

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

All communications for this paper should be accompanied by the name of the author; not necessarily for publication, but as an evidence of good faith on the part of the writer.

BOYHOOD HOURS.

One night as by the fire I thought of this and thought of that, Back many years my mind did fly.

I have drank pleasure's laughing cup, I've drank the sparkling draught all up; I've been in love, I've felt the bliss.

But all the pleasures rare and fine, Enjoyed when in our manhood's prime, Are nothing more than shams in truth.

I would give what the world can't hold To be a boy as in days of old, To sit once more in the meadow grass.

The Lost Lease

Paul Tarrant sat in his study running through the morning papers and marking with a blue pencil the paragraphs his secretary would cut out.

got their injunction, and my loss will be enormous if I am stopped. But surely you can compel them to pay any loss you may suffer if you win eventually.

"Oh, they are men of straw, not worth a penny. I tell you, Mr. Tarrant," pleaded Cheeseman, fairly jumping with nervous excitement.

"Well, well, Mr. Cheeseman; we will take a cab down to the Temple, and look at the situation. We can talk further as we go, but let me add that, unless you can calm yourself, you will increase my difficulties considerably;

"At Brinstair's office. We locked it up again in the box reserved for my papers." "When was that?" "On Friday last."

"And this is Wednesday. And you haven't seen it since then?" "No, I was going north on Saturday, and arranged to meet Brinstair at Mansfield yesterday."

"Could Brinstair have put it in the wrong box by mistake?" "Impossible! He had the box brought in, stood it on a table beside his desk, opened it and took out the lease. When we had finished with it, he put it back. I distinctly remember seeing him re-lock the box."

"And did he put the box back in its place?" "That I don't remember—I'm not sure—I don't think he did, though, while I stayed."

"Where did you go then?" "To my own office in Cannon street, where I had an appointment, and then home."

"What did that appointment have reference to?" "Not to this matter in any way."

"Then that wouldn't help us?" "No; it was merely to close up a purchase of some shares and debentures. It was too late to deposit the certificates in a safer place, so I put them in my own safe till I came back from the North."

"Who has an interest in abstracting or destroying this assignment of the lease?" "Nobody but the people who have brought the action for trespass."

"Well, Mr. Cheeseman, here we are at the office. We shall soon know if Mr. Brinstair has been heard of."

An amount of hostile unusual in the quiet building was apparent as they approached the stairway leading to Mr. Brinstair's office.

A police inspector was leaving the room as they drew near. "Are you on this job?" he asked Mr. Tarrant.

"A side issue only," replied Tarrant. "Have you any clue to the mystery?" "Nothing conclusive. Mr. Brinstair's hat, identified by his card inside the lining, has been found in the river. That may mean something or nothing—a clue or a ruse."

"Exactly. We can go in?" "Certainly. Come in! There is no one here but a constable and Mr. Brinstair's confidential clerk. Nothing has been disturbed. It is evident that Mr. Brinstair was induced to leave his office by somebody or for some purpose during the evening, and never came back as he intended when he left."

"Well, I am not interested professionally in his disappearance, otherwise than as it might bear on a missing document belonging to this gentleman, Mr. Cheeseman. I only want the box, in which the papers were kept, and the portmanteau examined." Tarrant turned to the confidential clerk, and added: "Perhaps you will oblige me by going through them while I am here."

"It is no good," interposed Mr. Cheeseman, irritably, "doing that again. We have gone through the lot."

"Do you really want me to find this paper for you?" asked Tarrant, with just a shade of annoyance in his tone. "Certainly. Of course I do."

"Well, then, oblige me going straight to your office and waiting there till I come to you or send for you. You really put me out."

"Very! he always comes in and goes out like a whirlwind when he calls here." "But surely you can compel them to pay any loss you may suffer if you win eventually."

"No, sir; they were in Mr. Brinstair's private room." "Did you speak to him when he came out?" "Only to say 'Good afternoon' to him. He passed through with his usual rush, murmuring something about being late for an appointment."

"Do you remember handling Mr. Cheeseman's box that day?" "Yes, I took it into the private room, and afterwards replaced it."

