

Matching a Button

by Mary Lee

Mr. Amos Smithers was a jeweler on Main street, Marysville, which is, as you know, a flourishing town in one of the Middle States. Mr. Amos Smithers's shop had been broken open the night before, and he was now holding a consultation with Detective Drake, who was examining into the matter with an eye to every detail of the case. But there seemed to be no clue to the robber.

"The thing has been very neatly done," said Detective Drake. "An old hand, I should say."

"I don't see how we all slept through it," said Mrs. Smithers, who had come into the shop and taken a seat. She was a pretty, well-dressed woman, with decidedly more pretension about her than her husband. Their daughter Elsie stood behind Mrs. Smithers's chair, also pretty, also well-dressed, and with that indescribable attractiveness about her that is sure to win its possessor friends all over the world.

"Bless you, mother, these fellows are as quiet as cats. They turned the gas on, too. There it was at full glare, when Dick came in this morning to open the shop."

"What is your estimate of your loss, Mr. Smithers?" asked the detective.

"Two thousand five hundred might cover it," Mr. Smithers said, ruefully.

"A very neat job," repeated the detective, in a tone of veiled admiration; "never remember to have seen a neater."

He was rummaging behind the counter at this moment. He picked up a button.

"Is this yours?" he asked, holding out a button.

Mr. Smithers peered at it from under his spectacles.

"That?" with some contempt. "Not that I know of. At all events, I will not put in a claim."

It was in fact a common coat button. It was gray. It had a metal rim, and the centre was a gray figured silk. The detective continued to eye it curiously.

"You are sure this is not yours?"

"Well—yes—I am."

"I am quite sure," asserted Mrs. Smithers. "This button evidently came off a gray overcoat. It is an overcoat button. Mr. Smithers never had a gray overcoat in his life."

“You spoke of Dick. Perhaps he may have lost it.”

Dick came in at that moment. He had been sweeping off the sidewalk.

“Did you ever see this button before, Dick?” inquired Mrs. Smithers, taking it from Mr. Drake and holding it up.

“Never did, ma’am.”

“Pity about that,[”] remarked Mr. Drake, whereupon Dick took the button, looked it over carelessly, with the air of one who suspected there might be “millions in it.” But, after all, he handed it to the detective with a regretful sigh. “Never saw it before,” he repeated.

“Ask Mr. Young,” suggested Mr. Drake, nodding towards the deaf clerk who was employed at a little stand in a corner behind the counter, mending jewels.

“Did you lose this button, Mr. Young?” Dick bawled in his ear.

Mr. Young lifted his pale, patient face, took in the purport of the inquiry, [but] shook his head.

“I may make something of this,” Mr. Drake said, taking out a leather pocket-book, into which he dropped the button. “At all events, it is only the clue I have come upon.”

“You think the robber must have lost it?” asked Mr. Smithers.

“He *may*. There’s no telling. Of course people were coming in and going out of the store all day yesterday, and the button may have dropped then, and been carried behind the counter. It’s even odds, I should say, that it was dropped last night. Still, there’s no harm in my keeping it in my eye. Mr. Smithers, have you made out your inventory? I’ll take that with me, and we’ll try to spot some of the articles if they should be sold. But the thieves are more likely to melt them up.”

“Yes, here’s the inventory,” said Mr. Smithers, as nearly as I can make it out. Mr. Drake, you’ll let us hear from you?”

“O, certainly, certainly. Good morning, ladies. Good morning, Mr. Smithers,” and exit Mr. Drake.

“If any one can throw any light on the subject, Mr. Drake is the man.” Mr. Smithers said, turning to his wife and daughter, when they were alone— Dick having accompanied Mr. Drake to the sidewalk, whence his admiring gaze followed the detective until he was out of sight; and Mr. Young being as good as nobody.

“I’m sure I hope he will,” sighed Mrs. Smithers. “It’s too bad. I suppose it will keep us at home all the summer.”

