

## *The Truss of Hay*

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Written for the New York Clipper  
by a California Detective

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That accident often accomplishes what the most hopeful nor perseverance falls to effect, the following narrative is but an additional proof; but as I rode towards the police station of my district during the afternoon of an April day, 1867, my thoughts, were far from being occupied by any such truth. I was thinking of Edward Felton, whom I had not seen for four years, and in whom I had always felt a friendly, nay, a brotherly interest.

Edward had been in the mounted police for some six or seven years, and he didn't take well to it, poor fellow. He felt what he considered his loss of caste deeply, and avoided speaking of his earlier days; but I knew that his family was an old and good one, and that he was one of those unfortunate younger scions to whose share the increasing poverty of the family had meted but a partial education, while the elder brother had received a much more superior education, and was heir to his father's estate.

The position of his relatives in Philadelphia would, no doubt, have enabled them to procure something better in time for Ned than a trooper's saddle, but the youth was proud, had gone to California to make his fortune, and vowed he would never return until he was independent of patronage; and whether such a thing was ever likely to happen, on two dollars a day and twelve cents extra—"good conduct" money—ask any "mounted man" who has the honor of being in the United States Police Force.

Felton used to be melancholy and reserved in his habits, and, as a natural consequence, his more [harum-scarum] mates did not much affect him. They called him proud, and themselves as good as he, and he took very good care to interfere with them as little as duty would permit.

Wondering how he had got along these four years, during which time I had but heard of his moves from one station to another, I reached his camp, and the first face upon which my eyes rested, when I entered the camp yard, was that of Ned, a face, however, so illuminated and revived, so to speak, that I had to look twice to convince myself of his identity.

"Well, Felton," I said, as I returned his warm greeting, "you are getting younger instead of older. Why you make me ashamed of my mouldy whiskers man! Has the last mail brought you word that good fortune awaits you at home?"

"Not it," replied he. "The good fortune can go to the devil; I don't covet it one bit. But here, give me your mare, and I'll stable her; Singer has gone on duty."

"Excuse me, my dear fellow," I responded, taking the bridle from his ready hand, "but I prefer looking after Vino myself. I shall not restrict her to regulation allowance after such a week's work, and I had better take the responsibility on my own shoulders."

“All right, old fellow; I’ll go and look after the wants of your stomach. I don’t know how our larder’s affected, but we will raise something or other, I dare say. Oh Mark,” he added, calling after me, as I was proceeding towards the stable, “there’s no forage out; you will have to get down a truss of hay from the loft.”

Leaving Vino outside for a moment, I entered with the intention of dislodging the truss, in the easiest manner, from the rough boards that, laid from wall plate to wall late, formed the said loft. There was a fork leaning against the door, and with the handle of it I tilted one of the trusses on end and tipped it on to the floor. As I did so, or rather as it fell, an unusual appearance in its centre attracted my attention, and a moment’s examination convinced me that a square piece had been artistically cut from the closely pressed hay and again inserted, but to what purpose?

Ah! that was the rub! The force of the concussion occasioned by its fall had shaken the piece partially from its well fitted cavity; and it was but a moment’s work to withdraw it altogether, leaving exposed, in the heart of the truss—a box.

“Wonders will never cease,” soliloquized I; “What the mischief sort of discovery have I dropped on now?” I seized the box with as firm a grip as its position would allow, and drew it to the light. It was simply a square box, about 18 inches in diameter, and papered on the outside with a green patterned wall paper; and it was primitively fastened by a piece of leather that hooked on to a lock. A piece of the hay corresponding in size to the article, had, as I have said, been carefully cut out of the truss, and a piece of barely three or four inches in thickness inserted over the box after it had been concealed. “What an outrageous hiding place to be sure,” I thought as I hastily stowed the “plant” up on the loft again, and hastened to feed Vino; “but surely you’ve made a mistake, this time, my hearties, whoever you are.” I was of course most curious to see the inside of this strange “find,” but my usual caution led me to wish for secrecy in examining it. I feared the entrance of my friend Felton, for I have ever made it my practice to conceal my plans carefully from even my fellow workers until their assistance is absolutely indispensable to the carrying of them out successfully. Fortune in this instance, however, favored me; for just as I had completed the arrangements necessary to the comfort of my horse, I saw Ned hurrying out of the yard in the direction of the township, which lay near by; no doubt to procure something eatable wherewith to supplement his stores. Seizing the opportunity, I lifted down the box, and hastily undid the fastening.

