

A Detective's Discovery

How Mrs. Popperman Grew Suspicious Over a Mysterious Bur

“Where did these burs come from?” and Mrs. Popperman pulled three real old-fashioned burs from her husband's coat as he lay on the lounge the other evening.

Now, it would have been very easy for Mr. Popperman to have told where the burs came from, but he thought it would be a good joke to mystify his wife, so he pretended to be surprised.

“I—I—don't know.”

“Have you been into the country to-day?”

“No.”

“Well, it's very singular how a business man can get burs on his clothes in New York.”

“Well, I'll tell you. The health officers have planted burdock bushes on Broadway to purify the air and prevent the horses from having blind staggers. Sometimes I brush up against these bushes.”

“Oh!” Mrs. Popperman eyed her husband suspiciously, but said nothing more.

The next morning two more burs were picked from his pants.

“Now, I want to know what this means. I went to New York yesterday on purpose to see if there were bushes on Broadway. There wasn't one. Now I want an explanation.”

“Well, I'll tell you, my dear. These are[n't] burs. They are the fruit of a remarkable tropical plant which is now on exhibition at the Fifth Avenue hotel. This plant is twenty feet high. Occasionally I go into the hotel, and, while standing under the leaves of this plant, the fruit, which resembles burs, drops on my clothes.”

“What is the name of this singular plant?”

“The botanical name is Lumty tum olius.”

After Mr. Popperman had departed the next day his wife sought a detective.

“My husband comes home every night with burs on his clothes. Now I want you to follow him and find out where he goes.”

The detective undertook to solve the mystery. No burs on Mr. Popperman's clothes that night—nor the next. The third night he returned with the usual complement. The next day the detective called upon Mrs. Popperman.

“I have discovered all. I followed your husband two days. He attended strictly to his business. The third day he left his office about 2 o’clock, and—”

“Went into the country?”

“No, ma'am. He came to Brooklyn and rode to the vacant lot which he has just purchased on Schermerhorn street. While superintending the erection of a fence around the lot he often came in contact with the burdock bushes, and there is where he gets the burs.”

“Oh, I am so glad. You have done your work well. Good day, sir.”

That evening when Mr. Popperman returned, his wife threw her arms around his neck and said: “My dear, I'm so glad to know that you are not a villain.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, about those burs, you know. I put a detective on your track and he told me that you got the burs in that lot on Schermerhorn street, and that you are innocent.”

“Ha! ha! So you put a detective on my track, did you?”

“Yes.”

“Good joke,” and Mr. Popperman laid back in his chair and fairly roared with laughter.

“Yes, dear, and here's the detective's bill, which you have got to pay.”

“To shadowing Mr. Popperman for three days, at \$9 per day, \$27.”

The laughter subsided, and for an hour it was so quiet that you could have heard a bur drop.

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