

Claude Melnotte as a Detective

by Allan Pinkerton

CHAPTER I.

LATE one evening in the fall of 1854, I was seated in my private office in Chicago, smoking a cigar, preparatory to going home for the night. The delightful Indian summer had just given way to the cold winds of November, which moaned and whistled around the building, mournfully heralding the near approach of icy-handed winter. I had turned down the gas and seated myself in a comfortable easy-chair before a bright coal fire, which lit up the room with a soft, mellow light. The surroundings were well adapted for the repose of mind and body, and I mechanically puffed away at my cigar, while enjoying a well-earned rest after a day of exciting work. As I was revolving in my mind the events of the day and laying plans for the morrow, I was disturbed in my reverie by the entrance of Mr. Stuart, one of my clerks, who said that there were three gentlemen in the main office desirous of seeing me. I was somewhat annoyed at the interruption, being anxious to go home soon, but as my motto has always been, "Business before pleasure," I said that I would see the visitors, and a moment later three fashionably dressed young gentlemen walked in. They introduced themselves as Messrs. Williams, Henry, and Robinson, and stated that they had been appointed members of a committee to secure my services in detecting the perpetrator of a series of robberies in their hotel.

"What hotel do you refer to, Mr. Robinson?" I asked.

"The Clifton House, on Wabash avenue," he replied.

I knew it well, as it is always my habit to keep thoroughly posted in regard to the city hotels. The Clifton House was the most fashionable hotel in Chicago at that time, and numbered among its guests many of the best people in the city. It was mainly a family hotel, and had gained so high a reputation by the superior manner in which it was conducted that many merchants and professional men had settled themselves with their families as permanent occupants of suites of rooms therein. Among its other attractions was the sociability with which all the permanent boarders mingled together, forming a very large and agreeable coterie of mutual acquaintances. There were many young, unmarried men of wealth and high social position, who made the house their headquarters and contributed largely to the gaiety of the winter season, so that the Clifton House hops were always attended by the *haut ton* of the city. These advantages rendered a residence in the Clifton House so desirable as to make it a centre of the wealth and fashion of Chicago. The idea that a vulgar thief could have entered this elysium of fashionable bliss seemed too preposterous to be believed.

I asked Mr. Robinson why they had not reported their losses to the landlord and required him to make an investigation.

This, they said, they had already done, and the landlord had exhausted every plan in his power in the attempt to ferret out the thief, but with no success whatever. He had called in the city detectives, but they had been completely baffled, and, in spite of all precautions, the losses still

continued. In this dilemma the boarders had held a meeting, at which the ladies were largely represented, and had appointed this committee to wait upon me to engage my services, if possible, to detect the criminal. The landlord was sorely troubled and was continually discharging servants, but this had no effect, as someone was sure to be robbed as often, on an average, as once a week. The stealing had been going on for over ten months, and many of the boarders had determined to leave the house unless the thief should be caught very soon.

The ladies suffered equally with the gentlemen, hence it was impossible to determine the sex of the thief. Not only were valuables of all kinds taken, but also dresses, gloves, skirts, coats, pantaloons, and even the undergarments of both sexes. Evidently the thief was able to dispose of the plunder, since no one individual could possibly make any personal use of the great variety of articles stolen.

A Mrs. Judson had lost a valuable gold watch and twenty-five dollars in cash. The pecuniary loss, to a lady of her wealth, was trifling, but the watch was a wedding present from her husband, and she valued it far above its intrinsic worth.

From a Mr. Seymour's room about forty dollars in cash and a number of new shirts had been taken. He had left the money at the bottom of one of his bureau drawers, securely locked, but the thief had evidently known just where to look for it, and, after leisurely taking out all the things in the drawer, had selected such as he (or she) wished, and had then carefully replaced the remaining articles just as they had been left by Mr. Seymour in the morning.

Mr. Robinson, also, had lost a revolver, a number of handkerchiefs, and some money.

The thief was, undoubtedly, a cool hand, able to discriminate carefully as to the value of personal property, and to work in a leisurely, systematic way.

Mr. Robinson stated that there was hardly anyone in the house who had not suffered, and that none of the boarders felt safe in leaving their rooms for an hour unoccupied. He said that some of his friends in New York, for whom I had then recently done some work, had spoken so highly of me that he was most desirous of securing my services, and he concluded by begging me to undertake the solution of the mystery.

This affair was one of those with which I have never liked to meddle. If the landlord had come to me, it would have been different; but, as it was, it was not satisfactory to me, and I tried to induce the committee to go elsewhere.

Mr. Robinson was not willing to do so, and, after much persuasion, I consented—not being busy otherwise—to examine into the case and see what I could do. The first condition that I made, however, was that the committee should report to the meeting of boarders that I had refused positively to undertake the investigation. I further asked them to give me a list of the boarders in the house, made out so as to show the names of those who had been robbed, with the numbers of their rooms, and a description of the articles stolen from each.

The committee at once drew up a rough list from memory, and, on footing up the losses, we found that they amounted to between four and five thousand dollars in value. I told Mr. Robinson to call again in a day or two, and the committee then returned to the hotel to inform the other boarders of their failure to engage me.

On reflection, I determined that nothing could be done until I had made a thorough inspection of the house, and the next morning I paid a visit to the Clifton House for that purpose.

At that time very few people knew me personally, and I was able to go all over the house without anyone imagining that I was a detective. I took particular notice of the servants, being careful to see them all, but could not find among them a single suspicious character. Most of them were Irish, and, though not by any means faultless, there was no probability that any of them possessed the audacity and skill to operate so successfully, even had they had the wish to do so.

I returned to my office, a few blocks distant, fully convinced that the case would be a difficult one. I had not found the slightest clue which could give a direction to my suspicions, so that when Mr. Robinson and the other members of the committee called, I could give them no encouraging news.

I asked them a number of questions about the various persons whom I had seen about the house, and they confirmed my good opinion of the help. I then told them that the mystery surrounding the affair made it interesting to me, and that I would consent to take it up, provided that my connection with it was kept a secret. I might, perhaps, succeed in getting on the right track soon, if the thief were not put on his guard against me; but there was no doubt that the difficulties of the case would be greatly increased if it should be generally known that I was engaged in working it up. The thief was, undoubtedly, a very skillful one, and would take unusual pains to avoid detection, the moment that it became known that a skilled detective had been employed.

The committee agreed to my conditions and left my office much pleased at having obtained my services.

Here I will say a few words relative to the professional detective.

One reason why the official detective is so often unsuccessful in capturing criminals is that he is so well-known. Even the small boys in the street, who regard him as a person endowed with supernatural powers, recognize him as he passes, and say: "There goes the detective!" All the barkeepers know him, and have an extra "smile" for him—gratis. In like manner he is "dead-headed" at the hotels, theatres, restaurants and elsewhere, until he becomes, not only one of the best-known men in town, but also, one of the greatest "sponges" in the community. He dresses well, though a little loud, perhaps, hob nobs with professional gamblers, and is often "hail-fellow, well met," with the thieves themselves. He is most likely their boon companion, and gets his regular percentage of the very "swag" which he is hired to discover. If the losers are willing to pay more than the thieves can sell their plunder for elsewhere, the detective receives the money and returns the goods. In any event he gets his share. This whole class of detectives are ready to sell out or are already sold. This may be considered strong language, but it is the truth.

In my employ every person is watched. I hire them all on the supposition that they are honest, but it does no harm to see that they are not unduly exposed to temptation; so they are carefully watched, and rarely do they ever have an opportunity to be dishonest, even were they so inclined.

CHAPTER II.

I PUZZLED my brain for some time before I could arrange a plan of operation to suit me. I sat and meditated somewhat as follows:

“The amount stolen so far is large and is constantly increasing. What is the thief doing with the money? Is it hoarded for future use, or is it immediately squandered in fast living? It *can't* be a servant. No servant could successfully carry out such a series of robberies; moreover, all the servants have been changed twice or thrice since the thefts began. No; I'm satisfied that it's not a servant. How would it do to call on the landlord and the clerks, and question them about the boarders in the house? No; that won't do. Mr. Robinson said that they were fully acquainted with all the facts, and had been completely baffled in their efforts to discover the guilty party. Besides, how do I know that the clerks, themselves, are not implicated? They have a better knowledge of the house and the movements of the boarders than anyone else, so that if one of them were dishonest, his opportunities for stealing would be very great. Another robbery will take place soon, hence I must act promptly. Let me see what I can do. There are a number of young men in the house—what if I should put an intelligent detective in the house as a boarder! That's a good idea. I'll do it. Now, whom shall I use? It will be a delicate job, and I must have someone who can ingratiate himself with both men and women, since, for aught I know to the contrary, the culprit may be one of the fair sex.”

I had in my employ, at that time, a young man named Streble, whom I felt inclined to entrust with this mission. He was Bavarian by birth, but had turned his back on the fatherland when quite young, to seek his fortune in the Far West. Like most Germans of the middle class, he was well educated, and possessed many accomplishments. He was a good musician, and had a rich baritone voice. He spoke both French and English, besides his native tongue, his foreign accent and grammatical errors being just sufficient to make him interesting. He had served as janitor in my building for nine or ten months, and I had found him so attentive to his duties that I had promoted him, in accordance with a rule which I have always observed, to watch all my employees and advance them as soon as they show themselves worthy. At first I had made him a “shadow,” technically, not literally, and had used him amongst the Germans and Israelites whenever my services had been required to detect criminals among those nationalities. He had proved to be so serviceable that I had a very good opinion of his ability, discretion and zeal, and I therefore decided to employ him in this case.

Another brilliant idea struck me in this connection. The Clifton House would admit none but the wealthy and aristocratic to its charmed circles. At least, without wealth and position no boarder would be acceptable to the regular inmates of the house, nor could he expect to gain their confidence and intimacy. Hence, I determined to introduce my detective in such a manner as to make him the admired of all admirers.

If Bulwer could turn a peasant into a prince, with the ability to impose upon the inhabitants of Lyons, who ought to have had some experience in the ways of royalty, why could not I pass my ex-janitor off for a prince, and make a second Claude Melnotte out of Mr. Streble? To be sure, I knew very little about the nobility of any country, but I was convinced that the so-called aristocracy of Chicago knew less. Some of the latter, with whom I was acquainted, railed most independently at the crowned heads of Europe, but I felt confident that they would prove to be the worst of toadies if they only could have a chance. Therefore, it occurred to me to give them an opportunity to worship at the shrine of an offshoot of royalty, if they felt so disposed, and this was my brilliant idea. I would give them a ready-made prince as an object for adoration. Thus, while giving them an opportunity to show the firmness of their republican principles, I should also do a neat stroke of business in catching the Clifton House thief.

CHAPTER III.

HAVING made up my mind to introduce Streble as a prince, I was under the necessity of deciding, also, whom he should represent. I had read somewhere about Prince Beauharnais, of Bavaria, and although I was entirely unacquainted with the history of his Highness, or whether he was then in existence, I was so sure that the Cliftonians would be equally ignorant, that I seized upon the name without any scruples whatever, and built upon it the following story for my detective:

He was to represent himself to be the son of Prince Beauharnais, of Bavaria. The Prince, himself, was then in the Crimea, having volunteered his services to aid the Allies against Russia. The French Government had gladly accepted his offer, and had assigned him to an important command. He desired that his son should enter the diplomatic service, and that he should be well acquainted with the customs of all countries. To that end, the young Prince had been sent to travel, and he had heard so much of this wonderful Far West that he had come almost direct to Chicago, after having visited the great capitals of Europe. The intention was that he should settle down quietly to observe the home-life and internal workings of each nation; and as our country was so large, he was to give out that he intended spending several months in each of the representative cities of the Union.

As he was to assume the character of a second Claude Melnotte, it might be his fate to encounter a Pauline, so I determined to instruct him not to go too far in his lovemaking. My idea was to carry out the comic side of Claude Melnotte's character in such a manner as to trace up the Clifton House thief, without in the least endangering the happiness of any young lady to whom the Prince might devote himself.

I reasoned that the young ladies would be drawn to him much more by the desire for wealth and position than from any real feeling of the heart, hence losing him would not permanently affect their happiness. Their only serious regrets would be for the time lost in the vain endeavor to capture a real prince; but their disappointment would soon be forgotten.

Having arranged the plan, I immediately sent for Streble, and told him that he must prepare to enact the part of the son of Prince Beauharnais, of Bavaria. I had to laugh at the look of amazement that came into his face.

“What! I take the part of a prince!” said he. “Why, it would be impossible for me to sustain the character.”

“Fear nothing, Streble,” I said. “I will keep you posted, as I do not intend to send you out of Chicago.”

He shook his head and said, laughingly:

“Indeed, it will be impossible for me to succeed here. I shall certainly be discovered, as so many people know me.”

“I will risk that,” I replied. “If anything goes wrong, I will take the consequences. Go down to Brannigan’s and get measured for a full suit of clothes, and I will order a complete outfit for you, to-morrow.”

The following day I dropped into Brannigan’s and left orders for several suits for Streble, to be made of the best material and in the latest styles. I also ordered a large, heavy, military cloak, richly braided, and lined with blue silk. Continuing my walk, I made a tour of all the shops and purchased an elegant outfit for Streble, which included every essential article, both for use and ornament, which a young gentleman of wealth and rank would be apt to possess. His jewelry was not such as to produce the effect of over-display, but it was very valuable, though I did not purchase this portion of his equipment. Messrs. J. & E. Edwards, the fashionable jewelers of the city, were among my oldest and warmest friends, and from them I borrowed two diamond rings and a diamond pin, all of the stones being large and perfect. These, with a valuable gold watch and chain, a set of studs and sleeve buttons, were all that I considered desirable for my prince to wear, and their value was such as to preclude the possibility of anyone accusing him of wearing cheap jewelry.

In order to give Streble an opportunity to disguise himself somewhat, I obtained a pair of large gold eyeglasses, fitted with plain crystals, so as not to interfere in the slightest degree with his eyesight. The disguise afforded by spectacles or eyeglasses is greater than might be supposed, so that I felt tolerably sure that none of Streble’s acquaintances would recognize him, even if they met him, which was not likely.

I then looked around for a trunk which would fill its part in the plot. Of course I could get a trunk anywhere, but the difficulty was to obtain one of foreign manufacture, dented and soiled by foreign travel and an ocean voyage. I remembered having seen one in the possession of Mr. Scarborough, President of the Ohio Valley Bank, Cincinnati, which was just suited to my purpose. The trunk was a large leather one, studded with brass nails, and covered with the marks of foreign railways, steamship lines and hotels. I immediately wrote to ask Mr. Scarborough to lend me the trunk, saying that, at some future time, I would cause him to laugh heartily at the use to which it had been put. In a few days I received it, and as the clothing and other articles were finished, they were soon packed ready for operations to begin.

Streble was a handsome fellow, and after having had his hair trimmed and his face shaved, leaving only a fine moustache and goatee, he was as stylish a young man as could be found in Chicago.

When all was ready, I called him into my private office, and gave him his instructions. After posting him as to the character of the Clifton House and its guests, I related the particulars of the robberies which had been committed there, and the difficulty in detecting the thief. To him would be entrusted this important duty; and, while he was to be honored and entertained as a prince, he was not to forget to keep his eyes open. Nothing must escape his notice, and he must be as wary and discreet as it was possible to be. Moreover, no mere circumstances of wealth and position should be permitted to exempt anyone from his watchful care, and suspicions directed toward a millionaire were to be reported as fully as those which would implicate the poorest in the house. (Indeed I strongly suspected that the culprit, when found, would prove to be one whose position apparently made him, or her, above suspicion.)

He was not to proclaim himself to be the son of a prince, but I would see that the report was started, and, on being questioned, he was to acknowledge it to be true. He was to register himself as Herr Lindeman, and when his real rank was discovered, the mystery surrounding him would make him doubly attractive. As he became well acquainted with the Clifton House boarders, he was to throw off all pretense of concealment, and describe the splendor of his father's palace, his immense wealth, the gaities of court life, etc. He was to be liberal to the gentlemen, and especially polite and attentive to the fair sex.

