

PROFESSIONAL BRETHREN

BY GEORGE E. WALSH

Copyright, 1902, by F. M. Duckles & Co., New York

membered what happened when I saw my master let me get him a bottle. "A bottle of what?" "Witch hazel. It was one of my mother's cures for poison from ivy or sumac."

"And that cured him?" Her face brightened wonderfully. She began to realize that she had been a victim of her imagination. "Completely," I answered. "Then it was not—nothing more serious than ordinary poison," she added, with a sigh of relief. "Nothing, ma'am."

She gave expression to her relieved feelings in a short laugh. The sweet-



"You come from Mr. Goddard?"

ness of it made me turn my head to look at her. The beautiful face had suddenly lit up in its expression. Here, I thought, was true love, and I willingly ignored her for it. "Pardon me," she said after a moment of silence. "I was thinking of something else which amused me. You must take a message to your master."

She walked toward the library table and drew pen and paper from a drawer. She hesitated a moment and then added:

"No; I won't write. I will send a verbal message by you. Charles has trusted you to bring one, and I will return it in the same way."

"Thank you, ma'am. I shall endeavor to prove worthy of the trust."

"Well, tell Mr. Goddard that I am quite recovered and that I expect to have him call on me today. Be sure to tell him that I must see him at once. He must give up every other engagement to come to me. Now, do you understand? Can you put it so he can't say no?"

"I can, ma'am, and I'll venture to give you my word of honor that he will be here before the sun sets."

"Go, then, and prove your words."

As I left her presence I felt that my mission had been one of mercy that morning, for I had, apparently unconsciously, been the means of lifting a burden temporarily from one heavy heart. I knew also that I carried a message that would bring a ray of sunlight into the life of another.

I might have stretched the importance of this interview to my master or I might have given him the literal truth. I know not which now. However, I delivered the message. It was sufficient to make him obey it.

The result of their meeting was manifest at once. Both of them appeared happy and normal again, and the old relationship seemed to be re-established. How much Miss Stetson explained to him about her fears and knowledge of his case I never knew, but for a time at least she was determined to put down all feelings of aversion for my master because of her knowledge that he was a doomed leper. Or perhaps—like another self-sacrificing virgin that I have read about—she had decided to consecrate her life to him, to live by him and nurse him through the coming years of pain and suffering and mental agony which must ever be the lot of a leper.

CHAPTER XIII.

I HAD now been in my position about six months. The interesting events which I have recorded had kept me from any longing to return to the exciting experiences of my profession. During this time I had grown somewhat stouter, and my countenance had begun to assume a kindly, benevolent, well fed appearance. Necessarily I had grown a trifle lazier. Several times I had almost decided to return to my old methods of life, but a certain inertia, undoubtedly bred and nourished by my new existence or cause, always prevented. I would keep deferring the time until a more convenient period.

A genuine fear that I would lose my skill through lack of practice occasionally tormented me, but each time I put it aside with the thought that my profession was no longer an absolute necessity. It did not mean bread and butter to me as it did at one time. I was a full fledged butler, and I could secure a good recommendation from my master any time I chose to leave.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN I reached the conclusion that something ought to be done to save Mr. Goddard from himself, I began planning the best course to pursue. First I would have to meet him at night under circumstances similar to our first meeting, and then I would have the liberty to speak to him. To accomplish this I watched him every night, often sitting up until nearly daybreak to see if he left the house. For nearly a week I followed this course, and I could swear that he had not left his bed after midnight.

On the seventh night he had an agreement to meet Dr. Squires at his office, and, feeling worn out with my unmonotonous vigils, I retired early and enjoyed a sound night's sleep.

That night a big robbery was committed not five miles from the house, and the following morning everybody was talking about it. When I heard

the news, a terrible... my master was using his alleged appointments with the doctor as a means to throw me off the track. I tried to trace back the dates of the various robberies, and I imagined that I could establish a coincidence between them and Mr. Goddard's visits to Dr. Squires.

All that day my master was indolent and worn out, as usual, and I instantly attributed it now to his work of the preceding night and not to any poison which the doctor was administering to him.

When this light dawned clearly upon my mind, I knew exactly what to do. I slept soundly and peacefully during the next few nights, but about ten days later when my master announced that he had another appointment with Dr. Squires I prepared to spend the night following him.

