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FOR 1912.

Place of Sitting	Day of Sitting	Hours of Opening	Jan.	Mar.	May	July.	Sept.	Nov.
1 Milton	Friday	10.30 a.m.	12	8	10	12	13	8
2 Oakville	Tuesday	12.30 p.m.	9	5	7	9	10	5
3 Georgetown	Wednesday	10.00 a.m.	10	6	8	10	11	6
4 Acton	Thursday	10.15 a.m.	11	7	9	11	12	7
5 Campbellville	Saturday	10.00 a.m.	13	9	11	13	14	9
6 Burlington	Monday	11.00 a.m.	8	4	6	8	9	4

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General Sessions of the Peace and County Court Sittings, with or without Jury, 11th June and 10th December, on opening days at 1 p.m.

County Court Sittings, without Jury, 2nd April and 1st October, and so often at other times as may be required for the despatch of business.

County Court Sittings—formerly Terms—8th January, 1st April, 2nd July and 7th October.

Audit of Criminal Justice Accounts, 8th January, 8th April, 8th July and 7th October.

By order, W. I. DICK, Milton,
Clerk of the Peace.

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W. M. S.: First Monday of the month at 3 p.m.
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GOING WEST.
8.43 a.m. 9.01 a.m. 3.33 p.m. 7.07 p.m. 8.25 p. m.
—SUNDAY—
West 9.04 a m., 8.25 p.m. East 6.57 a.m., 8.15 p.m.

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BRITZ
:: OF HEADQUARTERS ::

BY MARCIN BARBER

Supplied Exclusively in Canada by the British & Colonial Press, Limited, Toronto.

Britz eyed the woman impressively. "We must bear in mind," he said, "that whoever stole the jewels must have been in possession of the real necklace long enough to have a duplicate made. Either that, or he must have been so familiar with every stone in the setting as to enable him to have duplicates made from description. The only reasonable supposition is that the duplicate was made directly from the original. It is barely possible, however, that some other means were employed."

"That is the most puzzling feature of the theft," said Mrs. Missioner.

"How long have you known Mr. Sands?" asked Britz.

"From girlhood."

"And Mr. Griswold?"

"About five years."

"Both saw the necklace on you frequently?"

"Very often."

After several thoughtful moments, Britz remarked :

"The only one who could have taken the necklace out of the safe without your knowledge was Miss Holcomb. One of the original diamonds was found in her room. It is absolutely clear to me that she is innocent."

"Do you really think so?" the widow asked eagerly.

"It is as certain as that someone stole the necklace," answered Britz.

"Then we must get her out of jail at once!" exclaimed the widow.

"We must do nothing of the kind," corrected the detective. "We must allow all suspicion to be directed toward her."

"But it is cruel, it is inhuman, to keep her in prison," protested Mrs. Missioner.

"It is necessary," assured Britz.

"I will not permit it, even if it means the loss of the necklace," said the woman.

"My dear madam," Britz returned, "don't excite yourself. My blundering colleagues have done all the harm they can possibly do to Miss Holcomb. Far more important than the recovery of the necklace is the establishment of her innocence in the eyes of the world. With all the suspicious circumstances of this case woven about her, your mere belief in her innocence will not clear her. Therefore, you will have to leave this entire matter in my hands."

The widow bowed submissively. A shade of sorrow crept over her face as she contemplated the plight of her secretary.

"May I go to the jail and assure her of my belief in her?" she asked.

"That would be fatal," replied the detective.

"Then what can I do—I must do something for her," groaned Mrs. Missioner.

"The only thing we can do for her is to find the real thief," said Britz.

"I trust it won't be long," sighed the widow.

"Kindly give me the addresses of Mr. Sands and Mr. Griswold," asked the detective.

"You surely don't suspect either of them?" returned Mrs. Missioner.

"I suspect no one, as yet," Britz hastened to assure her.

