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IN SPIE OF
S BIRTH.

Under the influence of the sudden shock occasioned by the telegram, he had forgotten, that he intended to keep his relationship to Miriam and Ned a secret, and had spoken unguardedly.

"That you are his—Richard Heatherton's uncle?" Miriam faltered, with considerable embarrassment.

"Yes, it is true," the old man admitted; "but who has been telling you anything about it?"

"He—Richard Heatherton himself—told me."

"What!—when?" demanded Mr. Lawson, sharply, for he had not suspected that she even knew that the man was living.

"Only yesterday he forced his way into your house—into my presence, and revealed the truth to me," the sensitive woman confessed, with burning cheeks and pained eyes.

"The villain!" muttered her companion, with a frown.

"I have felt like some miserable impostor ever since," Miriam went on, tremulously, "for he accused me of having cunningly enticed myself into your home and confidence in order to benefit myself pecuniarily, and for the purpose of ingratiating Ned into your favor."

"But you did not—you did not know of the relationship?" Mr. Lawson interposed, regarding her keenly.

"I never dreamed of such a thing," she returned, lifting her clear eyes to his face, and speaking with an earnestness not to be doubted. "I have often wondered why you were so strangely kind to me, but I attrib- uted it only to your natural goodness of heart, which had been aroused, perhaps, by the fact that your agent had not used us honorably, and by our dire necessity. I have tried to show you my gratitude, by trying to make your home comfortable and pleasant, without a thought of ever ever winning anything for either Ned or myself, and the generous sum which you have given me, and the privileges we have enjoyed. I hope you believe me," she concluded, appealingly.

"You are so distressed, by the fear that he might think she had been artfully intriguing for his money, that he was deeply touched, and he do believe you," he gently answered; "and let me assure you, Miriam Heatherton, that you have made my life very pleasant during the years that you have spent with me, while I have grown richer and richer in the sum which you have given me, and the privileges we have enjoyed. I hope you believe me," she concluded, appealingly.

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ward his parents, his reckless indifference to his long-continued kindness, and, worse than all else, his villainy toward his gentle wife and noble boy. I have long suspected that you were the girl whom my nephew wronged;—the name you bore and something about Ned's looks and ways suggested the possibility of it. Of course I knew the truth after you received your marriage certificate and letter from Dr. Harris, and confided your history upon her bed, gave expression to her grief and fear, by a fit of passionate weeping.

Monday morning, when the head bookkeeper reentered the bank, just as the clock was striking out the hour of nine, he found the doors fast locked, and no signs of life about the building. A look of surprise leaped into his eyes, for it was the first occasion in his experience that the institution had failed to be opened promptly on time.

Ned, especially, had been in the doors open, and everything in order for the business of the day, ever since the keys had first been entrusted to him.

Presently he was joined by a brother clerk.

"Halloo, Cummings! what's up! can't you get in?" the clerk cried.

"No, you see, the building doesn't seem to have got around this morning," Mr. Cummings responded.

"Hum! he went to Nantasket on Saturday, didn't he?"

"Yes, he said he was going to spend Sunday with his mother, and he had the keys of the safes and vaults to take to Mr. Butler."

"He's explained the man with a star," "I hope nothing has happened to him. It is time he was here if he came on the first boat, isn't it?"

"Yes, for here comes Mr. Butler himself, and here's the old gentleman who has seen Heatherton, and can explain his absence."

"A portly, fine-looking gentleman joined them just at that moment and looked the surprise he experienced, at the news which he had just heard.

"What is the meaning of this?" he inquired, glancing from one to the other.

"It means that young Heatherton has not yet put in an appearance, and we cannot get in!" Mr. Cummings remarked, and now looking exceedingly anxious.

"That's queer! I never knew him to be late before. He was here on Saturday, and apparently well," said Mr. Butler.

"Yes, and he said he was going to Nantasket—haven't you seen him, Mr. Butler?" Cummings inquired, in a startled tone.

"I—No, I have just come up from Nantasket myself; but I saw nothing of him on the boat. I hurried up, however, for I knew Mr. Cranston was to start this morning for his vacation, and he would want to leave the keys to me."