He left the house about 8 o'clock. To my surprise, he did not take his horse, but walked leisurely down the road toward the old haunted mansion that the doctor had so long occupied. I followed him at a respectful distance, but he did not seem nervous or at all suspicious. He walked carelessly along, without once looking behind him.

He reached his destination about half past 8 and walked lightly up toward the house and entered. This did not astonish me, for I supposed that he really did go to the doctor's and probably submitted to some sort of treatment. His midnight marauding would begin after he left to go home.

I cautiously approached the house and tried to get a glimpse of the interior, but the blinds and shades were so closely drawn that I failed to get a glimpse of even the light. I contented myself with examining the burglar alarm, for at some future time I might find it useful to unfasten it from a window without giving an alarm.

The minutes passed slowly. Not a sound or movement from inside could be heard. Accustomed to waiting his patience for a long time, I did not find my vigil in various ways to keep from falling asleep. A few moments of sleep might spoil everything for me.

It must have been shortly after midnight when I heard the front door creak on its hinges. I was concealed behind some shrubbery at the time, where I could command a good view of the entrance to the house. The door, I knew, was opening, but no ray of light streamed through the crack. The whole house was, in fact, wrapped in darkness.

I saw the shadows of two men on the front porch, and by their general outlines I knew that one was my master and the other Dr. Squires. Neither spoke for some time. Then I heard the doctor say in a low, muffled voice:

"Now, Charles, the house is three miles below, and you ought to reach it in half an hour."

"Yes; I'll reach it in half an hour."

"You must be extra cautious, for there are many detectives around," the doctor continued.

"I shall be very careful."

"Then go and return as soon as possible."

They separated. The doctor stole noiselessly back into the house and my master walked stealthily down the gravelly drive toward the main highway.

His manner had completely changed. Every movement so made manifested suspicion and alertness. He was not nervous, but every faculty was strained. He was now the professional burglar on the scent. The slight breaking of a twig or the clinking of a pebble, I knew, would arouse an alarm him.

My prey was not an easy one to follow. He would stop and turn upon his tracks in the most unexpected way. His ears and eyes appeared gifted with wonderful powers of sensation. I had to increase the distance between us to avoid detection.

I managed to keep him in sight for about a mile, and then he suddenly gave me the slip. In some inexplicable manner he had dodged away from me and disappeared as completely as if the earth had swallowed him. Chagrined at thus being thrown off the track, I put all my energies at work to regain the lost trail. For two hours I wandered around, vainly trying to catch a glimpse of the man. I became so reckless that I would have exposed my person to him if it would have discovered his whereabouts to me.

Finally I gave it up in disgust. I seated myself under a tree near the highway and reflected. Certainly I was baffled for the night. I was on the point of returning home when the words of Dr. Squires recurred to me. The two were evidently engaged in the same criminal practices, and they would probably meet again that night somewhere.

With this thought uppermost in my mind I cautiously retraced my steps to the doctor's house. Once I thought that I had discovered my master again by accident, but upon closer observation I found that I was on the very point of accosting a detective. An arrest at such a time of the night might lead to unpleasant complications, and so I remained half an hour hidden in the bushes until the man had disappeared.

When I reached the old mansion, everything was as dark and gloomy as when I left it to follow my master. There was not the sign of a living being around. I cautiously started to walk up the gravelly drive, and the crunching noise of my boots sounded clear and distinct on the night air. I just had time to drop down behind some shrubbery before the front door of the house opened, and the dark shadow of a man seemed to flit out of it. I remained perfectly quiet, not daring to move or scarcely breathe. Undoubtedly the noise made by my

boots had attracted the attention of somebody in the mansion.

I remained in this reclining position for a full half hour. The shadow on the porch remained so perfectly still that I half imagined that it was a lion or the reflection of some intervening object. But my policy has ever been to make sure of a thing before deciding what course to pursue, and so I accepted the benefit of the doubt and waited patiently. Once or twice I thought of the tales of spirits and ghosts related about the old mansion and of how they walked through the empty rooms after midnight and made free with all earthly occupants. This did not disturb me, however, for I knew that somebody besides spirits was awake around the house that night.