You would never guess upon what an article my eyes first rested under that prepared lid! No, not if you were guessing a whole month! It required all my strength of nerve, and two or three looks at Vino munching her feed into the bargain, to convince me that the thing was real, and that I was not fast asleep and dreaming, for it was neither more nor less than a wedding bonnet! Oh, yes! There could not be the slightest doubt of it; there was the white satin and delicate blonde, the soft, trembling feathers and the suggestive pure veil; and moreover, there were orange blossoms; and who, after that, could doubt that it was a wedding bonnet!

I took it gently up on my extended finger as carefully as if for the bridal of my intended herself; but the dainty bonnet was almost forgotten when my vision rested on the strangely dissimilar article that lay under it and was exposed when I abstracted the concoction of satin and blonde that I held on my finger. Lying comfortably on the bottom of the box was a six barreled revolver;

fresh and new it was, too; but alongside the pistol was a good roll of bank notes that were not fresh and new, but limp and well thumbed; and among which were ones, and tens, and fives; ay, and a fifty. Could anything beat that?

Twenty, forty, sixty, eighty, one hundred! Ten, thirty and fifty; hum, hum and fifty! Yes, two hundred and fifty notes, a revolver and a wedding bonnet! A wedding bonnet which at this stage of the proceedings in the stall was very inconveniently in the way of Vino's nose; for I had pitched it anywhere when my fingers closed over the cash! Alas! alas! what sentiment can stand between the hand and a roll of bank notes? The notes once counted, however, and safely stowed in my pocket, the bonnet was restored to its box, and if a straw or two did attach themselves to the soft blonde, were the dreams of the intended bride less sweet?

"And who the deuce can she be?" I wondered, as I hid the "find" far back in the loft; "and on what discovery am I about to stumble?" I went out and joined young Fenton, who was now returning to the barrack room.

"I hope I have not kept you waiting, Mark?" he said, as he deposited his purchases near to the eatables already on the table. "Did you find much difficulty in getting down the hay?"

"Oh, no! Where do you get your forage now? I have not seen such good hay since I left Nelson."

"Singer and I brought it from Kyama yesterday. It is first class, and we were deuced glad to get it, as Mehan's contract was up three weeks ago, and no one seems willing to supply us again at the price."

"Kyama? That's Capel's station, isn't it? Does he sell forage? I thought that it was cattle he entirely devoted himself to?"

"And so it is; my word, Captain Capel is too proud to deal in hay; but Inspector Hart and he are rather old acquaintances, and I ventured to ask him for some, as a great compliment. By the by, Mark, you've got orders to buy horses, have you not? Capel has a fine mob for sale; you might have the pick of them, I daresay."

"You seem to know all about Kyama, Ned?" I said, looking shyly at the handsome fellow, as I swallowed a glass of excellent pale ale. "Are there any young ladies there?"

Felton grew rosy red, to my astonishment, for, of course, I had but asked the question to gain some information as to the identity of the intended bride; but his reply was prompt enough to disarm a less suspicious man altogether.

"Young ladies! My word, yes, two of them, no less."

"Two! I thought Captain Capel was a widower, and the father of only a son?"

"You are quite right; but he has a ward, a lovely girl, who is to be married to young Capel as soon as he is of age."

“And the other and the second one?”

“Oh she’s a companion or something of that sort.”

“And pretty also, eh?”

“Yes, tolerably so, indeed,” stammered out Ned; “she is a very delightful girl; her name is Miss Tennant.”

“Oh!”

And that’s it, thinks I once more to myself, you’re in love and most likely fancy yourself beloved, and that accounts for the bright eyes and the loss of all your old melancholy! Well, God speed you, my lad, but whose is the wedding bonnet?