I arranged that he should go to Niles, Michigan, by the Michigan Central Railroad. Thence he was to go to South Bend, Indiana, by carriage, there assume his princely character, and return to Chicago by the Michigan Southern Railroad. He was then to go to the Briggs House for the night. In the morning he was to inquire of the proprietor, Mr. French, where the banking house of R. K. Swift & Co. was situated. Mr. French, with his customary politeness, would probably accompany Herr Lindeman to the bank, where the latter was to present letters of credit to an immense amount, endorsed by Prince Beauharnais, payable to his son. I had let my friend Swift into the secret, and he had arranged this part of the affair so as completely to convince anyone of the Prince's identity and wealth. Herr Lindeman was then to remain at the Briggs House until a report of his rank and fortune had been well circulated, after which, he would have no difficulty in obtaining rooms in the Clifton House.

I impressed upon Streble many instructions as to his deportment and vigilance, and ordered him to report to me daily, whenever it was possible to do so. The trunk and Streble then departed to take the night train for Niles, and my plan was, at last, in operation.

CHAPTER IV.

ON the following day, being anxious to see how my newly-made prince would conduct himself, I entered the Briggs House shortly before the hour when he should arrive, and remained in the office, talking to Mr. French. A violent snowstorm had set in, and we stood near the stove watching the heavy snowflakes as they rapidly descended. Presently a carriage dashed up, from

which a traveler alighted and hurried into the hotel. I knew who it was before I saw him, having recognized his trunk.

As the gentleman walked leisurely to the desk to register his name, we saw a very distinguished-looking person. He wore a fine sealskin cap and a large military cloak, the latter being wrapped gracefully around his tall and commanding figure. Mr. French, who, like all hotel-keepers, prided himself on his ability to read character, glanced at the newcomer, and said:

“That young man is a gentleman of rank. I have never seen him before, but he has a thoroughbred look, such as you see only in those who have been accustomed to command. There is an indescribable something about the nobility by which I always know them. Excuse me, Pinkerton, I will attend to him myself.”

So saying, Mr. French hurried over to the desk, where he found that his new arrival had registered his name as Herr Lindeman. He was assigned to the finest suite of rooms in the house, and everything was done that could add to his comfort. Mr. French, himself, showed the distinguished stranger to the rooms prepared for him, and a special servant was assigned to his service. In about half an hour Mr. French returned, and said to me:

“I was right about that gentleman, Pinkerton. He is the son of a Bavarian prince, and is traveling *incog.* in order to study our customs and manners quietly. He would not have let me into the secret, but for the fact that he has some large letters of credit from his father, drawn upon R. K. Swift & Co., and he wants me to go to the bank with him in the morning. Don’t mention it to any one, as he charged me to keep his rank a secret.”

I assured him that the secret was safe with me, and told him to warn the Prince to be careful about his pocket-book, as there were many pickpockets about. I then returned to my office, well pleased with my prince, and fully convinced that he would maintain his character without any danger of being considered an impostor.

The following morning Herr Lindeman went to Swift’s bank, accompanied by Mr. French. I was in the bank when they arrived, and was greatly amused at the perfect gravity with which Mr. Swift and the Prince played their respective parts for the benefit of Mr. French.

Mr. Swift received the Prince with great consideration, as previous advices from his foreign correspondents had informed him of the Prince’s intended visit. The letters of credit were at once accepted, and a heavy sum placed subject to the Prince’s order, which he could draw upon at his convenience.

Business matters having been settled, the conversation turned upon the Prince’s travels, and he told Mr. Swift that, in order to ensure quietness, he was traveling under the name of Herr Lindeman. He asked, as a favor, that Mr. Swift would not acquaint anyone with his real rank.

Messrs. Swift & Co. asked after the health of Prince Beauharnais (the elder), and said that they would like to get him to invest some of his great wealth in Chicago. If he would place in their hands the small sum of half a million dollars, they could double it in a short time.

The Prince showed profound ignorance of business matters, and soon turned the conversation to the war in the Crimea, where he had recently been on a visit to his father. He gave some vivid descriptions of one or two battles which he had witnessed, and chatted very pleasantly for some time.

He then returned to the Briggs House with the delighted Mr. French, who was more than ever impressed with his guest's importance. After lunch, the Prince spent over an hour in writing to his father, giving him a glowing description of the wonders of the New World, and advising him to pay it a visit. (At least, this was what he told Mr. French he had written.)

He then inquired the way to the post-office, and Mr. French offered to send a boy with the letter, but the Prince said that he needed a little exercise, and would post it himself. He then walked around the streets for some time, and finally dropped into my office to report. I congratulated him warmly on the manner in which he had acted, and he returned to the hotel in high spirits.

Mr. French kept the secret as most people keep secrets. He told a few of his particular friends that he had a genuine prince stopping at his hotel, but that they must keep it a secret. They naturally spread the news among *their* intimate friends, and before night a large number of gentlemen were well acquainted with all the circumstances of the case. It was not surprising, therefore, that an evening paper should have made the following announcement:

“Chicago is honored with the presence of a Bavarian prince, who, with a most commendable modesty, is traveling as Herr Lindeman. He will be surprised to read this notice, but he must remember that it is impossible to keep any news concealed from Chicago reporters.”

The Prince remained at the Briggs House four days, going out very seldom, as the snow had begun to melt, leaving the streets in a disagreeable condition for either driving or walking. He was a connoisseur in cigars, and smoked incessantly, besides opening his cigar case to every gentleman to whom he was introduced. I cautioned him against this habit, telling him that so much smoking was bad for his health; but he had now got an opportunity to smoke at my expense, and smoke he would. In point of fact, it was the expense that I objected to, as he began to draw rather heavily upon my purse strings.

On the morning of the fourth day, while in conversation with Mr. Barnum, the gentlemanly clerk of the hotel, the Prince asked if there were any private hotels in Chicago, similar to those in Bavaria, where a person would be removed from the hurry and noise of a transient house. He would like to find the quiet of a home hotel, where he could enjoy the refining influences of ladies' society.

Mr. Barnum said that there were several such hotels in Chicago, the Clifton House being considered the best, as it was patronized by the best society of the city. He then offered to take the Prince there and show him through the house, if he so desired.

The Prince accepted the offer, and together they wended their way to the Clifton House. Mr. Barnum felt quite proud as he stepped out with the Prince; but when the latter offered him a

fragrant Havana, imported for the Prince's own use, the delighted clerk was quite overcome. As he carefully puffed away, with a look of ecstasy in his face, he declared that he had never before smoked such a fine cigar. These cigars, which the Prince stated were selected carefully in Havana and imported solely for his use, were pronounced by all who smoked them to be superior to any cigar in the market. The actual fact, however, regarding the cigars was that I had bought them of Frankenthal, under the Sherman House.

After a pleasant walk, Mr. Barnum and the Prince entered the Clifton House. The latter was introduced to the landlord as Herr Lindeman, but his fame had gone before him, and the landlord was delighted at the prospect of having a prince for a guest. The Prince examined all the vacant apartments and finally decided to take a suite of rooms two flights up, on the Wabash avenue side of the house. He was influenced in making his choice by the fact that it was the portion of the house occupied by the young, unmarried gentlemen, and he would be a near neighbor to the members of the committee. The suite, consisting of parlor, bed-room and bath-room, were elegantly furnished, and commanded a fine view of the avenue. The Prince made arrangements to take immediate possession, and then returned to the Briggs House with Mr. Barnum.

CHAPTER V.

It was soon known at the Clifton House that a prince was coming to stay there, and the guests were quite excited in consequence. The young ladies declared emphatically that they would show him no more consideration than was due to any other gentleman, and that, as he might imagine that his rank entitled him to great attention, they would treat him with distant politeness. They resolved to show this representative of the Old World despotisms how little the citizens of a free republic cared for rank and so-called aristocracy.

This was about the style in which the belles of the Clifton House talked to each other, but in fact each one was determined to make him "the captive of her bow and spear," if possible. Of course, none of them cared for his wealth or position—oh, no! but it would be so agreeable to be able to say that Prince so-and-so was once a devoted admirer. Besides, it was worth while to captivate him, just to save him from the arts and maneuvers of certain designing girls in the hotel who would be sure to try to entrap him.

The Prince bade goodbye to Mr. French and his other acquaintances at the Briggs House, and asked them to call upon him at the Clifton. He then sent his baggage in advance, and shortly after, was driven to the Clifton House, arriving just in time for dinner, which was usually served at six o'clock.

That day was marked, not only by the Prince's arrival, but also by an unusually heavy robbery. Mrs. Blackall, one of the wealthy guests, had spent the day in visiting her friends, but before going out, she had taken the precaution to hide about four hundred dollars in a secure place in her bureau. Her husband, who was in New York, had sent her the money the day previous, and she had kept it in her possession, instead of depositing it in bank, as she had expected to use it all in a day or two. Having locked the bureau drawer, and also the door of her room, she had gone away without any misgivings. On her return in the evening, she found her door still locked, but on lighting the gas and glancing at her bureau, she saw that the drawer which she had locked was

wide open and the money was missing. She immediately rang her bell violently, and in a few minutes the clerks, servants, and other boarders rushed in to learn what had alarmed her. For a moment she could not speak, but she pointed to her bureau, and finally gasped out:

“Oh! this is shocking! Someone has taken all my money. I have lost over three hundred dollars! What shall I do?”

The committee, Messrs. Robinson, Williams and Henry, were sent for immediately. On entering the room they cleared it of the crowd, and strove to console Mrs. Blackall, but, like Rachel, she refused to be comforted. Finally Mr. Robinson was obliged to tell her of the steps they had taken to discover the thief, and that I had been engaged to work up the case. He assured her that he would at once lay her loss before me in order to incite me to act promptly, and without doubt, her money would be recovered.

In a few minutes several ladies called upon Mrs. Blackall to condole with her, and soon the room was filled with an excited and indignant crowd of ladies. The whole party united in condemning the committee as a lazy, supine, and incompetent trio, who had done nothing whatever to protect their fellow boarders.

Mr. Robinson could not withstand the volleys of bitter sarcasm which were aimed at him, and therefore, in order to quiet the ladies, he told them, first pledging them to secrecy, that the committee had secured my services, and that I hoped soon to capture the thief. Having somewhat satisfied them with this information, Mr. Robinson hurried to my office and gave me the particulars of the last robbery, concluding by stating that he had told the ladies of my connection with the case.

I felt much annoyed at this evidence of Mr. Robinson's inability to keep a secret, but I could not help congratulating myself that I had not entrusted him with the details of my plan. I saw clearly that if he had known the identity of the supposed Prince, he would have revealed that secret too, and my plan would have been useless. I therefore told him that the man whom I intended to employ in the case was very busily engaged just then, but that I would put him at work very soon, and that the committee need not fear the result. Mr. Robinson then took his leave, quite reassured.

During the evening, the Prince loitered in the office for some time, and the landlord introduced him to many of the guests. His easy, agreeable manners at once made him popular, and he was soon on good terms with most of the gentlemen in the house. While he was smoking and chatting with a group of the boarders in the smoking-room, a young man of polished manners and pleasant address, came forward gracefully, and introduced himself to the Prince as Mr. Edward Bright. He said the only excuse he could offer for his forwardness was that the Prince had selected rooms immediately adjoining his own, and as they were to be near neighbors, he wished very much to make the Prince's acquaintance.

The Prince replied that he hated ceremony, and was glad to meet a gentleman who had the courage to ignore forms. He disliked the English custom of holding aloof from everyone until a regular introduction was obtained. He admired Mr. Bright's frankness, and would be glad to

regard him as a friend. He offered Mr. Bright a cigar, and together they walked up and down the smoking-room. In the course of the conversation, Mr. Bright, who was well acquainted with the local history of Chicago, gave the Prince much useful and interesting information about the growth of the "Garden City."

"Only think," he said, "that only twenty years ago, the site whereon this wonderful city stands was a wilderness. To-day we see this noble city, inhabited by its one hundred thousand souls. By enterprise, industry, and perseverance has this great change been accomplished. The man is now living who will see this city the metropolis of the West."

When they had finished their cigars, Mr. Bright invited the Prince into the parlor, where a bevy of ladies had gathered, all anxious to see the Prince and make his acquaintance. Mr. Bright felt highly pleased at having the opportunity to introduce the Prince. He knew that the ladies were dying to know His Highness, and that his boldness in bringing about the desired introductions would be very much appreciated by them.

The Prince remained in conversation with a group of ladies for some time, charming them all by his agreeable conversation and well-turned compliments. His trifling German accent only rendered him more interesting, and he was voted charming by every lady present. He finally went to the piano, where a Miss Hume was playing, and began talking of music.

"Have you heard this song?" asked Miss Hume, taking up a new and popular ballad.

The Prince glanced at it a moment, hummed a line or two of the air, and said:

"No, I haf not; it is a pleasure for the future."

"Oh! you read music!" said Miss Hume; "perhaps you sing also?"

"Well—a little, just for myself, sometimes," said the Prince.

"I am sure you sing well, Herr Lindeman," said Bright, who was standing near. "Come, please favor us with some of your magnificent German songs. There are no songs like them."

The ladies all joined in pressing him to sing, and finally he consented. Taking the seat vacated by Miss Hume, he played a few chords rapidly to accustom his fingers to the instrument, and then sang Schubert's "Farewell," in a rich powerful baritone. As he concluded, he was greeted with great applause, and all the complimentary adjectives in the dictionary were showered upon him.

"You are a splendid musician, Herr Lindeman," said Bright. "You must have studied at some of the great schools of music in Europe."

"Yes," the Prince replied, modestly, "I am passionately fond of music, and have studied at Munich and Paris."

When the Prince left the parlor, it was unanimously conceded that he was a talented musician. In fact, he had quite taken the ladies by storm, and they pronounced him the most polished gentleman they had ever met.

Thus was the Prince introduced into the charmed circle of the Clifton House, and his career thenceforward was a continued ovation.

CHAPTER VI.

THE following day began with a heavy snow-storm, but toward noon the storm ceased, and Mr. Bright invited the Prince to go out with him. The Prince put on his cap and military cloak, and the two gentlemen took quite a long walk. The Prince found Mr. Bright a most agreeable companion, and under the latter's guidance he soon became acquainted with the principal objects of interest in the city. Indeed, it was astonishing how soon he learned to find his way about the streets.

They strolled about for some time, admiring the pretty faces which were whirled past them in gliding sleighs, and the pretty feet and ankles, the display of which the sloppy sidewalks necessitated. They finally stopped at the Tremont House bar, where Mr. Bright introduced the Prince to a number of fancy American drinks. The Prince noticed that Mr. Bright was a heavy drinker, and that he seemed very well provided with funds. No matter how much money the Prince spent, Mr. Bright always met him half-way.

After calling on Mr. French at the Briggs House, they spent the time until five o'clock in visiting the fashionable billiard halls, in all of which Mr. Bright was well-known. At five, they returned to the Clifton House, to dress for dinner.

Mr. Bright evidently regarded the Prince as under his special chaperonage, and therefore took a seat next him at dinner. During the progress of the meal he gave the Prince a rapid sketch of the various family parties in the vicinity of their seats, and greatly amused him by his droll way of condensing the descriptions of other people into a few words.

"The people sitting opposite to us are Mr. and Mrs. Abbott, their son and daughter. They are a very fine family—a rare instance of the combination of money and breeding. Miss Abbott is just 'coming out,' and will be a great belle."

"Yes, she is very beautiful," said the Prince.

"That party of three, next to the Abbotts, are Mr. and Mrs. Barrett and their son. Barrett is a wealthy dry-goods merchant, and does everything, regardless of expense—and taste. His daughter is in Europe at present, 'finishing' an education which never was half commenced. He talks of going to Europe to bring his daughter home, next summer. Mr. Kimball and his sister are staring at you from the next table. Kimball is in the boot-and-shoe business, and is rapidly pegging his way into an immense fortune. He, also, is going abroad, to hunt up his aristocratic relatives in England. The gentleman near Miss Kimball, who looks as if he had swallowed a

poker, is the distinguished Irish advocate, Miles Foggerty. He thinks he can make a jury believe anything, and so he can—if he will only argue against it.”

