

THE COSTLY KISS:

A NEW YORK DETECTIVE EXPERIENCE

A wholesale hardware store down town was entered, the safe opened, and sixteen thousand dollars taken, one night last August. Next morning complaint was made, and I was sent to work on the case.

On examining the premises every thing showed the touch of a professional hand. The lock of the front door had been “tooled” effectually; the bolt was dislodged, and could not be shot. The door of the counting-room had been kicked in, the thin partition making this an easy matter. The safe had been opened without violence, a key fitted to the lock having evidently been used. The fall-rope – the stout rope used for hoisting goods to the upper stories – had been cut; one end had been made fast to a handle of the safe; the other end hung out from the window, which opened into an alley-way some fifteen or twenty feet below. It seemed plain that the thief had been unwilling to run the risk of coming out through the front door into the street – it might have been nearly daylight – and had preferred this less exposed exit. Nothing in the store had been taken with the exception of a pair of silver-mounted pistols; the thief had, reasonably, been content with the booty found in the safe.

After concluding this examination I received from the partners a description of the money stolen. It consisted of new bills on a Massachusetts bank – fives and tens—twelve thousand of the amount having a private mark, put on at the bank, for reasons of their own. This mark was a “Co,” written in small letters, in red ink, near the right-hand lower corner. Besides, I was shown pistols of the same pattern as the ones taken. Lastly, I took a look at the key of the safe. It was a plain, straight key; the tip screwed on. The make of the key was such that it could not easily be copied; I doubt whether an impression could have been taken from it in wax worth any thing. This key had been in the pocket of the senior partner over night. There was a duplicate tip kept in a drawer of one of the counting-room desks very carelessly; but this drawer was found locked, and the tip within. I borrowed this tip, as it might possibly be of use to me.

Before I left, I asked the partners if they suspected any body on their premises? No: their porter, a respectable black man, had been in their employ for fourteen years; they *knew* him to be honest. Of their clerks, one was a boy, just from the country; next to him was a young man, a nephew of the junior partner, engaged to be married to the adopted daughter of the senior partner, and about to receive an interest in the business; the head clerk was a superintendent of a Sunday-school in Brooklyn, and therefore above suspicion; the book-keeper, an elderly young man, bald, bachelor, quiet, regular, reliable as an interest-table. No, again; it was not possible that the work had been done by any one connected with the establishment. True, the safe had been opened by some one who had used the right key; but if this had been done by one of the employees, he would not have made such a fuss about getting in and out.

The first step I took was to get my cards printed. Here’s one of them that I keep as a memento of the case. You see, I describe the bills, noting particularly the private mark –

the “Co” – and offer a reward to any one giving information at police head-quarters of the person offering such bills; and there is a reward of one hundred dollars for the recovery of the whole amount – a ridiculously small reward, but all they would allow me to offer. These cards I distributed at bar-rooms, billiard-saloons, eating-houses, livery-stables, lodging-houses, including some hotels; shipping offices; the foreign steamers of course; exchange offices, and other places likely to be patronized by “cracksmen.” I also sent some of the cards to the police of other cities. And this was all I could do. I had set my hooks, and now must wait patiently for a bite.

When I first entered the force I was told that I must cultivate my bump of patience, and I have had occasion to learn the value of the advice. It was annoying to have day after day go by with no advance made in my work, but there was no help for it. It was nearly a week before I got even a nibble.

This came in the form of a note left at the office, informing the deputy that something might be learned about the bills marked “Co” by calling at such a number Greenwich Street, a place where I had left one of my cards. I went over there immediately, and found that one of my fives, marked, had been taken there, at the bar, the night before; but it had not been noticed as a marked bill until after the man had gone. The bar-keeper, however, remembered the man, and described him. The description answered to no one I knew. All I could do was to circulate the description, and hope that some brother officer might light upon him; I might, myself. Not much, however, from *that* nibble; but as the possessor of the “swag” had begun to spend on his money, I had hopes of having something to do before long.