Ay, that was the question, sure enough—whose was the wedding bonnet? Surely it was beyond all doubt not the delightful Miss Tennant’s. Felton could have had no hand in the “plant” or he would never have permitted me choose my own truss from the loft; and, besides, where was he, poor devil, to get two hundred and fifty bank notes?

“Well, Ned,” I observed, as I finished my meal, “I think I’ll spell with you for a day or two, as Vino is really knocked up and I can have a look at Capel’s horses. But, I say, keep it quiet about my connection with the force; I often find it to my interest to remain unsuspected even when I have no particular case on hand.”

“All right, mate,” answered my hearty friend, “I guess you’ll find me quiet enough on the subject;” and he left the room to attend to some duty or other. Taking up my hat, I strolled up the scattered street with the idea of taking my first step towards finding an owner for the money I had so strangely discovered. Directing my steps to the principal hotel in the place, I entered a room and requested to see the landlord, who in a few moments joined me.

“Good day, sir; what can I do for you?”

“Take a seat, and answer me a question or two,” I replied. The straightforward business-looking owner of the house did so, and without a single expression of curiosity in his features.

“I hope you can keep a secret, Mr. Slate,” I continued, “for I am about to tell you one. I am an officer in the detective force, but I do not wish the fact to be known in this neighborhood at present.”

“It will not be known from me, you may depend upon it. It is impossible to say how soon I might be in need of your services on my own behalf.”

“Well, I am in possession of some notes which I want to trace back if I can. Are you in the habit of keeping any record of the numbers of bank notes that pass through your hands?”

“Only in case of the notes being above a five in value; when they are so, I inevitably take a note of the number I receive, as well as those I give in lieu of them.”

“An excellent method,” I exclaimed, in reply, “and if you would only be good enough to let me have a peep at your list, who knows but we might discover something.”

While the landlord was absent procuring the book in which he kept his numbers, I produced my bundle of notes and rapidly took their numbers and their banks. Scarcely had I completed and held the bit of memorandum in my hand, when Mr. Slate returned and opened the ledger he carried.

“If you would kindly read me the numbers commencing from to-day, and reading backwards for a few weeks, I will tell you if I recognize any.”

Mr. Slate did as I requested, but unsuccessfully for a dozen or two figures. At last, however, he read:—

“Stay, sir; that’s one of mine. Could you tell me to whom you gave that note?”

“Easily; it is marked here. I gave it in change, with the three following ones, to Constable Felton, about two weeks ago.”

“Constable Felton? Edward Felton, stationed here at Saltmarsh?”

“The same, sir. He wished change for a twenty dollar note, and I gave it to him.”

I leave you to conceive my state of bewilderment as, after gaining a little more information from the landlord, I took my slow and thoughtful way to camp. I had traced some of the notes safely enough to Ned Felton. Could it be possible that he had anything to do with the wedding bonnet? But no, it was not possible. I watched him carefully that night, and even took him into the stable to examine Vino’s condition, but I saw no consciousness whatsoever in poor, happy looking Ned’s countenance as I feigned to require some more hay, and knocked a trum down off the loft in my attempts to get it. Certainly, no man could have laughed so gaily at the fall as did Ned had he been aware of the hidden six-chambered revolver, the wedding bonnet and the 250 notes composing the “plant.”

I was all anxiety now to visit Kyama, never doubting but that I would manage to make some little discovery; and, intimating my intention to Ned before he mounted his horse to proceed on duty, I saddled Vino, and, leaving her in the stable, proceeded to settle another little piece of business before I started—and that was neither more nor less than the “planting of the plant.” I

was fearful lest my pretty “find” might be discovered in my absence, you see; and so looking right and left to see that the coast was clear, I carried the bonnet box, carefully enveloped in a sack, into a garden at the back, where Singer was raising some sickly cabbages, dug a hole and buried it. From my mentioning how carefully I covered the box ere I placed it in the ground, you may fancy I was afraid of the white article it contained being damaged; but if you did you would be mistaken, for it was the paper on the outside I wished to preserve, and Singer’s soil was rather damp.

