

Mrs. Blank's Diamonds
How They Were Recovered By A Secret
Service Detective

In the winter of 1863—it was the very last week in December—a strange robbery occurred in the residence of a prominent United States Senator who was occupying a house on Massachusetts avenue. One afternoon his wife discovered that her diamonds were missing. She had them in her hands on, say Tuesday afternoon, and on Friday afternoon they were gone. She had them in a box in a bureau drawer in her bedroom, and was sure that the key to this drawer had not passed out of her possession. The box was not locked, and it had not even been lifted out of the drawer. Some one had simply raised the lid and lifted the diamonds out. The thief must have opened the bureau with a false key; but who was the thief? Only one domestic had access to the bedroom, and she was above suspicion. No breaking and entering had been committed, no caller could be suspected, and “the diamond mystery,” as it was called, was a puzzler. It was given over to the police detectives to struggle with, and we of the Government service did not even hear all the particulars. The gems were valued at \$16,000. The Senator at once privately offered a reward of \$5,000 and no questions asked, but nothing came of it.

Seven weeks after the robbery occurred I was detailed to look up a clerk in the Treasury Department who had pocketed \$4,800 of Uncle Sam's greenbacks and slid out. He had about thirty hours the start of me, and he kept increasing the advantage. He went first to Philadelphia. While he probably did not tarry there two hours I was half a day learning that he had gone to New York. He was not in that city an hour, but I was a day and a half learning that he had gone to Syracuse. I traced him from thence to Buffalo, Detroit, Chicago and back east to Poughkeepsie. The scamp knew well enough that someone would be after him, and he was playing the fox to throw any pursuer off the scent. I was several days behind him in Chicago, and when I reached Poughkeepsie the trail had become cold.

It was four days before I got the slightest clue, and then it came from a citizen of Cortland, a hundred miles away. He gave me a pretty fair description of the fugitive, and I was off on the next train. When I reached Cortland the stranger was still there. He looked something like the man I wanted, but easily identified himself as a resident of Auburn. I was dead stuck. The fugitive had increased his start until he might now be half way to Europe. I received telegraphic instructions to return to Washington, and at once left by way of Elmira, Harrisburg and Philadelphia. At Harrisburg I had to wait for three hours, and after eating a lunch I walked up and down the station platform for an hour. In so doing my attention was attracted to a middle-aged woman in the ladies' waiting-room. I saw that she was covertly watching me, and in the same manner I look her measure. She was quietly and modestly dressed, and was perhaps waiting for the same train I was. After a bit she got nervous and changed her seat, but I had a full view through an open window of the whole room. I once started off as if to go up town, but dodged and returned, and lo! she went to the door to look after me.

When the woman caught sight of me again she picked up a small traveling-bag and a wrap and started for the street. I slowly followed, determined to get a better look at her face. Before she reached the door she turned to locate me, and as she saw me only a few feet away she turned and flung the bag at me and hurried away at a run. I was so astonished for two or three minutes that I

made no move. Then I picked up the bag, looked it over, and finding it unlocked I opened it. Inside was a pasteboard box. In the box were the diamonds stolen from Mrs. Senator Blank. There was not another thing in the bag, which was quite old and worn. I put the gems in a safe place and began a hunt for the woman, but though it lasted three days I got no trace of her.

Who stole the diamonds? I have not the slightest idea. Who was the woman? The wife of some crook, probably. I carried the diamonds to Washington and delivered them into the hands of Mrs. Senator Blank. Although her husband had offered \$5,000 reward he gave me \$500, called me a good fellow, and that was every cent I received. Two weeks later I got my man at Johnstown, Pa., in which place he had opened a cigar store and believed himself dead to the outside world.
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