

Detective Downey

by Mrs. Cashel Heey

Quorn Lodge, situated in a felicitously chosen part of an eminently genteel suburb, which shall be called “out of” its proper name for obvious reasons, was a desirable residence. Its designation was preposterous, but that did not matter; suburbs have a chartered right to silliness in the matter of names. There were admiring friends of the handsome Mrs. Morrison who held that it was an equally original and sweet idea of hers to call the brand new villa, with all the modern improvements and the day-after-tomorrow fashions in decoration, Quorn Lodge, for among the glowing reminiscences of her unmarried estate with which Mrs. Morrison was wont to entertain the elite of Riverside feats in the hunting field figured conspicuously. Now it is well known that there is no more effectual means of conveying a suggestion that one is of “county” antecedents than free and familiar use of the jargon of hunting, especially when the listeners know nothing at all about packs and meets, runs and blanks, and are bashfully dubious concerning the difference between pad and a brush. The handsome and dashing Mrs. Morrison was somehow understood to have “come down” in position by her marriage with Mr. Morrison, who had nothing of the county, but a good deal of the counting house, about him, and the impression was mainly due to that sweet idea of calling the villa Quorn Lodge. “As a tribute to the memory of my dear hunting days—I hope you don’t think it foolish?” she would say, with a glance from her dark eyes and a flash of her white teeth, which largely aided the male auditor to think it a capital notion. As a matter of fact the neighborhood knew nothing about Mrs. Morrison, while all that anybody could want to know about Mr. Morrison was easily to be learned. He was a good looking, well dressed, prosperous man of about 45, in whose manners the observant might have found a certain watchfulness and guardedness, combined with rather laborious politeness—something like the manner of the obsequious yet peremptory persons who “walk” the great shops—very clever in business and notoriously devoted to his handsome wife. His actual position was that of manager of the Uphill and DOWDALE bank in Magog street, E. C., a trusted and flourishing concern, although not of very old standing as the longevity of banks is counted, to whose prosperity the experience and ability of Mr. Morrison had largely contributed, and he had occupied that well paid post for five years previous to his marriage and the setting up of his household gods at Quorn Lodge, an event now five years old.

The brand new villa had been improved and beautified with each succeeding year, for Mr. Morrison liked comfort in its most advanced forms; Mrs. Morrison too was a person of refined tastes; and it was now as nearly perfect a residence of its kind and pretensions as could be found within two hours’ drive of Hyde Park Corner. The house was large and commodious; the tastefully laid out lawn and gardens, the modest show of glass, the admirably contrived stable and coach house, not to be suspected from the front of the house, the well kept shrubberies, had a general air of completeness and order which implied vigilance and taste on the part of the owners of all these good things; but also meant money. Mrs. Morrison’s pretty little open carriage, her pair of ponies, the neat brougham which conveyed her to dinners and theatres in town, her unimpeachable toilets, concerning which she would observe, with the glance and the flash before mentioned, “I always dress so simply, you know; I love simplicity”—these also meant money. It had happened once that a man who had been dining at Quorn Lodge, where very good dinners were given and capital Saturday-to-Monday house parties were an institution during the season,

remarked with languid and transient curiosity to a fellow guest that he wondered how Morrison did it, for it was well done, good form all round, must cost a deuce of a lot, and they had never heard that Morrison had money. To this it had been suggested by the other party to the conversation that it was a deuced good thing to be in a bank, because you could always get to know what was going on, don't you know, and there were windfalls to be had perpetually. His companion looked doubtful of the soundness of his observation, but propounded the bright idea that no doubt Morrison had got money with "her." And then, in the unaccountable way in which impressions do get taken up and statements spread, it became accepted in the Morrises' society that Mrs. Morrison had a good deal of money, presumably of "county" origin, and expectations as well. No distinct assertion on these points was ever traced to either the husband or the wife, but when, at the height of one London season, the hospitalities of Quorn Lodge were suspended and Mrs. Morrison canceled her engagements for three weeks, appearing at church only and in a ravishing mourning costume, these people who troubled themselves at all about the Morrises' affairs assumed that the expectations had probably fallen in. This notion was confirmed when, from Mrs. Morrison's temporary eclipse, she emerged with the added brilliancy of several diamond ornaments of remarkable beauty and value and admitted to an early caller that the stones formed part of a legacy.