I was getting tired of watching that immovable figure on the porch, and my eyelids were winking and blinking spasmodically when my ears caught a sound directly back of me. I did not dare move my head an inch, but the thought of the bloodthirsty Danes suddenly made me cold and clammy. I imagined I detected the patter of their

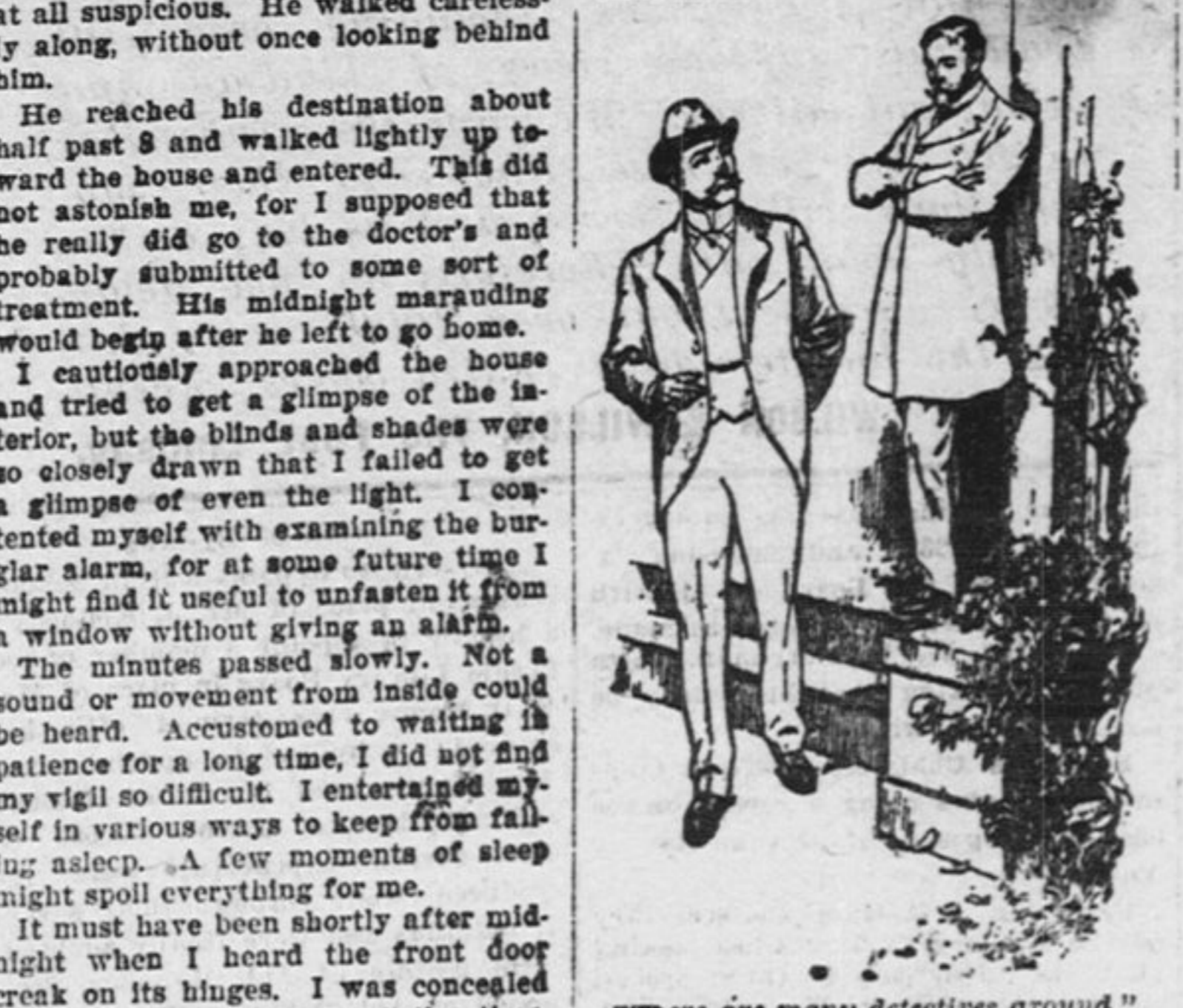
feet on the gravelly drive, and I gripped my revolver tightly, determined to make a desperate stand for my life.

A moment later my feelings were somewhat relieved. The steps approached nearer and nearer—soft, stealthy, delicate steps that might have been made by a child. Then the figure of a man loomed up within three yards of me and moved swiftly toward the house.

But in that momentary glimpse I caught the features of my master. In his hands he carried a clumsy bundle or article, which I failed to make out. Then for the first time the shadow on the porch moved. The two met at the top of the steps and quickly disappeared in the house, the door closing noiselessly behind them.