“Ah, well, there might be worse things than being in one's own home all the summer,” said Elsie cheerfully. “Plenty of fans and ice cream. *I shan't* mind, and if you should give out, mother, we will pack you off to the seashore, and father and I will keep house together.”

“I firmly believe Mr. Drake will succeed in clearing up the mystery,” said Mrs. Smithers, rising with an air of decision. “I can't help feeling so,” and Mrs. Smithers, looked as much relieved as though her presentiments had been realities. “Come, Elsie, let's go upstairs. We have wasted two hours, at least.”

The mother and daughter returned to their own portion of the establishment. They had very pleasant rooms over the store, which Mr. Smithers had long wished to exchange for a house, in a more fashionable locality; but she had hitherto been unable to induce her husband to agree with her. To tell the truth; he had something like a very romantic attachment for the airy, bright rooms, where he had brought home his spoiled, pretty wife; where his darling Elsie had grown up; and where, now that he was growing older and less active, he was so near to his place of business. It made him homesick to think of being away two children—for he had always thought of his wife as the same girl he had married—during the whole long day. As it was, he could step in and out very conveniently.

“Yes. Here we shall be all through the hot weather, I've no doubt,” said Mrs. Smithers, taking up again the burden of her lamentation. “Now, how different it would be if your father had done as I wished, and settled down in a nice little house on Park Avenue. If we had *spent* this money, it wouldn't have been there to be stolen.”

“O now, mother, father must have had his stock all the same. He wouldn't have paid for the house with the things in the store.”

“How do you know he would not? That is just like you, Elsie. Anything for an argument! You seem to forget that my object in wishing to live out of this region of the town is to give you pleasant associations. You can't expect to have any society as long as you are cooped up in this shabby old place.”

“But I think I have society, mother.”

“I don't agree with you. You don't know any of the fashionable people at all. Nor ever will, until we move.”

“Then I'm sure I don't care to know them—if they come to see not me but the house I live in.”

“No, Elsie, that is not it. They come to see [if] you live in their part of the town, and it does not take half the day to hunt you up.”

“I am quite satisfied to know people who are willing to take a little trouble on my account,” said Elsie, with her sweet-tempered laugh.

“O, well, Elsie, you always try to talk me down. I'm sorry you can't be made to realize your own interests.”

[“]Now, mother, you know that father and you decided some time ago, that it was for our interests for us to stay just here for awhile. Besides, mother, I don’t believe we should really enjoy it if we were to push our way into another set. I had a great deal rather stay where I am known and wanted. Our acquaintances are not exactly elegant, but they are none of them vulgar, and it is a privilege to talk to some of father’s friends. Father is so intelligent and well read himself that he is not satisfied with less than that in his friends.”

“O, well, I suppose I am peculiar,” Mrs. Smithers said. This was a phrase of hers in which she took a good deal of comfort. She was convinced she was formed of finer clay than most people. “I suppose I am peculiar. I require more than you do. I am tired to death of commonplace people.”

“I am so sorry I am commonplace,” said Elsie, kissing her. “I know I am, so don’t attempt to deny it.”

“No, I won’t have you say so. But you are absolutely without ambition. I don’t understand it in a daughter of mine.”

Elsie said to herself that she had ambitions. In fact, I should be sorry to have her for my heroine, had she not had them. No girl should be without ambition.

That day, at dinner, Mr. Smithers announced that he had a call from a young man who had brought him a letter of introduction from his cousin, Judge Keene, in New York. “Gardiner Welles,” said Mr. Smithers; “quite a fine-looking fellow. I invited him to take tea with us tonight. I think you’ll like him, mother.”

“A young man?”

“Twenty-six or so, I should say. Talks well. I think you’ll be apt to like him. I’m not sure about Elsie. I think she likes something quieter.”