"My poor uncle, Count Walsh—you may have seen the announcement in the papers—died at Vienna, having renumbered me most generously in his will. An Irish name? Yes, dear Mrs. Denham, the Walshes were of Irish origin, but one branch of the family has been settled in Austria for generations. Of course the diamonds are only what I like to think of as the sentimental portion of my dear uncle's legacy."

"Very gratifying indeed," said Mrs. Denham, reflecting the while on the presumable satisfactoriness of the substantial portion. "Then you were a Walsh?"

"Oh, no," replied Mrs. Morrison, with a broad, calm smile of explanation, "the Walshes are my mother's people—I am a Prothero." Mrs. Morrison's way of saying this conveyed so agreeable an impression of frankness that Mrs. Denham felt thereafter she knew all about the Walshes and Protheroes. She, however, together with the rest of the Morrises' society, had to take both families on trust; for never were people so free from ties of kindred as the fortunate owners of Quorn Lodge. Of all the numerous visitors to the villa at Riverside, not one claimed relationship with its genial master and his handsome wife.

The early sun has rarely shone upon a more comfortable spectacle than the dining room at Quorn Lodge presented on one fine summer's morning in 1885, with Mr. and Mrs. Morrison seated at their invariably early breakfast; one at either side of a luxuriously spread round table placed in the deep bay of a window which opened upon a terrace garden rich with roses. The handsome Mrs. Morrison was one of these exceptional women who look well in the morning; she always slept soundly, she never fretted about anything or anybody; her style of morning dress was perfect, and remarkable for its costly simplicity: she invariably began the day with entire self complacency, and we all know that there is nothing more becoming. Sunshine outside, and sunshine inside, an atmosphere perfumed with rose scents, everything good to eat at breakfast that could be wished for by a pair who held identical views on the rank and importance of eating among the pleasures of life, some agreeable matters to talk over, postponed from yesterday on

account of last night's dinner party, a charming scheme for Mr. Morrison's very short vacation to be elaborated—it was quite idyllic, after the manner of the modern idyll, in which the poetry is mostly left out. The conjugal talk was very cozy and confidential, and Mr. Morrison started to catch his train in due course; only a slight deviation from custom had distinguished the morning from its predecessors. It was Tuesday morning. Mrs. Morrison had not glanced at "What the World Says," and picked out little bits of information for the benefit of her husband, who reserved his serious newspapers for railway reading. When Mrs. Morrison took up *The World*, after Mr. Morrison's departure, she found that it offered its readers the tempting primeur of a romance in real life; it was not a story without an example; but it was striking enough. A man of old family and long descended estate, having been persistently robbed during the whole of his minority by his guardian—who, when accounts had to be rendered, squared them with a revolver—had betaken himself to the colony of Victoria with the startlingly small sum of ready money which could be rescued, and had been lost sight of and forgotten for many a year. What *The World* had to say of Charles Barrington was that after a long period of patient, but not highly remunerative industry, he had suddenly become wealthy by a vast legacy. He had been in the employment of one of the great squatters, a childless man, had won his confidence, and now found himself his heir. *The World* had further to say that Mr. Barrington was eager to supply a portion—it would not really be a very serious portion—of his great wealth to the redemption of his ancestral estate, and would probably make the ancient and picturesque, but long uninhabited manor house of Draxton his principal residence, much to the advantage of the county of Norfolk, which had suffered for several years from the extinction of a former foyer of refined hospitality and Conservative influence.

"What a lucky fellow," thought Mrs. Morrison, as she laid down the newspaper and took up her flower basket and scissors, preparatory to her daily raid upon the roses. "And what a prize matrimonial! There's nothing about a wife. The chase of the colonial Croesus will be as funny as a New York competition for a live lord." And then she forgot all about *The World's* primeur.