A blank look settled over the faces of the other two gentlemen, at this remark, while a chill of apprehension ran down the back of Mr. Cummings.

"For Ned to be absent at that hour in the morning, with the keys to untold treasure in his possession for a course he must have seen since he has not delivered them to me," Butler had a very bad look, and instantly his mind reverted to the terrible denouement which had attended his return from Albany.

"Could it be that the young man was a scamp after all; that he had committed the robbery, cunningly covering his tracks, and then wormed himself back into the confidence of Mr. Butler?"

"You haven't seen the boy at all?" demanded Mr. Cummings of Mr. Butler.

"I haven't laid my eyes upon him," Butler replied, with a look of uneasiness.

"But Mr. Cranston has given the keys to you by him, as he was unexpectedly obliged to leave for the White Mountains on Saturday afternoon—one of his children was very ill, I believe."

"Good! that's something dreadful must have happened to Heatherton!" cried Mr. Butler, with a white face, staggering back against the wall.

"Yes, or to the bank."

"Are you sure he went to Nantasket?"

"No, but he said he was going on the 2 o'clock boat," Mr. Cummings returned, with a stern expression of his lips. "However, we must not stand here doing nothing; we must manage some way to get inside the bank, and make sure that the money is safe."

"Mr. Johnson, and he has a duplicate key," he concluded, as another employee of the bank at that moment joined them.

The door was explained to him, whereupon the door was speedily unlocked and the four anxious men hurried inside the bank, only to find their worst fears confirmed.

The greatest confusion prevailed everywhere.

Instead of the order and nicety in which everything had been left less than forty-eight hours previous, papers and books were strewn in every direction.

Drawers and desks had been examined and ransacked, and the safe stood open, with its money-drawers empty of their contents.

The door to the vault was swung aside, while every package of bills, every roll of coin, besides all available checks had disappeared.

A most gigantic and wholesale robbery had been committed, for the usual quarterly payments had come in on the previous Saturday, and a large amount of money had been retained in the bank, consequently the robbers had made a rich haul.

But the discovery was a terrible shock to the four men, and, as they stood looking into each other's ghastly faces, speechless and benumbed with terror.

Of course the mind of every one turned with suspicion to missing Ned.

"We must get on the track of that boy at once," Mr. Butler remarked, with white lips and in a shaking voice.

"I will see to it," Mr. Cummings replied, sufficiently to speak.

"Send for an officer or a detective without a moment's delay," supplied Mr. Cummings, with considerable excitement.

An officer was accordingly sent for; messengers were also despatched to summon the other officials of the bank, and a telegram inquiring for

Ned was forwarded to Mr. Lawson's cottage at Nantasket.

A reply from Mrs. Heatherton was received somewhat later, stating that Mr. Lawson was in New York and that Ned had not been at Nantasket at all.

"This message created the utmost consternation among the employees of the bank."

"The young rogue must have committed the robbery on Saturday night and left immediately for parts unknown," Mr. Butler exclaimed.

"He has had a fine start, too. I always thought he had a remarkably good head on his young shoulders, and if my advice had been taken he would have been severely dealt with after that Albany affair."

"Don't be too hard on the boy," said the more kind-hearted Mr. Cummings; "he may have been the victim of others, and is in no way responsible for this dire state of things. Who knows what some professional crack-brain may have done?"

"Nonsense, Cummings," was the irritated retort; "who had been used as a stable. The convent was in a state of chaos. The Catholic Church was entirely stripped of all its draperies and furnishings, the bare wooden altar remaining.

The head gear of the Dundee cool mine was badly damaged, and the dwellings of the manager and workmen all pillaged and destroyed, before leaving Dundee the Boers turned on all the water taps at the public hydrants and in some of the houses, in order that the water might run out of the pipes, and thus cut off the supply outside the town.

The Boer women were, perhaps, the most unscrupulous and most accomplished of the looters; they went through the houses in thorough business-like fashion, carefully selecting what they deemed to be the most valuable articles. Everything made of silver has disappeared, including the Communion plate at the middle English Church in Newcastle all the stores have been looted, some entirely, others partly. Three buildings have been burned to the ground. One of these is the Catholic Church, which is entirely demolished, all the holy images having first been beheaded. The adjoining convent was used as the headquarters of the Russian Ambulance, the members of which were so disgusted with the conduct of the Boers that they telegraphed to St. Petersburg to be recalled, but in vain. Another building wholly demolished is the goods-shed at the railway station. The water-tank has been destroyed by dynamite. An unsuccessful attempt was made to burn down the railway station itself. The billiard tables at the hotels were all smashed.

