

## *A Detective Story*

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The Ruse Once Employed to Trap a Shrewd Thief

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Who Was at One Time Confined In Denver

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“Have you been to the county jail lately?” asked an old-time detective of a News reporter yesterday.

“No, I have not,” was the reply. “What is over there—anything of any account?”

“No, nothing of any importance that I know of. Do you remember an elderly man who was confined there about four or five months ago? He was a Frenchman, I think, and I heard that he had died somewhere in Missouri. He told me something in his history that would make mighty interesting reading, I tell you.”

THE NEWS man was eager to know what was the most interesting or remarkable thing the prisoner had told him.

“Well, I’ll tell you all about it. This chap—I’ve forgotten his name—was for a long time in Paris. He was a thief and a slick one, too, or he would have been picked up long before he actually was. The Parisian police, you doubtless know, is one of the most perfect working institutions in the world. It is necessary that it should be so, for in so large and gay a city, the amount of crime committed every day is most remarkable.

“Well, this man, as I told you before, was very clever. The police had had its eye upon him for a long time, but had never been able to detect him in any positive shortcoming. His house had undergone repeated searches without any effect resulting from the most diligent inquiry—nothing even of the most trifling nature could be found to use in evidence against him. Nevertheless he was known to traffic with the thieves, and did confess to me that he had successfully evaded the vigilance of even the secret agents.

“One evening as he was going out of his house and had gone some distance down the street, a gentleman whom he had never before seen stepped up to him and addressed him by a name other than his own. The thief replied that that was not his name. The stranger insisted that was. The thief protested that the stranger was wrong, and he in turn declared that he recognized in the accosted party a man who had been diligently sought for by the police through Paris and its environs.

“‘You are grossly mistaken,’ replied he promptly, ‘my name is so-and-so, and I live in such a street.’”

“ ‘Come, come friend,’ said the stranger, ‘excuses are useless. I know you too well to part with you so easily.’

“ ‘This is too much,’ cried he; ‘but at the next police station I shall positively be able to meet those who can convince you that I know my own name better than you do.’

“ ‘Agreed,’ said the stranger, and together they took their course toward the neighboring guard-house. They entered and the stranger demanded the fellow’s papers. He had none about him, but the stranger insisted on his being searched, when three watches and a sum in gold was found upon his person. All those things were wrapped up in a handkerchief. The suspected thief was detained in the guard-house until the next day, when his wife was brought in to visit him, and imparted the melancholy information that she had been tricked.

“The trial came up not long after and the accused, who was very anxious to know how he had been discovered, had the story from the lips of the shrewd detective, who had planned and executed the capture.

“ ‘How did he manage it?’ was asked.

“ ‘Well, as the thief told it to me, it was in this way,’ giving nearly the language of the detective, who said:

“ ‘I took the handkerchief in which were found the watches and money, and disguising myself as a messenger, I hastened to the house of this receiver of stolen goods and demanded to speak with his wife. She of course had no idea of my business; and seeing several persons besides herself present I signified to her that by business, being of a private nature, it was important that I should speak to her alone; and in token of my claims to her confidence, produced the handkerchief and asked her whether she recognized it. Although still ignorant of the cause of my visit her countenance became troubled and her whole person was much agitated as she begged me to let her hear my business.

“ ‘I am quite sorry,’ replied I, ‘to be the bearer of unpleasant news; but the fact is your husband has just been arrested, everything found on his person has been seized, and from some words which he happened to overhear he suspects that he has been betrayed; he therefore wishes you to remove out of the house certain things you are aware would be dangerous to his safety if found on his premises; if you please I will lend you a helping hand, but I must forewarn you that you have not one moment to lose.’

“The information was of the first importance; the sight of the handkerchief and the description of the objects it had served to envelop removed from her mind every doubt as to the truth of the message I had brought her, and she easily fell into the snare I had laid to entrap her. She thanked me for the trouble I had taken and begged I would go and engage three coaches and return to her with as little delay as possible. I left the house to execute my commission; but on the road I stopped to give one of my people instructions to keep the coaches in sight and to seize them with their contents, directly I would give a signal. The vehicles drew up to the door and upon entering the house I found things in a high state of preparation for removing. The floor was strewed with

articles of every description: time-pieces, candelabra, etruscan vases, cloths, cashmeres, linens, muslins, etc. All these things had been taken from a closet, the entrance to which was cleverly concealed by a large press, so skillfully contrived that the most practiced eye could not have discovered the deception. I assisted in the removal, and when it was completed, the press having been carefully replaced, the woman begged of me to accompany her, which I did, and no sooner was she seated in one of the coaches ready to start than I suddenly pulled up the window, and at this previously concocted signal we were immediately surrounded by the police.”

“That was cleverly played, wasn’t it?”

“You’re right it was; but I’ve got something on hand now that is likely to equal it. You don’t want to say anything about it now, though.”

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