the house. A programme had hastily been arranged. They all gathered at the door of the room. Just one moment they stood and then there sounded a wild, weird shriek, and it appeared to be in the very room where the robber and his female pal were counting the gold and examining the jewels. The shriek had been sent forth with a purpose. Both the man and the woman were paralyzed with terror, so sudden had come the yell, in all its shrill and piercing distinctness. As they stood and gazed Du Flore, armed with a pair of cocked revolvers, entered the room. The man attempted to draw a weapon, but Du Flore called out:

"Hold on there! you're covered."

Ike and Jack entered the room. Both were armed, and Ike went directly to the woman and in a strange, weird voice said:

"You do not wish to die."

"Throw up your hands," commanded Du Flore.

The man did not obey. The click of a hammer sounded in his ears and he muttered: "It's all up with us, Maggie. Who is to blame?"

Du Flore was a powerful fellow. He suddenly leaped forward and quicker than a wink struck the man a blow that felled him to the floor. The robber was unprepared, and fell as though shot; and Jack, ever ready as usual, clapped the darbies on him while Ike with singular dexterity performed the same service for the woman, and the job was over.

It had been a bold, well-played game from first to last.

[Pg 90]

The bonds and gold and jewels were scooped into a bag, the man and woman were led down the stairs, and a little later the whole party were on board one of the Staten Island ferryboats. Jack remarked:

"The servants in that house will wonder where their mistress is when they walk downstairs in the morning."

The two prisoners were taken to headquarters, and within two hours the "pard" of the robber was captured on information which the chief of police secured from the woman. The mystery of the robbery had been solved, and on the following morning our hero proceeded to the home of Mr. Sidney. He found the old gentleman in his usual placid humor, but he did display just a little excitement when Ike said:

"I'm ready now to introduce you to your niece."

The old man stared.

"Is it possible?" he ejaculated.

"Yes, sir, it is possible. It's true your fortune has been recovered—every bond, every dollar, every jewel."

The old man stood a moment lost in deep thought, and finally he said:

"This is indeed wonderful—yes, very wonderful!"

"It is true, and now I go to prepare your lovely niece to receive you."

Ike did proceed to the home of Sara Sidney. He found the young lady in quite a happy mood, and her lovely face became radiant as she entered the little parlor where Ike waited to meet her.

"I am so glad you have come."

"Indeed!"

"Yes."

"Do you anticipate the news I have to tell you?"

"I do not."

"I have great news for you, but first let me tell you a strange tale."

Ike proceeded and told the tale of the robbery—told it as though he were merely relating an interesting story with which Miss Sidney had no connection—and proceeded and told how he and his friend Jack, with Detective Du Flore, had recovered all the stolen bonds, money and jewels.

[Pg 91]

The girl listened and was deeply interested, evidently believing that Jack was merely telling a tale of his success, and she said when he had concluded:

"You are one of the greatest detectives on earth."

"I will not lay claim to that distinction until I have found your uncle. You know I told you I had a clue."

"Yes, and it would be so strange if after all these years I should meet my father's brother, my uncle."

"Would you like to meet him?"

"How can you ask such a question? Do you know what it means to be alone in the world?"

"Yes, I know exactly what it means to be alone in the world. I am alone in the world. I do not know that I have a living relative on earth."

"Ike, you never told me your story."

"Shall I tell you my story?"

"Yes; I should be delighted to hear it."

"I will tell it to you. All I can remember of my earliest days is that I was traveling around the world from city to city with a strange man who bade me call him uncle. He was a great magician. He taught me his trade. I had a natural aptitude for the business. I evidently possessed a gift in that direction, and he cultivated my natural gift so that I became a wonder to him and a wonder to myself. Well, one day, without any previous warning, the old man announced to me here in New York that he was going away—to leave me. I was amazed and heart-broken. He had been in America a year when he made the announcement. He would not tell me why he deserted me; he would not tell me where he was going and would not assure me that I should ever see him or hear from him again. And what was stranger still, although I knew that he was rich—for together we had been very successful—he was leaving me practically penniless. All he gave me was five dollars, and when I reproached him he said:

[Pg 92]

"You can earn the money you need with your wonderful gift.' He gave me a great deal of good advice as concerned my conduct while making the struggle of life."