Mr. Morrison had a busy day of it. The Uphill and Downtale bank had been turned into a limited liability company on the death of one of the partners in the original firm, in whose employment Mr. Morrison had been from his early boyhood. One of the drawbacks of a limited liability concern, from a certain point of view, is that it implies a directorate; for directors, especially if they are fussily disposed and new fangled by their functions, are apt to make themselves obnoxious to the responsible employees, just as an in-coming minister may bother the permanent officials in an office of the state, who naturally know a great deal better than he how its business ought to be done, or left undone. Mr. Morrison had been singularly fortunate in his directors for some years; they had every reason to be satisfied with results as these were laid before them; some of them knew nothing about banking business, and did not want to expose their ignorance to a nominal subordinate who was an expert; others had so much to do of greater moment that their attendance at the board meetings of the stable and steady going "U. and D." was merely perfunctory. The chairman, too, was a very comfortable person, who made unctuous speeches, liked a florid tone in the reports, and was immensely popular with the shareholders. In fact, up to a recent period, things at the "U. and D." had been, like Mrs. Gamp's slumbers at The Bull, Holborn, too comfortable to last; but a death vacancy in the directorate had occurred early in 1883, and Mr. Morrison was beginning to regard the director who had been elected in the place of the entirely harmless deceased, as a pestilent fellow. If Mr. Treherne had been as well

informed as he was inquisitive, he might have induced Mr. Morrison to make up his mind upon a point which he was in the habit of revolving, but in this respect the manager had the advantage of the director, and beyond inspiring Mr. Morrison with intense dislike of him, Mr. Treherne had not as yet seriously discomposed that cautious and long sighted person. He had, however, made himself particularly obnoxious to the manager at the board meeting held on the particular day at which this simple story has arrived, and it was with an ill regulated sensation of irritation that Mr. Morrison saw Mr. Treherne step into the compartment of the train in which he had already taken his place, and heard his cheerful remark that he was going out of town for a week.

Of course the two men had their evening papers, and Mr. Morrison settled himself to his Pall Mall immediately, while Mr. Treherne, who would have liked to talk, resigned himself to *The St. James'*. The primeur of that morning's *World* had already lost its freshness and its start; the story of Mr. Barrington, of Draxton, figured in the columns of both journals with comments and moralizings after the respective fashion of each, and Mr. Morrison and Mr. Treherne, having simultaneously discovered the romance in real life, looked at each other on reaching the end of the paragraph.

"Read this—about the young fellow out in Melbourne?" asked Mr. Treherne. Mr. Morrison nodded.

"Lucky dog! Seems to have deserved it, too. Odd sort of experience in a man's life to be born to wealth, and lose it through a precious rascal; then to have it thrust upon him like this. If I were in his shoes I shouldn't encumber myself with an old house and a lot of land in a dreary country, especially now when every wise man's object is to get rid of property of the kind; but each one to his taste. I know what I should do if I came in for such a good thing; "I should," etc., etc. Thus Mr. Treherne talked on in an animated strain. Mr. Morrison did not interrupt the flow of his remarks by a single word, he merely fanned himself very slightly with his Pall Mall, and thought—"He does not know. He does not know."

When Mr. Morrison reached home he surprised his solemn butler by going into the dining room and asking for a little brandy: having drank half a glassful, he looked at himself in the mirror, was apparently reassured, and stepped out on the lawn to join his wife, according to custom.

"I'm glad we are not going out, and that nobody's coming," he said to himself, as he made his way to the garden bench on which he sat; her dress, composed of cream colored muslin and lace, sweetly but expensively simple, making a spot of light against the background of dark shrubs.

If Mr. Morrison had felt ill or been upset by anything during the day, the effects were not discernible, and the out-of-rule half glass of brandy remained a secret between himself and the solemn butler. The *tete-a-tete* dinner was good, perfectly served, and its progress was unmarked by any incident. Mrs. Morrison was not of a sentimental turn, or she might have remarked that her husband regarded her with unusual attention. He was, indeed, studying her appearance, and after she left him alone for the conventional quarter of an hour, he actually but unconsciously said aloud:

"She never looked better or stronger in her life. There's no fear of her."

Mrs. Morrison was reading the current number of Loudon Society by the light of a lace shaded lamp, as she reclined in an easy chair of the very last invented kind. Her attitude and the disposition of the light would have been favorable to a study of her. Her tall, lissom figure displayed lines of strength and firmness, the full throat was a fitting support for the rather large head, the handsome regular features, bright complexion, and masses of rich dark hair, not fine enough to indicate a sensitive organization, but of the texture that bespeaks a pleasure loving one, made up an attractive picture of its kind. This was not an elevated kind. It had once been remarked by a sylph like creature with flaxen hair and pale eyes, that "if it were not for Mrs. Morrison's taste in dress there would be something very barmaidish about her." The observation was not entirely devoid of truth. When coldly surveyed she owed her elegance to her clothes; her refinement to her surroundings. Without these she would hardly have looked like a lady: but in any guise an observer of her unmasked face would have read therein boldness and readiness.

