

The O'Shaughnessy Diamonds
by William M. Cooke

ON the night of the 1st of June, 187—, the safe of Vanderkill & Brown, tea-brokers, of New York City, of which firm I was the senior partner, was broken open and robbed of diamonds valued at sixty thousand dollars and of five hundred dollars in money.

How jewels of such worth came to be left in so unlikely a place may need to be explained; and this I will first do.

Late in the afternoon of the day before, I was sitting alone in our private office. In the outer office, into which a door opened, our two boys, John and Edward, were at work,—one doing up express packages of samples, the other washing teacups; and our assistant buyer, Mr. Jones, was arranging sample cans on the racks. There was no one else in the office.

I had been writing letters for the Western mail, and was just signing the last one, when I heard some one outside asking for me or Mr. Brown, and one of our old customers, a man named O'Shaughnessy, of Chicago, came into the room. I had known him well a few years before, when he was at the head of a large grocery-house; but since then he had been operating heavily in grain, was said to have grown very rich, and seldom visited New York: so I was somewhat surprised at seeing him.

He carried in his hand an oblong brown-paper parcel, and, after shaking hands with me and asking after my health and that of Mr. Brown,—who, by the way, was at home, very sick,— he said, "I came in to ask if you would lock up this parcel in your safe tonight. I find I have to go to Philadelphia at once, and I hardly like to carry it about with me."

"Is it valuable?" I asked. For answer he opened the package and showed me, lying in a morocco case, a diamond necklace. I know little about jewels, but I saw that the stones were large and brilliant and plainly of great value.

"It's for my wife," he said, "and it cost me a cool sixty thousand,—not a cent less." And then he went on, "The jewellers only finished it this afternoon, and, after I had given my check for it, I found I had no time to take it up-town to the hotel and then catch my train: so I thought I would leave it with you."

I hastily closed the lid of the case and looked about, for I thought I had heard a footstep at the door; but I saw no one, and concluded that one of the clerks had been about to come in, but had walked away on seeing that I was engaged.

Well, to make a long story short, I told Mr. O'Shaughnessy that I was unwilling to have anything so valuable left in my care, that our safe was old and never meant to be more than fire-proof, and that he had better leave the diamonds at the bank where he kept his New York account; but he

answered that he had called there and found it closed for the day. He also said that he would take all risk upon himself: so, at last, I reluctantly agreed to do as he wished.

There was a small inside compartment to the safe, with a separate door. Here we kept our insurance policies and suchlike papers, and the petty-cash-box, and in it was also now a square tin box, with a combination padlock, which Mr. Jones had, some months before, got leave to keep there. This I removed, and in its place I put the jewel-case, and was closing the door, when Mr. O'Shaughnessy stopped me. "Wait a moment," he said: "here are five hundred dollars. I shan't need it till to-morrow. I might as well leave this too." And he drew from his pocket a roll of bills, which he wedged in beside the case. Upon this I locked the compartment and handed him the key. He thanked me, and left the office, saying that he would return next day.

My day's work at last done, I walked out, and explained to Mr. Jones that, as I had needed space in the safe for other things, he would have to find some other place for his box, and then, as was my custom, I saw that the books were put carefully away in the safe, locked its doors, dropped the key into my pocket, and started for home. It was nearing my dinner-hour, and I was in haste to reach the ferry: so I was much vexed, when I turned into Wall Street, at finding a most tiresome person, whom I slightly knew, leaning against a railing, having his shoes blacked. He was a man who always wished to talk about the market, while I, my tastes being literary rather than commercial, have always preferred talking of anything else. But he called to me, and then seized one of my coat buttons, and I had perforce to listen to him for nearly half an hour.

As I stood there, our two office-boys passed on their way home and wished me good-night. I remembered that I had tickets which I should not use for a benefit performance at one of the theatres so I called the boys back and gave them each one, and they went on their way much pleased. They were smart, well-behaved lads, brothers, who, between them, supported their old mother, and I always made a point of showing them kindness where I might.

Then, after some time, our clerk, Mr. Jones, turned the corner. He was walking slowly, and had his tin box in his hand. He seemed surprised at seeing me there, and for an instant hesitated. Then he said, in his quiet, gentlemanly way, "I beg your pardon, Mr. Vanderkill,—I meant to ask you before: will you allow me to leave my box at your rooms tonight? There are some papers in it of value to me, and I fear that at my boarding-house someone might meddle with them."

"Why, certainly," I answered. Then, seeing a chance of escape from my captor, I added, "Wait: I'll go with you."

