PUMPKIN AND PRUNE.

A PAGE OF EXPERIENCE FROM AN EX-DETECTIVE'S NOTE-BOOK.

Several robberies had been committed in a well-known and popular hotel in one of our large cities. These robberies were of a very mysterious character, and baffled all ordinary devices for their detection. That they were all the work of one man, or set of men, was apparent from their similarity. As descriptive of the two which preceded it, let me tell the story of Mr. and Mrs. Pascal.

They registered in the hotel which I may call the "Cawmor House," and selected room No. 19, on the second floor, which was also the apartment which had been despoiled twice before. They were accompanied by Miss "Line" Regis, Mrs. Pascal's niece, she having a communicating room, which fronted on the street. The landlord cautioned the guests to be careful of their valuables, which, of course, they promised to do.

Mr. Pascal, the day following their arrival, having business to look after in a neighboring town, left the ladies to themselves. After a late dinner, they came up stairs, and, partly disrobing, each retired to her own room, madame to nap, and Miss Regis to read, the door between the two rooms, however, being opened wide, and the outside doors carefully locked and bolted.

It was four o'clock when Mrs. Pascal awoke from her siesta, and both ladies began to dress. Miss Regis had not been asleep for a second, a late novel having enchained her attention. Madame, previous to lying down, had taken off and placed upon the dressing-stand, her handsome diamonds, valued at nearly six thousand dollars. This article of furniture was but a few feet away from the bed, and in full view from the couch in nearly all positions. A person standing or seated opposite the door of the other chamber had them in sight also.

Mrs. Pascal, having robed herself in another dress, sought her jewels, and after a few moments' search the conviction was forced upon her that they had been stolen. Instantly she summoned the clerk, and he called in the hotel proprietor, and a fuller investigation was made, but the diamonds were nowhere to be found, nor could the detective who had been employed by the hotel since the second operation, and who remained in the house as a guest, give any solution of the matter. There was absolutely no clew to the robber.

The proprietor was almost at his wits' end, for well he knew that unless this were ferreted out, his hotel would soon become an unprofitable concern. Reflecting on the matter, he concluded to apply to a well-known detective agency, and after his story had been related, my chief concluded to undertake the case, and placed me in charge, with instructions to spare neither zeal nor money in discovering the thief. I insisted upon the retention of the hotel detective as a "cover," and stipulated that he should ostensibly be in charge of the case, and that the propeietor himself should maintain the secret, and not interfere in any way, whatever, unless called upon by my chief.

When I sat down to think over the matter, I was first struck by the exceeding difficulty of the case. I had no clew upon which to work, and that a thief should be able to effect an entrance into a bed-chamber, with a wide-awake person in sight and hearing, staggered my experience. I saw that I had a most crafty person to deal with, and some entirely new trick to understand. The longer I thought over it the more puzzled I became, for I knew Sam Pence, the hotel detective, must have made a pretty thorough canvass of the operation, examined the windows, closets and doors, as well as been on the alert for supicious characters. He, I knew, was a good enough man for any ordinary business, but outside of that had no imagination or skill. Clearly, this was a case for a most delicate operation. But I made up my mind as to a course of action, and resolutely followed it out, with what result the reader may learn at the close of this narrative.

The Pascal party left, after a week's sojourn, and room No. 19 was vacant for a day, when Mrs. De Lancy Moore, and her maid occupied it. Mrs. Moore was one of those ladies who may be described in music-symbolism as f. f. f., or, "fair, fat and forty." Rachel, the maid, and an old maid at that, might be catalogued as p. p. p., or, "patient, pale and prudish." Madame Moore owned an f. f. f., voice, but Miss Rachel's was a pianissimo squeak. Poor Rachel was in complete subjection to her mistress, and walked behind her in the softest, meekest possible manner.