Next day another call at the office from a livery-stable keeper in East Broadway. I wasn't in when he called, but the sergeant took the man's information, and told him he'd send me up to his place. I went, and found he had taken in a “fineff” (\$5), one of my marked bills. It was a man I'd had dealings with before; and when I left one of my cards with him he said, jokingly, that if my man came in his way he'd halter him for me, and put him in a clean stall till called for. Well, what I got from this source was just this: the stable-keeper had taken the “V” from a grocer close by; and when the horse man questioned the provision man, he said he'd taken it from a widow woman that kept a boarding-house in that neighborhood. They hadn't questioned the widow but left that for me; so I got her address and went right to the house. It was about eleven o'clock and she was in the heat of getting dinner – came up to see me with a very red face and her sleeves rolled up. However, I won't take time to paint her picture. The amount of my visit there was that she had taken the bill from one of her boarders, a nice little girl, she said, by the name of Jenny Rice; she worked at a bindery down town, and was the widow's seventh or eleventh cousin, in some way. She gave me an exact account of the relationship, but I never can remember further than second cousin in my own family. Well, I asked the widow how she supposed Jenny came by the bill. I had told her at first that the bill was a bad one, and I had received it in business, and traced it round to her. She said she had no idea; most likely for wages at the bindery. By this time I had made up my mind that the widow was an honest, reliable kind of little woman, and I gave her some idea of what was in the wind; told her I was an officer, and said something about a reward. I told her I

was anxious to know something about Jenny's acquaintances; what young men she knew, etc.

"Now," says she, "Jenny's an honest girl; that I know; but I don't like the company she keeps – that's a fact! That is, I don't mean company in general; but there's a young fellow who's walked up home with her, and taken her out to concerts a few times, that I don't like at all. He's got too much money, and is rather too much of a gentleman – not that he's a bit too good for her, but he isn't the kind of a young man I want to see paying attentions to my Jenny – she's the same to me as a daughter. Jenny's got his daguerreotype locked up somewhere, the foolish girl! I wish I could get it for you, but it won't do to try to get into her drawer. But he couldn't have given her five dollars; that's out of the question! I'd better ask Jenny where she got it. I'll ask her this noon; and if you'll come here this afternoon I'll tell you what she says."

Now the widow's talk about this young man had interested me, as you may guess. I wanted to see him; and I thought I could do it best by being at the house toward night, when he might walk home with Jenny. So I told Mrs. Gould – the widow, that is – that I'd rather she wouldn't say any thing to Jenny about the bill at present; that it wasn't best to trouble her, for it was most likely, as she said, that the bill came from the bindery; but that I'd be round that evening, and if the fellow she'd spoken of should happen to come home with her, or come in to invite her to go any where with him, why, I could see him, and then find out what kind of person he was. The widow said she wouldn't speak to Jenny if I thought it wasn't best; and if I would make inquiries about this Gregory's character – that was the name Jenny called him by – she'd be very much obliged to me. And we agreed that I should come there that evening, and –if there was any occasion for it – I should pass as a distant relation of hers from Rhode Island, where her husband came from. And so, after fixing on the best time to call, I came away.

At the office again; and there I found a message waiting for me to go to a station-house down town, to see a young woman who had been offered some of my marked bills. You see my hooks were getting nibbles for me in several directions.

On my way down town I stopped in at the store, and told the partners that I was started at last on several scents, and should drive my man to earth in a few days. The news was acceptable to them, as you may suppose.

Well, at the station-house I found a young Irishwoman, who, they said, had been offering some marked bills at a shipping-office, in payment for a second-cabin passage to Liverpool. The money was shown me – about seventy-five dollars, -- and I recognized it at once. The woman was an unusually pretty Irish girl, well dressed, and having the appearance of being a first-class servant. She gave her name as Margaret – she wouldn't give the other – and she seemed determined to keep her own affairs to herself. I perceived, as I thought, that what the French call *enceinte*. Poor thing! I said to myself, it's more than likely that the very rascal I'm after is your deceiver, and has given you this money to get you off to Ireland, out of the way.

I took Margaret into the Captain's sitting-room, and tried to talk with her, but I was met at the onset with such a speech as this:

"Mr. Officer," said she, "you may spare your words. My secret is dearer to me – dearer even than the baby that lies near my heart. God bless and preserve it! It will save trouble for me to speak plainly now at the start. I shall never tell who gave me that money."

I was a good deal taken aback by such a speech as that, you know. About all I could say was what I did:

"We must put you in prison until you do," says I.