So I joined him, and we crossed to Brooklyn together.

Now, I liked this Mr. Jones. He had come to us about a year before, in answer to our advertisement for a clerk.

He could give us no references, having, as he said, just come over from England; but we had fancied his looks and engaged him, and he had made himself most useful to us. He had also shown himself well-bred. I am, perhaps, somewhat old-fashioned in my ideas, but I own that I like my clerks to show me respect; and in this Jones never failed. Then he had taken in good part

some advice which, as an older man, I had once thought it well to give him, and was also, as I discovered, a man of some taste in reading. For at that time I was writing my "Philosophy of Tea-Drinking." Once, after a hard day's work, I had thought Jones looked tired and in need of amusement: so, as I knew him to be poor and, like myself, a bachelor, I asked him to my rooms and read to him a chapter or two from my work. His remarks upon it had been so intelligent and just that I was gratified, and he had more than once repeated the visit at my invitation. I have often wished since that some of our money-loving publishers had a tithe of that young man's discernment and taste.

We had crossed the Wall Street ferry, and Mr. Jones was about to leave me, —he boarded in Gowanus, while my rooms were on Clinton Street,—when I thought of his box. I am a considerate man, and it seemed to me a pity that he should have to bring it back so far after supper: so I told him that if he liked I would take it with me then. At first he naturally declined, saying that he could not think of giving me the trouble; then, seeing that I was in earnest, he thanked me, handed it to me, and hurried after a Furman Street car. I took the box with me to the restaurant where I dined, and afterward to my rooms.

I have been used for many years to spending the evening alone, and, when not writing, can usually content myself with my cigar and books, or, at worst, with my own thoughts. But this evening my mind was ill at ease. I could not forget the diamonds. As I sat by the window, smoking, I thought how very easy it would be for any one to enter the office through the side-window over the alley, and then how little skill would be needed to open the safe. In fact, though I am not a nervous man, and have great command over my feelings, I felt a sense of relief when, as the City Hall bell was tolling nine, the gong at the front door struck and Jones was shown into the room, though, to tell the truth, I was also at first a little annoyed at his coming unasked. However, he explained that, having to come my way, he had thought it well to return some books he had borrowed of me: so I asked him to stay. And I read him the latest chapter of the "Philosophy of Tea Drinking," and then we talked about that and other books. He asked my advice about a course of reading he thought of taking, and I gave him my views upon the subject. We then drifted into talk about the older English novel-writers. I have always held their works in great esteem,—above all, those of Smollett; and I was pleased at finding that he shared my liking for that great humorist. On the whole, the evening passed so pleasantly that when eleven o'clock came, and he arose to go, I made him take two of my best "Reina Victorias," which I only smoke after dinner.

I had placed his box in a small closet where I kept my liquor-case and cigars, with other things which I think it best to lock up.

"You may leave it there as long as you wish, Jones," I said: "it will not be in my way." And then he took his leave, and I went to bed.

I rested well that night, for I am a sound sleeper; but upon waking in the morning my first thoughts were again of the diamonds. So I breakfasted and went over to the office a full hour earlier than usual.

The front door of the building was open, and the janitor sweeping the steps, but the office door was still locked. I let myself in with a latch-key, and at once walked back to the private office; and then I received a shock. It is hard to describe a shock, but I may say that I felt as I did one January morning when I stepped into my bath-tub and by mistake turned on the cold shower; for the fire-doors of the safe stood open. On the floor before it, among upturned drawers and scattered papers, lay several shining steel implements, evidently burglars' tools, and the petty-cash-box.

The door of the inside compartment was ajar, and I looked in. It was empty. Then I gathered my wits together and made a thorough search. The books were all there, the insurance-policies and other papers, and the empty cash-box. But of the jewel-case and the roll of money there were no signs, either in the safe or about the office.

How the thieves had entered I saw at once. The side-window, looking out on the alley, was closed, but a pane of the glass was missing, and the patent catch had been pushed back.

When I fully realized that the diamonds were lost, I wasted no further time. I gave the signal for a District Telegraph messenger, and, when the boy came, sent him to the nearest police station to report the robbery. Then I hurried across the street to the telegraph office, and sent this message to our broker in Philadelphia:

“If possible, find Mr. O’Shaughnessy, of Chicago. Probably at Continental. Say, safe opened; diamonds and money stolen. Return immediately, or telegraph description.”

