CAUGHT AT LAST.

At this time of year I am sometimes reminded of an odd adventure which began one mad March night during a journey from north to south, beginning at the town of Preston, Lancashire.

Having adjusted my wraps and made myself comfortable in the corner of the third-class carriage which my porter had got for me, I took stock of the three other passengers who occupied the other end of the compartment.

A big, lusty, fresh-looking fellow in stout tweeds and wearing a Scotch cap, was seated with his face toward the engine; a young lady and a young gentleman faced him, the young gentleman having the corner, the lady resting her head on his shoulder.

From an opening in the folds of his overcoat I caught the gleam of a pair of handcuffs. He was a captive.

The lady, however, smiled tearfully, and in soft, coaxing tones, said:

"Mr. Sutcliffe, couldn't you loosen the irons? They're chafing his wrists so."

"Didn't he say he'd shoot me?" answered the big man, who I now understood was a policeman in plain clothes taking a prisoner south.

Then the lady burst into tears, and with a laugh Sutcliffe met her half way, unlocked the horrid bracelets, and let loose one of Dandy's wrists.

"There, mon," said he, "you can put your arm round 'er. But mean of yer little games wi' me. I've carried prisoners all o'er England, Scotland and Ireland, and never 'ad a mon yet."

Then the lady reached a splitting headache and the lamp was drawn over the lamp by general consent, and I curled up in my corner.

We sped on awhile. Sutcliffe was asleep—sound—snoring heavily. Then I dropped off, and remembered nothing clearly till we pulled up with a jerk. I woke. Sutcliffe woke.

The lamp was burning low, but it gave light enough to show us a carriage which contained only our two selves.

"My groom!" roared Sutcliffe. "My bird has flown. Did we stop betwixt Crewe and here?"

I couldn't say.

He said no more. Swiftly he grabbed at his cap, his wraps and a small bag, slipped on his boots and opened the carriage door.

One evening, some three years later, my wife being down at the seaside, and I finding the time heavy on my hands, dropped into the pit of a famous playhouse.

Before the curtain had been up many minutes my attention was drawn to a big man who had a seat in the front row of the pit.

I looked and looked—and then I recognized my friend Sutcliffe, the policeman of my midnight journey.

After the first act he pushed his way out, and I touched him on the shoulder.

"You don't remember me."

He scrutinized me for a moment, and then nearly shook my hand off.

"Why—for sure I do—eh! It cost me my place I' t' foorce, did that job. Ah've never clapped eyes on thai pair since."

Then we got to our places and I saw by his gestures and his looks at me that he was telling his buxom wife the story of that mad March night.

Suddenly I saw his face turn rigid, and he rose up in his seat, as if he was about to leap into the stalls. His wife pulled him back and talked eagerly to him.

Down came the curtain, out came Sutcliffe, grabbed my shoulder in his hands, and said out loud:

"I'm dommed if that theer Dandy beant a-sittin' reet i' front o' me."

I followed his eyes, and at once recognized that cynical curl of the lip, that rather effeminate prisoner who had escaped from custody between Crewe and Stafford.

He was dressed in the height of fashion. He was standing with his face toward the circle, peering at fashion through a pair of glasses.

"Hallo!" said Sutcliffe, "why he's getten a new missus."

"Yes," hissed a heavily veiled woman behind us. "Now, arrest him, Mr. Sutcliffe. You're not going to let him go, are you?"

We both started. It was the lady who had escaped with Dandy.

"Nay, missus, I'm not i' t' force now. Yo mon catch him yerself—yo let him go."

She was trembling like a leaf in the wind, and casting a venomous look at us swiftly left the theater.

We both of us watched the unsuspecting Dandy during the last act, with scarce a look at the stage or an ear for the music. But none enjoyed it more than the cynical Dandy and his charming lady.

A few minutes before the finale we saw him place a splendid cloak upon her fair shoulders and pass politely along the row to the door.

Our party followed their example. We raced round to the front door, and were just in time to see the escaped prisoner and his new missus get into an elegant one-horse brougham and drive off.

But behind them was a hansom, in which sat a thickly veiled lady and two men. And they drove off.

"Copped as sure as eggs is eggs," chuckled Sutcliffe. "Scotland Yard is after Dandy."

Chinese Fans.

Over eleven million fans are exported in one year from Canton, China.

We've All Seen Them.

There ought to be a school for teaching men and women how to carry an umbrella. Most people seem to think that umbrellas were made to trip up pedestrians or to swipe off their eyeglasses and put out their eyes.