Mr. Morrison once more regarded her intently as he entered the drawing room, seated himself, and took up a book. He was an inattentive reader, his eyes were constantly directed towards the table clock at his wife's elbow, and when the silver chime rang out ten he rose and approached her. She put down the magazine and smiled but for a moment only. He touched her on the shoulder, and said:

"Will you go to your room and tell Louise that she need not wait for you, and will you then come back to me, here? I have something to say, and we must not be interrupted."

It was characteristic of her that she did not ask a question.

"Certainly, I will," was all she said, and in a moment she had left the room.

She returned quickly, and found him still standing by her vacant chair. She put out her hand to him as she said:

"Has it come? So soon?"

"I fear so. I think so."

"Are you prepared?"

"Yes, if I can get time."

"Now, tell me all about it."

The concluding sentences of the long conference between Mr. and Mrs. Morrison are all that need be recorded in this place. The wife's behavior had amply justified the husband's confidence in her good sense and her strong nerves.

"Let me go over the points once more," said Mrs. Morrison. "The discovery that the title deeds, leases and other securities connected with Draxton are missing from the bank need not

necessarily be made until this Barrington returns; you will ascertain by telegraph at what date he means to reach England, and you can carry out the plans already formed, provided nothing connected with the Draxton business turns up before he can possibly get here. The chief danger to be apprehended is from Treherne, who either does not know, as a director, the stake of the bank in Barrington's former property, or has forgotten it. If he learns the fact, or is reminded of it, he will want to have the deeds and documents inspected on the spot, and all must come out. In the one case you have at the worst six weeks for action, in the other you have one week. It is for the latter emergency we have to provide. You feel no doubt that this man Downey will be employed?"

"None whatever. He has always worked for the bank, and Treherne has a great opinion of him; he knew of him before."

"Have you a great opinion of him?"

"I don't think much of any of these gentry. But of one thing I am quite sure; he could not fail to detect me in any disguise."

"Then the sooner Downey knows me by sight, and I know Downey by sight, the better. So I shall have occasion to consult Mr. Downey, and arrange to meet him in your private room at the bank the day after to-morrow."

She cast a curious, lingering look around the luxurious room as she left it, in the chilly dawn, just as the birds began to twitter; her face was pale from fatigue, not from fear, and she was steady in nerve and limb. A warm ray was striking her bedroom windows when she laid her head on her pillow; she closed her eyes against it and fell asleep, with these for her last conscious thoughts: "Has it been worth it? I think it has; we have always known the smash must come, and we have made our game for it. I think we shall win yet. Whatever happens, I will never turn tail on my own convictions. I would rather live with a clever knave, who at all events trusts me, than with the honestest of fools; and I would rather have no life at all than a cheap life."

On the following day an animated conversation on the subject of the romance in real life took place in the manager's room at the "U. and D." between the directors whose turn of business it was, and Mr. Morrison, who gave them a succinct account of the complicated relations of the bank with the Draxton estate, and foretold great profits in the future to be made out of the colonial Croesus. He had already telegraphed congratulations and an inquiry as to when Mr. Barrington intended to start for England. He had felt all the time as though he were standing on a powder mine, but he stood there, metaphorically, with the coolness and unconcern which only a martyr, or a gambler, displays when the hour is supreme. The spirit that inspired the knave was that of the gambler, the vilest spirit of them all, and it stood to him then, true to its damnable pact with consenting souls.

That night Mr. and Mrs. Morrison were present at a crowded ball at a house in Eaton square. Mrs. Morrison, who looked remarkably well, wore "the Walsh diamonds" in a becoming fashion, the five stars being sewn upon the bodice of her gown. On her return to Quorn Lodge she discovered that one of the stars was missing, whereupon she declared her conviction that the

jewel had been stolen from her person. She remembered to have been hustled by the crowd just beyond the awning, when she had walked a little way to her brougham's place in the line; she had nearly lost her tight wrap, and although she blamed her own foolish impatience, she blamed Louise's ineffectual sewing on of the star much more severely, so severely indeed that the indignant maid gave her warning on the spot.