With that I felt I had done for the time all in my power, and went back to our office. Here I found John and Edward, both much excited, and the janitor, whom they had called in. This man lived in rooms on the top floor of the building, and I questioned him closely. He said he had finished sweeping out the office the night before at about eight o’clock. He had fastened the windows and doors, and, after seeing to a few other matters about the building, had sat for a while on the door-step and then gone upstairs to his rooms. He had heard no strange noises during the night.

While I was talking to him, Jones appeared. Him I took aside and told the extent of the loss. I had felt too much disturbed to care to speak of it to the others. He turned really pale. For a moment he was speechless. Then he exclaimed, Great heavens, Mr. Vanderkill! A small fortune! And to trust it in that thing!”

He seemed to take the matter so much to heart that I began to feel more cheerful. “Well, Jones,” I said, “it is an unlucky affair; but, after all, the loss will not fall on us. I gave Mr. O’Shaughnessy fair warning, and he chose to take the risk.” And I set about reading the morning mail, which had just been brought in.

This day was a most disagreeable one to me. First the police-officers came, and two detectives in plain clothing. They examined the safe and broken window and the burglars' tools, and agreed that the work had been done by professionals, and clever ones. I told them all that had passed between Mr. O’Shaughnessy and myself, and they then questioned the clerks. An important fact now came to light.

To make matters clear, I must here explain that the door which connected our two rooms was close to that opening from the outer office into the entry of the building. Edward suddenly remembered that, happening to turn his head, he had seen a man leave the office through this door at the time Mr. O'Shaughnessy was within with me. John had been busy at his work, and had seen nothing, but Jones, too, had noticed the man. He had come in, glanced about, taken a few steps forward and looked in at my door, and had then turned and quietly walked out. It happened often that men blundered into our office, mistaking it for some other, but I remembered and spoke of the footstep that had startled me, and to our minds the case grew plain. The fellow had been one of the robbers, or a confederate, who had followed Mr. O'Shaughnessy from the jeweller's, and he had doubtless seen the open case in our hands.

Of his looks neither Edward nor Jones could recall more than that he was tall and stout, with a dark moustache, and that he wore a straw hat and light clothes; but, at all events, the detectives had now some clue to follow, and they went away.

At length Mr. O'Shaughnessy arrived from Philadelphia. I must say, to his credit, that he bore the loss much better than I had dared hope, and blamed only himself. He at once wrote out advertisements for the newspapers, offering a reward of five thousand dollars for the recovery of the necklace. This offer, with a full description of the jewels, was also telegraphed from police headquarters all over the country, so that by nightfall the police of nearly every large city in the United States and Canada knew of the robbery.

I confess I had little hope of ever seeing the diamonds again; but O'Shaughnessy thought otherwise. As for the money, he said, that, of course, was lost. The diamonds, however, would be hard to dispose of, with so many men on the watch for them, and he expected that the thieves would offer to compromise. The police, too, thought this the most likely course for them to take. So, after some thought, I decided to keep the matter from Mr. Brown's knowledge,— at least while he was ill. And I was afterward glad that I had not troubled him with it, for the next morning his wife sent for me in haste, and in the afternoon he died.

I was deeply grieved at his death, for we had worked together as clerks and partners for many years, and had been warm friends. I also foresaw that my life would be less easy than it had been. He was the harder-working man of the two, and it would be difficult to fill his place at the office. So, during the following week I was too busy about my own affairs to give much thought to the robbery.

The newspapers, however, made much of it, and I heard from time to time that the police were at work upon the case. One after another, some half dozen men were arrested on suspicion. Now it was some well-known burglar who was thought to be spending too much money, or perhaps some wretched tramp seen coming from the alley during the night, or a man suspected of being our visitor of the afternoon. But one and all were discharged for lack of proof against them, and not a trace of the real robbers or of the diamonds was found. Nor did the thieves yet give a hint of any wish to compromise. It seemed clear that they had either already fled the country or had hidden the jewels and were biding their time to get rid of them.

The detectives thought the latter case the more probable, for the police at Havana and the European ports had also been telegraphed to be on the lookout, and this any smart thief would have foreseen.

At last, after a week had passed, Mr. O'Shaughnessy grew tired of waiting in New York. He raised the offered reward to ten thousand dollars. "Better spend ten thousand at once," he said philosophically, "than lose sixty;" and then he went back to Chicago.

As a matter of course, this large offer, which was widely advertised, caused renewed talk—and with good results.

