

A Story of the Detective Police

Some time since a quantity of planks of iron was placed across the rails of the London and North Western line near Cheddington station. Fortunately, however, the malicious intention of the party was frustrated by a timely discovery of the plot, and the obstructions were removed before a train came up. The usual steps were taken to discover the perpetrators of the inhuman act, but without effect; as, however, strong suspicions were entertained that the individual resided in the neighborhood, and might make another attempt, the authorities resolved not to let the matter pass by with impunity. Accordingly other means were employed, which eventually proved successful. Some weeks ago an itinerant vender of matches and other small ware appeared in the neighborhood of Chaddington station, and took up his abode at Ivinghoe. No suspicions were attached the new comer, and he plied his humble calling, which he facetiously dignified with the title of "timber merchant," without molestation. By degrees he visited all the beer houses in the neighborhood, and his acquaintance with the class of persons who frequented them became rather on an extensive scale. Being of a sociable and communicative turn, he became a general favorite at taproom carousals. In this way matters continued for some weeks, when one morning the tranquility of the locality was somewhat disturbed by the apprehension of two men named Prior and Newns on a charge of having placed the obstructions mentioned above on the London and North Western Railway with a malicious intent. They were taken before the magistrates, and to their astonishment found in the person of their accuser the venerable "matchman" transformed into a London detective. The officer, it appears, had performed his part remarkably well. On all suitable occasions he contrived to introduce some topic about the railway, and during the conversations allusion was generally made to the late attempt at Cheddington. By great tact and perseverance, to be found only amongst the class to which he belonged, he managed to collect a mass of "little facts and corroborations," and, having completed the chain of evidence to the proper point, had the men named above taken into custody. The hearing was adjourned until Monday last, when the prisoners were again taken before the magistrates at Ivinghoe and committed for trial at the next Buckinghamshire quarter sessions. — *Bedford, England, Times*.

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