"Very well," she replied; "I can stand that well enough, though I *wouldn't* like to have *his* baby born in a *prison*! But it's a vow I've made, and I'll never be left to break a vow I've made, and I'll never be left to break a vow that my conscience and my heart tell me to keep."

"Well, Margaret," I said, "you may think better of this. I'll see you again to-morrow morning;" and I had her put into the room of one of the sergeants, who was absent on leave, for over night. I thought it possible that a night's confinement might be an argument with her, and, besides, I had a dim hope that my visit at Mrs. Gould's that evening might lead to discoveries which would make the breaking of Margaret's vow unnecessary. I had her safe in hand, at all events, and could afford to wait for something to turn up which should enable me to get hold of her secret. Poor girl! I was sincerely sorry for her. Her real Irish beauty – the most charming beauty, to me, in the world – her dark gray eyes, glistening with tears; her sad situation; her devotion to her betrayer; all these excited my sympathies for her in an alarming degree – for a policeman: a policeman, you know, has no business to have such things as sympathies about him.

Well, I was at Mrs. Gould's at the set time, just before ten. Jenny came home alone – a very pretty girl she was, by-the-way, a plump, little bird of a girl, lively as a wren ("Jenny Wren" I called her to myself) – and as I sat in the sitting-room with the widow, I had to be introduced to her as Mr. Gould, from Rhode Island. She didn't pay me as much attention as I would have liked, but hurried through her tea and went up to her room to dress to go out.

"Tell Sue," says she, "when she comes to come right up to my room."

"Where are you going?" the widow asked.

"Oh, we're going out to spend the evening; shan't be home till late. But you needn't sit up; I've got the key." And so she flitted off.

"That Sue," says Mrs. Gould, as soon as Jenny was out of hearing, "she goes with Gregory, too! He'll be with them girls to-night, sure as rats! If you mean to see him, you'd better follow the girls."

The advice was good, and I soon left the house and got a position across the way from which to watch them when they came out. Sue arrived in a few minutes, and then pretty soon they came out together, and turned into East Broadway, I following at a proper distance behind. They went at a brisk pace down street, and hadn't gone far before they met a young fellow coming up. They had a jolly meeting, laughing and talking at a great rate. I didn't try to get a look at him then; I felt sure they were going together to some place of amusement, and I could follow them in and spot him at my leisure, so I let them go on undisturbed. They went on, each of the girls taking an arm, until they came to the National Theatre, and there they went in. I gave them time to get fairly in, and then I took a pit ticket and went in too. Looking around after I got seated, I soon discovered Jenny by her bonnet – the trimming was rather peculiar – and who do you think, by thunder! Was with her? That young clerk, the one that was a relation of one partner, engaged to the daughter of the other, and about to become a member of the firm himself!

“You – blessed young rascal!” says I to myself, “what the – mischief are you up to?”

But I didn't stop to think long. This Charley, as he was called, might recognize me – for he had seen me at the store – and be on his guard. You see I had at once concluded that he was the burglar. I know that I had no distinct proof of it, but you know we often *feel* sure of some facts before we *are* sure. Well, I got out into the street; and as I wanted to find a quiet place to think, and had plenty of time, I went to a saloon near by, and sat down over a glass of iced lager.

Now, if you'll think a moment, you'll see I was in something of a quandary. If there had been nothing else to do but the arrest of the man I believed was the guilty party, why I had only to walk back into the theatre and collar Charley Taylor, alias Gregory; for I was sure, I thought, of his being the man. But then, in a case of this kind, in which highly respectable people are mixed up, you know, it's best to be *very* sure and have your proofs before you go to extremities. Now I hadn't *got* any proofs.

And then another thing, the *recovery of the money* was really my main business. Justice is all very well, of course, but I knew that the hardware firm down town cared considerably more for their sixteen thousand dollars than for the appropriator thereof, especially, mind you, if said appropriator should prove to be *one of themselves*, as I may say. But if I were to go and dash at Charley in a careless way, he might – supposing him guilty – find means to put it out of our reach; or he might – of course he *would* – protest his innocence, and have so arranged matters as to demand our proofs. This would be difficult, perhaps; at all events, I hadn't any at present. I might watch him until he had occasion to pass off some more marked bills, but that might be a long and tedious job; and then again I might trip him up in a few hours. But I had, I thought, a better way. Most likely Jenny had got that five dollar bill from him; that was a pretty fair guess. And most likely, too, poor Margaret's money came from the same hand, though of that I wasn't so sure. A young rascal like him, who would flirt with sewing-girls while engaged at the same time to be married to a rich and fashionable young lady, educated, refined, and all that; and more than this, who would steal his own money, so to speak, to