The captain of a steam-yacht just home from a short cruise to the eastward went to the police with a tale which stirred them up mightily. He said that the evening of the 1st of the month he had spent with some friends on the east side of the town. The yacht was lying in Gowanus Bay, and he started at about twelve o'clock to go on board. His way toward the Hamilton ferry led him past the building in which was our office. Just as he came abreast of it, three men ran out from the side-alley, brushed past him, and hurried up the street. As they passed, he had seen their faces quite plainly by the light of a street-lamp, and from their looks and actions suspected that they had been up to no good. He had half thought to sic a policeman in chase, but none came: so he went quietly on his way, and next morning started eastward.

He was shown the portraits in the Rogues' Gallery, but recognized none of them, and from the description of the men which he gave it was believed that they were strangers, and that the detectives had been wasting their time on false scents. They had been tracking old friends, and now saw, much to their chagrin, that they must start afresh in their search. To give them their due, they were active enough; but in a big city like New York it is a hard task to find a man with no guide but a slight knowledge of his looks. And so the weeks dragged on.

As may be remembered, the heat that summer was very great. While Mr. Brown lived, it had been our custom during the hot months to take turns in leaving town for a week at a time. But now, as day after day passed, I found myself tied hopelessly to my work, and felt the loss of his help more and more.

As I bustled about the street or sat by the hour drawing tea, with the thermometer marking ninety degrees in the shade, I realized to the full what it was to earn one's bread by the sweat of one's brow. In Mr. Jones I had, as I have said, a good assistant; but at length I found that if I would keep my health I must take a holiday now and then, and I decided to employ still another clerk.

But I did not readily find one to my liking. Perhaps I was hard to suit, but I have always disliked having underbred or ignorant men about me. I was beginning to fear that I should have to put up with a most vulgar-looking young man who had applied for the place, when I happened one day at luncheon to speak of the matter to the market-reporter of one of the morning papers—a person named Granger—and he at once said that he knew of a man who would do, and promised to send him to me.

I have not hitherto spoken of this Mr. Granger. I knew little about him, but had met him daily for some time past in my own and other offices. He was a pleasant-spoken, well-informed man—though hardly a gentleman—and, as men will do who meet often down-town, we had drifted into an easy speaking acquaintance.

With the looks of the young man whom he sent me, and who proved to be named Ormsby, I was pleased. His speech, too, was taking and his references good: so I took him on trial. He knew nothing whatever about tea, but that mattered little: I meant that he should busy himself with the office-work, that Jones might be able to give his whole time to the duties of buying and selling; and after a short time they settled down so well to their work that I felt safe in leaving them in charge of the business for days at a time. And so I was able now and then to make short visits to the Catskills and Long Branch, and found my life once more bearable.

Upon my book I wrote little during the heated term, the lighted gas making my room uncomfortably warm: so, as the few families whom I knew well were out of town at the sea-side or the mountains, I fell into the habit of spending most of my evenings by the water. On leaving the office in the afternoon, I would take boat or train to Coney Island, have a dip in the surf, and then dine at one of the hotels. Afterward I would stroll along the beach, watching the bathers, and then find a seat and listen to the music of a band until it was time to return to the city. Sometimes I met there one or more of my business acquaintances, when we would empty a modest bottle of claret and smoke our after-dinner cigars together. And once or twice I caught sight of Jones and Ormsby walking side by side in the crowd; and this gratified me. I liked to feel that my clerks were on such good terms with each other. Upon the whole, I may say that I enjoyed myself much in a quiet way that summer.

In time, John and Edward took their usual vacations of a week each, and I then told Jones that I could spare him for a fortnight. He had, I thought, fairly earned a holiday.

Somewhat to my relief, I must own, he said he did not want one; but more than once in the morning I had noticed a very tired look upon his face, and I insisted upon his taking at least an occasional day to himself. And, as Ormsby had shown himself a gentlemanly young man, I also now and then invited them both to dine with me at Manhattan Beach or Cable's— a kindness which they seemed to take as it was meant.

So July and August wore away. It was now September, and the lost jewels had not yet been heard from. The police were at their wits' ends, for, after great search, they had at last secured the stranger whom Edward and Mr. Jones had seen in our office, and he had proved to be a person of well-known good character, who claimed to have mistaken the office for that of some other firm.

To add to their woes, since the theft of the necklace two other safes had been opened and bonds and money stolen, and in no case had they yet succeeded in tracing the burglars. The manner of the thefts showed that they were the work of the same hands, but whose were the hands could only be guessed as yet. And at length, to cap the climax, came the robbery of the Citizens' Bank.