He wrote the addresses of the two men on the back of a card and left. Britz headed straight for Headquarters and entered the office of the Chief. He threw himself wearily into a chair with the air of one vainly trying to discern a glimmer of light in the enshrouding darkness.

"It's going to be hard work," he said.

"I expected it would be when I put you on it," the Chief replied.

Britz recounted the information he had gathered from Mrs. Missioner and then walked into his own office. Summoning two subordinates, he directed them to go to the Missioner house and trail the footman and the East Indian servant. Two other men were assigned to shadow Sands and Griswold.

"That's all I can do to-day," he murmured.

CHAPTER IX.
Word from Logan

A week of agonized suspense in the Toombs seemed drawn into an eternity of suffering to Miss Holcomb. Conscious of her own innocence, she had ,nevertheless, ceased to struggle against the relentless fate that marked her as its victim. Her sensitive nature recoiled from contact with the miserable creatures into whose midst she was suddenly thrust. No longer could she find solace in tears, for the long drain had exhausted the supply. The gloom of her surroundings penetrated the innermost sanctuary of her soul, and she became possessed of a deep melancholy which even the encouraging words of Dr. Fitch could not relieve.

"Don't give up to despair; truth and justice will prevail," Dr. Fitch had urged every day. But the grim prison walls shut out hope as effectually as if the knell of her final fate had been sounded. Only one prop remained to sustain her through the long days and nights of confinement in the Tombs. It was her belief that she would be speedily freed at her second hearing, but even that prop was rudely torn from under her. Instead of regaining her liberty, she was sent back to the Tombs under heavier bail to await the action of the Grand Jury. It was the work of a few brief minutes to make out a prima facie case against her, and in her benumbed state of mind, she hardly knew what was transpiring in the courtroom. Her eyes had a vacant stare, as if peering into a heavy mist. When court adjourned, she followed the jailer automatically back to her cell. When the door clicked behind her, a violent tremor shook her frame and she gave herself up, body, mind and soul, to the bitter spirit of despair that had seized her.

She was recalled to her senses by the matron, who announced that Dr. Fitch was in the reception room.

Hastily coiling her disarranged hair into a knot, she passed along the narrow corridors and descended to the visitors' room. This chamber, filled with the echoes of sad, tragedies, marked with the invisible footprints of the surging undercurrent of human life, is the gateway through which pass innocent and guilty alike to freedom or to penal servitude. Here the world within meets the world without; here messages of hope are poured into tears of despair. Here is said the final farewell of the woman condemned; through this room the innocent pass out of the grim shadow of the barred corridors to the welcome sunlight of the street.

No woman may enter this room without a shudder of despair; none may leave it without a prayer of deliverance. Bare of furnishings, there is nothing to relieve the drab monotony of its walls. A gray-haired matron of buxom form sits stolidly at the door. Her cold eyes carry no message of encouragement. She is not there to encourage; she is there to watch. Even to visitors, the room imparts a feeling of misty terror, a long-

ing to escape its sinister aspect.

A groan, as of physical pain, came from Fitch as he beheld Miss Holcomb in the wan light that filtered through the window. Her distress reacted on his sensibilities; he could utter no word of encouragement.

"It is awful," he moaned, as he led her into a corner of the room.

"And they all believe me guilty?" she asked despairingly.

"Not all," he returned, "there is one whose faith is unshaken."

"Mrs. Missioner—what of her?" she asked.

"I don't know," Dr. Fitch replied.

"Have the police discovered no clew to the theft?"

"I haven't heard a word from them," Dr. Fitch said.

They remained silent, as if fearful of inflicting pain on each other by further discussion of the discouraging outlook. The doctor's eyes were fixed on the tips of his boots; hers roved aimlessly about the room.

"I talked with the lawyer to-day," he broke the silence. "He says they haven't sufficient evidence to convict, and that while the case looks ugly, there is nothing to fear. He is in favor of a speedy trial."

"Then even if I am set free my name will remain smirched," she declared.

His spirits sank lower as he contemplated the dark outlook of her future. With a heroic effort he brought himself out of his dejection, and, eyeing her intently, said:

"Your name will be cleared of all suspicion."