the tune of sixteen thousand dollars, was bad enough for any thing. If nay one of my suspicions was correct, the others were likely to be. Now, according to my theory, both Jenny and Margaret held proofs against him. But Margaret wouldn't expose him, and Jenny, probably, was so much bewitched with the handsome young villain that he could make her believe any thing and do any thing for him. It was quite unlikely that she would own, for the sake of her own character, that he had given her money. Very well, I could play off the two girls against each other. Make either believe that he was in love with the other, and *then*, you know, jealousy would bring out the truth right away.

By the time I arrived at these results my second glass of lager had disappeared, and I got up, decided on two points at least; one, to let Charley alone for the present – I had him within reach any time I wanted him; and the other to go and see Margaret again, and try the effect of a little honest deception. And I thought I might as well go then as any time, for it wasn't late. So I went.

When I got to the station-house they told me that the poor girl had been sobbing and moaning in a pitiful way, but that for the last hour she was quiet. I knocked at her door, and she came and opened it immediately, and looked just as if she was expecting someone. When she found it was only me, she went back to her chair and sat down, and her face showed, as plain as could be, that she had made up her mind to be faithful to her vow, let what would come. She had taken off her bonnet and arranged her hair – dark, wavy hair, done up plainly and tastily – and she looked prettier than ever. I oughtn't to call her pretty, for that's a *little* word, I think. She was beautiful enough for a queen, but it was that kind of beauty – I declare I can't describe it, but I should like my *sister* to have such a face. It was goodness and liveliness and sweetness and archness, all put together; and her paleness and sad looks rather improved her appearance.

“So you are bound you won't betray Charley?” said I, as I sat down.

She started up like a wild deer at the name Charley; she threw her hands out just as I have seen it done on the stage, and her eyes didn't flash, they *burned*.

“How do you know?—” she began, and then she changed her tone:

“Ah, Mr. Officer, don't you think you'd caught me that time! His name isn't Charley, and it's guess again, Sir, and worse luck to you.”

Poor girl! Nature spoke before you did, and betrayed the secret you tried to keep.

“No, Margaret,” said I, “you can't deceive me. I know all about it.”

And I told her enough, and in such a way, as to convince her that I knew everything she feared, and I asked her to trust me and make a clean breast of it.

“Very well, Sir,” she said; “you seem to think you know a great deal about our – about my affairs. You know so much you surely can’t want to hear any more from me. You’ll be an older man than you are, though, before you get me to break my vow.”

Then she leaned forward, put her head into her hands, and gave up to her feelings. She hadn’t but just controlled her voice while saying what she did. I saw that if I wanted to know any thing more from her I must bring all my facts to bear. But did I *want* to know more? Why break the poor thing’s heart with the truth?

Well, I sat some time thinking about it. There was no sound in the room but the hiss of the gas, and, once in a while, the saddest of sighs from poor Margaret. I concluded, finally, that it was best to get her statement if possible. I should want to use it to convince the partners of the rascally Charley; it might, perhaps, save his intended bride from making a life-long mistake; and, lastly, it was best that Margaret herself should know – the sooner the better – the character of the man she was evidently trusting. So, I began:

“Margaret,” said I, breaking the stillness and making her start, almost frightened, from her seat, “Margaret, this is a bad business of mine –”

“Sure it is,” she interrupted.

“—And I don’t like to have it to do; but as I’m in it I must go on, and I want to have it done and over with. Now, listen to me: I shall tell you nothing but the truth, *so help me God!* And I can prove it all to you if you want it. In the first place, you used to live at Mr. Brown’s in Tenth Street. Charley boarded there with his uncle, and there he met you.” (She was shivering all the time, though it was a hot night; her head was in her hands, so I couldn’t see her face.) “Charley is engaged to be married to Miss Sarah, the young lady that lives with Mr. Brown’s partner – perhaps you know her.”

During this last sentence she slowly raised her head and *looked* at me – *such* a look! I declare if some painter could see her as I saw her, he could make a picture that people couldn’t look away from.