Mr. Welles put in an appearance at the hour named by Mr. Smithers. Mrs. Smithers, as her husband had predicted, was charmed with him. He was decidedly agreeable. He was up in the light literature of the day. He was exceedingly fluent; and it was unnecessary to do more than lean back and listen to him. Elsie, too, found this exceedingly pleasant; all the more so, because Mr. Welles’ admiration of her was most open and undisguised; mutual admiration is not an unusual phenomenon.

Of course the subject of the robbers came up. Mrs. Smithers gave a most eloquent sketch of the facts as far as known—as we are aware, meagre enough. How the store had been rifled in the night. How the only clue to the robbers was a button, which had been picked up by the detective, and which he had kept, as of possible use.

“What kind of button?” inquired Mr. Welles.

“A gray button, half metal, half silk.”

“Mr. Drake is very sharp. Depend upon it, he will make something out of it,” said Mr. Smithers. “Mother, another cup of tea, if you please.”

“May I inquire, does Detective Drake imagine that the man who lost that button has the monopoly of that particular style?” said Mr. Welles.

Elsie laughed.

“Do you know I had never thought of that?”

“Drake is all right. Drake is not to be caught napping. He had his own notions about it.”

“I dare say,” agreed Mr. Welles, airily.

His manner to her father was the one thing about him which displeased Elsie. It was undoubtedly patronizing. To her mother and to herself he was deference itself.

After tea, Mr. Smithers settled down to his newspapers, and Mr. Welles devoted himself to the ladies. When he rose to take leave, Mrs. Smithers urged him to come to see them soon again. Mr. Welles thanked her, warmly, and bowed most gallantly over her hand.

“He is perfectly charming!” pronounced Mrs. Smithers. “Don’t judge by the outside, mother. Friends are like wine—the better for keeping.”

“I trust I have some discrimination, Amos. I was never more prepossessed in my life—never. He is evidently a man accustomed to the very best society. I never saw such manners in my life. Really distinguished!”

“Yes, I told you you would like him.” It sometimes occurred to Mr. Smithers to be amazed that his wife had ever fancied him—poor, plain, uninteresting Amos Smithers—when she was so fully alive to attractions like those of Mr. Welles.

Meanwhile Mr. Welles sauntered home, or rather to the room in the third story of the principal Marysville hotel, which he shared with a friend. The friend was sitting up smoking.

“Hullo! How are you, old fellow?” cried the latter. “Make yourself at home. Sit down. Glad to see you. How did the tea-party go off?”

“Very well. The daughter is the sweetest girl I’ve seen for an age. I mean to go in for her. The old people were uncommonly civil, too. Really I couldn’t have done better for myself. It was by the merest accident I found that Judge Keene was the old man’s cousin; it was a lucky thought of mine to write a letter from him introducing myself. Smithers probably doesn’t hear from his cousin very often. Swallowed the whole thing, handwriting and all. I had to guess at that; but those old lawyers all write pretty much the same kind of scratch.”

“Anything said about last night?”

“O, yes. We discussed it. Ha! ha! ha!”

“Ha! ha! ha!”

“You owned up, I suppose?”

“O, yes! I owned up.”

“Well, I must be off in a day or two. In fact I’ve a notion of going tomorrow. You have this plan of going into the milling business here. I wish you joy of it, but it’s too slow work for me. So we’ll divide the spoils, and say adieu for awhile. Yes, I think I’ll be off tomorrow. I rather expect you’ll be after me before long.”

“I may, and I may not. I’m to have the mill by paying twelve hundred dollars down. Then I must find some respectable citizen to go on my note. That took me to old Smithers tonight. I heard he was a respectable citizen with ready money and an obliging disposition. Otherwise I might have hesitated to present myself—so soon again.”

“Do you believe he’ll go on your note?”

“Yes, I do; that is, if Mrs. Smithers has any influence with her lord and master. O, I’ll come out all right!”

“I’ve no doubt of it. I suppose I am to take the spoils with me to New York and convert them into ready money, as agreed?”

“Yes, there’s no other way. We can’t dispose of them here.”