It was done in the early morning by blowing open the vault-doors with gunpowder, and a large number of coupon bonds were taken. It was not known on "the street" till near noon, when the extra editions of the evening papers were cried, and I was then too busy to give it much thought. But at luncheon I heard the men about me talking the matter over, and afterward, in the office, found my clerks reading the long accounts of the robbery given by the papers. The affair attracted much public notice, and the commonly-expressed belief was that the thieves would, as before, go free. Indeed, I overheard Ormsby offer to bet Jones a new hat that they would not only escape, but get rid of the bonds as well.

But, however trite the saying may be, most dogs do have their day, and the turn of the police had come. Opening my paper next morning at breakfast, a staring head-line told me that the Citizens' Bank robbers had been arrested and lodged in the Tombs. Below I read the tale of the capture. In brief, a woman, ill treated by one of them, had betrayed them to the officers. They were found in a quiet west side street, in a house which they had rented and where they had lived unsuspected for months. They were three in number, and had fought hard against arrest, but had been overpowered.

Upon searching the house, the police had discovered plain proof of their guilt in a package of the stolen bonds. And this was not all. Their looks tallied exactly with the description of the men seen by the yacht's captain on that night in June. It was believed that the diamond-thieves had at last been found.

I need hardly say that these tidings were very welcome to me and heightened my usual good humor: so, when Jones, in the course of the morning, asked leave to stay away from the office on the morrow, I readily consented. He was looking poorly, and I suggested to him that he had better go into the country somewhere and make a longer stay; but he answered that he wished for but one day, that he might show parts of the city to an old friend newly arrived from England. So I said no more, but at noon asked him to lunch with me, wishing to show him that I appreciated his thought for my comfort and interests.

In the afternoon I had a telegram from Mr. O'Shaughnessy, saying that he was on his way to New York. I was glad to hear this, for I foresaw that he would relieve me of any duties which might otherwise have fallen to me in the matter of the diamonds. And then Jones reported that he had sold a large invoice of high-priced tea, earning a goodly brokerage. In fact, the day passed most pleasantly, and I started for home in a very easy frame of mind.

At the ferry-house, where I was waiting for a boat, Jones overtook me. He reminded me of his box, which I had in my keeping, but, to tell the truth, had quite forgotten,—said that he thought that some old letters which he wanted to show to his friend were in it, and asked if he might go with me and get it. So we walked up to my rooms: he took the box and left, and shortly after I set out for my restaurant.

The place was well filled, but I found one free table, and dined in much comfort. I had, at last, lighted a cigar, and was burning the brandy for my coffee, when I heard my name spoken, and, looking up, saw Mr. Granger beside me. He had already dined, he said, but I asked him to join me, and we sat over coffee and cigars for some time. He seemed in high spirits, and was really

very entertaining, telling several amusing stories of his adventures in search of items of news. But midway in one of these stories he was interrupted by a waiter who brought word from the barroom that someone there wished to see him: so he bade me good-night, took his hat, and left me.

A few minutes later, however, he returned. "Mr. Vanderkill," he said, smiling, "have you any engagement for the evening?"

I told him I had none.

"Well, then," he went on, "I think I can offer you a novel entertainment." And then he told me that he had just learned from a trustworthy person that the police meant that night to make an important arrest; that a certain criminal, long searched for in vain, was known to have engaged passage on a vessel which would sail next morning for Callao, and that the detectives intended to lie in wait for him at the wharf in the evening, feeling sure that he would try to slip aboard unobserved under cover of the darkness. He said that as yet no other reporter knew of the affair, and that, of course, he might expect to be well paid for a report of it. "As you know," he said, "police matters are not in my line at present; but when I see so good a chance to earn a few dollars at outside work, I can't afford to let it escape me." He went on to say that he had learned the exact place where the arrest would be made, and would be pleased to have me accompany him as a looker-on. "There may, possibly, be a fight," he added, "but we shall be in no danger."

At first, Mr. Granger's idea of an evening's amusement struck me as being rather odd. I thanked him, but said that I thought the sight of an arrest would hardly give me pleasure. But he urged me so strongly, in a laughing way, to give him my company, that at last I agreed to do so. In my heart, however, I trusted that the adventure might never become known on "the street."

It was then but half-past eight o'clock, —too early to start: so we went to a neighboring billiard-room and played until ten o'clock. We then took a street-car to the Fulton Ferry and crossed to New York.

On the way we talked of many things, and among them of the bank-robbery and that of our safe. "And, by the way," he said suddenly, after a pause in the conversation, "I think I may tell you something which is not generally known. I heard upon good authority this afternoon that one of the robbers had offered to give state's evidence on condition of pardon. I understand," he went on, "that he promises to give all the particulars of the robbery of the bank and of yours and the other safes. But," he continued, "the strange part of the story is that he denies positively having ever seen the diamonds, — says there was nothing taken from your safe but a roll of money. How do you account for that?"