“Mr. Officer,” said Margaret, “if this is a lie you’re telling me, may – may God forgive you. But you’re – breaking – my heart!”

“Margaret,” said I, “it’s the sad truth, and nothing more or less. I have a sister at home, and I couldn’t trifle with a woman. And now hear me out. This very night, not more than an hour ago, I saw him making love to a pretty sewing-girl at the theatre. He is with her a great deal, takes her to theatres and concerts, and she is in love with him if he isn’t with her.”

“Oh, my God!” she groaned and rocked herself to and fro. I could hardly stand it. If I hadn’t felt so *mad* at Charley, I don’t know but I should have had occasion to wipe my eyes too.

“You see, Margaret,” I went on, “that this fellow is a thorough rascal, and whatever promises he has made you are worth just nothing at all”

“No, Sir,” she burst in, “he promised me money, and he gave it to me, too, with a free hand, God Bless him! He’s as generous a man as lives; but the rest! oh the rest! I’d be glad to think you’d lied to me, Sir, though I knew it would sink you fathoms deep in hell. But something tells me you’re speaking the truth with your honest face.”

“That money,” said I, “Margaret, was stolen. He has been living a fast life lately, and he had to rob a store to get money. He broke into his own uncle’s store, and took thousands of dollars, and it’s that that’s bringing everything out. The money was marked.”

“And so you’re on his track, and I’m fool enough, *curse* my woman’s weakness, to help you to more proofs against him!”

She went on now for some time in such a way that I feared her trouble had crazed her. She paced the room, hardly minding me, now cursing herself, now him – “her *baby*, oh, her *baby*, his baby!” And then she fell on her knees at her chair, and uttered one of the wildest, strangest, and yet most beautiful prayers I ever heard. From the tone of the prayer I saw she was thinking of suicide, and I planned how to prevent this. I concluded to take her home with me, and leave her under the care of my mother and sister.

Well, I’m making too long a story of this, but I can hardly help it. I never was so interested for any body as I was for that poor Irish girl. I pitied the intended bride of Charley, it is true, but I hadn’t *seen* her, and besides, I knew that she hadn’t suffered wrong from him. But Margaret! There she was, the poor crushed flower, right before me; she’s before me *now*, for that matter.

To go on now, and finish up as soon as I can, I took Margaret home with me. She was glad to go, or rather she went without any objections. I led her along as I would a child. At home I left her in good hands.

And now I had the agreeable little task of undeceiving the simple-hearted Jenny. There wasn’t really any necessity for it, for I had proofs enough through Margaret; but, as I thought the matter over, I came to the conclusion to use Jenny’s proof – if I could get any – and so save Margaret an exposure. In this way, too, I could spare, somewhat, the feelings of Charley’s family, especially of the young lady he was engaged to. She was innocent, and it would be too bad to make her suffer more than was necessary; *that* would be enough. So, next day I found Jenny; met her at noon, and had a talk with her in Mrs. Gould’s sitting-room. She wouldn’t believe what I told her, and said that it was “none of my business” where she got the bill, spiteful and nippy as she could be. I convinced her that it *was* my business and proposed to prove to her that what I told her about Margaret was true. I didn’t want to *compel* her to tell me where she got the bill; it was easier and better to get at the truth in a gentler way. And so I asked her to go with me just to see Margaret. Well, finally she consented to go. Now, if I knew how, I should just like to

describe the meeting between those two girls; but I *don't* know how; there's no use in my trying. To tell the truth, I left them alone part of the time. When I came in again, in about half an hour, contrary to what I expected – for they began at each other somewhat in the way of cats, to speak plainly – I found them almost in each other's arms, and both crying.

When I took Jenny away, we walked to Mrs. Gould's without a word on either side. As soon as we got seated in the house,

"Now," says I, "Miss Jenny, "do you want to have Margaret exposed to any more trouble; or shall I have what I want from you?"

"No, no!" she said; "Margaret had more than her share of trouble. As for me, I've only been flirting, carrying on a little – ha! ha!" (but it was a hollow kind of laugh, Jenny!) "and I can afford to do any thing, almost, to spare her. Only I *don't* want to go into court! Must I?"

I told her that it might not be necessary; and then I asked her, plumply, if Charley gave her that bill.

