

A Detective Story
by H. B. S.

McNab was a detective and the shrewdest of his race.
No rival wight possessed his skill in working up a case.
A crime that baffled the police to him was merely fun,
He often knew the criminal before the crime was done.

Whenever any personage so far forgot himself
And had such vulgar manners as to kill a man for pelf,
They always called McNab, the most sagacious of his breed,
To ascertain the gentleman who did the bloody deed.

So, when a man concocted a most clever plan to steal
By adding strychnine to a fellow-creature's frugal meal,
They called McNab and said: "Go find this erring person, do;
He is a man of middle age, whose optics both are blue."

McNab replied: "With such a clew to find him I'll engage.
If he is, as you say, a blue-eyed man of middle age.
His azure orbs and middle age will be the damning facts
By which I'll bring the gentleman to answer for his acts.

The parson of the parish was a man of most pronounced
Blue eyes and middle age; so on him our detective pounced.
"Ha, ha!" he cried, with proper pride, "the wretched creature scan!
Behold his eyes – his middle age!" But he was not the man.

McNab, of course, apologized; then, going to the street,
The Bishop – middle-aged – he chanced by accident to meet.
"Those eyes!" cried he, and straightway for the portly Bishop ran,
And brought him into court in chains; but he was not the man.

He shadowed next an infant who had optics Prussian blue
And was as middle aged as one could find a child of two.
With circumstantial evidence convincing he began –
The infant proved an alibi; so it was not the man.

"Aha!" said he, "I know a maid with eyes ultra marine;
Such striking middle-age, methinks, I ne'er before have seen."
He drove the spinster through the streets within the prison van;
She proved her eyes were gray, and so she could not be the man.

At last one day while gazing in the mirror he observed
His own blue eyes and middle age, and he became unnerved.
He said: "Such damning evidence 'twere useless to dispute

And I must be the man, or, maybe I should say, ‘the brute.’”

And then he put the handcuffs on his unaccustomed wrists,
And on the law’s severest kind of penalty insists.
His reputation thus he saved; his conscience, too, was eased;
They hanged him, as he wished them to, and Justice then was appeased.
--H.B.S. in *Rambler*

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Macon [MS] Beacon, March 20, 1886

The Bolivar [TN] Bulletin, March 26, 1886

The Sedalia [MO] Weekly Bazoo, June 1, 1886