“I’ve decided. I leave tomorrow.”

“All right. By the way, Rob, suppose you take that gray overcoat of mine with you. You always liked it; I’m tired of it.”

“Sam, you are liberality itself. You—you overwhelm me. Still, I will nerve myself to accept your offer. Having been hard up for some months, my wardrobe is at a very low ebb. Where is the garment? I’ll try it on.”

“It’s a capital fit. There’s one button gone, you see, by the way. I’m sorry for that. You had better get another if you can match it, and make yourself as respectable as circumstances will admit of.”

“Thank you, thank you. It’s well to make a fair outside show, I suppose. See here, Sam, you’ll have to foot my expenses to New York.”

“O, of course. Mind that button.”

“You seem to be possessed about that button. I should never have noticed it.”

“Mind you notice it now.”

Mr. Gardiner Welles desired to get rid of his overcoat without getting his friend into trouble, if he could help it, and at the same time do his friend a good turn.

Bright and early the next day, Frank was whirled out of Marysville. He wore the gray overcoat. He was standing on the platform of a car with a cigar in his mouth, as the train slowly moved out of the depot, when Detective Drake’s eye fastened on him as if by intuition. He quickened his steps. He stood for a brief second in front of Frank—long enough to see that the top button of his coat was wanting. Just then the locomotive gave a shrill whistle, and the train tore away. But Mr. Drake had taken an instantaneous mental photograph of him. He turned away bitterly disappointed, to be sure, that he had arrived just too late, but he telegraphed direct to New York, and along the route, directing the authorities there to be on the lookout for a person answering the description he gave. As luck would have it, however, he took off his coat before he arrived in New York, and strapped it up with its brown lining exposed to view. So Detective Drake was checked. Frank strolled unmolested to his lodgings, that night put himself in communication with his mates, and before noon of next day had converted Sam’s share of Mr. Smithers’ wares into hard money, which he forthwith transmitted to the former gentleman. His own share he laid away for a while. He received an intimation that silver ware would sell better in a short time than it was doing at present.

After that he had no news of his friend Sam for some time. [Their] worthies were of the opinion that it was safer not to communicate with each other through the medium of the United States mails. Occasionally Frank would skim the personals of the Herald, on the lookout for a message from Sam; but without avail. Meanwhile, warmer weather came, and he laid aside the gray overcoat which still continued to be minus a button.

As the days and weeks slipped by, and Detective Drake failed to throw any light on the robbery, Mr. Smithers lost faith in his sagacity, to a certain extent. Especially as his wife openly sneered at him, and Elsie gently disagreed with him when he ventured to chant the praises of the detective’s sharpness.

As for the new friend of the family, Mr. Gardiner Welles, he made all manner of fun of Mr. Drake and his button. Finally, Mr. Smithers avoided the subject, and even avoided Mr. Drake when he met him on the street, feeling that he had—perhaps unwittingly—misled him. Mr. Drake was equally reluctant to enter into conversation with Mr. Smithers. His professional pride was touched; he had never been more entirely off the scent than in this case. It was really a relief to his feelings when he was transferred to duty in New York. Who knew? He might yet match that gray button in a wider field.

Mr. Smithers certainly liked Mr. Gardiner Welles no better on further acquaintance than at their first interview, when he had secretly distrusted the man. Still he had absolutely no reasons to offer for his dislike. He had come to him on an unquestionable recommendation. His wife and

daughter endorsed him. From all that he could learn, his habits were good, and he possessed talent and enterprise. In fact, urged by Mrs. Smithers, he had consented to go on Mr. Welles' note for one thousand dollars. Practically, he stood sponsor for him to the community. People always spoke of Mr. Welles to Mr. Smithers as your friend—which Mr. Smithers always felt disposed to dispute, and yet never did, chiefly because Mr. Welles was the friend of his wife and daughter.