"Was that after Mr. Cheeseman had gone?" "After he had gone out; yes, sir." "How old is Mr. Brinstair?" "About sixty-five, I think, sir."

"A temperate man?" "Strictly." "Smoker?" "Rather excessively. I should say—ten or a dozen cigars a day."

"Where does he keep his cigars here?" "In a box in the drawer of his desk." "Oblige me by bringing the box here."

The clerk went into the inner room, and presently returned with a cigar box in his hand. "This," he said, "is the only one I find, and it is empty."

"Tarrant glanced at it, thanked him, and added that he had no further use for it." "Well, Inspector," said Tarrant, a few moments later; that document isn't here. I didn't suppose it was, but the time hasn't been wasted. Have you telegraphed to the Mansfield police yet?"

"No," answered the inspector, surprised. "Why?" "Well, I should if I were you. Ask if a man answering Brinstair's description has turned up, wandering in the streets of that town. I will come back in about an hour to see if you have an answer."

"They left the office together, the Inspector to act on Tarrant's hint, and the latter visited the nearest cigar shops. Finally, at one of them, he learned that a gentleman who, from the shopkeeper's account, bore some resemblance to the missing man, came in a few evenings before at about ten o'clock and bought a dozen cigars of a special brand not often called for."

Asked if he had any conversation with this customer, the shopkeeper replied, "Well, now, I must forget. I remember he remarked it was a hot night, and—oh, yes; he said he wondered if it would be cooler down on the water front. He lit one of the cigars and went out, and I haven't seen him since."

Tarrant wandered down to the water front, also lit a cigar, and leaned on the rail, with his eyes on the traffic on the river. He changed his locality three or four times, always, apparently, selecting a spot near a sent where one or more of the homeless frequenters of these outdoor lodgings were sitting. Presently, an idea or a recollection struggled into the mind of one of the latter and unshaven ones, and he brightened up a bit, and called out to Tarrant, "Ver'ill how yer hat, mister. If you ain't seen him since."

"What makes you think so?" asked Tarrant, turning to him. "Well, a gent like you comes down here 'fther night, and stands a-snookin' at the river, an' talking to himself like an' 'gived bless ye, his hat went over an' he nearly went over after it. He might have gave me that hat instead of 'lendin' it down the river."

"I'm obliged to you for the information, my friend. Do you think it is worth a quarter?" "Think 'e, mister; easy earned."

Tarrant strolled back to Brinstair's office. The Inspector met him with an expression of admiration on his face. "You hit it, Mr. Tarrant," he said; "our man was picked up wandering in the streets of Mansfield last night, quite out of his mind like. Couldn't remember his name, or where he lived, or what he was in Mansfield for. He was d-d-stained, and is being taken care of; but how did it occur to you, sir?"

"Why, such things happen, Inspector. There was no good ground to suspect foul play or suicide, and I imagined that a man who had overworked and overcooked himself might collapse like that. You knew he had not turned up in New York. What more likely than he should follow out a fixed purpose and make his way to the station and book for Mansfield, though quite unconscious of what he was doing?"

"I see; but how did his hat get into the river. I wonder?" "He had smoked his last cigar, and wanted another. He went to buy one, meaning to come directly back, but it was a hot night, and he turned down to the water front, thinking it might be cooler. There is a poor wretch down there, who, for a quarter, will tell you how he lost his hat while leaning over the rail. It was then, in my judgment, that his memory left him. When the mind is just on the balance, a very little thing will topple it over—as well as a hat."

"That doesn't find Mr. Cheeseman's paper, sir; does it?" "No; we'll let Mr. Cheeseman find that himself. Do you want to go with me?" "If you please, I am carless."

They took a cab to Cannon street, and found Tarrant's excited client peeping up and fro in a state of distress. He welcomed Tarrant with effusion. "Have you any good news for me?" he cried.

The detective smiled that bland and non-committal smile of his. "I think," he cried, "you told me that your appointment after you left Brinstair last Friday had nothing to do with the Terrivale coal mine lease."