The police station I was bound for was situated about five miles distant; the road to it lay through a pretty pastoral country stretching by the river. I had been at Captain Capel’s before, but that was some years ago, when I was in the mounted police, and I knew there was not the slightest chance of his recognizing either my name or person.

The house was a substantial and handsome stone building, facing the river, and built upon a slope, green with shrubberies. An avenue of poplars led to the entrance, and, following it, I found myself in a few moments under the portico of Kyama. I gave my card to the servant who answered the bell and requested to see Captain Capel on business. While I waited that gentleman’s convenience I tied my horse to the portico and ere I had done so Captain Capel joined me. After the ordinary greetings required by courtesy, I intimated my intention of purchasing horses, and the captain immediately ordered Vino to be stabled and requested me to enter and partake of some refreshment.

“If it will suit your convenience, captain,” I replied, “I should prefer first attending to business; afterwards, I shall have pleasure in partaking of your hospitality.”

“Certainly,” said he; “and, fortunately, the paddock is but a short distance from the stables, which you see yonder near the barns.”

The captain was a tall and still military looking man, and I was astonished to find him anything but the proud and reserved man I had decided him to be during my former short visit. Perhaps the difference between the social positions of a common “[tramp]” and a gentleman who intimated an intention of purchasing a dozen horses of good breeding might have accounted for the suavity with which the captain treated me; but, whatever was the reason, I found him disposed to be quite communicative and friendly.

His horses were really suitable, and in the course of a couple of hours I had chosen six, and decided upon leaving an inspection of the remainder till another day; the fact of the matter being that I wished to have an excuse for again visiting Kyama, and besides I was beginning to be uneasy about my present success. No sooner, however, had I completed my purchase, than I received a most pressing invitation from the Captain to stay and dine with him, to which invitation I acceded with delight.

I had not, as yet, seen a single member of the family save Captain Capel himself, and I was far from suspecting *him* to have anything to do with my wedding bonnet. Just, however, as we were returning towards the house a young man rode furiously to meet us, and without deigning the slightest notice to his father's companion, addressed the Captain abruptly:— "Father, have you positively been *selling* hay?"

"I have, Bob; why do you ask the question?"

"Well, it is a go!" said he, and the respectful youth turned his horse and left as suddenly as he had come.

During my short opportunity I had closely observed this young scion of the Capels, as I had no doubt he was, and I did not feel like honestly congratulating my host upon the possession of such an heir. He was an ill-tempered, obstinate looking youth, and withal had little stamp of the intelligence in his beetling brows and low forehead. As he spoke the words I have recorded and rode away, I sent a private and joyous opinion of my own after him. At last I saw a clue to the mystery.

"Yes, Mr. Bob, my hearty," I thought; "I think I could find an owner now for the wedding bonnet and the revolver; ay, and the two hundred and fifty flimsies into the bargain."

I noticed a cloud gather on the Captain's face as he looked after his son; and, as if under an irrepressible impulse, he turned away and addressed me:— "I wish I could see him learn to overcome that fiery spasmodic temper of his."

"Your son, I presume, Captain? Oh, time will settle all that for you! And you know that it is these strong willed youths that, properly trained and curbed, make the true heroes of life."

"Trus, sir, but the time is past now, I fear, for curb or bit. Robert will be of age the day after to-morrow. By the bye, we celebrate the occasion with a ball in my house; I trust your leisure will permit of your favoring us by your company."

I bowed and declared myself only too happy to accept the invitation.

"There he goes," said his father again with a sigh, as Mr. Robert sped down the poplar avenue like a shot; "off without the slightest intimation; but I hope everything from his marriage. Miss Seldon is the sweetest being in existence."

"Ah, there is a marriage in view, Captain?"

"Yes, I shall have the pleasure of introducing my ward and future daughter-in-law to you at dinner. John, show this gentleman to a room," and my host, consigning me to the care of a servant, left me.