Detective Downey had formerly belonged to "the force," but he had retired and set up on his own account, in consequence of the divergence of his views from those of his superior officers, and his rooted belief that there existed in this country but one real adept in detection, whose name was Richard Downey. The man was an enthusiast in his calling, and he held none, living or dead, in such reverence as its great chiefs, even the apocryphal ones. For him M. Decoq was as authentic as Napoleon Bonaparte, and he would have given the pay of a great many jobs to have possessed a fat forefinger like Inspector Bucket's; but failing that, he did his best to make a lean one emphatic. He was a little dark man with twinkling eyes, a self satisfied smirk, and he had a fixed idea that at the bottom of every crime and misdemeanor that departs from, or, so to speak, rises above the lowest of the vulgar, there is a woman! He did not persuade himself that his fixed idea was an original one; on the contrary, he rendered sincere homage to the promulgator of it, and regarded the distinguished utterer of the famous phrase, "Cherchez la femme," as a wiser than Solomon, although after all he only gave to that sage's conclusions an epigrammatic form. Of course his fixed idea led him wildly wrong on some occasions, but it had guided him straight enough on others; he had a respectable list of criminal convictions to his credit, and was, probably, as happy a man as one could meet in a day's walk. Whether he aspired to the immortality of a volume of memoirs was known only to himself; it looked like it, for the invariable occupation of his leisure was the copying and arrangement of a voluminous mass of notes.

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Morrison's frauds had been as ingenious in the beginning of his career as his thefts were audacious at its close. He had enjoyed extraordinary luck, never failing to win at whatever game he played. And yet he must for years have been frequently within a hair a breath of detection, up to the moment when the Barrington incident made it a certainty. "The coolness, too, of the really reckless scoundrel!" said Mr. Treherne, who always boasted and sometimes almost believed, he had never trusted Morrison—"I have a remarkable faculty of reading character," he would say)—and could not quite refrain from a kind of perverse admiration of the man who had done them all so thoroughly—all except him. How thoroughly the victims did not appreciate just at once, for when the first installment of the truth was discovered, it was fondly believed that Mr. Morrison might be caught by the simple expedient of silence on the part of all concerned. If nothing were done, if nothing were said, to alarm him, was there not reason to believe that he would come back as usual, totally unsuspecting? As the bank authorities knew nothing about his telegram nor did Mr. Barrington, there was nothing to suggest to them that anything had occurred to startle Morrison, and he might therefore walk into the lion's den—otherwise his own room in the "U. and D."—with fearless confidence. This theory was so soothing (especially as there was every reason to believe that Morrison could be made to disgorge freely, that there

would be more than the mere punishment of the criminal to be attained) that Mr. Treherne began to talk about the “providentialness” of Mr. Barrington’s not having arrived until Morrison had gone abroad.

But this sanguine mood underwent a modification when, after cautious inquiry had been made by Downey at Riverdale and at Quorn Lodge, it became known that the house was not only shut up, but had changed ownership. Mr. Josephus was interviewed, and found to be completely en regle; he had purchased the villa and all its contents from Mr. Morrison; and the fact that the snug little place had been Morrison’s freehold property became known to his employers for the first time. Things now looked very serious, and the victims were only moderately sustained by the representations of Downey, who, having been employed at first merely to “inquire,” was now called into consultation at the special instigation of Mr. Treherne.

Unbounded, although carefully concealed, was the delight of Downey. Here was a really good case, and he was the man to deal with it. He proposed to deal with it on the pessimist side; to take for granted that Morrison had some reason for believing that the game was up, and had absconded on the pretext of a trip to the continent. If this were so, then Downey could safely affirm that Morrison was the coolest hand he had ever met in the whole course of his business; for he had sent for him, Downey, and employed him in a personal matter a few days before he left London. Downey had also been with him the very day before, to arrange for communicating with Mrs. Morrison on the subject of the stolen diamond star. The address, up to a certain date not yet expired, was to be Lucerne; and, Mr. Downey argued, why should she not have gone there, even supposing Morrison to have pushed on to a safer place? From his experience of women, Mr. Downey argued that if you calculated upon one of them sticking through almost any amount of difficulty and danger to her diamonds or the ghost of them, as he might call the chance of getting any stolen ones back, you’ll find you’ve started right anyhow.

“Wherever he is, she’s at Lucerne,” repeated Mr. Downey; “and a very good thing it is that I can identify her.”

“Providential, quite!” murmured Mr. Treherne.