In this way, Bright went through the list of boarders, with all of whom he was well acquainted. He hit off the characteristics of the various persons very happily, and was evidently a good judge of human nature. He was a thorough man of the world, and was an invaluable aid to the Prince in introducing him to the other guests, after dinner.

In the evening they passed an hour or two very delightfully in the parlor. Several of the young ladies sang and played, and the Prince was then induced to sing a piece of his own composition, which was generally admired. The authorship of the song was brought out by the persistence with which one young lady called for the name of the composer. He was followed by Mr. Bright, who was a much superior musician to the Prince, both naturally and by education; but the latter’s title covered all defects, and the ladies mentally decided in his favor, in comparing the two.

The next day was bright and pleasant, and everyone was outdoors during the forenoon. The Prince managed to elude all the other boarders, in order to come to my office to report. In some way, his story aroused a slight suspicion in my mind with regard to Bright. I can hardly say what it was in Bright’s conduct that caught my attention, except perhaps his effusive manner toward the Prince, and the fact that he seemed to have no regular occupation nor business of any kind. Other gentlemen were friendly and hospitable toward the Prince, but Bright seemed desirous of taking him completely under his own charge. Most of the other young men smoked and drank occasionally; but Bright seemed to be continually spending a good deal of money in gratifying his appetite. I had an unaccountable feeling that Bright was playing a part, with an object in view. I kept my suspicions to myself, however, not even mentioning them to the Prince.

In the afternoon the Prince returned to the Clifton House and entered the smoking-room to have a quiet smoke, but hearing music in the parlor, he changed his mind and walked in there. The only occupants of the room were Mrs. Pearson and her daughter. Mrs. Pearson was a wealthy widow, having no other living relatives but her daughter. The latter was a beautiful blonde, with an exquisite complexion, regular features, rosy lips, and a plump, well-developed figure.

Miss Pearson was at the piano when the Prince entered, but she stopped playing immediately, and greeted him heartily. The Prince begged her to continue playing, and took a seat by her side.

Mrs. Pearson’s motherly heart was filled with delight to see her daughter *t[ê]te-à-t[ê]te* with the Prince, and she could not repress the thought:

“What a handsome couple they would make!”

They certainly got along together very pleasantly. Miss Pearson had studied German for some time, hence the conversation was carried on in that language. She spoke the language quite well, but if she made a mistake, the Prince had such a gentle way of correcting her that she felt quite at ease with him. If she only had him for a teacher, she said, how soon she would become proficient!

The subject of life in Germany was introduced, and the Prince gave her some very entertaining information as to the home life and customs of the higher classes in that country. He also vividly described the pleasures of Munich, Berlin and Paris, and said that nothing would so much please him as to be her guide when she visited the Old World.

Miss Pearson was highly flattered by the Prince's attention, while her mother fairly worshipped him. She felt that a tour under such circumstances would be perfectly enchanting, especially as she concluded that the Prince would not have made such an offer unless he had been in love with her daughter. The prospect of having a prince for a son-in-law seemed quite near realization, and Mrs. Pearson's joy thereat was great. In order to cement the acquaintance, she invited the Prince to accompany them on a sleigh-ride next day, and he accepted with great pleasure.

Alas! who would have thought that Mrs. Pearson, only a few days previous, had been one of the loudest in her condemnation of "those American girls who would so fail in their allegiance to the Great Republic as to marry a foreigner, just for his title." Yet those had been her very words.

CHAPTER VII.

THE *tête-à-tête* in the parlor was suddenly interrupted by a loud noise, followed by the rushing of people in the halls. The Prince hurried out with the frightened ladies clinging to him for protection, and found that Mr. Hutchinson's room had been entered and ransacked by a thief. They went up to the room, which they found full of excited boarders, all loud in their denunciations of the servants. Foremost among the indignant guests was Bright, who informed the Prince that Mr. Hutchinson had received four hundred dollars a few days before, which he had intended to use in a short time, and hence had not deposited it in bank. To insure its safety, however, he had secreted it under the carpet in his room. He had told a few particular friends how securely he had hidden his money, but had mentioned it to no one else. Yet, now, on coming home, he had found that a diamond pin, a dozen shirts, and two hundred and fifty dollars of this money had been stolen. There could be no doubt this time, Bright said, that a servant was the thief, since no outsider could escape with such bulky plunder without being noticed.

The landlord immediately sent for a city detective, who soon arrived. He looked very wise, and said just what most detectives would have said:

"What in h—l did the man put the money under the carpet for? Why didn't he carry it in his pocket? There is one thing certain—the shirts were stolen by one of these d—d Irish biddies to give to her beau," his theory in this respect coinciding with Bright's.

"Now we must keep a sharp watch on them all," continued the detective. "The landlord must order all the girls to stay in the house unless they have permission to go out. If any of them ask leave to go, I will arrest them and see whether they have not hidden the shirts under their clothes. I will soon go through them," he added, with a sneering laugh.

The Prince said that this was the first time he had ever seen anything of the kind. The detective, he thought, must be a very shrewd fellow, and it was fortunate that they had secured so valuable a man.

The detective then retired to the bar-room, and while eagerly swallowing the drinks to which the boarders treated him liberally, he laid before them his plan for capturing the guilty biddy. He intended placing two detectives of the second grade outside the house. Then, if any of the servants left the house the “shadows” would follow them and “give them to an officer.” They would then be searched, and if the stolen property were found on them, he would soon put them where they could do no more harm.

This was all rather vague, as he neglected to inform the boarders how the servants could be arrested in the street and searched without any warrants. Moreover, he also forgot to say what would happen if he arrested and searched an innocent person. But these little trifles were not noticed by the boarders, who had great confidence in anything that called itself a detective.

The Prince retired to his room to dress for dinner, but watched his opportunity to slip out unseen and came straight to my office. He reported the facts of the robbery, and of the presence and plans of the city detective. I said that the latter’s movements would not interfere with us, since if he *could* find the thief, so much the better, though I had no faith in him whatever.

I complimented the Prince on his zeal and attention to duty, and instructed him to learn all he could about Bright. I wished especially to find out where the latter was just previous to Hutchinson’s discovery of his loss.

“Not that I suspect Bright,” I added, “for I also think this theft was committed by the servants. But still, find out whether Bright, or a servant, or anyone else, was seen in the hall in the vicinity of Hutchinson’s room. By the way, was there any mark on the shirts?”

“Yes,” replied the Prince, “there was a large letter H in the lower corner of each one.”

“Well, that’s all,” I said; “you can return to the Clifton, Prince.”

The Prince returned to the hotel, and went down to dinner a little late. After dinner he entered the smoking-room, where he found Bright engaged in narrating the details of the robbery and his reasons for believing that it had been committed by a servant. The Prince noticed that even Mr. Hutchinson himself did not take any more interest in the robbery than Bright. The boarders thought that Bright reasoned very forcibly, and that he was an exceedingly kind-hearted young man to take such an interest in another’s loss.

After a time Bright joined the Prince, and they went to the billiard-room. They smoked and played billiards for an hour, and then joined the ladies in the parlor. The Prince was in high spirits, and succeeded in entertaining his fair admirers most charmingly. He was prevailed upon to play, and as usual, his performance was greeted with great applause.

As he finished playing, he glanced around and saw that Bright was not in the room. He had intended to tell Bright of the engagement to go sleigh-riding with the Pearsons the next day, and so he excused himself from the company and stepped into the hall to look for his young friend. He thought he saw a figure like Bright’s passing out of the front door, so he hurried after him,

intending merely to speak to him a moment and then return. As the night was cold, he seized his fur cap and went out the side entrance. On reaching the street, he saw Bright walking away rapidly, and the idea suddenly flashed into his mind to follow. He had received no orders to “shadow” anyone, but he thought it could do no harm to see where this fashionable young idler spent his evenings.

Bright walked to Dearborn street, and turning north, continued in that direction until he arrived opposite the Tremont House, when he suddenly dashed up a pair of stairs and disappeared.

“Aha! this will be good news for Pinkerton,” said the Prince, as he returned to the hotel, where he spent the remainder of the evening in the parlor.

The Prince came down to breakfast early the next morning, but his friend Bright did not appear. After waiting for some time, the Prince took a walk alone, arriving at my office about ten o’clock. After hearing his report, I said:

“You did well to follow Bright. So he went to Bill Gardner’s faro rooms, did he? That’s a point of some importance. He knew the way so well that it is evident he had been there before. I should like to know what money he played with. It is too late to find that out now, but I will provide for him after this. Whenever you step to the door, you will see one of my ‘shadows’ approaching you from the direction of the lake. He will follow Bright and leave you to your duty in the Clifton House. If you do not see the ‘shadow,’ however, you must follow Bright yourself.”

The Prince returned to the Clifton House, and after lunch, was promptly on hand to fulfill his engagement with Mrs. Pearson. Her handsome sleigh, drawn by a span of coal black, thoroughbred horses, was at the door, and the weather and sleighing were remarkably fine. The Prince handed the ladies to their seats, a vacant place beside Miss Pearson being left for him, and they were soon flying down the avenue. Miss Pearson renewed her interesting conversation of the previous day with the Prince, while her happy mamma beamed upon them approvingly from the opposite seat. From every window of the hotel, as they moved off, envious glances were thrown after them, while Mrs. Pearson was pronounced “a foxy old schemer,” and her daughter “an impudent minx.” The party was certainly very stylish and attracted much attention. The conversation between Miss Pearson and the Prince was still carried on in German, and the young lady’s face, lit up with bright smiles, showed how much she was enjoying herself. Suddenly she turned to her mother and said:

“Oh! mamma! how delightful! The Prince has been telling me all about the Crimean war, and he says that when we go to Europe he will get passes from his father to visit the battlefields, and will show us the spot where the Light Brigade made their famous charge.”

“Oh! indeed; you are too kind, Prince. I don’t know how we can sufficiently thank you,” replied the overjoyed Mrs. Pearson.

“The charm of to haf such agreeable society will be to me a sufficient reward,” replied the Prince, bowing gallantly.

It will be seen that my Prince did not lack inventive capacity in the bestowal of his promises, for, as I afterwards learned, he never made two alike. He was naturally obliged to draw heavily on his imagination to satisfy all his friends equally, and, I must say, he succeeded marvelously. Having once agreed to “play the prince,” he was determined that no petty considerations of expense or trouble should interfere with his princely generosity—in promises.

After a most enjoyable ride, the party returned to the Clifton House in the best of spirits.

Shortly after his return, the Prince met Bright, who complained of not having slept well the night before. He said that he did not feel well, and invited the Prince to step down to the bar-room. Here Bright drank heavily, as usual, ordering “brandy smashes.”

“What is that?” asked the Prince. “I should like to taste,” and he, also, called for one. He pronounced it too strong for him, however, as in Bavaria he was accustomed to drink only beer and light wines.

From the bar-room they went into the sitting-room, and as it was not time to dress for dinner, the Prince threw himself on a sofa. The drive in the cold air had made him quite drowsy, and in a few minutes he fell into a light nap. While he was sleeping he turned half over, and his pocket-book fell upon the floor. This pocket-book was an exact fac-simile of his cigar case, according to a custom quite prevalent in Europe at that time.

The entrance of a gentleman, named Stark, awoke the Prince just as Bright had picked up the pocket-book.

“Hulloa!” said Stark, “has the Prince lost his pocket-book?”

The Prince quickly sprang up, and Bright handed it to him with the remark that he had intended taking care of it until the Prince waked up. The Prince thanked him for his kindness, and nothing more was thought about the matter. When the Prince reported the incident to me, however, it suggested a new idea, which was too valuable to be thrown away. The reader will soon discover what this idea was, and how I made use of it.

At dinner the Prince formed the acquaintance of Mr. Hanson, a wealthy real estate dealer. Mr. Hanson belonged to an aristocratic Kentucky family, and consequently, rather looked down on those who had the misfortune to be born in the North. The Prince had met his family the evening before, but had not seen Mr. Hanson until that evening at dinner, when that gentleman sent a glass of wine to him, and saluted him as he drank.

Mr. Bright informed the Prince that the gentleman to whom he had bowed, was Mr. Hanson, who considered himself the most aristocratic gentleman in the house. Mr. Hanson’s family consisted of his wife and several daughters, the eldest of whom was a lovely brunette, about sixteen years old, just budding into womanhood.

After dinner the Prince met Miss Pearson in the parlor and was having a pleasant chat about Germany, when Mr. Hanson came up and introduced himself. They conversed together for some

time, and then Mr. Hanson took the Prince's arm and strolled through the parlors. As they walked, the Prince spoke of the pleasure of his sleigh-ride that day.

"I don't like sleigh-rides," returned Mr. Hanson. "We don't use sleighs in Kentucky, where I came from. I've made a heap o' money speculatin' in re[a]l estate since I came to Chicago, an' I thought some o' totin' my family over to U-rope next year. By the way, couldn't I manage to borrow a few millions in Bavaria at, say three percent per annum? I could invest it here at three percent. a month."

"No, I think you hardly could, for our Bavaria all her capital needs for—what you call it?—home improofments," replied the Prince.

By this time they had reached Mrs. Hanson and her daughter, who, it may be remarked, *en passant*, were particularly vexed to think that the Pearsons had been the first to appear in public with the Prince. The Hansons and Pearsons were rival aspirants for the leadership of the Clifton House set, and represented respectively the red and the white rose; the brunettes and the blondes.

Mrs. Pearson had spoken of the Prince's kind offer to accompany herself and daughter on a European tour, and Mrs. Hanson was determined to succeed equally well with His Highness. Hence, she addressed him with her most languid and would-be aristocratic air:

"Oh! Herr Lindeman—as you will persist in calling yourself—you have no idea how I long to visit Germany. It must be such a beautiful country. How I dote on that lovely poem, 'Bingen on the Rhine!' I should so like you to hear my daughter repeat it. Ever since I first read about Germany I have had a longing to visit it. You must know I am of a very poetical temperament. I think a great deal of poetry, and music, and painting, and art, and—and—such things. Now, my poor husband here—heigh-ho! all he cares for is to run after corner lots. He doesn't drag his business into the parlor, however, as so many people do. It is *so vulgar*, the way some folks are always talking about business. *My wish is to be acquainted with European courts.*" Saying which, Mrs. Hanson looked most bewitchingly at the Prince.

At this moment she saw the Pearsons approaching, evidently intent on carrying off the Prince, and she, therefore, executed a brilliant maneuver right under the guns of the enemy.

"Herr Lindeman, won't you play for us?" she asked. "You do play so divinely. I am a great lover of music, and Annie is, also."

"Yes," replied the Prince; "it will give me pleasure to play if your daughter will sing."

"I am not a good singer," said Miss Hanson; "but if my singing will induce you to play, I offer myself a willing sacrifice," and taking the Prince's arm, she walked to the piano before the Pearsons could get within speaking distance.

"There," said Mrs. Hanson to her husband, "didn't I manage that well? All the company are looking, and I think I served those upstart Pearsons just about right. Who are they, anyhow? Her

husband was only a dealer in fancy notions, and she has the presumption to put herself on a level with old Kentucky families, like us.”

The Prince and Miss Hanson played and sang together the whole evening, and when they parted it was with evident regret. Miss Hanson was very fascinating, and she seemed to have exercised her powers on the Prince with telling effect. Mrs. Hanson remarked the next day:

“Our girl is very much in love with the Prince, and he with her. He told her yesterday that he was passionately fond of brunettes.”

Who would have thought such a change could have been wrought in a few hours? It was only the morning previous that the Prince had told Miss Pearson that he cared *only for blondes!*

CHAPTER VIII.