"Did you not ask him about your parentage?"

"I did, but he refused to give me any information."

"Did he deny knowing about you?"

"He indicated that he did know the story of my earliest life, but he refused to give me any information. He did say, however, that some day if I lived I would learn all about myself."

"How cruel he was!"

"It would appear so, but after all it is proved that he knew what he was talking about. He said I could earn all the money I needed with my great gift, and his words have proved true. I have not wanted for anything since the night he so strangely disappeared. Before going he gave me a box and told me I must not open that box until I was twenty-one, or until such time as I might fall into some dreadful calamity; then, when all other means failed, I was to open the box."

"And you have that box?"

"I have."

"You never opened it?"

"I have never opened it."

"Oh, how I would like to see what is in that box!" said Sara in an eager tone.

"No doubt you are a true daughter of Eve, but I will not open that box until I am one-and-twenty. I have never had any excuse for opening it, as far as having been overtaken by any dire calamity. My life has been pleasant and successful. I have been enabled to perform many good deeds for people who needed aid and assistance."

[Pg 93]

"You did a wonderful deed for me."

"I propose to do more for you. I propose to find your uncle."

"But that box, Ike?"

"Well, what about the box?"

"Are you sure it is safe?"

"Yes, I am sure it is safe."

"Oh, how I should like to be present when you open that box!"

"Maybe you can be," said Ike.

"Oh, I should go wild in anticipation."

"Some day—not now—but some day I may propose a condition whereby you may earn the privilege of being present when I open that box."

"No doubt it contains some wonderful secret."

"It is possibly a secret concerning me. It may inform me that I am the unknown son of a beggar, or it may tell me that I am a prince, a lord or a duke."

"A prince, Ike! Yes, it will inform you that you are a prince."

"The prince of ventriloquists," said Ike with a laugh—a very merry laugh.

"Oh, Ike, you are really a lord or a duke," cried Sara in tones of great enthusiasm.

Ike observed her enthusiasm, and, for reasons which our readers shall learn when we tell the story of the opening of the mysterious box, our hero was quite pleased, and the girl again said:

"Ike, remember your promise. You are to give me an opportunity to be present when you open that mysterious box. Oh, how I would like to learn its secret! Not for myself, but for you. It will be a great and pleasing discovery when you open that box."

[Pg 94]

"Maybe I have a great and pleasing disclosure to make to you now."

The girl's face assumed a sudden pallor.

"What do you mean, Ike?"

"I made you another promise. I told you I would find your uncle."

"I see, I see! You have found him?"

"Yes, I have found him."

"I know now why you told me the story of the old miser and the loss and recovery of his treasures."

"You discern why I told?"

"Yes."

"Why did I tell you?"

"I hardly dare answer."

"Do not fear. Tell me what you suspect."

"That old miser is my uncle?"

"Yes, Sara, that old miser is indeed your uncle, and I have a great surprise for you."

Sara was thoughtful a moment and then asked:

"Are you sure he is my uncle?"

"I am."

"You have absolute proof?"

"I have."

"And I am the niece of a soulless miser!" murmured Sara in a disconsolate tone.

"No, he is not an old miser—he is a warm-hearted, generous man. I will tell you more about him later on."

"But are you sure you have the proof?"

"Yes, I am sure."

"Tell me what the proof is."

"I am going to show you the proof. I have a great surprise for you. Come, put on your hat and cloak. You are to go with me and behold something that will make you stare."

"I shall not stare at my uncle; and again, Ike, I assure you I must have positive proof."

