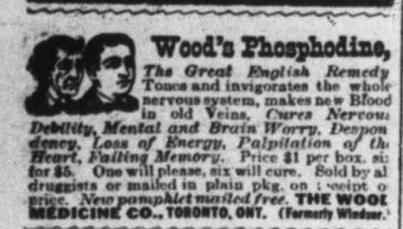
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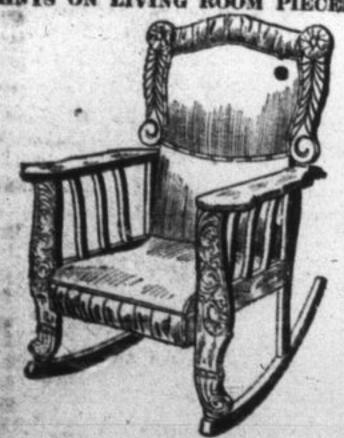
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BY MARCIN BARBER

British & Colonial Press, Limited, Toronto.

"Yes be draws the funniest, dearst little dogs. "And his monkeys, Miss March

Don't forget his monkeys." "Aren't they simply-simply ravish ng?" the girl returned. "And have you seen his newest satire on the Newport set-a lot of apes and ba boons and chimpanzees in evening dress sitting at the table with several men and women? 'A Family Re

union," he calls it." "Delightful!" said Britz with enthuslasm equaling hers. "I perceive we enjoy a good many things in common. Miss March." She smiled. It was not every

matinée girl who could interest a man who solved world-famous mysteries. "Isn't it strange!" she said. Then the training of years recalled her to a sense of what she was doing. fear we've been very unconventional Mr. Britz," she said as primly as her prettiness permitted. "But I've enjoyed our little chat ver much."

"Which means I must be going said Britz promptly, "if I'm not to spoil your enjoyment of the m Victorian scene. The orchestra has finished speaking its little piece. "Yes, there goes the curtain. agreed Dorothy, rising hastily,

glad to have met you. Mr. Britz. hope I've been of some assistance about dear Mrs. Missioner's jewels Good-afternoon. "Good-afternoon, Miss March,

very good, afternoon." And he was stepping quickly toward the don when her sweet voice arrested him. "But, Mr. Britz," she cried, "there was something you wished to ask m something that was to help you

find the diamonds?" "Some other time, Miss March thank you," said Britz, smiling. won't detain you now. Perhaps we'l meet at another matinee soon, with a longer intermission between the acis Delighted to have made your acquain tance, Miss March. I know you're in a hurry to get back to your seat. F. rest audiences don't like to be turbed, yo uknow. Good afternoon, Miss March, and-thank you

"Good afternoon, then, Mr. Britz, and she flitted down the aisle. "Yes, thank you so much, Miss March!" murmured Britz as he left the theatre and merged himself with

the afternoon tide in Broadway. He had cause to thank her, he believed. For, in her girlish talk, she nad given him the first Missioner clew of the week-or, rather, she had extended for him a thread in the mystery that had occupied much of his thoughts from the moment when he received Logan's cable saving paste jewels were made from sketches For days he had sought to learn who among Mrs. Missioner's intimates was artist enough to make such delicate draughts of the diamonds as would be required by an artificer for the manufacture of imitations. With that object, he had ascertained Dorothy's intention to go to the matinee in the Forrest and had gone to the theatre to meet her under conditions not likely to interfere with such gentle quesgirl had brought forth the fact that Curtis Griswold could sketch-that the clubman was sufficiently

of his pencil to have his skill pre generally known among his acquatances. Lorimer and Daubigny, the other society artists she had men tioned, were not, he knew, in Mrs Missioner's circle. It was fortunate for Lieutenant

Britz, as well as for Elinor Holcomb and Dr. Fitch, and everybody whose hopes hinged on the detective's suc cess in solving the great Missioner diamond mystery, that long custom made him thread the traffic of the city's throbbing artery automatically,

for so deeply did the sleuth ponder the possibilities of his newest informa tion that he had several close escapss from taxicabs, private automobiles and trolley cars as he crossed Broadway and bent his steps toward First Avenue. The case had cleared a little but his course was not much plained than it had been when he dropped into the theatre in quest of further knowledge.