She could read encouragement in that purposeful face and the set determination of those lips. His resolute features were eloquent with promise in her behalf. No matter how fierce the fires of accusation blazed about her, there was one whose belief would remain unshaken. The finger of contumely might point at her, but in his eyes it would carry no reproach. Yet, as she realized how deeply her future was interwoven with his, she felt an anguish of heart more poignant than the pain of her own predicament.

"What a terrible blow this must be to you," was all she could say.

"It means to me only the opportunity to prove myself worthy of you," he replied.

"But suppose," she breathed, "they do not find the thief and the world is made to believe me guilty?"

The mere suggestion of failure to clear the woman he loved aroused all the combativeness of his nature. He brought his clenched fist down on his knee and thundered forth an eloquent challenge to the world.

"I'll stand between you and the creatures who are trying to crush you!" he exclaimed. "Let them come like a thousand furies! Your fight is my fight," he whispered, bending closer to her, "and your victory will be mine."

His eyes darted points of fire that kindled a responsive light in the glance she turned on him.

"You will never desert me?" she murmured gratefully.

"Never!"

She felt his arm about her waist, and with a sigh almost of happiness she surrendered herself to his embrace. He pressed her close to him, his lips seeking hers in the fading light of the room. The faint kiss that broke the stillness glorified the love of these two souls and struck a divine radiance that seemed to bring a message of hope from above.

"It is so good to have you near me," she said. "I feel as if no harm could come to me."

They became vaguely conscious of a man's form outlined in the murky light of the room. As the figure gradually shaped itself to Fitch's eyes, his hand slipped from her waist and he rose to his feet.

"Lieutenant Britz!" he exclaimed.

The detective came out of the obscurity of the opposite wall, and, doffing his hat, respectfully addressed them:

"It is unusual, I know, for a police officer to ask information of a prisoner held for the Grand Jury. Before Miss Holcomb replies to the questions I am about to ask, I think it might be well for her to seek the advice of counsel."

"Miss Holcomb will answer any questions you may ask," Fitch replied. "She has nothing to hide."

The impenetrable face of the detective gave no insight to his thoughts. He drew a chair close to the expectant couple, shifting his gaze from Fitch to the face of the young woman. Though he gave no sign of it, he read the acute suffering she felt.

"Miss Holcomb," he began, "when were you last in Europe with Mrs. Missioner?"

"A little less than a year and a half ago," came the quick response.

"Was that before or after the East Indian servant entered the employ of Mrs. Missioner?"

"He was engaged after we came back."

"Did you meet Mr. Sands or Mr. Griswold abroad?"

"We met both of them in London and Paris."

"Did Mrs. Missioner have the costlier with her? I mean the one with the Maharanee diamond?"

"She did."

The detective settled back in his chair, his chin to his chest, as if lost in deep thought. The strange pallor of his face, caused by the electric light, gave him the appearance of a dark clay image. Miss Holcomb watched fascinatedly at Mrs. Missioner

some explanation of his puzzling questions.

"The case is more baffling than ever," he said, in response to her questioning look. "When I began my investigation, I was firmly convinced of your innocence."

"And now?" interrupted Dr. Fitch.

Britz replied with an equivocal shrug of the shoulders. A moment or two passed before he spoke. "I am seeking the light," he said.

"Do you wish to ask Miss Holcomb any further questions?" Fitch asked. "She is only too anxious to enlighten you."

The detective's eyes narrowed on the young woman.

"There is some information that I want, Miss Holcomb; I believe you can supply it." After brief reflection, he asked; "Mr. Sands and Mr. Griswold are frequent visitors at the house of Mrs. Missioner?"

"Both call very frequently," Miss Holcomb replied.

"And their visits are inspired by a feeling that is stronger than friendship?"

Miss Holcomb looked at Fitch as if in doubt what to say.

"Be perfectly frank," he advised.