He was doing well with his mill. Everything seemed to favor him, and the day came, when somewhat to Mr. Smithers' surprise, and greatly to Mrs. Smithers' self-gratulation, he paid the note endorsed to our worthy jeweler. After that he was more patronizing and supercilious than ever; he had before this made an effort to veil his contempt for Mr. Smithers; he apparently considered himself absolved from any such obligation now.

In this he certainly played his cards badly as far as Elsie was concerned. She might otherwise have been carried away by Mr. Welles' excellent acting. But she argued that there must be something radically wrong about a man who could treat an older man and a man so gentle as her father, and so good, with disrespect. When she spoke to her mother about this, however, Mrs. Smithers professed surprise.

“Good gracious, child, I have not noticed anything out of the way in Mr. Welles' manner. And I'm sure, he is politeness itself to me. Always rises when I come into the room, and remains standing until I am seated.”

“Yes; I think that is very disagreeable—and unnecessary. There is a formality about it I dislike. You might prefer to remain standing or to walk about.”

“Nonsense. Mr. Welles knows about those things.”

“No more than any sensible person.”

“Now, Elsie, I see how it is. You will allow your father's prejudices to influence you to refuse an advantageous offer. This Mr. Welles is quite out of the common run. You are very fortunate to have met him. He really belongs to a different—a better—set than ours.”

“I am not so sure of that.”

“Elsie! His manners—”

“His manners remind me of those of the men I've seen on the stage. The fine gentleman, you know. He seems to be acting a part.”

In truth, Mr. Gardiner Welles was chiefly indebted for his manners to a stage education. And it certainly required all the superficial polish thus acquired to overlaying the roughness and coarseness of certain other associations of his.

One day Mr. Welles asked Mrs. and Miss Smithers to come out to his mill on a tour of inspection. He agreed to call for them himself and drive them out. Mrs. Smithers agreed delightedly, as she was very apt to do to any proposition of Mr. Welles. Elsie demurred. She began to have misgivings now as to accepting any overture from Mr. Welles. She realized that at this stage of their acquaintance, small things given “meant great things at a distance.”

Which great things she had not the faintest intention of yielding up to Mr. Gardiner Welles, or any one resembling him.

However, she went with her mother to the mill. It was a charming bright day, and Mr. Welles brought a pair of fast black horses, and they soon put the road between Marysville and the mill. As their light wagon drew up, a heavy farmer’s wagon loaded with bags of flour was also in front of the great door. In the driver, Elsie recognized an acquaintance, who forthwith sprang off his seat, and hastily tying his horses, rushed up to shake hands with Elsie.

“O, Ross!”

“O, Elsie!”

“Where did you come from?”

“From Yale two or three days ago. I am hard at work now, doing anything that comes to hand. So glad to be at home. Would have been to see you, but father is short of hands, and I am supplying the deficiency.”

“Do come as soon as you can. Mr. Welles, this is my friend Mr. Nolan. Mother, don’t you see Ross?”

Mr. Welles bestowed a very supercilious greeting upon Ross, whom he took for a country farmer not worth being civil to. Mrs. Smithers shook hands with indifference; but Ross was not rebuffed. He joined the party and escorted Elsie through the mill, and he and she laughed and talked nonsense together, as she certainly never laughed and talked with Mr. Gardiner Welles.

[“]So Mr. Welles is a friend of yours?” Ross inquired, presently.

“Yes and no. A friend of father’s—and mother’s.”

“I was rather surprised to hear it. Where did Mr. Smithers pick him up, do you know?”

“He brought a letter from Judge Keene in New York.”

“I am still more surprised. How on earth did he know Judge Keene?”

“What on earth do you mean by all these dark suggestions? And in the man’s own mill, too!”

“You are sure he is not a particular friend of yours?”

“Positive.”

“I’ll tell you then that there are very queer stories about in reference to this gentleman. They say that he has been quite conspicuously before the public in his day; that he was tried for forgery upon one occasion, and was sentenced to the penitentiary. Afterwards his time was commuted.”