"Yes, he *did!*" she said; "and I'd rather tell the whole story than leave it *part* told. It was this way: Charley tried to snatch a kiss from me one evening, and I told him, in fun, that kisses were worth a dollar apiece. 'I'll give you five!' says he. 'Let's see your money,' says I; and then he put the bill in my hand, and I, like a silly girl, gave him the kiss. I tried to make him take back the money, but he wouldn't take it, and finally left it on the floor when he went away. I thought then that, as he cared so little for the money, I could find a better use for it than he was likely to put it to, and so I paid it to Mrs. Gould for board. And now he'll find what *such* kisses really cost sometimes, I hope; for, if I *ever* liked him, I'm sure I *hate* him *now*."

So, you see, I had got all the proof I wanted. Perhaps I hadn't said, in so many words, that Margaret had admitted that Charley had given her that money which she offered at the shipping office; she did; and, besides this, she had told me that she had seen him have large rolls of bills, which he said he had *inherited*.

Well, my next step was to get hold of Master Charley in such a way that I could secure man and money at the same time. I shall soon come to that now, and the end of the story.

Early next morning I reported progress to the Deputy. He seemed as much interested in the case as I was, and told me to go on and arrest Charley as soon as I could.

From there I went down to the store, and told the partners every thing. They were, of course, completely overcome, and didn't know what to say or do. Charley's uncle spoke first, and proposed calling him down to talk to them. I objected to this, and told them why. If they wanted me to recover their money, they must let me do it in my own way; and I told them my reasons for fearing that he would deny the charge and try to get off

himself, and either take the money with him, or get rid of it – put it out of our reach in some way. The sum was a little too large to risk; its loss had straightened them a good deal – for, as you may remember, the hard times were beginning about then – if they could possibly have spared it, I am sure they would have hushed up the matter in some way. They concluded, however, to leave me to finish the case as I chose, making me promise, though, to make nothing public – at least not till I had consulted them.

The way I managed to get the money was this – and I take some credit to myself for the process. If you'll bear in mind that I was to do nothing publicly, you'll understand better why I acted as I did at first:

I found out that Charley was going to the opera that evening with his intended. I went there too. I was dressed in opera style, so as to be ready to play the part of a gentleman of fashion, if necessary. I looked around for some time before I found Charley and his friend; and when I did find them, and saw *her*, I was sorry, I tell you, for what I had got to do. She was not nearly so pretty as Margaret, but she *loved* him; every look and action showed it. I needn't dwell on that, and I don't want to. It's enough to say that here was another heart to be broken, and I was the unfortunate wretch to be the means of it! – Sometimes I think I won't remain in the force another day; but I find I'm getting used to it. I don't want any more cases like this, though – Between the acts I met Charley in the lobby, and pretending to have something to say to him of importance, asked him to be so kind to step aside for a moment. He looked at me with surprise, and recognized me as the officer he had seen in the store; but he went with me into a corner a little out of the stream.

“Now,” says I, “I suppose you don't want to have the muss of a public arrest here, with your lady to take care of, and acquaintances all around –“

“Arrest for what!” says he, putting on the indignant, but taking care to speak low. I almost smiled at the difference between his manner and his tone.

“Well, for taking about sixteen thousand dollars out of a certain safe down town,” says I.

He was excited, of course; but he carried himself with surprising coolness.

“I'm much obliged to you for beginning this so quietly,” says he; “but I assure you that you have made a great mistake.”

“We won't waste words,” says I. “I have only to say to you just this – and if you're a sensible man you'll do what I say, and save yourself a public arrest; *I know Margaret; I know Jenny Rice; I know*, as perhaps you don't, that almost all those bills *have a private mark on them*; and I know that *I have got you foul* every way. Now listen to me – you needn't waste time talking now – I want you to go back and finish the opera with your friend; and you may be sure that I shall be close by you all the time. You mustn't mind it if I claim your acquaintance; and then when you ride home, I'll go too. After you've put your friend inside her door, you are to go with me, quietly. Now, if you fail to obey my

directions, in any particular, rely upon it that I shall expose you as publicly as I can. *If I've made a mistake, you can prove it to me, and nobody need be the wiser for your arrest.*"

The orchestra began just then, and he knew he must go back to be in his seat when the curtain rose; so he sullenly gave me his word to do as I told him, and left for his place.