They were not many days in the hotel before Sam Pence displayed his wit in styling them "Pumpkin and Prune." Sam saw the gorgeous display of diamonds, jewelry, and many-colored silks which Madame Moore wore, and in a quiet way warned Rachel of the danger of leaving valuables carelessly around in their room. Poor Rachel hardly vouchsafed an answer to his imprudence, but all at once it struck upon his benighted intellect that it would be a good thing to show her some little attention and secure her co-operation in the watch for the thief. Acting upon that suggestion, he became quite gallant, and while Rachel appeared very coy and exceedingly meek, Sam concluded to trust her, should he find an opportunity to have an uninterrupted talk.

Madame Moore came up stairs on a certain Wednesday, fairly blazing with diamonds, and entered her room, where Rachel partly unrobed her, and discreetly quitting the room, the maid retired to the adjoining one, while her mistress indulged in her "cat-nap," as she called it, and which generally lasted a good two hours. At madame's request, the window curtains in Rachel's room were drawn, so as to shut out the light from the street. Rachel took up a book, and madame a religious journal. The diamonds were placed carelessly upon the dressing-bureau. In the course of half an hour the sound of deep snoring was heard from the bed, and Rachel, dropping her book fixed her eyes upon the looking glass in her room, in which was to be seen a reflection of the jewels.

Had the reader been looking on, he might have seen a black line cross the glass and descend upon the stand; had he been listening he might have heard a very slight click, and noticed its gradual ascent and disappearance.

I saw through the whole trick at once, and, without changing my clothes, I grasped my revolver, and slipped out of my room, to call Sam to my assistance. I managed to cast off some of my (Rachel's) toggery on the way, and in a wonderful plight I appeared before him. Of course he was stupified and chagrined a minute, but Sam was a thoroughly good fellow at heart, and did not refuse my request. Had any of the boarders seen me in my trip up stairs, they would have been shocked, for on my way I shed wig and various white garments, which I shall not particularize, appearing decidedly en deshabille, my attire partaking of the garments of both sexes. I had also summoned the landlord through the annunciator and taken a pair of iron bracelets out of Rachel's light trunk.

We burst into the room, but before the door could be battered down, the robber had cast an iron wire and an apple out of the window. Fortunately for me, Madame Moore, who was in reality my wife, saw the articles descend, and hastening down stairs she summoned a policeman and secured a seedy-looking fellow, who was walking rapidly away with the wire and the fruit.

He was brought back to the hotel, marched up to the room above Madame Moore's, where I was holding a little experience meeting. When Weedin, for that is the name the robber gave, saw his "pal," he "weakened on the moral dodge" he had assumed, and proceeded to make best terms he could for himself and partner.

In short, I succeeded in recapturing all the precious stones, save one small one, which had been "spouted" to pay the expenses with which to carry on the war. The wire which we captured was provided with light nippers at the end, which were controlled by a silk cord. When the jaws of the vise were in position, the cord was tightened and they closed around the valuables, and were drawn up into the robber's hand.

I discovered also a trap in the flooring, cut out by the thief, large enough to admit his head, which, when not in use, was covered up by the carpet. Out of the plaster ceiling in Madame Moore's room he had managed to cut an orifice large enough to pass in and out the wire, and gave his eye command of the dressing-stand. This orifice, when not in use, was closed with an India-rubber plug, painted to represent the plaster, all this having been done some months before, through the agency of a comrade and his wife, who occupied the room for a day.

The supposed diamond caught up in this last operation had been placed in a plugged apple, tied to the wire, and thrown from the window, and was to have been placed with the others stolen.

We learned afterward that Weedin's intention was to carry his plunder to Europe, where he hoped also to realize handsomely by his invention. This, it will be seen, closed one of the avenues by which detectives find a clew to the discovery of criminals, through the sale of their plunder to pawnbrokers. Weedin was sentenced to two years, and was released some time this year.

Sam Pence might have enjoyed much sport out of my miscellaneous dress had I not now and then gently reminded him how bent he was upon "making up to Rachel."

It's what he got anyhow, for calling my wife and me Pumpkin and Prune.

POULTRY NOTES.

Give fowls shade.

Give fowls air and exercise.

Give fowls lime, grit and light.

Give fowls fresh earth to scratch.

Give fowls green stuff every day.

Give fowls fresh water twice a day.