“The sooner I start the better, gentlemen,” proceeded the detective. “There’s just the chance—though the sale of the villa’s dead against it—that he may be there quite unsuspectingly, and there’s also the chance that she’s keeping him hanging on, like a fool, waiting for news of the star. She hasn’t much head, I should say, judging from the way she told the story of how she’d been robbed—stuttering and stammering and crying and contradicting herself—she’ll want the diamonds at any price. It’s so much the better for this job, but if I was an absconding criminal of any description I should not like a woman with a head like Mrs. Morrison’s to abscond along with me.”

“But,” said Mr. Treherne, “if you found Mrs. Morrison alone at Lucerne what would you do then?”

“Watch her. If he knows he’s found out, and yet is such a fool as to stop where I’ve got his

address, I'll catch him; but up to the present his record has not got any folly in it—very much the other way. If he's waiting for her anywhere, she will join him.”

The victims in council concurred in Downey's views, with one exception a mild director, who was disposed to regard an address given to a detective by an intending fugitive with despondency rather than confidence. He was, however, put down by Mr. Treherne, and then Downey was dismissed to make certain inquiries at the Grosvenor hotel. He was to report the result to the conclave at 3 p.m., and to receive final instructions.

“Gentlemen,” said the detective, on his reappearance at the appointed hour, “I have to tell you that I have been wrong, quite wrong.” It was not agreeable to Downey to make this admission, nevertheless there was a subdued elation about the man. “There will be no call for me to go to Lucerne to watch Mrs. Morrison; it is to be done easier and cheaper than that.”

“What! what do you mean?” asked Mr. Treherne excitedly.

“Do let him tell his story his own way,” expostulated the mild director.

“Thank you, sir; it is best in general. Well, gentlemen, you are prepared by what I have said to hear that Mrs. Morrison is not at Lucerne, (The mild director's whole form silently proclaimed: I told you so!) But you will be surprised to hear that she did not leave London with Mr. Morrison, and that to the best of my belief she is in England still! I acquired this valuable information in the following manner,” here Downey dropped into his professional tone, and produced his notebook; “On inquiry at the Grosvenor hotel I found that Mr. and Mrs. Morrison had stayed there for two days and nights, and that during that time Mrs. Morrison had complained of illness. On the second night she told the chambermaid in attendance that although there was nothing serious the matter she really could not face foreign parts, but had made up her mind to go to a quiet English sea place during Mr. Morrison's absence. The girl remembered this well, because, as she acknowledged, Mrs. Morrison gave her something handsome on leaving the hotel, which she did with Mr. Morrison. In less than half an hour she came to the hotel door in a cab, and asked if she could see the chambermaid. The girl had only that moment given notice that a handbag had been left in a drawer in the room which Mrs. Morrison had occupied. This was a lucky accident; for Mrs. Morrison's return to the hotel to get her bag proves that she did not leave England with Mr. Morrison. I assumed a troubled air, and said it was very annoying—I had occasion to communicate with Mrs. Morrison, and how was I to get her address? Of course, nobody knew and nobody cared, and I was turning away, when the young chambermaid said: ‘Perhaps this may help you,’ and handed me a card. ‘It was stuck in the looking glass to tighten it,’ she added; ‘I saw Mrs. Morrison put it there, and I'm sure I don't know how I came to put it in my pocket, but I did.’ That's the card, gentlemen. It is evidently a lodging house address—'100 Marine terrace, Broadstairs'—and there I shall find Mrs. Morrison.”

“Very likely,” said the mild director; “but what then?”

“This,” answered Mr. Downey, who had been reserving his effect: “I don't believe he's gone either! From inquiries I have made I am satisfied that no one in the least resembling Mr. Morrison crossed to Calais that morning; and every passenger on board, of anything like his age,

had a lady with him. He isn't gone; and he will come or write—communicate with her somehow; only give him time and we shall get him.”

“I can't imagine any motive that could lead him to remain in England, having a fair chance of getting away,” said the mild director, “but as there's nothing to be done until we've traced him, and your plan offers a chance of doing so, I see no objection to it.”

The others assented more readily, and the council of victims again separated. Mr. Morrison would have been amused could he have known how very near to its fulfillment was his prediction of the conduct of the “U. and D.”