[Pg 95]

"You shall have positive proof. This is a most strange and remarkable romance. It is fate. I am a strong believer in fate. I have encountered so many strange incidents during my short life. See my meeting with you; remember the tragic incidents that followed. You intended to drown yourself in the park lake."

The girl's face became ghastly.

"No, no, Ike."

"Yes, I know."

"I will admit the temptation to drown myself after the discovery of my loss was very great; but no, no, I would have recoiled at the last moment."

"I am so glad to hear you say so. I do not think much of people who on the appearance of every little trouble rush to kill themselves. It shows lack of mind strength. But come; I am to take you to meet your uncle."

The girl hesitated. She did not appear as glad as Ike had thought she would be. The fact was, he did not know the lovely girl yet. He was to learn more about her later on, and there was to follow an intense romance as a result of his meeting with this lovely little lady from the far West.

"Come, your uncle awaits you."

"Does he know about me?"

"Yes."

"Does he accept the proof?"

"He will when he sees you."

"What do you mean?"

"That is my little secret for the present. I tell you I still have in reserve a great surprise for you—the proof for you, the proof for him. It is a most remarkable coincidence, and here again fate comes in. Yes, yes, there is a wonderful surprise for you."

While Ike was talking he could not keep his eyes off the face of the lovely girl. Its changing expressions made her look wondrously beautiful. He was charmed—charmed as he had never been charmed before in all his life. We will not say yet that he had met his fate, but we will say that he was in a very dangerous position.

[Pg 96]

Our hero finally persuaded Sara to go and prepare herself for the street, and together they started to go to the home of the old miser. When they arrived in front of the house the girl stood still; a shudder passed over her delicate frame and she said:

"Must I enter that old miserable-looking house to meet my uncle?"

"Yes, but I am surprised. I do not understand your reluctance."

"Never mind. I must go and I will."

Ike led the way into the house. He had completed all his arrangements for the meeting. He knew just what he was about. Once in the house he led the fair girl into the parlor. There had been no cleaning done. Everything was moldy, old and decaying as upon the night when Ike first forced an entrance. The girl looked around in a disdainful manner, and again Ike did not understand her mood. She did not appear even pleased when he had thought she would be so delighted. He dusted off a chair, bade her sit down and then he lit the gas; for there was gas in the old house. After lighting the gas he went to the covered picture and said:

"Sara, look at this and tell me how old you were when you sat for this picture."

As he spoke he removed the cover and the beautiful face of the old man's dead daughter was revealed as pictured upon the canvas. It was a beautiful painting, and the resemblance to the living girl who gazed upon the face was marvelous. She did not speak—she could not speak. She just gazed with all her eyes.

"This is something I did not promise to find," said Ike; "but it is the proof that Mr. Sidney is your uncle. This is a portrait of his——" [Pg 97]

Ike stopped short, and the girl gasped:

"Go on. Of whom?"

"Mr. Sidney's daughter—your cousin—the daughter whose place in his affections you are to supply; for she is dead, and that is why he lives the life which led people to believe that he was a miser. He is not a miser, but a kind, generous, liberal man, and in finding your uncle for you I have found one whom you can and will love."

Sara appeared to be completely overcome with astonishment.

"I do not understand it," she said.

Ike had told the story of the robbery. He proceeded and told the previous history of Mr. Sidney, and when he had concluded he said:

"It's all very strange and wonderful. Indeed, mysterious are the ways of Providence, but the most remarkable feature of this whole series of incidents, Miss Sidney, is the fact that the portending dénouement was all brought about through two very mean and contemptible robberies. But all's well that ends well, as I've often had occasion to say in the past, and I wish you to meet your uncle."

Ike had no reason, however, to go and call the old miser, for there occurred a most unexpected metamorphosis. Our hero had just concluded the last remark above quoted when he chanced to turn, and there stood a fine-looking old gentleman, clean shaved, his hair cut and his attire perfect. Ike started in amazement, for despite the startling metamorphosis he recognized Mr. Sidney. Sara also beheld the old man, and she stood and gazed aghast.