THE company in the parlor dispersed about eleven o'clock. The Prince and several other young gentlemen, including Bright, went up to Mr. Robinson's room to try some fine liquor which he had just received. Bright was in high spirits, and was dressed with unusual care. The Prince judged from his manner that he did not wish to remain long, and concluded that he probably intended going to Bill Gardner's faro bank to spend a few hours. The Prince was so confident that Bright was going out somewhere, that he excused himself from the party for a few minutes, got his hat and cloak, and slipped out of the hotel by the side door on Wabash avenue.

The reader familiar with Old Chicago, will recollect that the Clifton House was situated on the corner of Wabash avenue and Madison street, the principal entrance being on the last-named street. My office was on the corner of Washington and Dearborn streets, only three blocks distant.

On reaching the front of the hotel, the Prince could see nothing of the “shadow” whose duty it was to follow Bright. He knew, however, that he would be sure to find some of my men sleeping in the office. So he hurried over on a keen run. He was agreeably surprised to find Mr. Bangs, my General Superintendent, in the office. On hearing the Prince's suspicions that Bright was going out for the night, Bangs called up McCarthy, a shrewd, quick-witted “shadow,” gave him a full description of Bright's personal appearance, and ordered him to watch the Clifton House. When a young gentleman answering to that description, came out, McCarthy was to follow him. Another young man might come out and point out Bright to the “shadow,” but whether he was pointed out or not, Bright must be followed in case he left the hotel. (I had been careful not to let any of my other detectives know anything about the *soi-disant* prince, as it was not necessary that they should know anything.)

McCarthy hurried to the Clifton House and took a position where he could watch both entrances. The Prince had already returned and joined his jovial companions in Robinson's room. At a quarter past twelve, the Prince excused himself from the party on the plea of fatigue, and went to his room. Bright remarked at the same time that he would like to have a quiet smoke, and also withdrew. In a few minutes he left the house, wearing a heavy overcoat, and having his face partly concealed by a warm muffler. The night was very dark, but as he passed out of the

gaslighted hall, McCarthy got a good look at him, and felt sure that it was his man. To make assurance doubly sure, however, the “shadow” stopped Bright under a street lamp, and asked the way to Lake street. Having thus satisfied himself of his correctness, McCarthy kept Bright in sight until they reached the Court House square. There Bright took a hack, and was driven across the bridge to the North Side. McCarthy seated himself comfortably behind, and only jumped off when he saw the hackman was slacking his speed. The carriage then drew up in front of a well-known house of ill-fame, kept by Madam Hatch, the proprietress of the most elegant house of that character in the city. Bright got out, paid the hackman, and entered the house. The fact that he had discharged the hackman was evidence that he intended to spend the night. McCarthy, therefore, returned to my office, and reported to Mr. Bangs, who ordered him to go back to the North Side and watch Madam Hatch’s house all night.

Bangs then came directly to my house, on Adams street, and asked my advice. I told him that, late as it was, he had better call immediately on Madam Hatch, and inquire the name of the young gentleman who had called at her house early that morning; also to find out all that she knew with regard to him. Accordingly, Mr. Bangs drove to Madam Hatch’s. It was two o’clock when he arrived there, but Madam was still up. Business was brisk, the champagne had been circulating freely, and she was in the best of humors.

She greeted Bangs cordially, and readily granted him a private interview. He then told her that he had come, at my request, to learn what she knew of the young gentleman who had arrived there about one o’clock that night. He proceeded to describe the man, but had not gone far in his description, before she said:

“Oh! I know whom you mean. If Mr. Pinkerton will promise never to divulge the source of his information, I will tell all that I know of him.”

Bangs gave his pledge that she should never be known in connection with the case, and she continued:

“The man to whom you refer is Mr. Bright. He brought a St. Louis girl here, about three months ago, and he pays all her expenses most liberally. I know you can’t be after him. Mr. Pinkerton makes mistakes as often as other men, and he could not make a greater mistake than to be suspicious of Bright. He is one of the most perfect gentlemen I have ever met. He spends his money freely, and his girl gets all she wants. She has one of the finest wardrobes of any girl in the city, and only the other day he brought her a magnificent brown silk. No, no; Mr. Pinkerton can have no cause to suspect him.”

“It seems a clear case of mistaken identity,” said Bangs; “and I agree with you, that Mr. Pinkerton has made a mistake. By-the-by, does Bright call often?”

“Oh! yes; he is a fine fellow, and never neglects his girl. He is always here three or four times a week, and often takes her out for a drive. She is a splendid girl, and I know several gentlemen who are dying to pay her attention, but she will have nothing to do with them. She is afraid of Bright, and it would not do to have reports brought to his ears. He is so liberal that it would be

folly for her to risk losing him. He is talking of going to New Orleans, and will take her with him.”

“He must be a fine catch for a good girl,” said Bangs. “There is evidently a mistake in suspecting him. Won’t you take some champagne, Madam Hatch?”

Champagne was something which the Madam was never known to refuse, so she hurried off to get a bottle. On returning, she playfully allowed the cork to pop into Bangs’ face, and filled two large goblets with the sparkling fluid. The shallow champagne glasses then in fashion were not at all to Madam’s taste.

“What business is young Bright engaged in?” asked Bangs, as he sipped his wine.

“He is not in business at all,” said the Madam. “His father is a wealthy dry goods merchant of New York, and he has sent his son to Chicago to see the world for a time before going into business. The old gentleman keeps Ed. liberally supplied with money, in order, I suppose, to let him sow his wild oats here, before coming home to settle down to steady habits. Beyond looking after his father’s customers in Chicago, he seems to have nothing to do. Sometimes he comes here with a party of gentlemen, but he never lets them see his girl. He always stays around until they retire, before going to her room.”

“This is fine champagne,” said Bangs, looking at it critically, while mentally pronouncing it rather fair cider. “Bright is a fortunate young man.”

Then finishing his glass, he added:

“There is no doubt that Mr. Pinkerton is mistaken this time. How much for the champagne? What, only five dollars! Why, you will ruin yourself selling such a fine article at that price,” and paying the amount, Mr. Bangs came away.

He met McCarthy outside, and relieved him from watching any further, until eight o’clock next morning. About eight o’clock McCarthy was again on hand, and when Bright came out, about an hour later, the “shadow” saw him safely inside the doors of the Clifton House, before coming to the office to report. As Bright entered the hotel, he passed the Prince, who was in the hall, but he hurried to his room, without stopping to speak.

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN I had heard McCarthy’s report, I called Mr. Bangs into my private office and learned what had taken place at Madam Hatch’s. I then sat musing some time, and at length said:

“Bangs, I rather think we shall tree the coon before long. By the way, has Sharp reported yet? What did he make out of that washerwoman?”

I had put Sharp on the track of Bright’s washerwoman to see whether something might not be discovered about the stolen underclothing.

“No,” said Bangs, “he hasn’t made out anything yet. He only observed a colored girl cutting some shirts shorter and hemming them.”

“What!” said I, starting up, “you think that isn’t anything? Well, I think it everything. The shirts which were stolen had a large letter H in the lower corner. If Sharp had only got me one of those pieces with an H on it, I should have asked nothing more.”

“Well,” said Bangs, “Sharp was unable to get any of the clippings, but he may be able to get a piece yet. He overheard the woman tell the girl to cut off just two inches.”

“I am sorry he did not succeed,” I replied, “but Sharp is a good man and may do better if he tries again. This case begins to work up nicely. You know, Bangs, I am a firm believer in first impressions; I seldom have to abandon them. The first impression I get always takes fast hold of me, and in nine cases out of ten it proves to be correct. The first time I laid eyes on Bright, I felt that he was the thief, and now I am convinced of it. All we shall have to do is to wait, and the Prince will draw him out.”

In the course of the morning the Prince strolled down town and met Mr. Beaver, a wealthy banker, who boarded at the Clifton House. They met in the vicinity of the Tremont House, and Mr. Beaver greeted the Prince very heartily. He invited his distinguished friend to visit his bank, which was close by. The Prince had just come out of Bill Gardner’s faro bank, but thought best to say nothing of this visit to a rival establishment.

Mr. Beaver gave the Prince a full description of the methods of banking in this country, and modestly called attention to the superior character of his own banking facilities. He concluded by asking the Prince to drive out with Mrs. Beaver and her daughters in the afternoon. The Prince had no other engagement, and expressed himself as most pleased to accept the invitation.

Mr. Beaver was the happy father of three marriageable daughters, and though he was a great advocate of republican principles, it was possible that he would not have objected to giving one of the young ladies in marriage to a wealthy prince.

After dinner the Beaver family sleigh drove up to the main entrance of the hotel. The Prince assisted Mrs. Beaver and the young ladies into the sleigh, and then took a seat beside the eldest Miss Beaver. As they drove off, the attentions of the three beautiful young brunettes and the admiring looks of their mamma were so overpowering as almost to abash even the Prince, ready man of the world though he was; but their lively conversation soon put him at his ease. The subject of their remarks was European aristocracy, with which, of course, he was perfectly familiar, and they lamentably ignorant; hence he was able to give them a great deal of entertaining information relative to the pleasures of court life.

The young ladies said that their mamma intended taking them to Europe in the summer, but that their papa was so much bound up in business that he might remain behind. The Prince gave Mrs. Beaver a most cordial invitation to visit his father when they went to Bavaria, and said that he would write to his father on the subject immediately. He then proceeded to describe the grand

old palace which had been in the possession of his family for many generations. He pictured in glowing colors its architectural beauties and its massive construction; its walls, hung with the richest Gobelin tapestry; its art gallery, filled with priceless gems of painting and sculpture; its grand old halls, which, in former days, had rung with the songs and shouts of his mailed ancestors and their loyal vassals; and lastly, the noble park surrounding the castle, where the huntsman's horn so often had echoed in the chase of the deer or the wild boar.

Then the Prince gave an account of the reception of the King of Bavaria at the castle, just before the departure of Prince Beauharnais for the Crimea. The illumination of the castle and park was a sight for a lifetime. The grounds were one flood of light, so arranged as to produce the most picturesque and enchanting effects. The crest of the range of hills encircling the valley in which the palace was situated, was crowned with a continuous line of flame, while the distant hillsides were dotted with elegant designs of immense size, representing fountains, trees, castles, and ships, all in fire. From the park gates to the grand entrance to the castle, a steady stream of carriages stretched continuously, depositing their loads of titled visitors rapidly and without perceptible delay. His vivid memory enabled him to describe some of the exquisite toilets worn by the ladies, their jewels and costly laces. He also drew heavily upon his recollection—I had almost said imagination—for the gorgeous uniforms and court dresses worn by the gentlemen of the royal household. He concluded by mentioning the grand orchestra of one hundred master musicians, who played the beautiful German waltzes so irresistibly that the mere memory of them was enough to make one wish to dance.

It is needless to say that the Prince's graphic description completely fascinated the Beavers, and made him almost an object of adoration in their sight. The grandest entertainments they had ever attended paled into utter insignificance before those which must be matters of common occurrence in the circle of nobility to which the Prince belonged. They only wondered that the Prince could ever have torn himself away from such delightful society; that he was able to exist in the plebeian atmosphere of Chicago, was truly surprising. He certainly was a most finished gentleman, the young ladies thought, besides being so very fascinating in his conversation and manners. Whether they would have formed the same opinion of him had they known his real social status is a question I leave the reader to determine.

After a delightful drive of two hours, the party returned to the hotel in fine spirits. The Prince escorted the ladies to their apartments and then walked down to the office.

CHAPTER X.

ON entering the office, the Prince met Bright, who was smoking a cigar, as usual. Bright said that he had been looking for his friend for some time, as he wanted to have a quiet talk. They accordingly took seats in a corner of the smoking-room, where they would be unobserved.

"I wanted to see whether you would like to go to a masquerade ball, to-morrow night," said Bright. "It will be a very fine affair, and only gentlemen of known respectability can obtain tickets, so that there will be no disorderly nor glaringly disreputable characters there. It is intended to be a thoroughly respectable ball, and it will be attended by many ladies in good

society; but there will be just enough of a sprinkling of girls who are a little inclined to be fast, to make it lively. Wouldn't you like me to get you a ticket?"

"Yes," replied the Prince, "I should much like to go."

"We will have a jolly time together," said Bright. "What costume shall you wear?"

"I haf but little time a costume to prepare. What can I get ready-made?"

"Well," said Bright, "I saw a uniform at the costumer's where my suit is making, which I think would just about suit you. It was a very resplendent affair, and you could call yourself a Bavarian general. The man could easily alter it for you, and add such insignia of rank as are worn in the Bavarian service. You could step in there to-morrow morning, and give the directions. He can easily make the alterations before night."

"Yes, I think that would suit me," said the Prince. "What costume shall you wear?"

"Oh! I am going as a lawyer, with bag, wig and gown. I think I can play the part pretty well, and the disguise will be perfect. By the way, Prince, I will introduce you to a young lady who will be glad to accompany you, and who will be a lively companion."

"Very well, *mein freund*, order me a ticket, a costume, a carriage, a young lady, and everything else that is necessary. Myself I place at your disposal. Now I go to dress for dinner." So saying, the Prince went to his room.

In the evening, the Prince joined the company assembled in the parlor, and, as usual, was a bone of contention among the rival belles. The Hansons, the Pearsons, and the Beavers were out in full force, each endeavoring, by a series of delicate strategic movements, to out-manceuvre the others, and capture the Prince. The star of the Beaver beauties was rather in the ascendant, as they had had possession of him all the afternoon; but they desired to monopolize him for the evening also. They had already informed everyone in the room that the Prince had invited them to pay a visit to his father in Bavaria, and that he was going to give them letters of introduction to Prince Beauharnais, the elder, and to various other titled persons in Germany. They could not help showing their elation at their great good fortune, and in many ways assumed such important manners as to irritate all the other ladies in the room.

When the Prince entered the parlor, he first encountered Mrs. and Miss Hanson, who quickly engaged him in conversation. Before they could mature any plan to retain possession of their prize, however, Mr. Beaver entered the door behind the Prince, who had not yet seated himself. He saw the latter bending over Mrs. Hanson and her daughter, while beyond, he saw his own wife and daughters casting despairing looks at the trio before him. Comprehending the situation at a glance, he determined to carry off the Prince before Mrs. Hanson could arrange another such a musical party as the one of the previous evening. He, therefore, stepped up to the Prince, slapped him familiarly on the shoulder, and said, jocularly:

“Prince, I have a favor to ask of you. Couldn’t you manage to secure an introduction for my wife and daughters to King Maximilian, of Bavaria?”

“I haf no doubt that I could so do,” replied the Prince, politely. “A presentation day comes twice by a month, at which I or my father could have your charming family presented.”

Mr. Beaver was perfectly overjoyed. It never occurred to him that the American minister at Munich could have presented his family just as well; but he now felt that they would make the European tour under the most aristocratic auspices, and he was highly elated at the prospect. In the excess of his happiness, he grasped the Prince’s arm, and said:

“Won’t you favor us with some music, Prince? If you will, I will have my daughter sing with you.”

It was impossible to decline, and the Prince was soon securely anchored on the piano stool, with one of the fair Beavers to keep possession of him. The inexpressible wrath of Mrs. Hanson, who thus saw her own tactics used against her, must be imagined; I confess my total inability to do justice to the subject. For the remainder of the evening the Beavers stood guard over the Prince. There had been, already, some considerable dissension in the ranks of the Beaver family, as to which of the young ladies was entitled to the credit of having attracted the Prince’s attentions, and the younger girls were disposed to dispute the elder’s claim to all of his society. Hence, no matter where the Prince went that evening, he was sure to be under convoy of one of the omnipresent Beavers. He was forced to admit to me that, as far as perseverance went, they were not only Beavers by name, but beavers by nature.

In spite of all the attentions paid him, however, the Prince did not relax his vigilant watch, and at one time he discovered that Bright was not in the room. He immediately went to the front door, on the plea of looking at the weather; but seeing one of my “shadows” on duty he returned to the custody of the Beavers. In about an hour, Bright came in, but soon went out again, and remained nearly half an hour. Nearly all the boarders were in the parlors, hence the Prince concluded that Bright had been down in the bar-room.