"It won't do to call Miss March as : witness," he mused, walking north in the carriage-crowded avenue, with that briskness characteristic of him when his brain was most active. "She can't absolutely prove anything. was necessary to obtain tangible ev dence of Griswold's ability as draughtsman. How to do so without alarming the clubman was the pre-

sent problem. Britz was by no means prepared to suspect Griswold of the robbery. He realized thoroughly that Derothy's in formation was all he had to indicate Griswold any more than Sands, or two or three others. He did not even know whether Miss Holcomb could draw, and it was no part of his purpose to distress the imprisoned girl with questions betraying the smallest ing. The afternoon tea in Sherry's, with them. "Perhaps if you make an No: Britz, always honest with himself, could not say he suspected Gris- tent admirers, this cosy home-coming The pad was in his hand. Deftly, he wold. His method was the opposite in the dusk of a winter day, however tore off the top sheet and inclosed it of Donnelly's and Carson's. Instead unreasonable the weather, had made in his fingers. As the widow started of suspecting everybody, as they in- her meditative. Even as she spoke to to speak, and entirely unobserved by variably did in cases at all myster! the detective and sank dreamily into Griswold or Sands, the detective slipous, he would not attach suspicion to a conversation chair beside the fire, ped that agile hand into his pocket. anyone without satisfactory proof. her eyes strayed from Sands to Gris- When the hand came out, That was the secret of his success. | weld. from Griswold to Sands, with empty. He was more than a detective; he was the vague look of a woman trying to a prosecutor, judge, jury, and counsel decide a momentous question. Gris. more emphasis than would be expecto the defense. It accounted for the wold, ever ready to seize the small- ted of her large good-nature, "I can fact that he rarely made a mistaken est advantage promptly occupied the recall nothing. I am sure there is arrest, and that when he caused man other end of the chair. Facing the nothing to recall. You must look is much more unusual to see a man

"Griswold, Sands, Ali, Blodgett----" The names presented themselves to Britz eyed Sands sharply before rethe sleuth's mind in that order as he plying. He gripped his chin with briskly, "there is nothing more to say. hastened along with no particular thumb and finger, and seemed study. With your permission, I will send a

ing he ganced at the rich, the debon shared the serpentine chair with the air, the gay sauntering along the side | wealthy widow. walks or rolling in automobiles and "I want a plan of the room," said The safety of their wealth, sometimes too. One of my men was to have of their very lives, depended on the made draughts for me, but I had to on the police force of New York. So he smiled slowly at his poor workfar as the rank and file of the De manship, "I'm doing the best I can." partment were concerned, those carewas because Britz and his compeers you'll never make an artist. I hope," patiently, so devotedly, so ceaselessty, that fashion and finance, coquetry and commerce, could bask in the sunshine

of metropolitan prosperity A dark-blue limousine standing at the corner of Forty-fourth Stree a walting cab, trained his Sherry's fashionable restauran front of which the costly autome stood. Dimiy, through the filcurtains, he saw the flaures of lingering over afternoon tea, with few early diners. He could not tinguish their faces, but something window held his glance. waiter, moving silently about saw clearly the blonds beauty of Mrs. Missioner, and the clear-cut features

as a redoubt, looked at him inqu ingly, but the detective fished out his pocket a fai cigar with a sea and-gold band, and in a moment and the cabby were chatting amiabl The Headquarters man had not to wait. Before the cabman had far into discussion of the current tical crisis, the door of the restauran across the street was swung open b boy in many buttons, and Mrs. Mil sioner appeared on the threshold She was followed closely by Griswold and, after a moment's pause to giad den the heart of the much-buttoned youth, by a man the watching detec tive was somewhat surprised to see

"Home," said Mrs. Missioner to be chauffeur. Britz could not hear word, but he read it from her lips, He saw the widow step into limousine, saw Sands and Griswold follow, saw the chauffeur throw clutch, saw the big car glide swiftly south to wheel for a northward trip along the avenue. Before the au mobile reached a turning point, the detective sprang into the cab, whispered an address to the driver, and added in a low tone