Mr. Downey had been on the watch at Broadstairs for a full month before he had anything to report to his employers, beyond the fact that Mrs. Morrison was living at No. 100 Marine terrace, Broadstairs, under the name of Spears; that the house was a respectable boarding house, at present tenanted by ladies only; but that he fully expected Mr. Morrison to appear in the character of a gentleman boarder. He was as far as ever from being able to account for the proceedings of either the man or his wife, but his belief in his own maxim, “Keep the woman under your eye and you'll get the man if he's above ground,” remained intact. Mrs. Morrison was in bad health; she had not been out of doors, to the best of his belief, since his arrival at Broadstairs, and an ingenuous servant girl, judiciously questioned, had given him many particulars of the malady of Mrs. Spears. He was, therefore, not a little surprised, when taking his usual stroll on the beach in front of Marine terrace, to behold Mrs. Morrison, just as he had seen her in the manager's room at the “U. and D.,” but without her discomposure, come forth from No. 100 and cross the road to the beach in such a fashion as to come up with him and confront him at once. She was the picture of health, and her bright, dark eyes shot a bold, derisive glance at the dumfounded detective, as she accosted him:

“How do you do, Mr. Downey? How do you like Broadstairs? You must find it rather dull, I fancy, but I suppose the pay atones. I'm sorry to cut off your supplies, but I really cannot keep on dodging you when I want a walk any longer, and it takes up my clever housemaid's time to watch you go off and come on your beat; besides, it isn't necessary now, and even though it is a bank that pays, one ought not to waste their money, you know. Eh, Mr. Downey?”

“Madam! Mrs. Morrison!”

“Mrs. Morrison? What do you mean by calling me out of my name?”

“Do you mean to tell me you are not Mrs. Morrison?”

“Certainly I do.”

“Not the—not the person who lost a diamond star and employed me to find it? Why, Mr. Morrison named you to me as his wife.”

“Mr. Morrison did nothing of the kind. He named you to me, and you, with your wonderful cleverness, you know, took the other thing for granted.”

“You mean to tell me you personated—”

“I personated nobody, Mr. Detective Downey. I merely possess a little talent for acting, and—pray, have you found my star, or the thief who stole it? No? Never mind, you can keep that twenty-pound note ‘on account’ until you do. But I really don’t think you ought to hang on here any longer.”

Downey was hardly able to get out the words: “Explain, woman, don’t jeer like that. Who are you? You must be Mrs. Morrison; you were seen at the bank; you must have been; you passed as Mrs. Morrison at the Grosvenor hotel.”

She laughed in his face.

“I was seen at the bank, but the persons who saw me would swear I am Mrs. Morrison as readily as you. I did not pass at the Grosvenor hotel as Mrs. Morrison; I never was inside the hotel in my life. I stopped in a cab at the door and I asked for Mrs. Morrison’s bag. My name, I repeat, is Spears, Martha Spears; I am the wife of a sea captain, at present on his way to Calcutta; I have kept the boarding house in which you take so deep an interest for ten years; the invalid for whom you inquire of Susan so tenderly is old Mrs. Spears, my mother-in-law. I see you’re still puzzled and so I will put you out of your pain. I am Mrs. Morrison’s twin sister, and remarkably like her.” Downey started. “I am very fond of her, and of him, too, and so I ought to be, for he set me up in No. 100 when he married my sister Jane.”

“Oh, ho!” said Downey, “so that’s how it was worked, was it?”

“That’s how it was worked; though, mind, I don’t commit myself to saying what ‘It’ means, either in your mouth or mine. You’ve got nothing against me, you know, and you’ll get nothing out of me if you were all the detectives who never find anything but mares’ nests rolled into one, for the excellent reason that there’s nothing to get.”

She paused in her voluble talk and laughed again a long laugh, full of fun and enjoyment.

“Where are they?”

He had grasped her arm voluntarily, and she shook off his hold with good humored contempt.

“Come,” she said, “you’re not quite a fool, though you’re not far off one. Do you imagine I know—do you think I’m such a fool as to want to know? Drop it, my good man, and do go back to all the ‘cases’ you will never make anything of by the very next train, for you are a nuisance as well as a ninny, I assure you.”

With another laugh she left him, tripped across the road as lightly as a girl, and let herself into her house with her latchkey, turning for an instant before she shut the door to wave him an ironical salute.

Downey went back to town by the first train and reported himself at the “U. and D.” No minutes of that interview exist among his papers. He was much depressed for a time, but he gradually consoled himself by the reflection that he had been right after all. He had looked for the woman at the bottom of this Morrison case and he had found her—only there were two and they were twins.

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