"I believe both have proposed marriage to her," she informed him.

"And Mrs. Missioner—she prefers which one?"

"I don't know," came the prompt response.

"You mean she has never indicated her preference to you? Come now, surely in a burst of confidence she dropped some hint as to her inclinations?"

It was plain to Britz that Miss Holcomb revolted against violating the intimate confidences of her employer. To reveal the secrets that had come to her through association with the woman who seemingly had turned her back on her now was so inconsistent with Miss Holcomb's entire character that Britz recognized the necessity of urging his question.

"I am not asking this out of any motive of idle curiosity," he said. "It is of vital importance I should be informed of Mrs. Missioner's relations with Mr. Sands and Mr. Griswold, as well as of the opportunity each had for obtaining the diamonds."

"I am sure neither of them would or could have taken them," Miss Holcomb said.

"That may be perfectly true," replied Britz. "I do not say either of them took the diamonds, but I must follow every line of inquiry that reveals itself to me. Now, isn't it a fact, Miss Holcomb, that Griswold was the preferred suitor?"

"I do not think so," she said in a low voice.

"You mean she preferred Sands?"

"Yes."

"What makes you think so?"

"Her general demeanor toward the two men."

"You mean she showed more fondness for Sands?"

Miss Holcomb knitted her brows. Her perplexity made her slow and hesitating of speech.

"I cannot say that," she answered. "Sometimes I thought she cared more for Mr. Griswold, and then again I would feel certain she preferred Mr. Sands. In the main, however, I always believed that Mr. Sands held her affections; while Mr. Griswold simply pleased her with his attentions."

"Possibly Mrs. Missioner didn't know her own mind?" the detective asked.

"Perhaps not," agreed Miss Holcomb.

"Did she ever make any remarks to you that led you to believe she cared more for one than for the other?"

"None that I recall."

"Miss Holcomb, do you know the history of the Maharanee diamond?" he suddenly fired.

A quick spark of memory kindled her mind, and with the first flash he understood the import of his question.

"Mrs. Missioner told me the history of the stone," she said. "I believe there was some scandal connected with its purchase in India. She told me that when her husband obtained it, there was some talk of it having been taken from a temple and that the provincial native government tried to gain possession of it." Mr. Missioner succeeded, however, in retaining it as part of his collection."

"What opportunity did the Indian servant have of obtaining the necklace?"

"None at all," she answered hopelessly, "unless he broke into the safe. I believe that was not done."

"Mrs. Missioner informed me that on one occasion, when the necklace was lying on the table, the servant entered the room with a box. You were in the room at the time. Was he close enough to the table to touch the necklace?"

"I remember the incident very well," she replied. "I took the box from him at the door and he turned around and went downstairs. I do not believe he was within ten feet of the table at any time."

"I don't know what to think," Britz said, after some reflection. "Almost as soon as a new clew hobs up, it falls down and I have to begin all over again. I have no more questions to ask to-day."

Fitch accompanied the detective out of the prison, begging vainly for some word of encouragement. Britz answered his questions with monosyllables, as if he were trying to submit his well with regard to the outcome of his investigation. Just before parting, however, Britz said:

"Every time that develops in this case, you can be sure, I will be informed of the fact. So far, nothing has been discovered that changes the

aspect of the case in the slightest degree."

The detective walked to Headquarters and entered the office of the Chief.

"Has Donnelly or Carson reported anything new?" he inquired.

"Nothing," answered the Chief. "And you?"

"Nothing that throws any light on the case."

"Britz," the Chief remarked, as though delivering some weighty conclusion, "I think you're working on the wrong hypothesis. You seem to have decided that Miss Holcomb is innocent. If you will survey the case as it stands, you will have to acknowledge that absolutely everything in it points to her guilt. I do not undertake to say what her motive was in stealing the jewels, unless it was simply the feminine lust for ornaments. I feel certain, also, that she was not alone in the crime. My belief is that she took the necklace out of the safe, turned it over to Dr. Fitch, or someone else, to have the duplicate made, and then returned the false jewels to the safe."