I would have given much just then to have had the power to penetrate behind those wooden walls or to have raised the shades and looked into the doctor's office, where I knew that a light must be burning. But I felt that my quest was ended for the night and that further work would be useless.

After waiting around another half hour I quietly stole out of the yard and hurried home to reflect over the strange occurrences of the night.



"There are many detectives around."

CHAPTER XV.

My opinion of Dr. Squires did not improve any after the disclosures just related, and I was naturally inclined to lay all the blame upon him, arguing that he had misled me as to the nature of the case that he held a master in some way or forced him to do his will. I took this view of the question for several days, upholding my master and reviling the doctor, attributing all sorts of evil things to him. Certainly he was as great a criminal as Mr. Goddard, and if one was ever caught in the act of robbery the other would have to be implicated. I felt that the doctor was accepting the easy part of the job, staying home to receive the stolen goods while my master ran the risk of capture and even of being killed.

In the event of the latter's arrest I knew that Dr. Squires would suddenly leave the neighborhood, and my master would be left to suffer the penalties of their mutual crime. Incidentally I decided to prevent any such unjust punishment by being on hand when the doctor found the place too hot for him. I knew enough about their partnership to have him sentenced to the state prison for a good long term.

My old hatred of the doctor returned with double force. I had more tangible reason for disliking him now than when I first suspected him of attempts to kill my master with poisons. My suspicions that he was not all above board in his lonely life in the haunted mansion were now confirmed. I would make it a point to investigate the premises in spite of all opposition.

Thereafter I coolly but deliberately went to work to effect an entrance into the old house, and it may be remarked, incidentally, that when a professional burglar of my standing makes up his mind to enter a building no locks, bolts, bars or electric alarms can keep him out. Moreover, I felt that I had justice on my side this time, and re-enforced with a quiet conscience, I made specially good plans.

It was three nights later that I found myself on the premises again. This time I was prepared for a work that had become a second nature to me. Leaving my shoes in a clump of bushes in the woods, I proceeded to approach the house with catlike tread. I reached the front porch without mishap. There was no moon out, and the place was extremely dark.

When satisfied that everything was quiet, I climbed up the largest piazza post and drew myself noiselessly upon

the upper porch. Here I rested a moment and then crawled along the side so as not to make any cracking noise with the floorboards. I gained the dark foot of the stairs which supported the blinds I deftly swung myself up on the slanting roof of the third story.

On the top of the house was a round cupola tower inclosed in glass, and I judged rightly that no burglar alarm would be attached to these windows and that noises made there would hardly be heard by the doctor and his old servant in their rooms below. I reached the cupola in safety and after resting a few minutes I proceeded to work.

In a few minutes I had cut out a small piece of glass from the window pane, and then, inserting my hand through the aperture, I easily unfastened the catch. I took the precaution, however, to be sure about a burglar alarm. There was none attached to the window, and so far I was safe.

Once inside the cupola, I flashed a bright ray of light from my dark lantern and inspected my surroundings. It was a small circular room with the accumulated dust of many years gathered on the window sills and floor. It was perfectly bare of articles of furniture and, as I judged, had not been visited by any one for years.

A trap in the floor opened into a hall below. I tried this door and found that it was locked on the inside. An ordinary lock is easier to pick than a padlock attached to a staple on the opposite side of a two inch board. However, I was prepared to encounter all sorts of difficulties.

I could work in comparative safety in the cupola. So I took a cold chisel and softly pried up the ends of the staple driven into the door from the opposite sides. When I had straightened these out, I forced them gradually out of their holes. They fell back with a little clatter that startled me. Would anybody hear the noise?

I waited breathlessly for a full half hour, squinting my eye through the small holes to detect any ray of light. But apparently nobody slept in that part of the house, and the noise had done no harm. I tried the trapdoor. It stuck a little at the corners, but by prying it up with my chisel I managed to raise it without creating any noise.

An old ladder led from the trapdoor to the hall below. I tested it with my feet before venturing my whole weight on it, for I was not certain whether it was strong enough to hold me. Then I quietly dropped down into the hall.