It was nearly twelve o’clock before the party broke up, and as the Prince passed out of the parlor, Bright joined him, and dragged him down to the bar-room.

Bright wished to take the Prince out for a lark, but as the latter had no desire to “see the elephant,” Bright said:

“Well, then, I will take you over to Madam Hatch’s, where you can pick out a partner for the ball. You will find many different styles to select from, and the girl you choose will be sure to go.”

The Prince tried to avoid going, but Bright was so persistent that he, at length, consented. A hack soon took them to Madam Hatch’s door, where Bright was about to dismiss the hackman, but the Prince interfered. It would be beneath his dignity, he said, to pass the night in such a house, and, therefore, he wished the hack to remain. Bright stammered in a confused way, begged the

Prince's pardon, and told the driver to remain, as they should be out in a few moments. They then entered the house.

In the parlor they found a number of handsome women, who, it is hardly necessary to state, belonged to the *demi-monde*. They were of the higher class of such women, many of them being well-educated and accomplished. Bright ordered champagne for the party, and the young men remained some little time, chatting with the girls, and sipping their wine. Bright then made another *faux pas*, by asking the Prince to play. The latter's pride would not permit him to comply with the request in such society, so he politely begged to be excused.

After a time the Prince designated the girl he wished to accompany him to the ball, and she promised to be ready to go, when he called, the next night.

"But what lady go you with?" the Prince asked Bright.

"Oh! she does not live here," he replied. "You will see her to-morrow night."

This showed the Prince that Bright did not wish anyone, whosoever, to see his fair mistress.

Having remained in all nearly an hour, they took their leave, and re-entered the hack. They had gone but a short distance when Bright made the hackman stop. He said that he had a message for one of the girls, which he had forgotten to deliver, and that he would go back for that purpose. He told the Prince not to wait, and the latter, therefore, returned to the Clifton House alone. Bright had been "shadowed" by McCarthy, and when he got out of the carriage, he was seen to go straight to Madam Hatch's, where he spent the night.

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER breakfast the next morning, the Prince was astonished to hear that Mr. Blair, who roomed only two doors from him, had been robbed during the night. Mr. Blair had retired late, and in consequence, had slept late the next morning. On awakening, he had sprung up and commenced dressing hurriedly. He had gone to his bureau for a clean shirt, and had instantly discovered that he had been robbed. His loss consisted of about one hundred and fifty dollars in coin, a gold watch and chain, and a valuable diamond ring, a present from a lady. Mr. Blair had immediately made known his misfortune, and the Prince was again a wondering spectator of one of the weekly excitements of American hotel life.

Mr. Blair finally rushed off to find the members of the committee, who had gone to their respective places of business. He soon brought them together and told his tale of woe. They all felt highly incensed and came swooping down upon me like eagles on their prey.

"What are you going to do, Mr. Pinkerton?" said one.

"I think it's very strange that you can't catch the thief, with all your experience," said another.

"If you don't catch him pretty soon, we shall all leave the Clifton House," chimed in a third.

I bore their scolding as meekly as possible and finally calmed them down by assuring them that I was actively engaged in working up the case. I begged them to keep quiet and to rest assured that I was doing everything in my power to ferret out the guilty party. I told them that I had hopes of detecting the thief within the coming week, but that they must have patience and not expect a detective to be omnipotent and omnipresent. They finally departed in a somewhat less unreasonable frame of mind.

During the forenoon the Prince came to my office and related his experience with the Beavers. I paid little attention to this, as their conduct was about what I had expected it to be, but I asked him how Bright had acted during the evening.

“Oh! he twice the room left, once staying an hour or more,” replied the Prince.

“Was the number of people in the parlor large?” I asked.

“Yes,” he answered, “there were much people present. Nearly all the boarders were in the room and many of their friends from the outside. I was to many strangers introduced, but I could not much say to them, as the Beavers always drew me off.”

“Was it while the room was crowded that Bright was away?” I asked.

“Yes, but I could not find to where he went. I saw a detecti[ve] outside, so I thought he had not gone away.”

The Prince then went out to prepare for the masquerade, and left me to think over his report.

“Strange!” I said to myself. “It is barely possible that I may be mistaken, but I feel sure that Bright is the thief. Could it have been possible for him to slip off, while everyone was in the parlor, and commit that robbery? If he did it, that was his only opportunity, as he spent the night at Madam Hatch’s after twelve o’clock. If the robbery took place after that hour, Bright must be innocent of that crime, at all events. Well, I must have patience; it won’t do to be in a hurry.”

I then called Mr. Bangs into my private office.

“Bangs,” I said, “I wish you to write to New York in order to learn all we can about Mr. Bright, senior. Try to find out why he keeps his son, young Ed. Bright, so much away from home. We may need this information soon, don’t you think so?”

“We might learn something relative to the young man’s character that would be of use,” Bangs replied.

“Then please write to my New York correspondent—Robert Boyer—and tell him to look up Mr. Bright. Let him find out how that gentleman stands in commercial circles and in society. I think it might be well to put a ‘shadow’ at work, to get in with the servants and discover why young Bright does not live at home. Servants always know a great deal more about family matters than

their employers are aware of. If Bright's servants are Irish, Boyer might put Lynch on that duty; you know he served on my force some time, and we can depend upon him."

"Yes," said Bangs, "he will be just the man to do that work. I will dictate a letter to Boyer immediately."

About two o'clock, I was hurriedly summoned to Mr. Beaver's bank. As I entered the door, Mr. Beaver seized me by the arm with a nervous, trembling grasp, and drew me into his private office.

"Pinkerton," he said, "some scoundrel got into the Clifton House last night and stole all my family's jewelry and two hundred dollars in cash. This forenoon Mrs. Beaver wished to make some purchases for the girls, as they are going out driving this afternoon with a Bavarian prince, who is stopping at the Clifton, but on going to her desk to get some money, she found not only all the money gone, but also all the jewelry we possess, except a few trinkets the girls wore last evening. The robbery must have been committed during the night, as at dinnertime nothing had been disturbed. I don't care for the money, but I must find the jewelry. It was a very fine collection, and I would not have taken five thousand dollars for it. What shall I do?" he continued, growing more and more excited. "There will be a grand ball at the Clifton in a short time, and positively, my family have nothing to wear."

While he was talking, my mind was, figuratively, running after his jewelry. I felt sure that Bright did not sell it, as that would be too difficult a matter for him and too dangerous. The fact that the trinkets worn by the Beaver girls during the previous evening had not been stolen, satisfied me that Bright was the thief, and that he had committed both robberies while absent from the parlor on the two occasions noticed by the Prince. Now, if he did not sell the jewelry, what did he do with it? I decided that he must be in the habit of taking all jewelry and similar articles to the woman whom he was keeping at Madam Hatch's. Of course, she knew that it was stolen, but she probably intended, in case of Bright's detection, to escape with all his presents, since hardly anyone knew her relations to Bright. These were the thoughts which flashed through my mind as I listened to Mr. Beaver, but I merely said:

"I will hunt up your jewelry as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, don't mention your loss, and I have no doubt that I shall succeed in recovering it."

"Do you suppose I shall keep quiet?" he asked, angrily. "I shall advertise my loss in every newspaper in town. Can't you find out at the pawnbrokers' shops whether any of my jewelry has been offered for sale? I know they would tell you, as you are an old hand in the detective business."

"I can inquire," I replied, "but I have no expectation of learning anything in that direction. The thief will not offer your jewelry for sale in Chicago, you can depend upon that."

"Well, if you can't do anything, I must get someone that can," snarled the irate Beaver. "I must recover my jewelry immediately, as the Prince is very attentive to my daughters, and it will not do for them to appear at parties with him without their jewelry."

I tried my best to calm him down, but without any effect. He had an idea that detectives were omnipotent, and that nothing was easier for them than to recover stolen property when they wished to do so.

“I have sent for the city police,” he said, “and they will be here directly. No one at the hotel knows anything of my loss as yet, but all the world shall know it tomorrow. I will have the whole police force at work, if necessary, for I am determined to find my jewelry.”

I smiled inwardly as I thought of the way in which the “whole police force” would assist in the recovery of the stolen property. I was satisfied that the jewelry was safely lodged in the hands of Bright’s mistress, and that the police might search every pawnbroker’s shop in the city without discovering the least clue. I knew perfectly well that even an offer to compromise for money would be ineffectual, since none of the professional thieves or “fences”^{*} had possession of the stolen articles.

I felt very confident that Madam Hatch was ignorant of Bright’s operations. She was a woman possessing many good qualities, and honesty was one of them. Her business was one of the most disreputable character, but she would never tolerate a thief, and I was satisfied that if she should be informed that an inmate of her house was receiving stolen property, she would give me her assistance in recovering it.

I could not convince Mr. Beaver of the folly of making his loss known publicly, and I therefore left him, as he had worked himself into a violent passion.

On entering my office I was surprised to see the Prince awaiting my return. The Misses Beaver had already told him of their loss, and he had hurried out to report it to me. The Beavers had previously made arrangements for the Prince to go driving with them that afternoon, but they were so much excited and distressed that they had been obliged to ask him to excuse them from going. I heard his story and then told him to return to the Clifton House.

I thought to myself, as the Prince went out, that he was a pretty good detective. Although he had been surrounded by an admiring crowd the night before, he had noticed Bright’s absence from the parlor twice; again, in the morning he had left all the pleasant gaiety of the hotel to come straight to me with a report of the Beaver robbery.

I was now well satisfied that Bright had robbed both Mr. Blair and Mr. Beaver, and I determined to arrange the trap for his capture as soon as I should hear from New York. I was particularly glad that I had written to Boyer to put Lynch at work, as I wished to know something of Bright’s past history.

Bright remained about the hotel most of the day. He was rather quiet and subdued, except when speaking of the robberies, and then he became quite indignant. He was very bitter, indeed, and

* A “fence” is a receiver of stolen goods—one who makes a business of buying stolen property from thieves.

even advocated the formation of a vigilance committee to catch the thief and hang him to the nearest lamp post.

“There is no use in temporizing,” he said; “we must make an example of this scoundrel or we shall never have any peace.”

Mr. Robinson came into my office in the afternoon to report the Beavers’ loss, and to again urge me to hasten my plans for the capture of the criminal. He said that a young man named Josephs had left the hotel that morning, bound for New York. Josephs, he added, was known to be very fond of jewelry, and many of the boarders suspected him of having robbed the Beavers. Mr. Robinson, therefore, wished me to telegraph to New York to have Josephs arrested on his arrival there. I said I had already written to New York, and that if Josephs had taken the jewelry he would surely be arrested.

CHAPTER XII.

THE grand masquerade ball at Metropolitan Hall had been announced a month in advance, and the preparations were such as to insure its complete success. The intention had been that none but persons of acknowledged respectability should be able to obtain tickets. In consequence, it was attended by hundreds of wealthy and fashionable people. To be sure the Clifton House set did not consider it sufficiently exclusive for their fastidious tastes, but this did not prevent large numbers of other members of the *haut ton* from attending, though afterward none of them could be found who would acknowledge having been present. Not that there was anything improper occurred, or that decorum was not strictly observed, but it became known that some of the fair masqueraders were not all they should have been; hence the really respectable ladies who had been present swore their escorts to secrecy, and denied all knowledge of the ball. This was perfectly practicable, since no one had seen their faces, and recognition behind their masks was impossible. Indeed, it was shrewdly surmised that some of the Cliftonian ladies even, had counted upon this fact in advance, and while professing that they would never think of attending a public ball, had, in secret, made up a party expressly to attend this masquerade. Be that as it may, the ball was certainly a great success; and while the majority of ladies were undoubtedly above suspicion, there was a sufficient attendance of the higher class of the *demi-monde* to make it uncommonly lively.

At nine o’clock the Prince was ready. He had obtained a very rich and showy uniform, which set off his fine figure to great advantage, while his features were entirely concealed by a close-fitting mask. Entering his carriage at the Clifton House, he drove straight to Madam Hatch’s, where he found his fair partner impatiently awaiting him.

She was dressed to represent a shepherdess, and was as frisky, and apparently as innocent, as the young lambs which she was supposed to take care of. She had been influenced in her choice of costume by the extreme shortness of her dress—at both ends. In fact, as the young lady in question rarely had an opportunity to show herself in public, she was determined that, on this occasion, people should *see as much of her* as possible, and it must be acknowledged that she succeeded.

As she was all ready when the Prince arrived, he handed her into the carriage, and in a short time they were mingling with the gay throng of miscellaneous characters in Metropolitan Hall.

In about half an hour, Bright arrived with his partner. He wore the bag, wig and gown of an English chancery solicitor, while she was dressed as Diana, the goddess of the chase. The correctness of their costumes, the ease with which they acted their parts, and the exceptionally beautiful form of the lady, caused a murmur of admiration to greet them as they moved about the hall. She wore a close-fitting corselet, made of fine scales of gold, cut square and low in the neck, with a narrow band going over each shoulder. Her magnificent arms were wholly bare, and the snowy whiteness of her matchless neck and bust was unrivaled. She carried a light bow in her left hand, and a quiver of arrows hung over her left shoulder, though she soon laid these articles aside as inconvenient in dancing. She wore a light tiara of gold filigree-work, which gave a regal poise to her elegantly shaped head; and her whole carriage was queenly and commanding.

Another of the belles who attracted much attention was a representative of Winter. She wore a white satin dress, cut very low, both in front and back, with a very long, trailing skirt. The top of the corsage was trimmed with long, glass pendants, which were exact representations of icicles. Her arms were bare; the puffed bands which took the place of sleeves, being trimmed with soft, white eider-down. Around every flounce of the skirt ran a light vine of ivy leaves, with little clusters of red holly berries at intervals. Her hair was dressed in the prevailing fashion, but was powdered to a snowy whiteness. She wore a light and graceful coronet of thorn ivy, set with red holly berries, the same as those on the skirt. Over all the dress was draped a mass of transparent, silk gauze, upon which was fastened a great number of tufts of new Sea-island cotton, in imitation of flakes of snow.

A Turkish costume also excited much admiration. The wearer was a petite brunette, of exquisite proportions and graceful carriage. Her undervest was of purple satin, richly embroidered, and trimmed around the throat with costly and delicate lace. The bosom was cut V-shaped, the opening being continued to the waist, and filled in, also, with lace, below the top of the embroidered chemise. Over this vest she wore a light, floating garment, with close-fitting sleeves, reaching to the wrist, where they terminated in lace ruffles. The body was cut away in a quick curve from the throat, on each side, leaving the undervest wholly exposed in front, while behind, this over-dress fell nearly to the floor, like a cavalier's cloak. Her lower limbs were clothed in full Turkish trousers, fastened about the waist with a voluminous scarf, or sash, of soft material, which was wound in quite a number of folds above her hips. These trousers were fastened just below the knee, but they fell, in a loose, easy fold, nearly to the ankle. She wore clocked silk stockings, and beautifully embroidered, yellow satin slippers, turning up to a point at the toes. A very light, white turban was on her head, from which hung a long, white veil, which completely concealed her features, except her eyes. This veil was worn only on making her *entree*, and was soon removed for convenience, the face being still concealed by a mask.

These were three of the most striking of the costumes, though there were many scores of others which would merit description, if space permitted. As far as dress was concerned, there certainly had never been before in Chicago a masquerade of equal elegance and style.

The Prince had been instructed to watch Bright's partner closely, and to obtain a view of her face, if possible. He, accordingly, soon lost his unsophisticated young shepherdess in the crowd, and kept his eye upon the goddess Diana. For a long time it seemed as if it would be impossible to speak to her alone. Though she was always an object of admiration to many handsome and agreeable cavaliers, she paid no attention to anyone except Bright, and the latter seemed determined not to let her go out of his sight. At length, however, he was dragged away to plead a case, and Diana, for the first time, was left alone. The Prince saw that this would probably be his only chance to find out who she was, hence he resolved to carry her by storm. He knew how fond all the *demi-monde* are of admiration, and, therefore, decided to address her in a strain of fervent flattery, and to pretend that he was desperately in love with her. He had no time to lose, so, walking up to her, he whispered in her ear:

"Oh! beautiful Diana, a word with thee."