I could not, and said so and then we changed the subject and spoke of my business and clerks. Mr. Granger asked me how Ormsby suited me, and then he remarked carelessly, "I met Jones on Clinton Street this afternoon, coming from your door. He had some sort of a box in his hand. Was it yours?"

I told him "No;" and then, for want of anything better to talk of, I explained to him how it had happened to be at my rooms. We were leaning on the rail of the ferry-boat at the time. Before I finished speaking it seemed to me that his mind had strayed from the subject. He made no reply, and for some time stared fixedly into the water. Reaching New York, Mr. Granger led the way up South Street, and at last turned and crossed the street toward one of the wharves. As we stepped upon it, a man came quietly out from behind a pile of barrels tiered along the bulkhead. He exchanged a few whispered words with Granger, and then returned to his hiding-place, while we walked on down the wharf. There were vessels lying at each side, and among them I remarked one large, black ship, which, even to my unpractised eye, showed signs of being in readiness to sail. For the wharf beside her was clear of goods, and she lay low in the water. The planks, too, which are used to protect the side of the vessel abreast of the hatchways when loading had been removed, and, though the night was dark, I could see on looking up that the sails had been already bent or attached to the yards. A faint light shone through the cabin-windows, but on deck all was dark, and no moving thing could be seen.

We walked on past her to the end of the wharf, and sat down on the stringpiece. And now for a long hour we waited in the dark, smoking, and talking in undertones, but no one came. I grew very tired, and wished that I was at home and in bed. "I can really stand this no longer," I said at last: "I shall go home." But Mr. Granger persuaded me to change my mind; and we then strolled back to the head of the wharf and placed ourselves behind the barrels I spoke of, where we were hidden among the shadows but could ourselves see any one who might pass. And soon the man whom I had before noticed crept up and again whispered to Granger, and then stepped behind a pile. Granger laid his hand upon my shoulder and bade me be quiet, and just then I saw a man cross the car-track, coming toward us.

He passed close by us and took a few steps down the wharf, but suddenly the man in hiding stepped before him and flashed a bull's-eye lantern full in his face. He started and turned, and made as though he would run, but a second man, who seemed to have sprung from the ground, barred his way. Then he stopped short, and I heard him say sharply, "Hands off, there! What do you want?"

To my surprise, Granger at once stepped forward. "Sorry to trouble you, Mr. Crawford," he said, "but I think you had better come with us." He had hardly spoken when I heard a heavy blow and saw him stagger, and then the stranger made a quick effort to escape. But the two men threw themselves upon him, and they fell together. I was greatly excited, I must own. I lost all sense of danger, and hastened toward them. The lantern lay at their feet, and I grasped it and turned the light on them as they struggled, and then, for the first time in years, I regret to say that I swore. "D—n it, Granger!" I cried, "you must stop this. Here is some mistake. This man is my clerk, Jones. You know him. Call them off, I say!"

But Granger caught my arm and drew me away. "No, no," he said. "Be quiet, please. It's all right." And he held me tightly.

The struggle lasted but a moment. Jones was no match for the other two, and they soon handcuffed him and helped him to his feet. I was trembling with anger and excitement. "Mr.

Granger," I said, "this is an outrage which some one shall pay for. Mr. Jones, do you know what this means?" But Granger only asked me to calm myself and wait, and Jones said no word.

On the wharf, at our feet, I saw a valise and something smaller, which proved to be Jones's tin box. Mr. Granger at once took charge of these, and, without more words, we crossed the street and entered a hack which had just driven up. And then we drove straight to the nearest police station. Arriving there, I stood by the door while some words passed between Granger and the sergeant at the desk. I thought it best to be silent, for indeed I was much puzzled and too full of anger to trust myself then to speak. But shortly Jones was taken into an inner room, and Granger asked me to follow; and then I mastered my feelings and spoke quietly to him. "Tell me," I said, "why all this tomfoolery? You knew Mr. Jones perfectly well, and that he could be found any day at my office. If he stands accused of any crime, why did they not go there for him? And, in any case, pray, what have you to do with the matter? And why was I, of all people, brought here to-night?"

But he would only tell me, as before, to wait. Then I turned to Jones; but neither would he give me any satisfaction. His face wore a hard, dogged look which I had never before seen there, and I began to believe that he must, after all, have been guilty of some wrong-doing, though I could not imagine its nature.