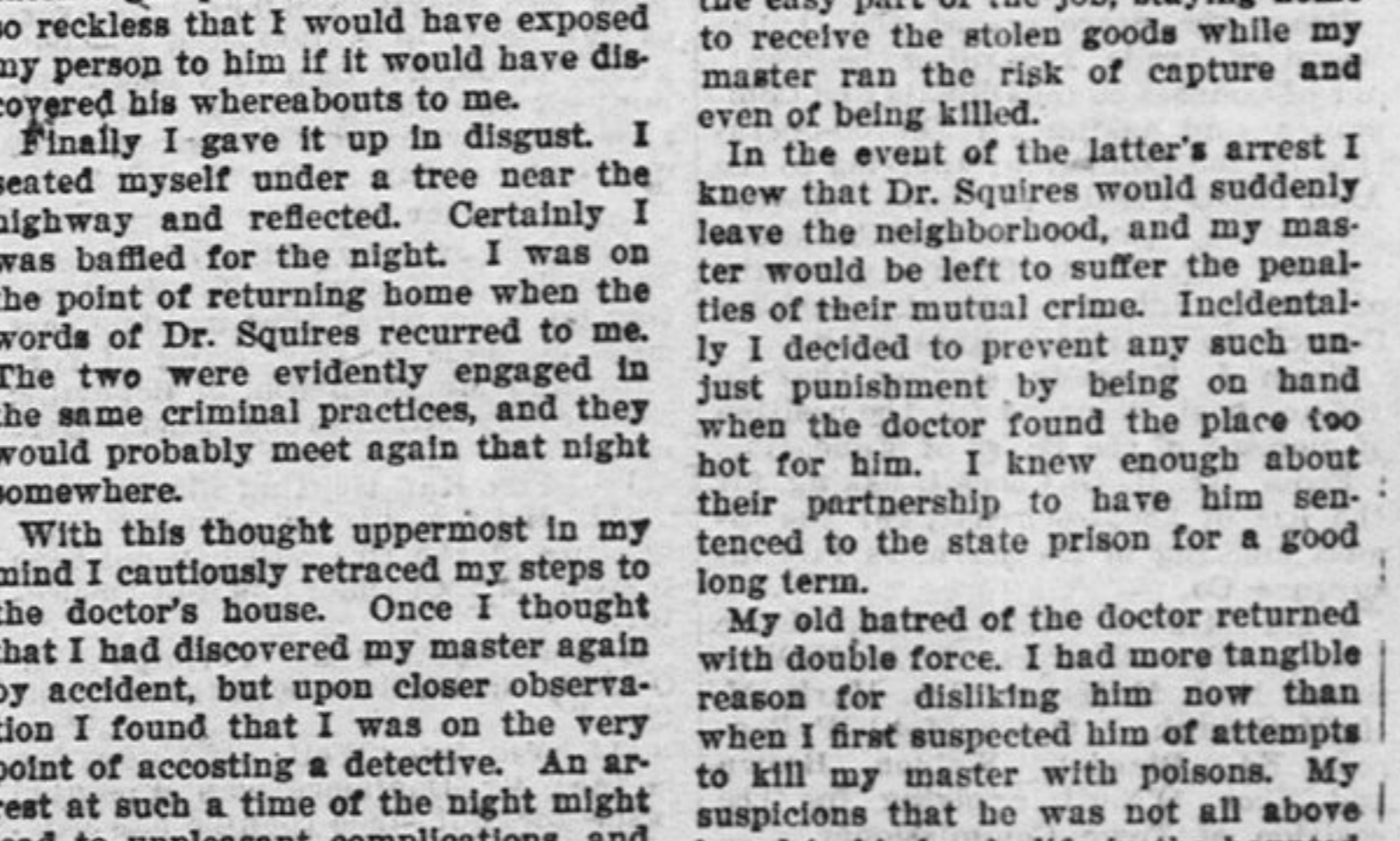
At last I was actually in the doctor's house, but whether I would find what I wanted was another question. Before attempting any investigation I made sure where the doctor and his old servant slept. Their sleeping rooms, I discovered, were on the ground floor. They opened into each other, and both doors were standing on the jar.

This gave me the two upper stories all to myself, and I began my investigation with an easier mind. The first room I entered was empty, with the exception of a few old clothes, blankets and discarded furniture. The second was furnished as for a bedroom, but very little furniture was in it. The third and fourth were disposed of in a few minutes because of their barren appearance.

The large back bedroom which overlooked the woods was securely locked and the key missing. With fingers all of a tremble in anticipation of a great discovery I proceeded to pick the lock. Fortunately it was a common lock which required but little real skill to open. The spring was a little stiff and rusty, but otherwise it worked easily, and I threw the lock back in its socket without causing anything more than a slight rattling noise.