"What dost thou wish?" she said, starting, as she saw the handsome figure bending over her.

"I would to thee a word in private speak," he replied. "If thou wouldst not drive thy true adorer to despair, grant my request."

She hesitated a moment, glanced around, as if looking for someone, and then, taking the Prince's arm, she accompanied him to a side room, which was connected with the ballroom by a door at each end. The Prince saw that Bright was nowhere in the vicinity, and that the room was unoccupied. He then addressed his companion in the impassioned tones of an ardent lover:

"You must, indeed, have thought my request strange; but will you pardon me when I say—I love you. Oh! forgive me, but I can help it not. The moment when you the hall entered, I felt that I was doomed. Every movement is such grace! Every feature is such perfection! I have never seen your face, but I love you, I adore you. I have within me that which tells me behind your mask is a face of beauty. Oh! lovely Diana, raise this mask, and let me upon your features look. See! on my knee, I implore this favor."

"No, no," she answered hurriedly. "I was not to raise my mask. You know not what you ask."

"Pardon me, sweet Diana, but do not refuse me my request. Little will it cost to you; but to me great pleasure it will give."

"But, my lord, I promised not to raise my mask to anyone," she answered, in an undecided tone.

"Oh! most cruel Diana!" urged the Prince, seizing her hand. "I cannot—will not leave you until your sweet face I see." Saying which, he kissed her hand passionately, without rebuke.

"Prince," she said, (with the air of one who had held out as long as could reasonably be expected,) "I know who you are. Bright has told me all about you, and I have been dying to see you. I am as anxious to see your face as you are to see mine, so, if you will unmask, I will, also."

The Prince instantly removed his mask, saying:

“Oh! charming goddess, can it possible be that you know and care for me? Oh! this is bliss indeed.”

As he spoke, the lady also took off her mask, revealing a face of such rare beauty as positively to startle the Prince for an instant. Her complexion was of that exquisite, creamy softness which is so unusual, and it was plain that she was not indebted to either paint or powder for its perfection. Her forehead was low and broad, and was crowned by the delicate filigree-work of her coronet. Her eyes were large and heavily fringed with dark brown lashes. Their color was a luminous gray, growing darker or lighter according to her moods. Her eyebrows had the perfect arch, and her nose the straight contour of the Grecian statues, such as Phidias and Praxiteles loved to create. Her chin was just prominent enough in its rounding outline to give character to the face without spoiling the exquisite oval, while her cheeks were full and tender. Her mouth was a perfect Cupid’s bow, and the tempting, rosy lips contained evidence of a passionate willingness to be kissed which was perfectly irresistible. At least, it was so to the Prince, who drew her to a seat beside him, and closed her lips with kisses, which she returned with equal ardor.

She was the first to speak:

“Oh! Prince, this is happiness. I could travel to the end of the world with you. But, for heaven’s sake, don’t let Bright know of this, nor suspect it. He would kill me if he knew of it. I can fool him, though. I love you and will manage to meet you alone some evening. You were at Madam Hatch’s last night, and I tried to see you, but was afraid of Bright. He came back after he went away with you. He keeps me at Madam Hatch’s, but he never lets any of his friends see me. How I hate him! He is a miserable cur, while you are so handsome, so manly. With what feelings of delight shall I remember this evening! How little I thought, when I came, that your arms would be around me—your lips press mine! My name is Mamie Liston. Please call me ‘Mamie’; it will sound so sweet from your lips.”

“Mamie, darling Mamie,” said the Prince, as he took her hand and drew a large diamond ring from her finger, “let me this ring take to dream upon. If you to me true will be, you will find me to you always true,” and he slipped the ring on his own finger.

“If you could only dream such dreams as I could wish, you would, indeed, dream well of me. I hate the life I lead here. When you go away, take me with you. How I should like to see the world with you!”

As the Prince was about to reply, he glanced through one of the doorways and saw Bright, evidently in search of his mistress, approaching the room.

“Here comes Bright!” he said, hastily putting on his mask. She also replaced her’s and said:

“Oh! dear! what shall I do? He will be sure to find us here alone, and I am afraid to meet him.”

“You slip out of one door as he the other enters. Mix with the crowd and I will here detain him for a time,” said the Prince.

Accordingly, just as Bright entered the room by one door, Mamie passed out by the door at the other end, which also led into the ballroom. He came up to the Prince and said:

“I thought I saw a lady in here, Prince. Who was she?”

“I saw her not well,” said the Prince, “as I haf not my glasses. She seemed for someone to be looking.”

“Ah! you’re a sly dog,” said Bright, familiarly, evidently thinking that the Prince had been having a flirtation which he wished to keep secret. “However, it’s no affair of mine. Have you seen my partner, the goddess Diana, lately? I have lost her,” he continued, entirely unsuspecting that the Prince’s companion had been his own charmer.

“I saw the lady at the other end of the hall a little while ago,” said the Prince. “She seems to be beautiful, and she is the most elegantly dressed woman here.”

“Yes, she has a good figure and dresses well, but her face is quite plain,” said Bright, who was alarmed lest the Prince should wish to make her acquaintance.

“Ah! what a pity!” replied the Prince. “I was wishing an introduction to haf, but if she has not the beauty of the face, I prefer much not to see her. Much I always regret to see a beautiful form spoiled by a vicious face.”

“Vicious? I never said she was vicious,” said the astonished Bright, with considerable warmth.

“Ah! I must a blunder haf made,” returned the Prince. “You said her face was not beautiful—that is ugly, ‘vicious,’ is it not? Your pardon I ask if I—”

“Oh! I see,” interrupted Bright with a laugh. “You meant ‘ugly.’ We say an ‘ugly’ horse, or an ‘ugly’ dog, when the animal is ‘vicious’; and when a woman is the reverse of beautiful, we say also that she is ‘ugly’; but a ‘vicious’ woman is quite another thing. Do you see, Prince?” he continued, laughing.

“My mistake you will excuse, *mein lieber freund*. I must better learn to speak.”

“Oh! that’s all right,” said Bright, good-humoredly, and they then strolled into the ballroom, each being contented with the result of the conversation. The Prince had succeeded in detaining Bright until Mamie was far away at the other end of the hall, while Bright congratulated himself that he had prevented the Prince from asking for an introduction to Mamie. On the whole, it must be confessed that the Prince had rather the advantage.

In about an hour, the Prince told Bright that he was slightly unwell, and would, therefore, retire. While looking for his partner, a young page handed him a note, written on the back of a ball programme. The only words were:

“Ten o’clock to-morrow evening.”

There was no signature, but he knew that it was from Mamie, so, on passing her, he held up the note and bowed his acceptance of the invitation. She nodded to show that she understood, and passed on. The signal and answer were made while Bright’s attention was turned away from Mamie, and he suspected nothing. In a short time the Prince found his short-skirted partner, and, much to her regret, took her away from the brilliant scene. Leaving her at Madam Hatch’s, he drove back to the Clifton House at the comparatively early hour of one o’clock. Bright and his partner remained at the ball until nearly daylight, and then returned to Madam Hatch’s, where Bright retired. He did not make his appearance at the Clifton House until nearly noon.

CHAPTER XIII.

ABOUT ten o’clock the morning after the ball, the Prince came to my office, made his report, and gave me the diamond ring which he had taken from Mamie Liston’s finger the night before.

I was delighted at his success in making her acquaintance, and especially at the fact of obtaining the ring.

“Why,” I said, as I examined it, “this is a very valuable ring, and from its size, I judge it must have been intended for a gentleman.”

The Prince replied that Mamie had invited him to visit her that evening, and that he should have to wear the ring then.

“Well,” I replied, “I think I shall soon be able to find its owner and allow you to return it this evening. Probably Bright is pretty well tired out with his night’s dissipation, and so will not visit her tonight. She must have calculated on that when she made the appointment with you. When you go there, you must notice carefully all the jewelry she wears, her clothes and the articles of luxury on her toilet-table, etc. But be very careful, for she is, undoubtedly, a sharp girl, and must not be alarmed until we have our nets all around both her and Bright.”

I then dismissed the Prince and sent a messenger for Mr. Robinson. The latter was one of those men who can hardly ever keep a secret a day, unless they are first sworn never to divulge it. On his arrival I impressed upon him the fact that any indiscretion, at this point of my proceedings, would surely destroy the good effect of all my previous work. Indeed, it might enable the thief to escape. I, therefore, made Mr. Robinson give me his solemn pledge never to reveal what I was about to tell him; I then handed him the ring.

“Do you recognize that?” I asked.

“No, but it may belong to the Beavers,” he replied.

“What makes you think so?”

“Well, nothing, except that they have just lost some jewelry and have engaged you to recover it. However, on second thoughts, I don’t believe this is their’s. It seems to me that the ring which Mr. Prussing lost, about eight or nine months ago, was very similar to this one. I can’t be certain about it, but this ring strongly reminds me of his.”

“Now, Mr. Robinson,” I said, “I wish you to take that ring out and try to find the owner. You must lose no time, as I must have it back by six o’clock at the latest. If you succeed, my labors will be very much lightened, and I may be able to recover all the stolen property, or its equivalent in money. Show the ring to Mr. Prussing in a careless way, and say that you are thinking of buying it. If he does not recognize it, show it to any other boarder who has lost a diamond ring. Do not display it publicly, nor mention to anyone that it is stolen property. If you come across the owner, he will recognize it soon enough; you must then pledge him to secrecy, make yourself responsible for the ring, and bring it back to me.”

Mr. Robinson promised to follow my instructions and immediately went to the hotel. Just before lunch, he met Mr. Prussing in the hall, on his way to his room.

“Prussing,” he said, “you have bought a good many diamonds and ought to be well posted as to their value; I want your opinion of the value of a ring which I have been offered, and which I think of buying,” and so saying, he handed the ring to Prussing.

“Why, that’s my ring,” said the delighted Prussing, as he seized upon it. “Where in the world did you get it? It was stolen from me when these mysterious robberies first began. Tell me where you got it, and perhaps we can catch the thief.”

“That is just what I expect to do,” replied Robinson. “You must keep perfectly quiet about this, and in a short time we shall recover all our lost articles. I thought it was your ring, and wished to make sure of it.”

“But where did it come from?” queried the curious Prussing.

“I do not know where it came from, myself,” was Robinson’s unsatisfactory answer. “I cannot tell you anything about it, except that the ring must be returned to the person who gave it to me, and I will be responsible for its safe return to you.”

Prussing was decidedly averse to any such a proceeding. He had obtained possession of his ring, and not only wished to keep it, but, also, to know all about the way in which it had come into Robinson’s hands. It was only by dint of urgent entreaties that Robinson succeeded in getting back the ring and quieting Prussing’s insatiate desire for information. The latter was one of the men who always “want to know, you know,” and was driven to the verge of distraction by the fact that Robinson not only positively refused to tell him anything, but also forbade him to mention the subject to anyone else.

On receiving back the ring, with the information that it was one of the articles stolen from the Clifton House, I was fully satisfied of Bright’s guilt. It was evident that he had stolen the ring and presented it to Mamie Liston.

The Prince remained in his room most of the day, resting from the fatigues of the previous evening. On going down to dinner, he met Bright, who had also slept all day, part of the time at Madam Hatch's and part in his own room.

"Didn't we have a fine time last night?" said Bright. "I never enjoyed myself more in my life. My partner was the finest woman at the ball. Over fifty gentlemen tried to get her to unmask, but she was true to her promise to me, and indignantly spurned them all."

The Prince listened with becoming gravity and replied:

"Yes, she seemed to be a lovely woman. She is a treasure you ought to appreciate."

Bright suddenly recollected his depreciation of his partner's personal appearance the night before, and hastened to change the subject.

"By the way," he said, "are you going to remain at home all the evening?"

"Yes," replied the Prince, "I feel too tired to go out."

"Well, I am going down to Bill Gardner's to have a little fun. Won't you go along?"

"I think not," said the Prince. "I feel much fatigue."

After dinner the Prince went into the parlor, where he was soon surrounded by the young ladies, who requested him to describe the ball. His account was very amusing and witty, especially when he endeavored to give accurate descriptions of the various dresses. He was very happy, however, in his modes of expression, and achieved a decided success in his representations of the different characters. He also drew comparisons between this ball and some masquerade balls which he had attended in Europe. His fair audience listened in mute ecstasy, and each one mentally resolved that if another masked ball were given, she would get the Prince to invite her to go. They thought that it *could* not be improper, if a Prince could go.

At the first opportunity, the Prince left the parlor, put on his hat and cloak and took a carriage for Madam Hatch's, to keep his appointment with Mamie Liston. The Madam had been informed of his intended visit, so that, on his arrival, she conducted him immediately to Mamie's room. In doing so, she led him through both parlors in order to give all her girls a chance to see a "real prince." Mamie had told them his rank, so that they had all assembled to get a good look at him as he passed.

He found Mamie awaiting him dressed in a brown silk, trimmed with a quantity of fine lace, which in itself was of great value; but that which most astonished him was, that she was literally almost covered with jewelry. Wherever she could fasten a jewel, she had done so, and she fairly sparkled in the gas-light. From the description which he had received, he was able to recognize Mrs. Beaver's jewelry, and that of several other boarders in the Clifton House. He remained about an hour and a half, and on leaving, Mamie swore to be eternally true to him. She asked for

the ring which he had taken, since she was afraid that Bright would miss it, as she was in the habit of wearing it constantly. He, therefore, returned it, but promised to bring her a larger and finer one when he next came.

In a short time he was again back in the Clifton House parlor, singing and playing for his admiring body-guard of ladies, with more than usual tenderness and effect. Bright stepped up to him for an instant and again asked him whether he would not like to go to Gardner's gambling-rooms, but the Prince declined. He walked to the door, however, and chatted with Bright for a moment, as the latter went out, but seeing that McCarthy was on hand, the Prince returned to the parlor. McCarthy followed Bright to the gambling-rooms and there left him. I had stationed one of my men, named Oakley, inside of Gardner's "bank," and McCarthy knew that Oakley would watch Bright for the rest of the night. Oakley reported next morning that Bright had played desperately all night. At first he had won a great deal, but when he returned to the Clifton House in the morning, he was a heavy loser.

CHAPTER XIV.

FOR a day or two everything went quietly at the Clifton House, but the third day was an uncommonly lively one. The weather was very windy and snowy, but a great many guests arrived at intervals during the day, and the clerks were kept busy in showing them to their rooms, etc. About five o'clock in the afternoon, the second clerk entered the office and found the safe door unlocked and standing open. He had been called away a few moments before and had merely closed the safe door, without locking it. He looked hastily into the money drawer and found that all the contents, amounting to over two hundred dollars, had been stolen. There had been several thousand dollars in the safe that afternoon, but fortunately it had been deposited in bank before three o'clock.

Nothing was said about the loss until after dinner, though the landlord immediately sent for me and for the city police. In less than half an hour I had made an inspection of the office, questioned the clerks, and learned all there was to be learned. While I was so engaged, the city police also came in, so that when the Prince and other boarders came down to dinner, they were informed of this new direction to the thief's efforts. It must be acknowledged that the landlord received little sympathy. The boarders discussed the matter at dinner-table, and agreed that, now that the landlord himself had become a sufferer, he might possibly succeed in protecting them.

In this connection it may be stated that the landlord was, certainly, a unique specimen of the hotel proprietor. He was probably as capable in his business as any man in the country; hence his house was always well filled. But he was as independent and autocratic in his ways as the Czar of all the Russias. He never appeared desirous to conciliate any one, and the threat of leaving the house had no effect upon him whatever. It was owing to this peculiarity that he had hitherto allowed the boarders to organize for their own protection, instead of employing me, or some other detective, himself.