"Double your fare for speed." The cabman lashed his horse, and knowing his craft, threaded his way through the traffic so quickly that a short time he was several blocks ahead of the limousine. All the way the avenue the race continued Britz well in the lead. At the Fifty. ninth Street entrance, the automobile swung into the park, but the cabman urged his horse straight up Avenue, and so great was the gain made by the short cut that a few blocks further north he dropped his fare in front of a mansion of imposing ugliness, touched his hat in acknowledgment of a generous fee, and was bowling eastward, halfway to Madison Avenue, when the Missioner car reappeared from the Park's Seventy-second Street gate.

"You at least can stop for a minute of gossip," said Mrs. Missioner over her shoulder as she preceded Sands and Griswold into her library. "Finance and club affairs can wait a little

off her furs, and stood gazing at the middle of the room. There, absorbed in his task, at ease in a big chair before the crackling grate, sat Detective-Lieutenant Britz. Pad in one hand, pencil in the other, he was sketching

could flash.

"Hush!" she whispered. She and his pencil moved slowly, awkwardly then?" he persited. over the paper. From his frequent glances at the end of the room that held the big safe, it was evident he I mean," said the sleuth. was making a drawing of it. The "Neither before nor after, Mr aborious dragging of his pencil point Britz," replied Mrs. Missioner, rising of the three who watched him. But deal of attnetion, but I never heard of the sleuth stuck to the task doggedly a betrothal." and at last he bore so heavily on a Lieutenant Britz, still standing becorner of his sketch that the point of fore the hearth, moved to let Mrs.

men behind her.

madam, because I had no time to edge, he went on. spare," said the sleuth.

or women to be placed in the prison- beautiful widow, he ignored both elsewhere if you seek to forge links er's dock, a conviction almost always Britz and Sands, and he threw into in a chain of evidence against Miss the glances he showered upon the Holcomb. I have told you all I know woman all the caress at his command. -all I could possibly know."

carriages up and down the asphalt, Britz at length, "A sketch of the safe, vigilance, courage, and efficiency of send him out of town at short notice himself and of the few men like him on another end of the case. So," and

"May I see what you have drawn?" free sons and daughters of opportun- asked Mrs. Missioner pleasantly. ity might be at the mercy of the ablest "Oh, Mr. Britz," she laughed, holding birds of prey in the human flock. It the paper at arm's length, "I'm afraid worked and watched and waited to she added hastily, "you have no pro the Hindoo servant watched more fessional pride on that point?"

"None whatever," returned the detective. He liked a woman with a he tripped down the steps of the Missense of humor, and there was something about Mrs. Missioner that appealed to him anyway. "I told you I was merely a substitute." Sands, towering above the widow on

the hearthrug, shot a single, indifferent look at the drawing. Griswold's interest in it was echoed by him in so far that he took the dia gram from her and examined it for a few seconds. Then, with a short. harsh laugh, he half turned to Britz. alternately bending and straightening the paper in his fingers.

"Ever hear of such a thing as perspective, detective?" he asked condescendinggly. Brits overlooked the air of superiority. He shook his head thoughtfully. There was inquiry in his eyes as he waited for Griswold's next words. "You'd starve to death in a studio," the clubman continued scornfully.

A crisp little laugh from Britz was the only reply. He crossed the floor and made a microscopic examination of the safe. Then he circled the room tapping the walls again, moving pieces of furniture to look behind them. turning up corners of the rug, and gaz ing reflectively at the ceiling. the Indian servant, appeared noiselessly at the door, started slightly at sight of the detective, and vanished as silently. Brits pretended not to the Hindoo, but, in his movements about the room, he paused at the threshold, and glanced quickly down the passage. There was no one All that time, Curtis Griswold, hav

ing ripped off the sheet on which Britz had drawn the rude diagram was sketching idly as he talked in an undertone to the widow. His the sketches by means of which the words held her attention. She took no note of the detective's wandering the heavy silence of Sands, the sound less appearance and disappearance of the Hindoo. Ripples of laughter, revealed that she, at least, was amused by what Griswold was saying. It was when Britz, having finished his detailed examination of the room, stopped close beside him that they lion, when by wedding her he might looked up.