The men were searching his clothing, but, except a pistol, they found only such trifles as a man may carry about him every day, and about fifty dollars in money. They then examined the valise. In it were clothes, a brush and comb, and such-like things,—nothing more. At last they took up the tin box. Jones declined to give them the combination, and they had to break the lock. Though I was by no means in a laughing mood, I could hardly keep back a smile as they opened it. I expected to see a package of old letters, perhaps a few photographs. And, to be sure, there were the letters.

I glanced at Mr. Granger. His hands were trembling somewhat, and his face had grown pale. What could he hope to find? He pushed aside the man who had opened the box, and removed the letters, of which there were many, but tossed them upon the table without a look. Beneath lay only a large old tobacco-pouch,—and one of the policemen laughed. Granger opened the pouch and looked in; then he drew from it a crumpled ball of newspaper. This he tore open, and then—my calmness quite forsook me, and I stepped forward with a cry of surprise—there was a shimmer and a glitter and a flash of broken light: he held the lost necklace in his hand!

Mr. Granger showed himself most considerate. I wished to go home at once, and he not only got me a hack but pressed upon me his pocket-flask of brandy. And indeed I was much bewildered, felt tired, and far from well, and was very glad to reach my rooms and go to bed.

But it was long before I could sleep. The thought that my trusted clerk must from the first have been in league with the robbers was a very bitter one, and I could not now doubt that this was the case. His actions on the night before would have proved it to my mind, even had it not been so plainly impossible that any one else could have hidden the necklace where it was found. The box had been hardly six hours in his keeping after leaving my hands,—too short a time for the laying and carrying out of any plot against him.

However, I fell asleep at last, and the morning brought more cheerful thoughts. It was good to know that the diamonds were at last in safe hands; and if Jones was indeed a rogue, then I was well rid of him. But I was eager to know how and by whom the discovery had been brought about, and, as soon as might be, I got a copy of the newspaper for which Granger wrote. And upon some points, at least, my mind was quickly enlightened, for on the very first page was an account of the whole affair. I read it with a growing feeling of wonder. It seemed hardly possible that for months I could have been so blind to what was going on about me. The article was headed, "The O'Shaughnessy Diamonds found," and ran thus:

"When yesterday it was announced that the robbers of the Citizens' Bank had fallen into the clutches of the law, the belief became general that in these men the police had also the perpetrators of the burglary by which Mr. O'Shaughnessy, of Chicago, lost his sixty-thousand dollar necklace, and the early recovery of this valuable ornament was regarded as certain. But 'there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip,' and had it not been for the sagacity of a certain newspaper reporter the jewels might even now have been upon the briny deep and to their owner irretrievably lost. Incited by the hope of earning the reward of ten thousand dollars offered for their restoration, this reporter has for months devoted his energies to the task of finding them; and at last success has crowned his efforts. The diamonds lie in the safe at police headquarters, and the person in whose possession they were found—a confederate of the three men already in custody—has abandoned the intention which he held until a late hour last evening of taking a yachting trip to Southern climes and will for the present devote himself to the study of the interior architecture of the Tombs.

"The manner in which this desirable consummation of the search was reached may be described as follows. One day about a year ago, happening into the office of Messrs. Vanderkill & Brown, from whose safe, it will be remembered, the diamonds were afterward stolen, the above-mentioned knight of the quill was struck by the strong resemblance which one of their clerks, a person of the euphonious name of Jones, bore to a certain accomplished London cracksman, one Crawford, better known as 'Gentleman Harry,' a title bestowed upon him by his admirers in recognition of his refined appearance and speech. The features of this worthy had been very familiar to the reporter at a time when the latter held the post of police court reporter to one of the great London journals. However, he did not think it advisable to make his suspicions public, and, as the young man bore a good reputation, he soon persuaded himself that they were groundless. Later, upon hearing of the robbery, he was, however, reminded of them, and when the offer of reward was increased to ten thousand dollars and became worth working for, he immediately proceeded to investigate Mr. Jones's record, and also took measures to have him carefully watched in future. To this end he engaged the services of an ex-detective and of a former member of the police force, one of whom promptly took board in the house where the gentlemanly Mr. Jones resided. He also succeeded in inducing Messrs. Vanderkill & Brown to take into their employ a young friend of his own, who in return was quite willing to aid the cause of justice by keeping an eye upon his fellow-clerk.