After I had completed my investigation, I told the landlord that I did not see what I could do. No one had been seen entering or leaving the office; the money which had been in the safe was now gone, and it could not be identified even if found. It was a case of mysterious disappearance;

there was nothing but guess-work to go upon, and he was probably just as good a guesser as I was.

“Some person in the house is the thief,” he said, “and my suspicions point to the servants; I should like to have you investigate the matter fully.”

“I will do what I can,” I replied, as I took my departure, “but I fear it will be very little.”

Suspicion had settled on the servants, and within the next three days, over a dozen of them were discharged. *The mere possibility* of having taken the money from the safe was sufficient to cause the discharge of any servant who had happened to be anywhere in the vicinity of the office that afternoon. It certainly was very unjust treatment, since a discharge under such circumstances was equivalent to a direct accusation, yet the accused had no opportunity to vindicate themselves.

Suspicion—how I hate it! I never act upon my first impressions, (though they have generally proved correct,) until I have collected positive proofs of guilt. Now, in this case, I said to myself, the first time I saw Bright: “There is something suspicious about that young man.” I never stated my impressions to anyone, however, nor did I injure his reputation in any way. Even when I discovered certain facts which were very damaging to his good character, I did not expose him. I merely kept a close watch upon him, determined to obtain a *positive proof* of his guilt before taking any steps against him.

In a day or two I received a letter from Robert Boyer, my New York agent. He reported that Bright, senior, was at the head of a large dry-goods house there, and that he was reputed to be a millionaire. His family consisted of his wife, three sons and two daughters, all of whom, (except Edward, who was in Chicago,) lived with him in a handsome house on Fifth avenue, near Thirty-second street. Edward Bright was his mother’s darling, but he was said to be very dissipated and worthless. Lynch had been put at work, according to my suggestion, and as soon as anything further was discovered, he would write to me.

Meanwhile the Prince was having a glorious time. He smoked the best cigars, drank the finest liquors, attended hops and parties, played, sang, and made love to the young ladies. He had the tact to distribute his attentions so equally that he could not be accused of being devoted to one lady; and in this way, by keeping up the interest of them all, he remained a general favorite. Whereas, had he allowed one charmer to monopolize his society, all the others would have been so indignant as to make his position much less agreeable.

Bright was his most intimate companion, spending many hours in the Prince’s society. They conversed a great deal about Germany, and Bright was never tired of listening to descriptions of the beauties of the Rhine. He said that he expected to go to Europe soon, himself, and that he should be able to enjoy the tour so much more from having heard the Prince’s charming descriptions.

The fifth day after the robbery of the safe, Mr. Rembrant, of the firm of Rembrant & Co., dealers in Yankee notions, discovered that one hundred and fifty dollars had been stolen from his trunk. As in all the other cases, there was absolutely no clue to the manner in which the money had

been taken. It had disappeared, and that was all that could be said. In this instance, even the approximate time of the theft was unknown, since Mr. Rembrant had not looked at his money for several days.

These continual robberies were becoming wholly unbearable, and the committee again came down upon me in high wrath. They gave me a terrible overhauling for my apparent neglect and indifference.

“We want to know what you are doing,” said Mr. Henry. “I can’t see that you ever come to the house unless you are sent for, and then you go away, saying that nothing can be done. You told us at first that you had a special man who was going to work up this case, but we haven’t seen anything of him yet. Why don’t you put him at work?”

“Yes,” said Mr. Robinson, who was very bitter, indeed; “we have suffered enough already; why don’t you acknowledge that the case is beyond your capacity and let us all leave the hotel? You have kept us in suspense for two weeks, and every time there is a new robbery you have the same story: ‘Keep quiet, gentlemen; have patience.’ It won’t do, Mr. Pinkerton; we must have some evidence that this state of things will not continue all winter. If your man is at work, he must be deceiving you, or else he is very stupid. Neither I nor any other member of the committee has ever seen him, and he has never asked us for any information or help.”

I kept my temper very carefully, though I am not usually a mild-spoken man when anyone attacks me, and told them that I felt as bad as if the losses had been my own.

I found that Mr. Beaver had been particularly savage in his remarks about me, and had thus conveyed some of his irritation to the committee. He had said that he believed I was a great braggart, promising much and doing little. He had been told by several city detectives that I was an interloper, a mere amateur, who knew nothing about the business.

With these feelings toward me, the committee were rather a difficult body to reason with; but I finally succeeded in pacifying them by the assurance that their property and money would be forthcoming in a few days. To tell the truth, the committee had a pretty hard time during those few days, since they were attacked with almost as much bitterness as if they, themselves, had been responsible for all the losses. Under these circumstances, it was not unnatural that they should have wished to “pass along” a little of the scolding to me.

The next morning I received a letter from my man, Lynch, in New York. He had become acquainted with Mr. Bright’s servants, and had taken the cook to the theatre. The cook had been with the family for a number of years, and was probably well-informed upon all their domestic affairs. He had invited her to attend a ball the next evening, when he hoped to be able to learn all she knew about Ed. Bright.

For several days all went quietly again at the Clifton House, and in the preparations for the approaching Christmas holidays the late robberies were forgotten. One afternoon Mrs. Winchester, the wife of a very wealthy iron merchant, returned from a shopping tour, which had occupied her nearly all day. Having spent all her money in buying presents, she had stopped at

her husband's office just before returning to the hotel, and had obtained a fresh supply of cash for another campaign the next day. She entered her room, remaining long enough to remove her outdoor clothing, and then hurried into a neighbor's room to compare purchases. She left a well-filled pocket-book lying on the mantel-piece, and forgot to lock her door, as she expected to be gone only a few minutes. On returning, in less than half an hour, she gave one look at the mantel-piece, and then screamed. Her friends came rushing in, and found Mrs. Winchester in a state of collapse on the floor, and her pocket-book in a similar condition on the mantel. During her brief absence, over three hundred dollars had been taken from the pocket-book, leaving it gaping, like a pair of shells whence the oyster had been extracted.

The Prince hurried over to report to me. He said that Mr. Winchester was almost wild enough to need a straight-jacket. He had sworn at everyone, from the landlord down to the bootblack, and had wound up by a peculiarly charitable and Christian imprecation against me and all other detectives, classing us either as knaves or fools—or both.

The Prince said that the boarders had held a meeting, and most of them had decided to leave the house. Bright had said that he should start soon for Memphis and New Orleans, going thence to Europe. He had asked the Prince for letters of introduction, which the latter had gladly promised to give him.

The number of letters promised by the Prince was so enormous that he would have kept a private secretary constantly employed in the work of writing them alone.

The late mail came in just after the Prince's departure, and in it I received a letter from Lynch. He had taken Mr. Bright's cook to the ball, where she, good-natured soul, possessed of plenty of wind and strength, had nearly danced him to death. Between dances, however, he had succeeded in drawing out a great deal of information about the young man in Chicago. Her account, condensed, was as follows:

Ed. Bright was his mother's favorite child, but as he grew to manhood, he became so wild and dissipated as to be uncontrollable. His father, at last, limited him to a certain liberal allowance, to which his fond mother added every cent of her own pin-money that she could spare. The young man's extravagant habits soon used up all her money as well as his own, and finally, he forged his father's name to some notes, which Mr. Bright, senior, paid, rather than have his son punished for the crime. The young man drank heavily, and associated openly with abandoned women, so that it had been necessary to send him away, to save the rest of the family from being disgraced by him. Since he had been in Chicago, however, from all accounts he had wholly reformed, and his letters gave great joy to his parents. He frequently expressed deep regret at his past career, and a determination to wipe out his former record by a blameless life in the future. His letters had so pleased his parents that his father had decided to send him to Europe for a couple of years, and then take him into the firm as a partner.

Truly, 'tis a wise father that knoweth his own son.

I sat musing over Lynch's letter for some time, arranging my plans. I then sent for Mr. Bangs, and had a long consultation with him; our decision was to arrest Bright at the first opportunity. The time to act had arrived.

CHAPTER XV.

TWO days passed before an opportunity occurred to put my plan in operation to entrap Bright. The morning of the third day was ushered in with one of those terrible snowstorms which visit Chicago about once each winter, accompanied by intense cold. The temperature was nearly Arctic in its severity, and the cutting prairie wind rendered it dangerous to be exposed to its violence for any length of time. The snow was swept about in blinding sheets, lodging in every sheltered spot, and piling in huge drifts wherever the various air-currents created eddies. While in many places the streets and sidewalks were swept quite bare, in others, the snow settled in nearly impassable barriers. Business was almost wholly suspended, and very few persons could be seen about the streets.

Bright and the Prince, having nothing to call them away from the hotel, spent the day very comfortably and agreeably. Little cared they for the weather. They had all the requisites for amusement within doors, and they enjoyed themselves very satisfactorily. They occupied the forenoon in playing billiards, smoking, drinking eggnog, and talking over the pleasures of their contemplated trip to New Orleans. After lunching together, they retired to the smoking-room for a quiet smoke and chat.

"Ah! my dear Bright," said the Prince, as he drew a sofa toward the grate, "your drink, which you call eggnog, makes me much sleepy. Take an easy-chair, yourself make at home, and I the same will do. Will you smoke? Try this new brand which I opened today." And he handed his pocket-book to Bright.

Bright took it, and on opening it quickly, saw that there was a large sum of money inside. He closed it immediately and handed it back, saying, with a short, nervous laugh:

"You're pretty careless of your money, Prince. This is your pocket-book, not your cigar-case."

"Oh! pardon me," said the Prince; "they are so exactly alike that I do often that error make."

He then replaced his pocket-book in his coat, and handed the cigar-case to Bright. They each lit a cigar, and talked listlessly for a short time as they smoked. Finally, the Prince said:

"Your pardon I will ask in advance, *mein freund*, if I to sleep should go. Your eggnog to my head has surely gone."

"Oh! that's all right," said Bright. "I will finish my cigar here, and then I have an engagement to play a match game of billiards, so that I shall be obliged to go out soon, anyhow."

"Well, I shall see you at dinner," replied the Prince, as he settled himself for a nap.

Very soon the quiet and warmth of the room began to have their effect upon the drowsy Prince; his breathing became regular and slow, and he passed into a sound sleep. Bright continued smoking in a rapid, excited manner, and then went to the door to look out into the hall. As he did so, the Prince moved restlessly in his sleep, and then turned over partly, on his side. His coat fell open as he moved, exposing the inside pocket, from which protruded his pocket-book. As Bright returned to his seat, his gaze was riveted on this pocket-book, which he knew contained a large sum of money.

The Prince's sleep was now evidently very sound, and his position, comfortable. There was no probability that he would awake for some time. Bright again stepped to the door, looked down the hall and glanced into the reading-room and parlors, but saw no one near. He then cautiously approached the Prince, but sprang back, with a terrified look, as he heard a distant door slam heavily. Having satisfied himself a second time that he was not watched, he darted quickly to the Prince's side, seized the pocket-book between his finger and thumb, and dexterously pulled it from the pocket. He paused a moment to see whether the Prince had been disturbed, and then left the room. In a few minutes he returned, and finding the Prince still asleep, he carefully replaced the pocket-book in the loose, open pocket, whence he had taken it. He then passed from the room. The deed was done, the bait had been taken, and it now remained only to close the trap.

The reader will now see where I made my point.

The Prince remained in his comfortable position until he was sure that Bright had gone away, and then arose, with an expression the very reverse of sleepy. He immediately put on his fur cap and overcoat, and hurried to my office. Those who saw him go out thought it was a freak, such as often takes a traveler, to see how severe the weather actually was; and as he struggled against the wind, or plunged through snow-drifts, he was probably undergoing an experience which he would be able to relate on his return to Bavaria, as an instance of the climate of the United States.

I had not been out during the day, so that I received the Prince's report immediately on his arrival. He related all the circumstances of the theft, and handed me the pocket-book. On examining it, I discovered that three marked bills of fifty dollars each, and two of one hundred dollars each, were missing, leaving about two hundred dollars still in the pocket-book.

"Now," I said, "Bright's career is ended. The game is up."

I called Mr. Bangs into my office and gave him directions as to what I wished done. I then told the Prince to return to the Clifton House.

"I shall place men around the hotel to watch," I said, "and shall be there myself within an hour. You must keep a lookout for me, and when I pass under the gas-lamp, you must come to meet me. It is such a stormy night that we shall run little risk of being seen. If Bright is not in, I shall wait until he comes. I wish to arrest him quietly, and hence should prefer to see him alone. If that is impossible, however, I will arrest him publicly, before all his friends."

It was now after four o'clock, and owing to the darkness of the storm, the gas-lamps were already lighted. The Prince started off, and I concluded my arrangements with Bangs. The latter, with three detectives, was to watch the house, so as to arrest Bright, if he should receive any warning and endeavor to escape. I intended to make the arrest myself, however, if I could. Bangs soon departed with his men, and I followed him in a short time.

It was, indeed, a terrible night. The wind blew with frantic violence, eddying about among the buildings in such a way as to seem always blowing in my face. The frozen snowflakes cut like a knife, and almost blinded me as I struggled along through the drifts.

“That night a chiel might understand
The deil had business on his hand.”

At length I reached the corner opposite the Clifton House. I had not stood long under the lamp-post ere I saw the Prince coming to meet me.

“It’s all right,” he said. “Bright is alone in the parlor, playing and singing. The ladies have all gone to dress for dinner, and now is the best time to see him.”

I wore a slouch hat and a large muffler which wholly concealed my features. One hand was protected by a warm glove, while the other was bare, as I might have to use force. I noiselessly slipped into the hall by the main entrance. No one was in sight, and I quickly entered the parlor. There, at the piano, with his back turned toward me, was Bright, the object of my visit.

The gas was turned down low, but, in the dim light, he was running his fingers over the piano keys, giving vent to his happiness in song. He was, undoubtedly enjoying very pleasant thoughts. He was picturing to himself the prospective delights of his southern tour.

In a few days, with Mamie Liston on his arm, he would leave this frigid climate of Chicago and revel in the balmy atmosphere of the South. They would sit in the open air beneath magnolias and orange trees, while the soft breezes would come to them over fragrant fields and groves, sweet-scented with perfume, and laden with the songs of birds. Then, when they should have become satiated with these scenes, they would embark for Europe, where Bright would make the acquaintance of Prince Beauharnais and many others of the nobility. What a splendid opportunity he would then have to replenish his purse at the expense of the titled aristocracy of the Old World! Only a few hours previous, he had proved how easy it was to rob a careless prince, who scarcely knew how much money he had. Oh! how he would thrive when he got into a community of such fellows!

He little imagined that Nemesis was already at his elbow. As I crossed the room, the velvet carpet gave back no sound of my foot-fall, and in a second I was at his side. Laying my hand on his shoulder, I said, in a low, stern voice:

“You are my prisoner.”

He sprang from his seat with a gasp of terror, but my hand was on his shoulder with a grasp of iron. Abject fear was depicted in every line of his face, and he could not speak.

“Come with me,” I said.

“I don’t know you,” he replied, convulsively. “For God’s sake, who are you, and what do you want?”

“I want that money you stole to-day,” was my answer.

“I never stole any money,” he said, in a low, trembling tone.

“Let me have that money,” I repeated, in a determined voice. “Will you give it up, or shall I take it from you? I must have it. Do you wish to be disgraced before all the boarders? Give me the money immediately.”

He made no move to get it, so I put my hand into his pocket and took out his pocket-book, which was full of bills. I opened it, and there, like the blood on Macbeth’s dagger, I saw the fatal mark on the bank-notes.

“Where did you get this money, and how long have you had it?” I asked.

“My father sent it to me, and I have had it more than three weeks,” he replied.

“Pshaw, man, I know better,” said I. “This money has not been in your possession for three hours. You stole it this afternoon from the Prince’s pocket-book.”

The bold manner in which I made this charge completely unnerved him. It was not alone the sense of guilt which overpowered him, but, also, the astounding fact that I, a perfect stranger to him, should know what even the Prince, himself, did not seem to have discovered.