Oats should be crushed if fed to little chicks.

Air and sunshine are health giving to fowls as well as to people.

See that coops are well oiled or whitewashed before the little chicks are put into them.

Do not be deceived with the idea that incubators need no care. The best that can be made require attention.

It is not so much learning how as to be willing to give constant care and attention that secures good work with the incubator.

Now that warm weather is here, care should be had to see that things are clean and sweet about the poultry quarters, and the ventilation good.

Give the old hen a good dusting with snuff before she is taken from the nest with the little chocks. Better do it a day or two before the chicks come.

If your hens begin to moult early do not feel badly over it. If they are yearlings they will with proper care be ready to lay good priced eggs for Christmas.

Poultry that have the range of the farm should have clean airy quarters to roost in. Do not let the droppings remain under the roosts till they are alive with vermin, nor so strong as to nearly suffocate you when the house door is opened.

One gain the man who keeps the old hen shut up while the chicks range is when a sudden shower comes up the chicks are soon under cover, whereas if the hen is loose she and the brood may be half a mile from shelter when a storm comes.

If the setting hens have a room or shed to themselves, corn, fresh water and a dust bath can be kept constantly within their reach and they can come from their nests and return at their pleasure with no troublesome (?) layer to molest their nest.

NOT ANSWERABLE.

Creditor (roughly)—When are you going to pay me that bill?

Debtor (genially)—My friend, you put me in mind of a little child.

Creditor—I do, do I? Why?

Debtor—Because a little child can ask questions that the wisest men cannot answer.

About the House.

THE FRAGMENTS.

"Thrift is always commendable and dignified. The secret of successful housekeeping lies in the ability to turn everything to the best account, no matter how trivial such may be," says a writer in an exchange.

"A friend of mine some time ago was obliged to practice close economy, the wolf being actually at the door. There was barely bread enough for her children, but an inspection of the pantry revealed a very little flour, an apparently empty package of baking powder, a cup of skim milk, an egg, three or four frozen apples, a small basin of dripping, and half a pint of molasses. She carried her stores to the kitchen and planned a point of attack. That day she and her children lunched on piping hot apple fritters served with molasses, good sweet bread and clear cold water. Speaking afterwards of the occurrance she said: 'When a cook reigned in my kitchen those fritters would have been impossible. There would have been no dripping, the baking powder package would have been burned without shaking out and the frozen apples thrown away.'

"When milk puddings, such as rice, sago and tapioca are baked, care should be taken to prevent sticking to the bottom of the dish. A cupful or more of the pudding is often thus wasted; but this may be avoided by having the dish well buttered and set in a bread pan containing water which must be added to from time to time.

"Cake is often wasted by being left in the pan and cut out as wanted, which plan is sure to leave the brown under part sticking to the pan. This may be avoided by slightly heating the pan before removing the cake. In mixing cake many little economies may be practiced. Bowls in which eggs have been beaten should always be rinsed with the milk required for the cake and again with a tablespoonful of water. Where butter is prescribed half lard may nearly always be used with excellent results, and it should always be used for greasing bread and cake tins. Be careful to spill nothing and do not use unnecessary flour in kneading or rolling out.

"I have seen jam jars sent down to be washed with two or three tablespoonfuls of syrup in the bottom. This is very wrong. Drain them out carefully and rinse with a half teacupful of hot water which may afterwards be added to baked or stewed fruit of any kind.

"It is difficult sometimes to guess the quantity of tea or coffee required, and it is a common practice with servants to throw out any that may be left over. This should never be done. Pour what is left into a clean glass bottle and heat by standing in water up to the neck and warming gradually.

"In emptying parcels of tea, coffee, rice, etc., care should be taken not to spill the contents. A funnel made wide enough to exactly fit into a two-quart jar is a great comfort and will soon save its cost many times over. I have often seen as much spilled in unpacking as would make the cup for which some poor soul may be longing, while rice seems to have a faculty for scattering itself far and wide.

"Enough, has been suggested, however to put the young housekeeper on the alert in making the most of her possibilities, bearing ever in mind of course the adage, 'Willful waste makes woeful want.'"