"Time passed. Conclusive evidence was found that the gentlemanly tea buyer Mr. Jones and the equally gentlemanly and accomplished burglar Mr. Crawford were one and the same person, who had adopted his present name and profession as a blind, and was in reality the accomplice of as daring a gang of robbers as ever terrorized a peaceful community.

“Little doubt remained that in the robbery of his employer’s safe he had played a useful though unobtrusive part, and the reporter asked himself whether he should not at once unmask him. But, as a thorough search of the gentleman’s apartments in his absence had revealed the fact that the missing jewels were not to be found there, he decided that his best chance of recovering them lay in allowing Mr. Crawford to remain at large, though under strict surveillance, until their hiding-place should be discovered.

“The night in which the robbery of the Citizens’ Bank took place, Mr. Jones, *alias* Crawford, spent away from home. In whose company he was is not positively known, for early in the evening his watcher unfortunately imbibed too freely of the contents of the flowing bowl. He very effectually drove dull care away and was carried to his room in a state of bliss and limpness.

“But just before cock-crow Mr. Jones was seen by a passing milkman to enter the house. And yesterday morning, after glancing at his newspaper, it was noticed that he showed signs of indisposition, which he attributed to the badness of the coffee served him at breakfast. He was afterward seen to visit the office of a well-known shipping firm, where he engaged passage, under the name of Robinson, on the clipper ship ‘Quickstep,’ about to sail for Callao. It was now evident that the time had arrived for action. During the day he was closely shadowed by his watchers, one of whom even went so far as to follow him in the evening to the wharf where the vessel lay. Here he was met by the reporter and two other men of his acquaintance, who were so loath to lose him that by their united eloquence they induced him to forego his intended visit to Callao and accompany them to the police station, where a surprise was in store for him. It will be, perhaps, a surprise to some others as well. In his tobacco-pouch some heartless villain had concealed the very diamond necklace so long sought.

“It may be added, as an item of interest to some of our worthy citizens who have been mourning the loss of sundry bonds and other valuable papers, that the lining of Mr. Jones’s—*alias* Crawford’s—coat proves to be of an uncommon kind, and that the privilege of examining it might repay them for the trouble of a visit to police headquarters.”

This was all. It was now clear to me that Mr. Granger was himself the reporter who had earned the reward so cleverly, and also that he must have been very sure of success, for the whole of this article could hardly have been written after he left the police station on the night before. But, if this was so, why had he left so much unexplained? About many points of the case I was still quite in the dark.

In the course of the day he called at the office, and I asked him to enlighten me. “I can imagine,” I said, “that Jones looked into the private office and saw the diamonds before they were locked up, and that he then spoke of them to his confederates, who afterward stole them; but where were they then hidden? Tell me the whole story.”

Mr. Granger stood by my desk, lighting a cigar, while I spoke. He now took a chair, leaned his arm on my desk, and looked me in the face. “Do you really want to know the inside facts?” he asked. “Well, I’ll tell you them. I didn’t know them all myself till yesterday;” and he smiled in a peculiar way as he pulled gently at his cigar. “I hardly think,” he said, “that you realize even now what an extremely clever clerk you have lost. It was perhaps an easy matter,” he went on, “to

deceive you and the police: what would you say if I told you that he had fooled his confederates as well?"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Simply," he answered, "that when those three men broke open your safe it was not to get the diamonds. They knew of none; and they found none, for there were none there."

I stared at him in astonishment.

"Your clerk, Mr. Jones," he went on, "from the first week he spent in your office, carried duplicate keys to the safe. Ten minutes after he was left alone with the diamonds that afternoon, they were in his hands. That he might not be suspected of the theft, he told his confederates of the money which was still in the safe, and induced them to break in at night and take it, though, as they now say, they thought it foolish to take so much trouble for such small pay. Of the diamonds he said nothing. Knowing these facts, don't you begin to understand where the jewels were hidden? I can tell you," he continued, "that from the time Jones took his box from your house until he reached the wharf he did not even open it, for he was closely watched." And with that he leaned back in his chair and slowly blew out a ring of smoke.

And now at last I understood how thoroughly I had been duped. "Granger," I said, "do you mean to tell me that they—that I—"

"Yes," he said quietly, "I do. For three months or more that necklace has been safely lying in your own closet."

"Why, then," I said, "that means that I have—"

"Certainly," he interrupted again, very coolly, "that you have been acting as a receiver of stolen goods." And he blew out another smoke-ring.

I could bear no more. Once again, I am sorry to say, I used an impolite word. Then I put on my hat and left the office.

WILLIAM M. COOKE.

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