It was apparent to every one that he had not the remotest idea where Ned was, nor had he any idea of his going to Nantasket on Saturday, as he had promised to do.

He answered all questions put to her frankly and without hesitation; explained the robbery, and was suddenly called away, and that he would return from New York that very evening; while she seemed so unmoved and dispassionate that a feeling of deepest pity thrilled every heart, and there was not a man present who did not shrink from telling her the suspicions which rested upon her.

Mr. Cummings was finally obliged to explain that Ned had had the keys to the vault and safes, besides the one opening the bank, and that a great robbery had been committed.

Poor Miriam sank almost fainting upon a chair at this dreadful intelligence.

"Oh! but Ned is guiltless of any wrong," she gasped, with ashen lips. "He would not touch a penny that did not belong to him; for, ever since he was a little child, he has said that he would honestly earn his money, and should be proud, oh! starting wildly to her feet, as a terrible fear flashed upon her, 'why—why did you give him the keys to all that treasure? Some- 666 body must have been deceived, and great Heaven!—I believe they have murdered my boy for the sake of your gold!'"

This awful fear was too much for the fond mother's strength, and happily for her, unconsciousness temporarily relieved her agony of mind.

The kind-hearted Mr. Cummings had no delay in leaving the scene, when she was again in charge of the matron, to be cared for until Mr. Lawson returned.

He arrived on Tuesday morning, and as a messenger was on the look-out for him at the Providence station, he was at once notified of what had occurred.

He, of course, was greatly unmoved by the revelation, and went directly to Mr. Heatherton's residence.

He found her in a state of forced composure, but so pale and sad that she was nearly moved to tears.

She insisted that Ned had been murdered, and seemed utterly hopeless that he would ever return to them.

Mr. Lawson said they would not return to Nantasket, but go directly to Mount Vernon street, where they would remain until some news were received.

Accordingly, he telegraphed to the servants to shut up the cottage and return immediately to Boston; then procuring a carriage, they drove directly to their city home.

But upon arriving at the house, their consternation and grief were augmented tenfold by the discovery that the dwelling had also been entered and robbed.

All the silver of any value had been taken away, besides many costly articles, and the safe in the library had been blown open and rifled of everything of value it contained.

(To be Continued.)

Another Umbrella Story

Here is a queer true story about some umbrellas. A lady who keeps a summer boarding house at the seashore near Boston went down the other day to look the house over and find out what must be renewed. She found numerous umbrellas left by former boarders, and, tying them together, she took the bundle to Boston to have them repaired.

She stopped in at a friend's house, and laid the bundle on her feet at the counter. When she had made her purchases she forgot her umbrellas, and absent-mindedly picked up an umbrella lying on the floor, and went out, not thinking at all, and started off.

Then the owner of the umbrella, a woman standing next her, seized her and said very sharply, "You have taken my umbrella!" Of course she apologized, feeling very much cut up about it, and went on, forgetting in her fluster her own bundle of umbrellas. On the car Cambridge she realized the mistake, and very closely. Presently this lady leaned forward and said to her with elegant emphasis: "You seem to have been more fortunate than the lady whose umbrella had taken the day before—Boston Transcript.

TACTICS OF THE BOERS.
How They Looted and Destroyed Property in Natal.

DISGUSTING FILTHY HABITS.

Writing from Newcastle, Natal, Mr. Dunn, of the Central News, says: "When I left Dundee, after the British retreat, last October, Dundee was a clean, flourishing town. Today every store, with one exception, is completely gutted; every house left unoccupied, and the streets and holes had been cut in the flooring of the rooms, and these were used as latrines. In one house lay the putrifying remains of half an unskinned cat, and the floors had been used as stables. The convent was in a state of chaos. The Catholic Church was entirely stripped of all its draperies and furnishings, the bare wooden altar remaining.

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ADMIRAL SEYMOUR