I was conducted into a dressing room, and in one moment guessed that a mistake had been made by my conductor, and that I had been shown into the young gentleman's apartment. I was only too glad, however, to take advantage of it, and while I washed the dust of the road off my hands and face, I ruminated with delight upon the *second* discovery I had made. The first was the uneasiness of Mr. Bob at the sale of the hay, of which he had no doubt heard from one of the servants; and the second was the paper on the wall of his dressing room, which was the exact pattern of that upon the bonnet box.

"Well, Mark, my man," I soliloquized, "there's some fun in this; a sort of relief, you see, after more tragical duties; and nothing but scheming and counter-scheming in it as far as I can see yet. But *nous verrons*." Shortly afterward I joined Captain Capel, and after partaking of a light lunch, we sent a couple of hours in visiting the different hobbies of the good gentleman. It is not necessary here to state what they separately were; suffice it to say, that I was all anxiety for the dinner hour, in hopes of seeing Master Bob, and also having a look at the ladies.

Well, at length the hour did arrive, and I found myself seated at table, after being introduced to "Miss Seldon, my ward," and to "Miss Tennant." The latter introduction was performed rather stiffly by the Captain, and with an air of condescension that fully marked to the eye of a stranger the difference in the position of the two ladies in the house. I fear I shall be incapable of explaining my feelings as I took my seat opposite to the companion dubbed Miss Tennant. I was puzzled and bewildered, in fact, completely "flabbergasted," for in the airily dressed and affected young dame with the keen black eyes and demure mien before me, I recognized at the first glance an escaped prisoner and convicted thief!

I was conscious of making some replies to the garrulous Captain that were anything but to the point; and it was with a strong effort only that I resumed my ordinary self-possession, and managed to carry on a general conversation, pay proper attention to the "ladies," and at the same time not lose a movement or an expression, however fleeting, that passed over the countenance of Miss Tennant.

She was evidently quite uneasy at the absence of somebody, and I doubted not that the somebody was none other than Mr. Capel himself. Having become quite certain of her identity with the escaped prisoner I mentioned, you perceive I had in her former conduct a clue to the present "game" and could almost have sworn to it without further proof. Yes, Miss Tennant's was no doubt the wedding bonnet, and I was hard hearted enough to chuckle over my determination that she should never wear it.

In one feeling, however, I thoroughly sympathized with the fair dame during dinner, for I was quite as anxious to see Mr. Bob enter as she could be herself; it would have been worth something to me could I have had an opportunity of observing them together, but time passed, and the young hopeful did not arrive.



I have not described this daring adventuress to you, as yet, and perhaps you would like to know what appearance the most clever and unprincipled woman it has been my lot to encounter, in the United States Police Force, presented to the world. Well, she was of middle height, dark haired, and, as I have already stated, possessed of keen dark eyes, of which she knew how to make use on all occasions; but otherwise she was an ordinary, common place looking woman, of perhaps 25 years, and not possessed of the most distant approach to beauty, variously as tastes signify the term. Indeed, as I sat at the table, I caught myself wondering more than once what hidden attraction or fascination was about the creature, who seemed to have passed her womanhood in befooling and leading by the nose all the silly young men she had come in contact with. To do so is not a very difficult task, you may fancy, and yet experience tells us that it is not every woman who can accomplish even that.

Captain Capel treated Miss Tennant with invariable and cold politeness; and no one could fail to remark that her place as “companion” was rigidly defined by Miss Seldon also. The latter young lady was pretty, and a perfect gentlewoman; in fact a true type of American young lady; with the calm possession of a well bred woman, perfectly conscious of her position. I could not imagine how such a girl had reconciled herself to a union with a cub like Mr. Bob; but girls are puzzles, you know, and will no doubt remain so to the end of time.

Well, dinner was over, and I should never have sought the drawing room at all were it not for my anxiety to see this young man. I was in hopes that he might have joined the ladies, but I was disappointed. I found Miss Seldon alone, and decided upon making my adieu and returning to the camp; and so, having been favored with the tips of the young lady’s fingers, I made my retreat without sound of trumpet, as the captain had fallen asleep over his wine, and sought the stable quietly. It was fortunate I did so, for as I approached the door the sound of whispering voices arrested me, and I drew behind the wall silently.