"I see you are an artist, Mr. Gris wold," remarked the sleuth, his eyes on the paper under the clubman's

Griswold was genuinely surprised For the first time, he seemed to be come aware of the shape his idle tracing on the pad had taken. In the course of his brief chat with Mrs Missioner, he had sketched clearly accurately, artistically, not only the room, but the great safe at its farther end-sketched them far better those few minutes than Britz could have done in as many hours. drawing, almost automatic, showed the subconscious skill of-to say the

least-an excellent amateur "Why, that's so," he said, holding up the drawing indifferently. His prowess with the pencil was an old story to the widow and his rival Griswold tossed the pad and penci on the table; and resumed his tall with Mrs. Missioner, turning the cold est of cold shoulders toward the

But Britz was not to be shouldered

aside so eastly. He addressed him She stopped in the act of throwing self to the widow, winning her instant attention with his first query: "Has Miss Holcomb ever told you

much about her last year in Smith?" he asked. Mrs. Missioner's evebrows arched. "Nothing important enough to remember, Mr. Britz," she said, staring Mrs. Missioner extended a hand be incredulously. The detective had al hind her to silence her companions ready assured her warmly of his be She turned her head with a smile lief in Elinor's innocence. Could it almost as mischievous as Dorothy be he was not going to clear the girl

"You know nothing of her engagethe others watched Britz quietly as ment to a Harvard undergraduate,

> The widow shook her head. "Before her father lost his fortune,

proved he was not accustomed to such impatiently. "Miss Holcomb, being a work at least, so it seemed to one beauty, naturally received a great

Missioner pass. The widow pushed He laid down the pad, took out a aside the heavy hangings of a winpocket-knife, and began to sharpen dow and peered into the twilight the pencil. When the point was fash backed by the trees in the park. loned to his liking, he looked up. Britz, having moved, took another Then and then only did he seem to see step. Those gray eyes of his shifted the widow and her friends. He arose so rapidly they were upon the three instantly and bowed to Mrs. Missioner, others almost simultaneously. So following that with a short nod to the gradually, so slowly did he approach the table that no one noticed his hand "I told your man to let me come in, upon it. Resting that hand upon the

"I am sorry you are not more min-Mrs. Missioner inclined her head in utely informed concerning Miss Holcomb's university days." Slowly his "You wish to see me?" she inquired. fingers extended until the tips rested "There is something more you wish on the tiny pad. "In a case like this, the smallest knowledge may be of She was not in the mood for discus- value." Slowly, ever so slowly, the sion of the detective's quest this even- fingers contracted, drawing the pad the short ride home, including the turn | effort, you can recall something about in the park, with her two most persist the prisoner's past, Mrs. Missioner?"

"No." said the rich woman with

panorama of fashion in Fifth Avenue. | most strongly on Sands, in reality was gems of mine," he resume

It was with an almost fatherly feer concentrated on the clubman who dry smile, "may as well meet the fate they deserve." With a quick movement, he threw all the sheets of paper on the table and the pad as weil into the heart of the fire.

"Guess I'll say 'Good-afternoon,' " and with a bow to Mrs. Missioner and the coolest of nods to the men, he left the room, the widow's detached "Good-afternon, Mr. Britz" floating after him.

Was he mistaken, Britz asked himself as he walked quickly along the passage, or did he see & pair of eyes beneath a towering turbait peer at him from the corner of a gross-corriclosely as, treating Blodgett's loftiness with exasperating indifference. stoner mansion, and hurried along path in the dark. Once in the shelter of the shadows, the detective quickened his pace, heading south. His hands clasped behind him, and his thoughts kept time with his steps as he swung along under the scraping January boughs. On the whole, he was very well satisfed with his

day's work. Not that he had any idea of calling a halt for the night. He illowed himself plenty of sleep, but ne wasted little time on recreation. Work was his relaxation. He had an nfallible specific against fatigue. When his duties became wearying, he rowded on more steam or switched to another phase of the case. A hange of points was as restful to Britz as a change of air.