Then I entered the room and closed the door behind me. I dashed the light from my lantern on every side, taking in the whole room in one circular sweep, and for a moment I was disappointed. There was nothing visible in the room except piles of old furniture covered over with the cloth to keep the dust from accumulating on the articles.

But why should the doctor have such fine furniture stored away in this



I soon disclosed to view a collection of treasures.

upstairs room? I raised one end of the covering and started back in astonishment. I could almost have shouted in my surprise. Throwing back the cloth in eager haste, I soon disclosed to view a collection of treasures that made my hand tremble. No robber's care ever revealed a richer store of wealth than that which lay spread out before me.

There was the silver and gold plate of a dozen different families. The jewels and diamonds that had come down as heirlooms from several generations, small statuettes, gold framed pictures and photographs, solid silver knives, forks, spoons and plates, watches, rings and bric-a-brac of more or less value were piled in heaps and clusters on the floor and tables. In short, there was everything that a robber could collect from a house and carry away in a bundle.

Gazing at this strange accumulation of miscellaneous goods, I felt that I was standing in a dangerous place, for the collector of them would not hesitate an instant to kill me if he once dis-

PUMPS

Do you want to buy the best pump in Canada? Get one of the Dennis Patent Pumps. They draw fast and work easy. We manufacture these pumps in all sizes in wood and iron, and will guarantee satisfaction with them in any depth of well up to 150 feet.

For Pumps, Pump Fixings and Repairs, also Wind Call on

SYLVESTER BROS. M'FG CO., Lindsay.

J. J. WETHERUP,

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL DEALER

PIANOS ORGANS SEWING MACHINES.

Mason & Risch Bell. New Williams. Standard-Grand. Domestic. Wheeler & Wilson.

OTHER MAKES SUPPLIED TO ORDER.

J. J. WETHERUP,

OFFICE: C. R. SUSSEX AND PEEL STS. BOX 415, LINDSAY

The Canada Life Assurance Co.

A Business Proposition.

We offer you a better investment than Government Bonds

Better for three reasons.

- 1st.—Canada Life 5 per cent. Gold Bonds yield a much higher rate of interest than Government Bonds.
- 2nd.—They are paid for by instalments—thus placed within the reach of men without capital.
- 3rd.—They are insured. That is, should the investor die, paying only one instalment on his bonds, all his future payments the Company would be immediately cancelled and the benefits of investment would at once become available.

Add to all these advantages the very material one that the investor or shares in the surplus earnings of this leading Company, and have an opportunity for safe and profitable investment rarely equalled. A handsome booklet, giving a full explanation, will be sent on request.

W. R. WIDDESS.

AGENT, LINDSAY.

WINTER IS HERE

If you have not already ordered your **WINTER OVERCOAT** it is not too late. We can make you a new stylish fitting Overcoat from \$15 to \$50. Why buy a ready-made suit when you can get a better one made to order for nearly the same price. Our goods cannot be beaten for quality, and as for style, our reputation as a cutter and tailor speaks for itself.

Give us a trial before patronizing Oakes, Port Perry or Lindsay tailors.

J. J. RICH

LITTLE BRITAIN.

SCHOOL OPENING

Exercise Books, Lead Pencils, Rubber Erasers, Ink, 7 bottles, Binding Paper, Pens, Public School Readers at reduced prices, First Book, Part Second, Second Reader, Third Reader, Fourth Reader.

Geo. A. Little

Book and Stationery Store, Kentville, Lindsay.

IF YOU CONTEMPLATE BUILDING

Call at Ingle's Planning Mill

Mr. Ingle can supply anything **BUILDING MATERIAL.**

SASH, DOORS, WINDOW BLINDS

always on hand. Being in business over thirty years, I am satisfied I know the wants of the people. Nothing first-class material for house or factory buildings turned out of my mill. Prices most reasonable. Consult me before making a contract. Satisfaction guaranteed in every case.

GEO. INGLE

Cor. Cambridge and Wellington

DOORS and FRAMES

Sashes and Frames for Sale

ALL KINDS OF SAWS FILED at our shop on Lindsay-st., south of Brown's Hotel.

GEORGE BRYAN, Lindsay.

To Cure a Cold in One Day

Cure Grip in Two Days.

Take **Laxative Bromo Quinine Tablets.** On every Seven Million boxes sold in past 12 months. This signature, *E. W. Johnson* box 25c.