“It’s an infernal business, that’s what it is, Liz! That cursed bonnet of yours and my father’s money—why, whoever finds them has the whole story at his finger’s ends!”

The voice was Mr. Robert’s, and from the sounds I guessed that he had just returned, and was stalling his horse.

“Oh! I shall be ruined if it is discovered, Robert!” gasped my fair lady. “I, who have only myself to depend on for my support; I shall be ruined, and your father will turn me out of the house.”

“Don’t cry, darling Liz” muttered the spooney; “only two nights more and I shall be independent. Never fear, my girl, nothing more and I shall be independent. Never fear, my girl, nothing shall harm you! It’s only that money I am afraid of, for, you see, I had no deuced right to take it.”

“Oh! oh!” thought I, as the pair of sweet ones stole out across the yard, “that’s the way of it, Master Robert, is it?” and Vino soon made the way short between Kyama and our police camp.

Fortunately for a determination that I had come to, Ned Felton was at home when I arrived. He was sitting by the fire in a thoughtful mood, apparently, and more like his old melancholy self than I had seen him since my arrival.

“Ned, my dear fellow,” I said, as I seated myself in his vicinity, “have you not had a visit from Mr. Robert Capel this afternoon?”

“Yes,” he replied, looking up inquiringly; “and I’ve been puzzling my brains over it ever since. What the mischief was he driving at?”

“‘Twas about the hay, wasn’t it?”

“Yes, and he seemed pleased when I told him that only one truss had been opened. When I asked what it was he told me that he’d call again, and that he had only lost something; then he was off like a shot.”

“Ha! I thought this young gentleman had lost something.”

“What was it? Do you know anything about it, Mark?”

“I do, Ned. Mr. Bob has lost a wedding bonnet and a revolver, and two hundred and fifty bank notes.”

“A wedding bonnet and a revolver. What ever do you mean?”

“My dear fellow,” I said kindly, drawing my chair closer to him, “I am afraid that I have alighted upon a discovery that will grieve you; but it is better to suffer from a friend than from Miss Tennant.”

“Miss Tennant?”

“Yes, am I mistaken in guessing that there is some intimacy between you and her? I am your sincere friend, Felton, and I do not ask the question from idle curiosity.”

“Miss Tennant has promised to become my wife, Mark,” was my mate’s faltering reply.

Entirely forgetting myself at this worse than confirmation of my fears, I could not suppress a little wrath as I replied, “she’s the very incarnation of everything that is abominable!”

“Mark! What’s that you say?”

“I tell you, it’s true, Ned; I wish to heaven it was not, for your sake,” I added, pitying from the bottom of my heart the poor, trustful young man whose eyes met mine with such a look of fear and anxiety; for surely no trial can be greater to a trusting and affectionate heart than to discover that its best feelings have been wasted upon a worthless object. I did not keep Ned in suspense. I told him the history of “Miss Tennant,” and my discovery of her recent plans; and I found that my old friend took the matter exactly as I would have wished him to do.

“The loss of hope is nothing,” he said bitterly; “it’s one’s pride that rebels at being made the dupe of such a creature. To think that I should have so befooled myself as to feel honored by the promise of *her* hand! I shall never forgive myself Mark, or her!”

“Don’t try it, my dear fellow,” I replied; “and as for your pride, console it by remembering that your Circe has befooled quite as clever and far more suspicious men than yourself. By hook or by crook, I shall manage it that you shall have the pleasure of putting handcuffs on the dame instead of a wedding ring.”

I was not very much surprised to see Captain Capel himself ride up to the police station on the following morning. He alighted from his horse hurriedly and hastily entered the room where I was engaged in breakfast. Now, my host of the previous day was not as yet aware that I was a detective; he simply had heard from my lips that I was connected with the force, and had too much politeness to ask in point blank in what capacity.

“Good morning, sir. I am an early visitor. Is Constable Felton at home? I have met with quite a misfortune and I fear in your line.”