Grudging as he was to himself in he matter of praise, he had to admit, however, he had spent his afternoon e had learned that Griswold was a self he had tangible proof of that fact n the shape of the tiny sheet of paper from the scratch pad. He took the paper out of his pocket and sused in the light zone of a roadside lamp. Yes, it was beyond ques ion that the hand which in idleness had traced that plan of the Missioner library was able, with care, to make a precise drawing of the Missioner diamonds even of the great Maharanee. On that count, Griswold was convicted by his own hand.

But Britz, as he resumed his swing ng stride, did not delude himself with the idea he had a clear case against the clubman. All he had was evidence that Griswold could have made Missioner jewels were duplicated without the necklace itself as a model. He was not even prepared to suspect the widow's admirer. He gave full weight to the lack of a motive as the | 02 case then stood, to the impossibility !! that a man who sought to marry Mrs. Missioner would risk his chances by stealing gems worth even half a milgain practical control of all her millions. Moreover, it was by no means certain that Griswold had found opportunity to substitute the paste necklace for the original. He was satisfied with his mental picture of the moment when Griswold fastened the necklace about the widow's neck. It seemed hardly possible that the ciubman, with Sands and Miss Holcomo in the room, could achieve the substitution undetected.

But the truth remained that Griswold's skill with a pencil sufficed for the sketches, and it was a clew Britz recognized as important. It was part of his policy to neglect nothing that revelation. All the time his upper mind was weighing and sifting the case as a whofe, his under conscious

ness was busy with the facts pertaining specifically to Griswold's possible part in the mystery. It was an exceptional dual process, but Britz had that kind of a mind. It enabled him to proceed smoothly and steadily with the main facts of a case and, simulaneously, to weed out the unimpor ant points of his information.

Of Elinor's innocence. Lieutenant Britz still had no tipiest doubt. The more insistently new disclosures tended to connect her with the disappearance of the Maharance diamond, and the other stones of Mrs. Missioner's necklace, the more resolutely he clung to his deduction that her course from the first to last had been that of one guiltless of crime. He maintained the judicial attitude of his mind toward the successive discoveries he made, but he did not see how the sternest jurist could listen with patience to the strongest of briefs against such an open nature as Elinor Holcomb's. Donnelly's finding the genuine diamond in her room meant nothing, save that the real thief had left the jewel there by accident or design. To his mind, the exact whereabouts of the stone argued a deliberate attempt had been | right, made to destroy the girl. It remained to be ascertained whether that attempt was born of enmity, or was due simply to a desire to throw off suspicion. He realized perfectly the possibility that it sprang from a combination of the two motives.

Who, then, was most likely to have placed the diamond in the secretary's room? Who could have most to gain by causing her arrest and con detion? Was it the purpose of the riminal to have the girl suspected only long enough for him to cover his rail permanently, or did he desire that she be found guilty and condemned to penal servitude? If the latter dan was formed, would the thief con ent himself with the almost over powering circumstantial evidence a ready accumulated against Elinor of would be venture to throw further aspicion upon her? And if the crimnal contemplated pursuing the pris oner beyond the threshold of the Tombs, would be operate through the stupidity of Donnelly and Carson, or would he hend his energies on the District Attorney? Britz considered briefly on the chance that the thief would be bold enough to appear as a witness for the prosecution, then I dismissed it as too improbable to af fect the present development of the

(To be continued)

In spite of the law of average it ! shot than to see two men half shot. It seems that no matter how high he climbs, a man is never above sug-

It's the man's own push that generally gets him a pull. place as an objective—merely walking ting the big millionaire. As a matter of fact, he was watching Griswold. His gaze, even as it appeared focused nesitated. "I suppose these little art but it's so hard to do two things at little art but it's so hard to do two things are little art but it's so hard to do two things are little art but it's so hard to do two things are little art but it's so hard to do two things are little art but it's so hard to do two things are little art but it's so hard to do two things are little art but it's so hard to do two things are little art but it's so hard to do two things are little art but it's so hard to do two ECONOMICAL---Heats the house well without burning all the coal you can buy.

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