GREEN CORN.

Boiled corn in Husks.—If you have never tried it you will be surprised to see how much better sweet corn is boiled in the husks. Remove the outer husks, and strip down the inner husks far enough to remove all the silks. Then re-cover the ear with the inner husks, tying at the top with a thread. Put in boiling water that has been salted, for a half hour. When done cut off the stalks and serve on a napkin.

Stewed Green Corn.—Cut the corn from the cob and stew for fifteen minutes in water that is boiling when the corn is put on. Pour off nearly all the water and cover with milk, and allow to stew until tender; before dishing, roll some pieces of butter in flour and mix with the corn, adding a little pepper and salt; give one boil and serve.

Roasted Corn.—Although we still call them "roasting ears" we have almost forgotten how to roast them. It is really a delicate way of preparing the corn when properly done. Remove the silk by opening the husks; then close the husks tightly and roast in the hot ashes of a wood fire. Serve with butter, pepper and salt.

Corn Oysters. —Take young corn, grate in dish; to every pint of this add one egg well beaten, 1 teacup of flour, 1-2 cup butter (rich sweet cream is better if it can be procured) salt, pepper to taste, mix well. One tablespoon of batter will make the size of an oyster, frying pan well buttered, fry light brown, spread with butter, eat hot. Another recipe is: One dozen ears of corn grated, 1 cup cracker crumbs, or flour; 3 eggs; 1 pint sweet milk; 1 teaspoon salt; 1-2 teaspoon of pepper. Fry in hot lard. This will make a large dish of oysters.

Baked Corn—Split the kernels of the ears of corn with a sharp knife and then scrape out the milk. Add one-third as much cream or rich milk as there is corn, and butter, pepper and salt to taste. Bake in a dish for a half hour, or until it begins to rise in the center of the dish.

Corn with Tomatoes.—Cut the corn from the cob and put it with an equal quantity of tomatoes that have been sliced and peeled; stew these together for half an hour; then season to taste with salt and pepper and a little sugar; stir in a liberal piece of butter and simmer a few minutes longer.

Green Corn Pudding.—One quart of milk, 5 eggs, 2 tablespoonfuls of melted butter, 1 tablespoonful of white sugar 1 dozen large ears of corn; grate the corn from the cob, beat the whites and yolks of the eggs separately; put the corn and yolks together, stir hard, and add the melted butter, then the milk gradually, stirring hard all the time; next the sugar, and then the whites and a little salt. Bake slowly, covering the dish at first. It will bake in about an hour.

Pickled Corn.—Choose the ears of sweet corn that are not too hard. Take off the husks and silk; boil the ears a few minutes until the milk is cooked, then cut the grains from the cobs. Pack in earthenware jars, putting in one-third as much salt as corn. Mix the salt and corn thoroughly, cover with a white cloth and weight down. If, after standing twenty-four hours, the brine does not cover the corn, add a little water. Keep the jar in a cellar during the winter. When the corn is wanted for use, take out the amount wanted, and cover with water. Let it stand six or eight hours, then pour the water off, and cover with fresh water. Repeat this until it is fresh enough, then cook just as you do in summer.

POMPADE FOR THE HANDS.

Chapped hands prove a sore affliction to many women when obliged to do their own housework, yet by a little care their trouble may be altogether avoided. At all times the hands should be kept scrupulously clean, and gloves should always be worn when blacking stoves, cleaning silver, etc.; yet if one has several pieces of work to do in immediate succession, each of which will probably soil the fingers, it is wiser not to bathe the hands between each task, unless they are unft for the next work to be done. Too much bathing will make the skin too tender, and a very tender hand will chap at every opportunity.

The following pomade is both curative and preventive, and if used according to directions will keep the hands very white and soft:

Cut one quarter of a pound of white wax very small and mix it well with a flask of salad oil, the juice of two lemons and one half pound of honey. Let them gradually melt over a slow fire and then beat the mixture until it is cold. Apply to the hands at night and sleep in loose kid gloves, with the palms cut out.

HOME CURE FOR RHEUMATISM.