For a few moments both stood and gazed at each other as though they were looking upon a visitant from the grave. It was Mr. Sidney who broke the silence. He said: [Pg 98]

"Indeed you have brought to me my child from the grave. I need no further proof. This is my niece."

Sara's voice was broken as she said:

"No, no, there is no call for proof. It is wonderful—it is wonderful! It would appear that my father had come to me from his grave."

"My dear child, your father and I were twin brothers. Forty years ago we quarreled. The quarrel was due to me. I have mourned your father long before he went away to California, and now that he is dead this is more than I deserve that he should have left as his legacy to me a child to solace the remaining years of my life."

A little later Jack and Du Flore entered the room. Many explanations followed and also a very enjoyable time.

Jack and Ike had performed several great feats, but later they were led into another series of adventures together which we shall relate in Number 50 of "OLD SLEUTH'S OWN," wherein our readers will learn the thrilling romance of the life of Nimble Ike, the most wonderful ventriloquist yet known in all the world, and also will be revealed the secret of the mysterious box.

THE END.

NOTE.—Remember there are some charming stories in the back numbers of "OLD SLEUTH'S OWN." Back numbers are always in print. When books are ordered in advance they will be sent as soon as issued.



All of the books in the **Eureka Series** are clever detective stories, and each one of those mentioned below has received the heartiest recommendation. Ask for the **Eureka Series** detective books.

1. Inspector Henderson, the Central Office Detective. By H. I. Hancock
2. His Evil Eye. By Harrie I. Hancock
3. Detective Johnson of New Orleans. By H. I. Hancock
4. Harry Blount, the Detective. By T. J. Flanagan
5. Harry Sharp, the New York Detective. By H. Rockwood
6. Private Detective No. 39. By John W. Postgate
7. Not Guilty. By the author of "The Original Mr. Jacobs"
8. A Confederate Spy. By Capt. Thos. N. Conrad
9. A Study in Scarlet. By A. Conan Doyle
10. The Unwilling Bride. By Fergus W. Hume
11. The Man Who Vanished. By Fergus W. Hume
12. The Lone Inn. By Fergus W. Hume
13. The World's Finger. By T. Hanshew
14. Tour of the World in Eighty Days. By Jules Verne
15. The Frozen Pirate. By W. Clark Russell
16. Mystery of a Hansom Cab. By Fergus W. Hume
17. A Close Call. By J. L. Berry
18. No. 99; A Detective Story. By Arthur Griffith
19. The Sign of the Four. By A. Conan Doyle
20. The Mystery of the Montauk Mills. By E. L. Coolidge
21. The Mountain Limited. By E. L. Coolidge
22. Gilt-Edge Tom, Conductor. By E. L. Coolidge
23. The Mossbank Murder. By Harry Mills
24. The Woman Stealer. By Harry Mills
25. King Dan, The Factory Detective. By G. W. Goode

See other advertisement for other list of titles in the **Eureka Series**.

You can obtain the **Eureka Series** books where you bought this one, or we will mail them to you, postpaid, for **30** cents each.

Address all orders to

J. S. OGILVIE PUBLISHING CO.
57 Rose Street, New York

Transcriber's Notes:

Added table of contents.

Images may be clicked to view larger versions.

Page 4, added missing comma after "60c."

Page 38, changed "had became enraged" to "had become enraged" and "become angry" to "became angry."

Page 48, changed "mean time" to "meantime" for consistency.

Page 52, added missing open quotes to first two paragraphs on page.

Page 59, changed "starred" to "stared."

Page 61, changed "statemen" to "statement."

Page 65, changed "politicially" to "politically."

Page 74, changed "althugh" to "although."

Page 82, changed "aked" to "asked."

Page 85, changed "Burlgars" to "Burglars."

Page 96, changed "appeear" to "appear."

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may

copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do

copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™’s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation’s EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state’s laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.