“I am sorry to hear that, Captain. Felton is absent, but perhaps I may be of equal use. What is the difficulty?”

“I have lost two hundred and fifty notes; not a great sum, it is true, but more than I can at this moment spare. Indeed, to tell the truth, the two hundred and fifty dollars was not really mine, but a sum I had drawn at the request of my ward from her banking account.”

“Lost it, Captain? Do you mean mislaid it, or—”

“It has disappeared from my desk within the last week, and I must believe it has been stolen.”

“Well, console yourself, my dear sir, for I believe I have the very money in my possession at this moment. However, I cannot enter into any explanations now, but beg of you to be as silent as the grave upon the subject until after your birth-night ball. I have one request to make of you, Captain, and that is, that you will permit me to bring Constable Felton with me to your ball as a guest. I assure you that in plain clothes he will do your rooms no discredit, and in addition that he is as well born as yourself.”

“With great pleasure, sir,” replied the Captain, readily; “he is a very deserving young man, and I think I have observed that he and my ward’s companion are interested in each other. By all means bring Mr. Felton with you to Kyama.”

“Thank you, Captain; but permit me to correct your impression with regard to my friend Felton and Miss Tennant. I have good reasons to know that his heart is quite untouched in that direction.”

“Oh! I must have been mistaken, then!” replied the Captain gaily; “but how you can have discovered my lost money is more than I can possibly understand, sir.”

“Have patience, Captain,” I said, “and you will learn all. But the interests of justice, et cetera, you know; and be assured that to-morrow night you shall regain possession of your notes.” After a little more conversation the good gentleman took his departure.

I have not mentioned to you yet the way in which Ned accounted for some of the bonnet-box notes having passed through his hands.

It seems that Miss Tennant had requested him to get a twenty dollar note changed for her, stating that she had just received her half year’s salary. No doubt the \$20 had been given her for that purpose by Mr. Robert, who did not wish to be unprovided with small notes during their intended trip. Indeed that young “spooney” afterwards confessed to the fact, and told his father all about the arrangements they had made for a run-a-way marriage; and how they had depended upon his eventual forgiveness; for which, however, Miss Tennant did not care one straw, as Mr. Bob was independent in right of his late mother.

At last came the night of the ball at Kyama, and Ned Felton and myself found ourselves at a rather early hour in the centre of as brilliant a throng as the state of California could produce. Mr. Capel’s circle of acquaintance was a large one, and the fairer portion of it mustered largely; but among the array of females present none interested me so much as the clever object of my presence that evening. Miss Tennant was simply attired as became her station; but she had on some jewelry not unbecoming that of a duchess, and upon one article of it my eye pounced at once; I knew it at a glance. “Silly woman’s vanity!” I mentally exclaimed. “Not even the danger of detection and punishment could prevent you from displaying your superior ornaments.” I was proud of my mate, too; he looked every inch a gentleman in his plain clothes; but I could perceive that the “companion” recognized his presence with astonishment not unmixed with annoyance. As for Ned, he never looked at her, one might suppose, but devoted his attention to some young lady with whom he was acquainted.

Miss Tennant was, in short, rather in the shade, in spite of her jeweled ornaments. Mr. Robert was too much occupied in receiving numerous congratulations of the company, and too full, no doubt, of his newly attained majority to pay her any attention; and I could see a gleam of joy lighten her keen eye as I seated myself on the couch beside her, and commenced to do my

prettiest agreeable. She was all smiles and amiability, as I expressed my grief at not being an adept at the Terpsichorean art, and, of course, incapable of enjoying the irrepressible happiness of being her partner, if only for a single dance.

“What a beautiful bracelet, Miss Tennant,” I exclaimed, as I gently took possession of the round arm, upon which glittered an ornament of sapphires, with which I was well acquainted, having had its fellow in my possession for months. “Pray excuse my rudeness, but I am quite an enthusiast about gems, and these are indeed valuable.”

“Yes, I believe so,” was her simpering reply; “they are old family relics and belonged to my grandmother when our family was in better circumstances.”