“My God!” he exclaimed, completely thrown off his guard, “how did you know that?”

“Never mind *how* I know it—it is enough that I do. Now, don’t stand talking here, or the whole house will know that Bright is a thief. Come with me, and I may save your reputation, yet,” said I, putting his pocket-book into my pocket.

I heard the rustle of dresses coming down the stairs, and I grasped his hand.

“Quick!” said I; “come this way.”

He hurried with me to the door leading into the back hall, and just as I passed out of the parlor, the porter, carrying a hod of coal, entered the room by the door at the other end. Following him, came a number of ladies, so that our escape was made just in time.

As I conducted Bright toward the front door, I asked him where he had left his coat and hat. He pointed them out to me on the coat-rack, and I quickly grabbed them as I passed. On reaching the vestibule, I stopped long enough to enable him to put his overcoat on, and we then passed out into the storm, without having been seen by a single person. I locked arms securely with him, and led him, through the storm and darkness, to my office, Bangs and his men keeping within a few paces all the way.

CHAPTER XVI.

NOT a word was spoken as we pressed on through the storm, and we entered my office rather breathless from our exertions in climbing through the snow-drifts. I took off my coat and hung it up. Bright mechanically followed my example, and then asked for a glass of water. He gulped down the water, threw himself into a chair and buried his face in his hands. I left him to himself for a time, in order to let him realize the gravity of his offences. I was the first to speak, as I wished to pour upon him the whole misery of his situation at once.

“Bright, do you begin to appreciate the terrible position in which you have placed yourself?” I asked. “How many robberies of money, jewelry, etc., have you committed? You are but a young man in years, yet you are already old in crime. Your parents are wealthy, and you could honestly command any luxury you wished, yet you have resorted to stealing to supply yourself with money. What excuse can you offer? Why have you done so? The man who steals to keep body and soul together—to save himself from starvation—is to be pitied, rather than condemned; but for you, there is no excuse. In order to gratify your merely animal desires, you have robbed your friends—not once, only, but forty or fifty times. Think, for a moment, of your mother’s unspeakable agony when she hears of this.”

Bright had recovered his composure by this time, and he now spoke up, in a dogged manner:

“You’re a stranger to me. I don’t know you, nor you me. How dare you accuse me of stealing? You are the thief. You have taken my money from me and have put it in your pocket. Tell me what all this means.”

“You say this money is yours, do you? Well, let us see,” I replied, taking the pocket-book from my pocket. “I do not rely on my own evidence alone, to convict you, but I have, also, that of the well-known banker, Mr. R. K. Swift, who will prove that he gave me these bills only yesterday. I have not had any opportunity to mark them since I took them from you, but, on the bills which belong to me, will be found the letter P, plainly marked in red ink on the upper left-hand corner.”

As I spoke I took out the bills, unrolled them, and showed him the mark on five of them.

“Bright, is this money yours or mine?” I asked.

“Yours—I am guilty,” he answered, his voice breaking into a sob, as he spoke. “Oh! for God’s sake, have mercy on me!”

“Yes, Bright, I thought it would come to this,” I said. “Think, for a moment, upon your position. For every one of your crimes the penalty is a long term of imprisonment at hard labor in the penitentiary. How many robberies have you committed?”

“I don’t know how many. I have been stealing for a long time. I don’t know what to do or say. I am crazy! What will my poor mother say when she hears of this? Oh! God! this is horrible!”

“Did you steal Mr. Robinson’s money?” I asked.

“Yes.”

“Mrs. Judson’s watch and money?”

“Yes.”

“Mrs. Blackall’s money, and Mrs. Hutchinson’s?”

“Yes.”

“Mrs. Beaver’s money and jewelry?”

“Yes.”

In this way I went through the whole list of robberies as far as I could remember them, and he acknowledged having committed them all.

“Now, you see where you have placed yourself,” I said. “I will give you until to-morrow morning to rest and calm yourself; you must then make out a list of the parties you have robbed, and the amounts taken from each. What shall I do with you? Do you think your father would pay back all these losses to the people whom you have robbed?”

“Oh! yes; and if he would not, mother would. I have been deceiving them terribly ever since I have been here, by reports of how well I was getting along, while, in fact, I have been growing worse and worse. Father can and will pay back every cent I have taken, if I will only swear to reform. Oh! why was I not detected in the first robbery I ever attempted? Then I should have been spared this; but I succeeded so well that I went on, and every new success encouraged me to continue, and now my whole life will be blasted by a long term in the penitentiary. Won’t you please telegraph to my father and see what he will do?”

After thinking over the matter, I said:

“I will telegraph to my New York agent, Robert Boyer, and you can telegraph to your father. Say that you are in trouble, and that a gentleman, named Robert Boyer, will call upon him and explain all.”

Bright immediately seized a pen and wrote a dispatch to his father, while I wrote one as follows:

“ROBERT BOYER, White street, New York:

“I have arrested Ed. Bright for larcenies committed at various times in the Clifton House. He has been operating for nine or ten months. He admits all. The pool amounts to nearly nine thousand dollars. See Bright, senior, and find out what he intends to do. Tell Lynch to drop his calls on the cook and send his bill to me.

“ALLAN PINKERTON.”

I read the dispatch to Bright and he expressed himself satisfied with it. I then showed him to a spare bedroom, which I kept in connection with my suite of offices, and left him to pass the night. Two of my men alternated in watching him, and I felt convinced that there would be no more startling robberies at the Clifton House for some time at least.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE Prince passed the evening at the hotel, as it was altogether too stormy to go out. He had, as usual, a most agreeable time. Knowing that his princely career was now rapidly drawing to a close, he made the most of his opportunities, and played, sang, and flirted most enchantingly. Bright's absence was not considered strange, as it was supposed that he had gone to visit some friend and had been weatherbound by the storm. Of course there was no longer any actual necessity of retaining the Prince at the hotel, but I thought best to keep him there at least a week longer, so that the part he had played should not be suspected.

The next morning I had a long talk with Bright. I asked him what he had done with the jewelry he had stolen. He said that he had disposed of it at various pawnbroker's shops. On pressing him to tell me what shops had bought the articles, he was unable to answer.

“Young man,” I said, “don't you know that it is impossible to take a middle course with me? If you wish to be saved from exposure and the rigors of the law, you must make up your mind to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. What have you done with the stolen jewelry?”

He finally admitted that he had given it all to a girl named Mamie Liston, whom he had been keeping at Madam Hatch's. I did not consider it necessary to let him know that I was fully aware of this fact in advance, but made him confess the whole story himself. My object was to prevent him from suspecting either the Prince or Madam Hatch.

“Now,” said I, when he had told me about Mamie Liston, “sit down and write an order for this girl to deliver all the jewelry to me.”

“No,” he replied, “I don't wish to take the things from Mamie; my father will pay the full value of everything.”

“That won’t do,” said I. “It would be wrong to rob your father to benefit your mistress. Besides, among the articles you have stolen are many heir-looms and keepsakes which the owners value far above any amount of money. I must have the identical articles themselves. If you will not give me the order, I shall arrest Mamie as a receiver of stolen goods. She will be sent to prison, and I shall get the jewelry by force.”

Bright did not wish her to be molested, and therefore wrote the order at my dictation. I immediately went to Madam Hatch’s and had an interview with Mamie. At first she was inclined to disregard Bright’s order, but I soon succeeded in convincing her that she would not be able to offer any resistance, so she collected all the jewelry in a good-sized pile, tied it up in a handkerchief, and burst into tears as she saw me about to depart with it. I told her that I wished no one to know of Bright’s trouble, and she had the two alternatives of keeping quiet, thus saving them both from a criminal trial, or of making it public and being prosecuted as a receiver of stolen goods, knowing them to have been stolen. She promised to keep the matter secret, and I returned to my office with the jewelry.

During the day I received a telegram from Robert Boyer. He said that he had called on Mr. Bright, whom he had found completely broken down by the shock which his son’s dispatch had given him. Mr. Bright begged that the matter might be kept secret, since if Mrs. Bright should hear that Ed. had become a thief, it would break her heart. He would send Mr. Young, his confidential secretary, to Chicago to settle up all the losses. The latter would have authority to draw upon Mr. Bright for the amount of money necessary to reimburse the persons who had been robbed. Mr. Young would leave that night for Chicago, and would call upon me as soon as he arrived.

Until Mr. Young’s arrival, however, I was obliged to keep Bright a close prisoner at my office, and as the snowstorm somewhat interfered with the railroads, Mr. Young did not reach Chicago until the third day after the arrest. On coming to my office, Mr. Young introduced himself to me and showed his authority from Mr. Bright to act in the matter. He requested to see Ed. Bright, and I at once showed him up to the latter’s room. As soon as Mr. Young entered, Bright burst into tears, and I left them alone for some time, not caring to be a witness of the painful scene.

I had never known the exact amount of money and property stolen by Bright, so I sent for Mr. Robinson and asked him to furnish me with a complete list of the losses in the Clifton House, and I would see what could be done toward settling with the losers.

Mr. Robinson was struck dumb with surprise, but soon found his voice, and, in great excitement, wished to know whether I had caught the thief.

“That is not likely,” I replied, “but I wish to find out how much it will take to settle the matter if I do find him or her. Therefore, get me the list, and I will see what I can do. Put in everything—shirts, underwear, jewelry, money—every article, in fact, that was stolen.”

“But you don’t expect to recover the jewelry?” he asked.

“No, I don’t *expect* anything, but get me the list, and I will see what can be done,” I replied.

Mr. Robinson returned to the Clifton House and soon set the boarders at work making out a list of their losses. I had to smile when I saw Mr. Beaver's list, as he had placed the most enormous prices on every article of jewelry he had lost. I said nothing, however, as I had the very jewelry which was stolen, ready to return to him.

When Mr. Robinson brought his list, I deducted from it the jewelry I had on hand, and added a fair amount for my time and expenses in working up the case. Mr. Young at once drew upon Mr. Bright, senior, for the amount, and as he and Ed. wended their way to the depot, *en route* for New York, I took the draft to Mr. Swift's bank and had it placed to my credit.

Ed. Bright sailed for England a few days later, since which time I have heard nothing of him.

I was influenced in my course in allowing him to escape prosecution, by the fact that it was his first serious crime, and I was convinced that it would be his last. If I had given him up to the authorities, he would have had to serve at least twenty years in the penitentiary, which punishment, though deserved, I did not have the heart to see meted out to him. I knew I had no right to compound a felony, but I felt that I could better serve the interests of society by giving this young man a chance to reform, than by delivering him up to a long term in prison, whence he would come out a hardened villain—his hand turned against every man, and every man's hand against him. Mr. Bright, senior, has called upon me several times since, and he always has expressed the warmest gratitude for the great good I did his family.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON my return to my office from the bank, I sent for Mr. Robinson, handed him his money and jewelry, and had him sign a receipt which I had prepared. He was all amazement, and I believe he would willingly have given back his recovered money to have had his curiosity satisfied as to who was the thief. But, on this point, I was impervious to all inquiries, and no amount of sharp questions could draw from me the least drop of information. I told him to return to the hotel and send the persons who had been robbed to me, and I would pay them in full for all their losses.

Merry Christmas had just passed, but, I must say, I never have felt more like a genuine Santa Claus than I did then. I was seated behind my desk with a pile of money on one side, little heaps of jewelry, sorted out and labeled, on the other, and before me a long list of names and amounts. During the afternoon, my office was crowded with visitors, and I was kept busy in dealing out the treasure before me and taking receipts.

Every few minutes there would be a perfect chorus, the ladies' voices predominating:

“But, Mr. Pinkerton, who is the thief?”

I answered them from Tennyson:

“Theirs not to reason why—
Theirs not to make reply”—

All they had to do was to take their money and sign the receipt.

My visitors, in fact, were little more than a crowd of animated interrogation marks, and the number of questions showered upon me would have tried the patience of even Job himself.

Nearly all of them wished to reward me for my trouble, but I refused to take anything whatever. Mr. Beaver called, amongst the rest, and when I handed him his own jewelry, he seemed to feel decidedly cheap, after having placed such an enormous valuation on it. He lost all his volubility, and slunk out of the office without a word. I was not sorry when the last visitor had received his property and departed.

I have now only to relate the occurrences at the Clifton House, from the time of Bright's arrest until the close of the engagement of my ex-janitor in his great *role* of Claude Melnotte.

All went along smoothly with the Prince. There was not a beauty in the house who did not worship at his shrine, and I am not exaggerating when I say that he could have married any young lady in that set, had he so desired.

Even he was, for a time, lost sight of in the excitement caused by the mysterious disappearance of Bright. The day following the arrest, many inquiries were made as to what had become of him. Nothing wrong was suspected, however, as it was thought that he might be visiting some of his friends, but when another day passed and still no Bright appeared, the boarders began to work themselves up to a great pitch of excitement.

Some of the ladies had heard him singing in the parlor, about five o'clock in the afternoon of the day on which he was missed, but on going into the room soon after, they had seen only a shadow flitting out of the doorway. The porter had entered the room at the same time and he was sure he had seen a strange and uncouth figure vanishing through the door. No one, however, had seen Bright. The servants, on the strength of the porter's story, went a step farther and declared, with superstitious earnestness, that he had been spirited away by some supernatural power—possibly the devil.

Someone stated that Bright had been seen plowing his way through the drifts toward Rush street bridge, late at night; it was, therefore, probable that, confused by the blinding storm, he had walked into the river and drowned. *I never was able to learn who started this story*, but it was accepted with great readiness as a solution of his mysterious disappearance. Bright had been a great favorite among the boarders, so that his sudden loss cast a gloom over the house. His friends inserted advertisements in the papers asking for information of him, and, also, offering to pay liberally for the return of his body, if found, to the Clifton House. Their efforts proved unavailing, however, and they never succeeded in learning the fate of the unfortunate young man. To this day, some of the old boarders in the Clifton House speak of young Bright with tears in their eyes. No one ever suspected him of having been the thief.

A week after Bright's disappearance, the Prince announced his intention of leaving for the South. He had received, through his bankers, Swift & Co., a letter from his father, directing him to visit

the Southern States, as it was desirable that he should become acquainted with all parts of the Union. After spending a few months in the South, he was to take a tour through the Atlantic States, and then return to Bavaria.

This announcement gave many a young lady the heartache, as she thought of the prize about to slip from her grasp. The fair Cliftonians were consoled, however, by receiving letters of introduction to the Prince's father, and by the Prince's promise to meet them in Munich, when they should visit Bavaria. They all felt that "while there's life, there's hope," and each one expected to achieve success on the next trial.

The day set for the Prince's departure arrived only too soon. He devoted the morning to bidding tender farewells to the Hansons, the Beavers, the Pearsons, and all the rest. Time flew as it never had flown before. The Prince had said but half what he wished to express, when his carriage was announced at the door.

He was dressed even more superbly than usual, and seemed determined to leave a most favorable impression behind him. His big trunk, of undoubted European manufacture, was deposited behind the carriage, the Prince, wrapped in his magnificent cloak, took his seat, and the door was closed upon him. Hands and handkerchiefs were enthusiastically waved in adieu as the gallant Bavarian drove off, and in a few minutes he disappeared forever from the guests of the Clifton House.

Departing by the Illinois Central Railroad, the Prince went to Kankakee, about sixty miles south of Chicago where he found it convenient to stop. He went to a hotel, doffed his princely character and attire, and dressed himself in a modest suit of grey. He then packed his finery in his trunk and sent it to me by express, while he went on to Onarga, to rusticate on my farm.

At the end of a week, he returned to Chicago, and the poor, benighted residents of that city never knew that they had possessed a prince of their own.

Allan Pinkerton, *Claude Melnotte as a Detective and Other Stories*. Chicago: W.B. Keen, Cooke, & Co., 1875. Pages 9 - 119.

This story was included in the illustrated anthology *Criminal Reminiscences and Detective Sketches*. [Click here to redirect to the table of contents.](#)

To see the single illustration that originally accompanied this story, [click here](#) and you will be redirected to the Internet Library.