"Well, it is very good that you have missed the connection, Mr. Cheeseman." "But that is ridiculous, Mr. Tarrant. I tell you—"

Tarrant stopped his protestations with a gesture. "Suppose I prove a connection to your satisfaction; what would you give?" "A thousand dollars."

The detective turned to the Inspector, saying, "Now, see what over-confidence will bring a man to," and then, to his client, he added, "It won't cost you so much as that, Mr. Cheeseman. Have you those debentures and share certificates here?"

"Yes; still in my safe." "Look them over, please, carefully." Mr. Cheeseman opened his safe, took out a packet, secured by a rubber band, ran them over slowly, and when he reached the last, stood staring at it in dumb amazement.

"You have found the document, Mr. Cheeseman?" asked Tarrant, quietly. "Yet you would have sworn that you left it locked in your private box at Brinstair's office. You had forgotten that, after it had been restored to the box and just as you were leaving, in a great hurry to keep your appointment (for which you were already late), a question arose which made another glance at the paper advisable. It was taken from its place, examined no doubt hastily, while your mind was intent on the subject of the coming appointment. You, perhaps, looked at your watch while you held the paper in your hand and rushed away, after you took the lease with you."

"It's marvelous!" murmured Mr. Cheeseman, grasping his recovered treasure. "No," said Tarrant; "I don't solve marvels, only very ordinary mysteries. Your little lapse of memory was not so serious as Brinstair's, but there is a certain analogy."

"Still," remarked the Inspector, as he walked away with Tarrant; "I don't quite see how you jumped to the conclusion that Mr. Cheeseman had himself brought the document away from his office."

"By the very simple process," answered Tarrant, "of eliminating every other way of accounting for its disappearance. It was not among his other papers at Brinstair's office, nor in the satchel Brinstair had packed to take away with him. The finding of Brinstair at Mansfield proved that he had neither run away nor been the victim of foul play, and there was not a scintilla of evidence of an attempt to steal the paper. Then Mr. Cheeseman must have taken it himself, and the state of his nerves is quite sufficient to account for his complete ignorance of having done so."—Pennsylvania Grit.

DAUGHTER OF THE REVOLUTION.

Lois Brought About a Little Revolution of Her Own. Lois Barton threw down the paper with an exclamation of impatience, but even from the floor various portraits stared at her. She caught the sheets up and thrust them fiercely into her waste basket.

"It's all very well to have patriotic societies and big meetings and banquets, but I'd like to know what good it does poor people who can't afford the dues. I'll warrant not one in five hundred of them had a great-grandfather who sent her husband and five sons to the war and captured two prisoners herself. But what does any prisoner care about it except me? And I don't believe I care very much. I'd defy anybody to care much for anything when she's alone in the world, with nothing to do except swing like a pendulum between her office and her boarding house."

Yet she did care, and she knew that she did. Inevitably her thoughts drifted to that other woman of her race, whose splendid courage still shone like a beacon across a hundred and thirty years.

"I'd like to have known her," Lois said, with flashing eyes. Then suddenly she caught a glimpse of herself in the glass. For a moment she stood still, held spellbound by what she saw. Then a dull red began to climb into her face.

"I could bear her loneliness—not seeing a soul for six weeks that winter—but I can't bear mine in a cityful of people. I could fight a redcoat or endure army discipline, but I can't take the trouble to put on a fresh collar or fix my hair becomingly. Lois Barton, do you think she would have been proud of you?"

There was much to do; she was ashamed that there was so much. But her "fighting blood" was enlisted now, and she did not shrink. She put a new binding on her skirt, polished her shoes, brushed dress and hat, put on a clean collar, tied her ribbon in the latest bow, and finally arranged her hair as she had not worn it for three years. After that she faced herself once more.

"This revolution has got to last!" she assured her reflection in the glass. Then, the dinner bell ringing, she went briskly down to the cabbage-scented dining room—they had cabbage twice a week, and she loathed it.

The tired little seamstress in the seat next her glanced up, and her worn face brightened. "I didn't think I could eat a mouthful," she said, "but somehow you look so bright and fresh that it rests me. You don't mind my telling you, do you?—You're a Companion."

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