“You are a fortunate young lady,” I said, insinuatingly; “I know a young gentleman who has bought a pair of bracelets here to-night for your acceptance, and I assure you they are very suitable ones.”

“For my acceptance? To whom do you allude, sir?”

“Ah, now, is it not unkind of you to affect ignorance of a poor fellow’s name when he is breaking his heart about you?” And I looked slyly at Ned Felton, who, as it happened, was regarding us at that moment uneasily. I made him a concerted signal, and offering my arm to Miss Tennant, in an insinuating manner requested her to take a turn with me on the verandah. To my great delight she assented; probably she was anxious to find out how much I knew of her engagement with young Felton.

“I have something very particular to communicate,” I added, as we stepped from the warm and crowded room into the pure light of a low and newly-risen moon. She looked at me inquiringly as she paused on the edge of the verandah, but started as she saw Felton approaching to my side.

“I have ventured to tell Miss Tennant that you intend offering her a pair of bracelets to-night, Felton,” I said, turning smilingly at my mate. I saw that his face was white in the moonlight, and that his lip trembled like a girl’s.

“I cannot do it, Mark,” he said, chokingly; “there they are” —and handing me his well-polished handcuffs, he turned hastily away. I caught the steel bracelets, and balancing them on my forefinger, by the aid of the connecting links, I looked into the face of Miss Tennant, whose arm I still firmly held. She was as pale as death; her eyes were distended, her teeth clattering. “Do you understand?” I questioned meaningly; but the unfortunate being was incapable of a reply. Perhaps I was cruel to her, but if ever a woman deserved it she did.

“You know *these* bracelets, Liz; you have worn them before, you know. But it was very foolish of you to put on Mr. Sinclair’s to-night, especially when a detective was one of the party! Yes, it is quite true, I am a detective, you have heard of me; haven’t you? ay, I thought so; well, Felton

has brought a conveyance for you, and we'll go now, and see you safely into it. Constable Singer will escort you to the lock-up; and we can manage our manners at leisure."

She never moved a lip in answer. Silently following my leading arm, she went by my side to the police cart that was in waiting behind the stable, and there I left her in Singer's charge until I procured from one of the unsuspecting servants a heavy mantle and a hat for Miss Tennant. Once having seen the conveyance *en route* for the camp, with the wretched woman safely inside, I returned to seem an interview with Captain Capel, my business in Kyama being satisfactorily accomplished.

When the Captain and myself were seated in his private room, to which he had at my request conducted me, I handed him the roll of notes which I had discovered in the bonnet box.

"I must apologize, Captain, for taking you from your duties as a host at such a time, but you will see that the business is pressing. I promised you your lost money to-night, there it is." And then I proceeded to make the astonished gentleman acquainted with the plot which had been laid against his peace under his own roof, and the character of one of the actors therein.

"And you really assure me that the creature who has so long resided under my roof had persuaded my fool of a son to—to—why, sir, it is almost more than mortal man can credit!"

"Nevertheless it is true, Captain; and not less, as I assure you, that the late Miss Tennant was convicted of theft under the name, or *alias*, of "Liz Porter." She had one of the stolen bracelets on to-night in your house; and it was from one of her protectors that she stole it, in company with many other valuable articles."

"What was her sentence?" inquired Captain Capel.

"Five years with hard labor, and she will do it now, if not with addition for her successful escape."

And she *aid*; that is to say, Liz Porter is "doing it" yet, and no one pities her.

We kept that wondrous box and the revolver as relics of the event. As for the wedding bonnet, I myself made it a present to a very pretty young lady, whom it became to a marvel. We do take such things upon us in the force sometimes.

I know you will be glad to hear that Felton has doffed the jacket. In consequence of several family deaths he is now the owner of his father's estate, and, residing in good style in Philadelphia, is as happy as he deserves to be. As for Kyama, I have never been there since, but I believe Mr. Bob still remains a bachelor, Miss Seldon having refused to have anything to do with him since the *expose*.

*New York Clipper*, 1 August 1868