I watched him as he played his part with his lady – 'twas better than looking at the opera to any one fond of playing; and when the opera was concluded I walked by his side – I didn't have to speak to him – and saw them into their carriage; I then hurried up on to the box with the driver, making him think I was a friend of the gentleman inside, going to join him after he had seen his lady home, and that I didn't go inside because I didn't want to disturb their tête-à-tête; and so we drove off.

I kept my place, when we got to the house, until he had seen his friend inside her door; I think there was a kiss with their good-night – if there was it was the last – and then he came down the steps, and I joined him. He paid the driver, and then I walked away with him to the nearest station-house. On the way he owned that, as for Margaret and Jenny, he had nothing to say; but that it was "too bad to be brought out for a paltry fifteen dollars." And then he told me that he had been one of the first in the counting-room the morning after the robbery, and had seen a ten and a five lying on the floor among the loose papers in front of the safe, and had, he admitted, taken them for his own use; but he was sure his uncle and the other partner wouldn't think much of that.

"You forget," said I, "that you gave Margaret at least seventy-five."

He started a little, and then says he,

"Well, I see you're smarter than I am; and I may as well own up. The *porter* did the business, and I caught him at it, and he gave me five hundred to keep mum."

"Why didn't you make a better bargain?" I asked him.

At that he winced a little.

"Now," says I, "you needn't lie any more about this. I know all about you. I haven't followed you for nothing for the past fortnight. *You* opened the safe, and *you've got the money*, and *I want it!*"

With that he trembled and turned pale. We had got inside the station-house, and he sat down in the sitting room, and seemed to be entirely overcome. Presently he looked up and began to come to the pitiful dodge, and to ask me to help him out of the scrape, to have mercy on him, and all that. He offered me any amount to let him off. I cut him short. Says I,

“I’ll show you as much pity as you deserve, you scoundrel! And no more. And the long and the short of it is, that the best thing you can do is to fork out that money and make matters as easy with the firm as you can. What *they’ll* do in the mercy line, I don’t know.”

Then he began sobbing and blubbering, and said that he couldn’t restore any thing; that he’d got frightened and thrown the greater part of the money into the dock, and had spent nearly all the rest.

“*What dock?*” said I.

“At the foot of Beekman Street.” said he.

“Did it sink or float?”

“It sunk – that is – some of it sunk – I believe—and some – floated.

He stammered over this, and I came down on him the moment he got through.

“You *lie*, you rascal!” says I. “You haven’t been to the foot of Beekman Street! You can’t dodge out *that* way either!”

I said this at a venture, like, for I wasn’t sure that he *hadn’t* been there, but I suspected him from his stammering; in fact, I had asked him whether it sunk or floated to try him. But I made a good hit; I was right in my suspicions. And he, thinking that I *had* followed him so closely as to know every step he’d taken, saw that there was no use trying to escape me. So he owned up, thoroughly. He told me how he’d planned the robbery, how he’d used the extra tip, putting it back in the drawer after using it – he had found a key that fitted the drawer – and how he had broken the front door lock and left the rope hanging out the window, to make it seem that an ordinary burglar had been in; but he said he hadn’t suspected the private mark on the bills.

Well, I kept him at the station over night, and the next morning we went together down to the store. We marched right in – it was early, and no one there but the porter – and up stairs, up to the attic, and there, from behind some old stove-pipes, he brought out two rolls of bills, tied up with fish-line. Then down to the counting-room, where we sat waiting for the firm to come in. As soon as they came there was a *time*.

On counting the money it was found that about a thousand of it was missing. I suppose the firm was content with recovering so much, and to spare the feelings of the family the affair was hushed up. I made the complaint, of course, but the case never came into court, that I know of. Charley walks the streets of New York today, and from the company he keeps I shouldn’t be surprised if I had to “cap” him again.

His wife that would have been I don't know any thing about. But I know that Margaret is out of his reach. I saw her on board a packet bound for Liverpool on her way home, about three months ago. Her grief brought on a miscarriage, and she was at death's door; but she recovered, and is now at home in Ireland – my sister has heard from her.

If Charley sees this story in print, he may just understand that if he had reformed and tried to live honestly I wouldn't have said a word about him; and one more thing, he had better look out for "shadows," any time of the day or night, and not pay too dear for his kisses.

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