“Who says so?”

“Several persons have told me the story. He has been recognized, you see. His trial took place in the West, six years ago. He must have been a mere boy then, judging by his present appearance.”

“I think it is very strange that no one gave father an inkling of this.”

“O, I don’t know. What is everybody’s business is nobody’s business. Besides, these were only rumors. Persons may have been misled by a resemblance.”

“Mother will never believe it. But I am almost positive father has never really liked the man.”

“I should never have told you, but that you looked so indignant when I asked if Mr. Welles was a friend of yours. I was sure that you would not be hurt at anything I might say about him.”

“Hurt! No. But I am Shocked. It seems so dreadful to have had him with us so much—coming in and out, and mother actually looking up to him on account of his superior breeding. He has played his part very well, if he *is* an imposter.”

“Acting is part of his profession. By-the-way, he was on the stage at one time—minor parts in minor theatre; but perhaps he acquired a certain amount of address in that way.”

“They are coming this way—he and mother. I don’t feel as though I could possibly speak to him. I shall show in my face that I’ve heard something.”

“O, no, you won’t. You will discover what an easy thing it is to smile and be a villain. He will never guess that I have been enlightening you.”

Mr. Welles and Mrs. Smithers approached. Mrs. Smithers was in quite a flutter of enjoyment; the pleasant drive, her companion, her sense of importance as being the friend of so charming a person as he on whose arm she leaned. “I feel thoroughly posted,” she averred, as she joined Elsie. “I am prepared to go into the milling business forthwith.” Elsie smiled faintly. “Are you ready to go now” she asked.

“Yes, I believe we are,” Mr. Welles replied, as though addressed. “Miss Elsie, pardon me, but you look pale.”

“I am perfectly well. This noise confuses me. I would rather be in the air.”

Mr. Welles shrugged his shoulders, as though marveling at her lukewarmness. He had a marked way of shrugging his shoulders, by-the-by. Also, his walk was peculiar. Partly owing to the tight boots he always wore, he was very unsteady on his feet. Perhaps he had endeavored to cultivate an airy, off-hand carriage, but the result was not satisfactory.

As they drove off, Mr. Welles remarked:

“A rustic swain, Miss Elsie?”

“You will have to translate,” Elsie said, shortly.

“My dear Elsie?” remonstrated Mrs. Smithers.

“O, I beg pardon. I had no idea the gentleman was such a particular friend.”

“Yes. He is a very old friend indeed. We have known each other all our lives.”

“My inquiry is answered. You admit that he is a swain. And there is no doubt about his being a *rustic* one.”

“I should say so,” added Mrs. Smithers. “Really, Elsie, I wonder what you can see in that young man. He is certainly to the last degree ordinary looking.”

“He is certainly utterly without pretensions, mother.”

“O, well, you would insist upon liking him it only for the sake of opposition.”

Elsie wisely let the matter drop. After all, she felt that Ross’s merits could take care of themselves. But when they were at home, and Mr. Welles had driven away with an airy bow, she unbosomed herself to her mother of her conversation with Ross. Mrs. Smithers was highly indignant. “It is abominable slander and falsehood,” she cried. “I wonder that you could listen to such lies. It was nothing in the world but a piece of malice on Ross’s part. Off course you know, as I know, that he has always been in love with you, and now he is jealous of Mr. Welles—and I’m not surprised he should be.”

“Good gracious! Mr. Welles is not fit to hold a candle to Ross!”

“Do you mean to say that, if you had to choose between two men—”

“Mother, I can’t discuss it. As far as I know, Ross has only a friendly regard for me.”

“It is to be hoped he would not presume—”

“Oh, mother! Why, Ross would take rank by his talents *anywhere*. One of these days he will quite look down upon a poor little country girl like me.”

“I detest mock humility.”

“I am in dead earnest.”