"But where were the paste gems made?" inquired Britz.

"That's for you to find out," snapped the Chief.

"I have personally visited every manufacturer of paste gems in this city and in Philadelphia, Boston, Buffalo and Washington. My men have been to all the places in the smaller cities. Manufacturers in all the other cities of the country have been visited by the local police, and I feel absolutely sure that the duplicates were not made in this country. Logan is on the way to Paris now, and until we hear from him I don't think we are safe in venturing any opinion as to the identity of the thief. I am receiving daily reports of the movements of Sands, Griswold, the butler, and the Indian servant, but they show nothing."

"Why do you think Logan will discover anything? Has the real necklace ever been abroad?"

"Mrs. Missioner had it with her on the other side, but I don't know that it ever left her possession."

The Chief's lips coiled into an amused smile.

"Kind o' looks as if you're on the wrong scent," he baited.

"Wait till we hear from Paris," Britz returned.

"You're way off the trail," the Chief persisted. "You're not even following the lines of your own deduction. The other day you said you were convinced the necklace was stolen within the last month. How do you suppose it got to Paris, had it duplicated, and then had the counterfeit sent back here in four weeks? You don't give them any time for the manufacture of the pastes."

"The crime was not conceived and executed in a day," Britz returned. "It is the work of long thought and careful planning. The duplicates may have been made any time within five years. The substitution was made since the expert saw the necklace fifteen months ago. A man like Ransome would have detected the paste at a glance. I saw him yesterday and he informed me the stones he saw were genuine."

"Then, following your line of reasoning, we must conclude that the original was out of the possession of Mrs. Missioner without her knowledge long enough to enable the thief to have the duplicate made? And if that is the case, then only one person could have succeeded in the crime. The secretary was the only one who had access to the safe, and she also would have known Mrs. Missioner's plans well enough to enable her to judge the length of time she could withhold the necklace without detection. Of course, the theft would have been discovered at once if Mrs. Missioner wanted to wear the necklace while it was gone."

"The original stones were never stolen from the safe," Britz said in a positive tone.

"Then how was the substitution made?" queried the other.

"I don't know," replied the detective gloomily. "I have yet to discover the time of the substitution."

"It seems to me," said the Chief, "you have still to discover a good many things with regard to this case. As a matter of fact, you're as much at sea as on the day you took charge."

"I have only begun to throw out my lines," Britz declared. "I'll land the fish before I'm through, and it won't be Miss Holcomb."

As the detective left the office, he could not help a feeling of depression at the slow progress of events. As yet, the intricacies of the mystery were vaguely outlined in his mind. He saw them as a floating mist, heavy with possibilities but charged with deceptive signs of beckoning trails that he instinctively knew led to nowhere. He was still treading lightly the mazes of the case. One false step might be fatal, and he preferred to remain in a crouching attitude of watchfulness, ready to spring from cover at the proper moment.

Much as he deplored his enforced inactivity, he nevertheless had faith in the final outcome. A quick mental survey of the case convinced him that the first necessity was to find the maker of the paste stones. Whoever made the duplicate Maharanee would surely recall having done so. There were few European firms that could have made the stone. It was doubtful whether any American manufacturer could have turned out a substitute to fool the eyes of Mrs. Missioner, even for a night. It is hard enough to get the coveted brilliance of the diamond in a small paste gem, infinitely more difficult is it to manufacture a counterfeit Maharanee. Britz knew that

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whoever copied the cut and luster of that marvellous stone was an expert of high caliber. No fain shimmer of glass could have availed to deceive Mrs. Missioner. The laboratory fire that gleamed from the duplicate was the work of years of experiment, and only in Paris, Britz believed, was the art of manufacturing paste gems sufficiently developed to bring forth a satisfactory duplicate of the Maharanee.