Although the herb teas, which our grandmothers used to make, may be laughed at in these later days, no one can doubt that they are often efficacious. One of these old-time remedies, which has been used of late with remarkedly good results, and that in more than one case, is sunflower tea.

The remedy has cured stubborn cases of rheumatism in elderly people and left them free from this distressing pain.

To prepare the tea, procure two quarts of black sunflower seeds and steep them all day in one gallon of water, then strain. White seeds may be used instead of the black if the latter cannot be obtained, but are not considered quite so strong. If the seeds cannot be gathered, they may be had at a seed store, or possibly at a druggist's.

The dose to be taken is one teacupful night and morning, till whole prescription is taken. More than one person will testify to their cure by this simple means.

WOMEN CARRY CANS.

Until this spring it has never occurred to the mannish young woman that she ought to complete the effect of her costume by carrying a cane. Now she has taken up the idea with enthusiasm, and almost every day there may be seen on Fifth Avenue gentlemanly young saunterers in neat tailor-made costumes, derby hats and carrying canes.

In England Queen Victoria has set the fashion, and the royal precedent is being actively followed in all the English towns. No sooner were the canes imported as novelties than New York women hastened to adopt the fad. Now they profess to find them remarkably convenient and a safeguard from the dreadful predicament of not knowing what to do with one's hands. There is somewhat of an art in properly carrying a cane, but if well managed it lends a jaunty air.

The canes that have been seen so far are mostly plain woods and are very slenderly constructed. The handles are usually crooked and a silken cord and tassel gives the feminine touch. In a few of the canes seen abroad, there is an attempt at elaborate mounting, and even a few jewel-studded handles have been seen.

AN EFFECTIVE CAP

The most effective fireman's cap ever known has been invented by a woman. It is made of fine strips of asbestos molded to the shape of the head. It is held fast in place by a band composed of rubber and asbestos, which makes it airtight. It weighs only 16 ounces, and can be carried on a person's arm without inconvenience. Perfect protection to the eyes without interfering with the view of surrounding objects is insured by plates of mica being placed in the eyeholes. A silk sponge, through which no smoke can enter, but which permits the plentiful ingress of air, fills an aperture for the mouth, and the cap is simply adjusted. In a recent test a fireman attempted, without it, to enter a smokehouse. After eight seconds he had to return, being half stifled, and gasping for breath. He then put on the asbestos cap and went back and remained thirty-five minutes in the thick smoke, with no possible chance of getting air from outside. It is claimed that this head covering will enable a man to remain in a stifling atmosphere for an hour, without the slightest

PHILOSOPHY.

Servant—Oh, please sir, your daughter has eloped with the coachman.

Mr. Highliver—Well it might have been worse. She might have run off with my French cook.

ONE FIGHT IN BULAWAYO.

THE KAFFIRS SHOT AND SKIRMISHED AS WELL AS THE WHITES.

An English Soldier's Letter to His Friends —A Wild Ride for Re-enforcements— The Hottest Action Fought in Matabeleland.

Writing from Bulawayo to his friends in London, a correspondent says:

"I am back again safe, but not quite sound, having been wounded in the head, but it is not very serious. A bullet cut a groove right along the back of my skull, but it was too thick for it to penetrate. We marched out on the 2nd April, 100 strong, with one Maxim. Our object was to relieve Gwanda, a station seventy-five miles out, and there were supposed to be twenty-five men there in danger. We left at 6 p. m., amid cheers. One troop consisted of Africanders, the other of Englishmen. I attached myself to the Africanders. The first night we were attacked, but repulsed the enemy with ease. We got down to Gwanda in thirty hours without more fighting. On the way we found all the stores looted and burnt. They even stabbed the pigs and dogs. It was good traveling —seventy-five miles in thirty hours, in full marching order. I started with no kit, only horse, saddle, etc., and rifle and revolver. We decided to stay there five days, as the store had not yet been looted, and we had plenty of provisions. I was issuer, so my mess lived high. About the fifth day we started back. About an hour after we started I felt my horse was not right, so I jumped off, took off the saddle, and put in a small spring wagon we had with us that I used to carry rations in and extra ammunition. In about an hour I saw it was all up with the poor old chap. He walked slower and slower, the froth streaming from his nose;

AT LAST HE STOPPED.

