

A Fly-leaf from a Detective's Note Book

Do you remember the mystery I was engaged in solving when we last met? Well, I will tell you the sequel. Mrs. A., you recollect, lost the ring, and Nellie —— was suspected of stealing it. The morning after the ball, while sleeping in her own chamber, the ring was removed from her finger without arousing its owner. No one but Nellie had access to the apartment, and she must have taken it. So thought Mrs. A., so thought her husband, and so thought I, when I was sent for and given the points in the case, before being employed to work it up. The ring was set with diamonds, a cluster of exceeding brilliancy and richness. Its value could not have been less than \$600.

Nellie was employed as Mrs. A.'s waiting maid, at wages which in four years would scarcely aggregated the value of the diamonds. Every stone in the set was worth a year of Nellie's life and labor, albeit neither nor all of them could have dropped a single drop of water on a parched tongue, or stroked a fevered brow when it was racked with pain. At the instance of Mrs. A., Nellie was arrested, upon the accusation of stealing the ring. She protested her innocence in tears, but all circumstances looked so strongly towards her guilt, her tears were unavailing.

I followed her to jail, and at my suggestion she was assigned a cell by herself. The next day I visited her, and by every means I dared to employ sought to gain from her a confession. At length I attempted to intimidate her, and harshly charged her with the theft. Again she burst into tears, and hiding her face in her hands, wept as though her heart would break. Here the matter ended, for I could go no farther. I had forgotten to tel you before that Nellie was handsome, and she never seemed so beautiful in my eyes as when the tears were falling from her own, in a shower of diamonds, every one of them more precious than those I was after. I left the cell completely baffled. Although I never told as much to Mrs. A., or intimidated as much to Nellie, I was satisfied of her innocence, and forthwith turned my efforts in another direction. I continued my visits to Nellie, in her cell day after day, but never afterwards alluded to the ring.

A week had passed, and I had all but given up the job in despair. Finally one morning early, while loitering down a certain street in the direction of the river, I instinctively paused under three balls and began closely scrutinizing a display of pledges in the window of my uncle's shop. In an instant my eye singled out a whole case of rings one of which I thought might be, and which, as fortune would have it, proved to be identically that stolen from Mrs. A.'s finger. I had little difficulty in tracing out the theft. It was Mrs. A.'s own son. To satisfy a debt, contracted during a debauch, he had taken it from his mother's finger while sleeping and pawned it.

But how about Nellie? you ask. She too was guilty of a theft, but I forgave her. *She is now my wife.*

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