Three weeks at least must elapse before word would come from Logan, who entimary sent abroad was himself a diamond expert. Before entering the Detective Bureau he had been a foreign agent of the United States Treasury Department. If the duplicate necklace was manufactured abroad, Logan would find the manufacturer without delay. Britz had faith in his man, and he waited impatiently through three weeks of torment for the first cablegram. It came finally, and he opened it with nervous fingers.

"Missioner necklace manufactured from drawings by three firms. Original never in possession of manufacturers."

Britz let the telegram flutter to the floor.

"I knew it!" he burst forth. "They wouldn't have dared to take the original out of the safe without immediately replacing it with the duplicate."

He picked up the message and burst into the Chief's room.

"Read it!" he exclaimed.

The Chief's eyes drank in the words, but his brain failed to grasp their underlying meaning.

"I don't see that this proves anything," he remarked.

"It proves everything," volleyed Britz. "It proves that the thief was a clever draughtsman. It proves that he spent weeks sketching the necklace, stone by stone, and it proves, too, that he went to Paris to have the duplicate made."

"It proves all that," agreed the Chief. "But who had the opportunity to see the necklace a sufficient number of times and long enough to make the sketches? Who but Miss Holcomb?"

"I will find someone who had almost as good an opportunity," Britz returned confidently.

"And if you do, what will it mean?" asked the Chief.

"It will mean something to work on," the detective said.

The next twenty-four hours Britz spent in the quiet of his home, his mind focused on the problem before him, trying to map out his line of procedure. Plan after plan he discarded as worthless. He could have struck out blindly in the hope of stumbling on a trail, but that was not Britz's method. Crime mysteries were to him scientific problems to be solved by scientific means. Step by step he went over the ground already covered, and then swept the outlook with the keen searchlight of his mind.

By a process of elimination he tried to sift the real thief from the group of suspects on whom his mental efforts were concentrated. He was unable to drag forth the culprit. Then he sought to discern the motive for the crime in the action of each possible criminal, but he could come to no satisfactory conclusion.

"More information, more information is needed before the real work can begin!" he murmured.

In his preoccupation he did not observe the door open and the servant show in a subordinate from Headquarters. Not until the visitor spoke did he become aware of his presence.

"Two cablegrams for you, sir," the subordinate said.

The first cablegram aroused no emotions in the detective.

"Have obtained original drawings. Will sail to-morrow with them," the message from Logan read.

He opened the second envelope and read the contents half a dozen times, as if to stamp them indelibly on his mind.

"Drawings for duplicates taken to manufacturer by young woman. Gave name of Elinor Holcomb."

Britz dismissed the visitor, left the house, and hastened to the office of Dr. Fitch. Taking the important cablegram from his pocket, he handed it to the physician. The doctor's eyes lingered on each word. His face paled, his eyes bulged forward, a violent tremor ran up and down his frame.

"This is awful!" he groaned.

"It's great news for you and Miss Holcomb," the detective smiled.

Fitch eyed him in perplexity. The detective met his inquiring gaze steadily, and, slowly folding the cablegram, he said:

"It proves beyond question she had no part in the crime."

"How?" Fitch demanded eagerly.

"If Miss Holcomb had been clever enough to plan the theft, she'd have known better than to go about Paris ordering the duplicates. Also, if she had taken the diamonds, she'd never have permitted one of them to remain in her room in Mrs. Missioner's house. No, whoever stole those gems deliberately tried to throw suspicion on her."

"But who could have conceived such a dastardly crime?" Fitch blurted, a wave of anger sweeping his frame.

"Whoever it was," Britz returned, "either was actuated by enmity toward the young woman, or knew enough about the Missioner household to realize that suspicion would naturally fall on her, and therefore he decided to use her as a cloak to hide his own identity. However, I now have something to work on, something that will produce quick results. Dr. Fitch, you may tell Miss Holcomb that in my calculations she is entirely eliminated from participation in the crime. You may inform her also that the hunt for the thief has begun."

Before the physician recovered from the pleasant shock of the detective's words, Britz was hurrying down the steps.