“Then you are very silly. However, Elsie, I request, as a particular favor, that you will not repeat a particular favor, that you will not repeat this ridiculous rigmarole about Mr. Welles to your father.”

“But I think he ought to know. You and I don’t know anything about his business affairs, and I’m so afraid that he *is* involved, or will become involved with Mr. Welles in money transactions. I want to warn him.”

This impressed Mrs. Smithers. Still she persisted.

“Let *me* tell your father, Elsie. Whatever may come of it, I see no necessity for an open rupture at present. Really, one would suppose that you had your father’s interests more at heart than *I* have.”

Elsie looked perfectly wretched. Just then her father came into the parlor. Elsie put her arms around her mother and kissed her.

“Then you’ll be sure to tell him precisely as I have told you?”

“Yes, yes,” Mrs. Smithers said; and Elsie left the room, under the impression that her mother meant to make the communication then and there.

But somehow Mrs. Smithers did not. She determined to use her own judgment, to inquire around, to ascertain facts, before she alarmed her husband unnecessarily.

Detective Drake had, meanwhile, been very successful in his new field in New York rapidly acquired a reputation. But not all his successes could banish from his mind the recollection of the failure he considered he had made in the Smithers’ case. His one hope was to come across Frank again, but in this he was unsuccessful.

It was not until nearly a year had gone by since the robbery of Mr. Smithers’ store, that he took up his abode in New York, rather low in his funds and low in his mind. He was finding it harder than usual to live by his wits. He had applied to his friend Sam for assistance, but Sam, through the medium of Mr. Gardiner Welles, had snubbed him most mercilessly. Sam was in respectable society now, and he was determined to see as little as possible of his former chum.

One night, Detective Drake dropped into the Union Square Theatre. As luck would have it, Frank had treated himself to an evening with Col. Sellers on the same occasion. He was sitting in the front row of the second gallery when the detective made him out, and started with pleasure. He had never forgotten his face. He was charmed to see him. At last he was on the track! Here was the man who had Marysville dressed in the gray overcoat minus a button, two days after the Smithers’ shop was entered. The detective sauntered up stairs and took a seat behind Frank. That individual laughed uproariously over Col. Sellers. Though down in the world, he still contrived to purchase an occasional fit of hilarity in this way. He was alone. When the play was over, he rose and sauntered off with [his] hands in his pockets of that identical gray overcoat.

The detective followed him. Frank turned down a side street, and walked along until he came to a pawnbroker's shop. The detective followed him into the shop, willing to pawn his own watch if it were necessary to manufacture an excuse for his being there. Frank drew out of his pocket a case of morocco, which he opened and displayed a dozen chocolate spoons of a peculiar fashion.

The detective's quick eye recognized them immediately as having been in the inventory given him by Mr. Smithers. In fact Frank had not yet parted with the plate and jewelry which had fallen to his lot. He had pawned and then redeemed piece after piece; but he had never sold. He had been waiting for that rise in trade I have hinted at above.

The detective arrested Frank, and lost no time in ferreting out the matter which had so long lain heavy on his soul. As a matter of course, Frank secured better terms for himself by implicating Sam; in consequence of which Mr. Drake lost no time in posting down to Marysville, and laying a warning hand on the shoulder of Mr. Gardiner Welles.

Both he and Frank were brought to justice. When it am to the point, Elsie could not help being sorry—"Just as Mr. Welles had taken an honest step or start in life." But, strictly speaking, *was* it an *honest* one, Elsie? It was made off the proceeds of the burglary of Mr. Smithers' shop.

After all, I am afraid, not much could be urged in Mr. Gardiner Welles' favor, not even by his great admirer, Mrs. Smithers. In fact, that good lady found it expedient to have very little to say on the subject. Certainly, her husband had not her to thank that he was not seriously involved in the downfall of the graceful Gardiner. However, the Smithers have one and all resolved to forget their disreputable acquaintance with all the speed that may be. Not even Ross Nolan ever breathes his name.

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