I told the other fellows to go on, as I should stop with him to the last. They wanted to shoot him, but I said the first one that shot my horse I should loose off into him.

"So they left me, and I stayed with the poor old chap till he died—his head on my knees. I tell you I felt sick. Poor old fellow, he knew me to the last. I walked on, and caught the troop up five miles further on. The Captain and all were sorry for me, as he was far and away the best horse and the best looked after. I lay down under a little bush and fell asleep. I was so tired; I had had no sleep and hard work for the last twenty-four hours. When I awoke every one was gone. I thanked God I was still alive. Then I walked after them and caught them up at night. We did not sleep much that night, and next day at dawn started. We did twelve miles and then rested for an hour, then went on for twelve miles more. We were in a nasty cloof. We found about twenty head of cattle and of course took them, after exchanging a few shots with the herds. I said that it was a trap. I was right.

"About half a mile on we were going through a neck, hills on each side. I was on the front seat of the little wagon when I saw a sheet of flame and heard a roar; the bullets came like hail. The mules turned and broke the pole. I jumped down, got them straight, and set to work to mend the pole with the driver, but the bullets were thick and they made me a target; one grazed my cheek, another went between my legs, while a third took a button off my leggings. I got behind a tree alongside the wagon, rested my rifle on a branch, and began. I let them have it. I saw three fall the first three shots, as they were only a hundred yards off. But our fellows were falling fast, and horses dropping everywhere, so we had to advance.

"We got on to a bit of open, but the niggers were close behind in the long grass. We went on advancing for four miles, fighting hard the whole time. At last we got a rise and made a stand, as it was pretty clear we had lost heavily. But they kept on us just as heavy a fire as we kept on them. Our ammunition was nearly run out.

"The Captain asked me if I would try and ride through to Bulawayo for reenforcements and ammunition, which was terribly short. I said, 'I'll try.'

"I took the best horse I could see near, cut the equipment loose, and jumped into the saddle. As I left them I had a

HAILSTORM OF BULLETS

after me. All of a sudden a bullet struck me in the head, went right through my hat, and cut a groove along my skull. I fell forward and heard a man say, 'Poor old ——, pipped.' I jumped up and said 'No fear.' Where's that blooming Kaffir?' I saw him and he didn't go far. A fellow came up and tied up my head, and I went on firing. My head and face were covered with blood. Now about the ride.

"I rode like the wind for ten miles, then slackened and gave my horse a drop of brandy I had in my flask. I then rushed on till my horse fell and rolled over me. I thought my leg was broken, but I managed to get into the saddle and go on. After a while I gave him the rest of the brandy, and rode to within six miles of Bulawayo, when I met two men bringing out a despatch.

"My horse was done, so I took one of theirs, told them to come back and galloped into Bulawayo. I did the thirty miles in one hour and a half, and had covered sixty miles that day, and five hours' hard fighting. I saw Col. Spreckley, and he sent 230 men at once. I just stayed to have my wounds bandaged and started with them. We met them twelve miles out. They had fought their way through the Kaffirs. I had to walk back, and got in at 5 a. m., having done eighty-five miles in twenty-four hours and five hours' fighting. We lost eight dead and twenty wounded out of a hundred. We killed about 300 out of 2,000 that attacked us. The thirst was terrible. My tongue stuck to my mouth; but I managed to keep cool throughout. My messmate was shot beside me; his blood spattered all over me; poor fellow, he is dead. I hadn't time to speak to him, the firing was too hot. At one time they were within thirty yards of us. It's the hottest action fought in Matabeleland. I was surprised to see how well the Kaffirs shot and skirmished, as good as any white troops, taking advantage of all the cover. We lost about thirty horses. They used to rush up to our wounded horses we left behind, and stab them, shouting 'Quaaser, quaaser.' I saw one stick a horse, but I 'quaasered' him as he put his spear in."