CHAPTER X.
Dorothy March Talks

Matinee girls in the Forrest Theatre differ from their sisters of other New York playhouses in that they are far more serious than anybody in the evening audiences. Caramels, marshmallows, chocolate creams, are forbidden by the unwritten law of their cult. The utmost nourishment one of them can allow herself is a salted almond nibbled surreptitiously between decorous little outbursts of kid gloved applause. It is not the sort of gathering in which one would expect to find the busiest sleuth of the headquarters staff, especially with a great diamond mystery on his hands. Yet,

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on one of those warm January afternoons that make the metropolis wonder if it is being metamorphosed into a winter resort, one of the most interested auditors in the select little theatre was Detective-Lieutenant Britz, of Manning's staff.

On the surface, that is to say. In reality, he was not listening to a word of the Thespian culture that trickled over the footlights. But if his ears were unoccupied, not so his eyes. His glance circled the auditorium like a slow-moved swung on a swivel, resting on the stage at long intervals in a perfunctory way. Manning could have told in a moment that his alert lieutenant was not at all interested in the unfolding of the attenuated plot on the boards; that Britz was looking for somebody.

Britz found the somebody he sought when his gaze fell on a slim little figure in the trimmest of dove-colored gowns, sitting in the fifth row off the centre aisle. Instantly his last pretense of attention to the play vanished. Keeping his eyes on the gray curves of the girl in the fifth row, he quitted his post at one side of the house and walked slowly to the main exit, whence he watched her until the curtain fell on the first act. Meanwhile, he scribbled on a card, slipped a liberal tip into the receptive hand of an usher, and indicated the object of his interest. When the curtain fell on the first act, the usher hurried down the aisle, and presented the card to the girl in gray.

"If Miss March," read the young woman, "will spare a few minutes to Britz, of Headquarters, she will confer a favor and serve her friend, Mrs. Missioner."

Dorothy gathered her wrap, glasses, and programme quickly, and followed the usher to the back of the theatre. The youth led her to the famous detective, whom ,though she had heard of him through Doris Missioner, she beheld for the first time. She had expected to see a man whose cleverness was writ large on his exterior, she was disappointed by the almost commonplace appearance of the man who faced her. But she acknowledged his self-introduction with the sweetness inseparable from her mignon features, and, at his request, strolled with him to a corner of the lobby, where they seated themselves on softly tinted bent-wood chairs.

"You wished to see me?" inquired Dorothy. It was a banal question, and a flush tinged her cheeks as she realized its superfluousness could not escape the greatest detective in New York. But Britz seemed not to notice it, and the simple directness of his manner put the girl at her ease.

"I took the liberty, Miss March," he said pleasantly, "because I saw you across the orchestra, and I need a short course in social knowledge." His smile robbed the reply of flippancy.

"Fancy!" said Dorothy. She was as utterly at sea as to the detective's purpose she could think of nothing clever to say save, "I fear you have sought a poor teacher."

"Well, I don't know, now," Britz returned, looking at her with respectful admiration. "You see, you're a society girl, and I know nothing of society, and there's something I want to know—something I ought to know. "If there's anything I can tell you, Mr. Britz, I'll be glad to do so," Dorothy volunteered. "Especially if it will help you to find Mrs. Missioner's diamonds."

"I'm not sure it will," said Britz. "It may, however, save me from making them in the wrong place." He seemed to enjoy the play Miss March."

This shift of subjects was so abrupt that if Dorothy's breath had not already been coming in catches, it might have gasped. It was evident detectives were more original than society men. She wondered absently if the type was worth studying.

"Why, yes," her hesitating answer came. "I believe it's considered one of the best bits of the season. We elevating ,you know, and—well, different."

"Modern, Miss March?"

"It has two periods. The first deals with the life of to-day, the second harks back to the early Victorian period, I understand, an abrupt turn to the present."

She was chatting quite easily when the detective now. Had she been seated in Mulberry Street instead of Murray Hill, she could not have been more natural.

To be continued.

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