

# JENNIE BAXTER: JOURNALIST.

BY ROBERT BARR.

## I.—THE DAILY BUGLE MISSES A HIT.

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"Well," said Miss Baxter, for the first time in some confusion, "I can assure you that I did not come here with the intention of listening to anything. I came into the next room by myself for the purpose of getting to see you as soon as possible. While not exactly a member of the staff of The Evening



"That is quite right," he said, rising.

Graphite, it nevertheless takes about all the work I am able to do, and so I consider myself bound to keep my eyes and ears open on its behalf wherever I am."

"Oh, I don't want to censure you at all," said Hardwick. "I merely wish to be certain how the thing was done. As I said, I am willing to take the blame entirely on my own shoulders. I don't think I should have made use of information obtained in that way myself. Still, I am not venturing to find fault with you for doing so."

"To find fault with me?" cried Miss Baxter somewhat warmly. "That would be the pot calling the kettle black indeed. Why, what better were you? You were bringing a poor man to furnish you with statistics which he was very reluctant to let you have. Yet you overcame his scruples with money, quite willing that he should risk his livelihood so long as you got the news. If you ask me, I don't see very much difference in our positions."

"Oh, quite so, quite so," answered Hardwick soothingly. "I have already disclaimed the critical attitude. The point I wish to be sure of is this—your overheard conversation between Alder and myself?"

"Yes, I did."

"Would you be able to repeat it?"

"I don't know that I could repeat it word for word, but I could certainly give the gist of it."

"Would you have any objection to telling a gentleman whom I shall call in a moment, as nearly as possible, what Alder said and what I said? I may add that the gentleman I speak of is Mr. Hempstead, and he is practically the proprietor of this paper. There has arisen between Mr. Alder and myself a slight divergence of memory, if I may call it so, and it seems that you are the only person who can settle the dispute."

"I am perfectly willing to tell what I heard to anybody."

"Thank you."

Mr. Hardwick pressed an electric button, and his secretary came in from another room.

"Would you ask Mr. Hempstead to step this way, if he is in his room?"

In a few minutes Mr. Hempstead entered, bowed somewhat stiffly toward the lady, but froze up instantly when he heard that she was the person who had given the board of public construction scandal to The Evening Graphite.

"I have just this moment learned, Mr. Hempstead, that Miss Baxter was in the adjoining room when Alder and I were talking over this matter. She heard the conversation. I have not asked her to repeat it, but sent for you at once, and she says she is willing to answer any questions you may ask."

"In that case, Mr. Hardwick, would it not be well to have Henry Alder here?"

"Certainly, if he is on the premises. Then, turning to his secretary, he said: 'Would you find out if Mr. Alder is in his room? Tell him Mr. Hempstead wishes to see him here.'"

When Henry Alder came in and the secretary had disappeared, Miss Baxter saw at once that she was in an unfavorable situation, for it was quite evident the three men were scarcely on speaking terms with each other. Nothing causes such a state of tension in a newspaper office as the missing of a piece of news that is important.

"Perhaps it would be better," suggested Hardwick, "if Miss Baxter would repeat the conversation as she heard it."

"I don't see the use of that," said Mr. Hempstead. "There is only one point at issue. Did Mr. Alder warn Mr. Hardwick that by delay he would lose the publication of this report?"

"Hardly that," answered the girl. "As I remember it, he said, 'Isn't there a danger that some other paper may get this?' Mr. Hardwick replied, 'I don't think so; not for three days, at least,' and then Mr. Alder said, 'Very good,' or 'Very well,' or something like that."

"That quite tallies with my own remembrance," said Hardwick. "I admit I am to blame, but I decidedly say that I was not definitely warned by Mr. Alder that the matter would be lost to us."

"I told you it would be lost if you delayed," said Alder. "And it has been

lost. I have been on the track of this for two weeks, and it is very galling to have missed it at the last moment through no fault of my own."

"Still," said Mr. Hempstead coldly, "your version of the conversation does not quite tally with what Miss Baxter says."

"Oh, have it as you wish!" said Alder truculently. "It doesn't matter in the least to me. I have taken service on The Daily Trumpet, and you may consider my place on The Bugle vacant!" saying which he put his hat on his head and left the room.

Mr. Hempstead seemed distressed by the discussion, but for the first time Mr. Hardwick smiled grimly.

"I always insist on accuracy," he said, "and lack of it is one of Alder's failings."

"Nevertheless, Mr. Hardwick, you have lost one of your best men. How are you going to replace him?" inquired the proprietor anxiously.

"There is little difficulty in replacing even the best man on any staff in London," replied Hardwick, with a glance at Miss Baxter. "As this young lady



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seems to keep her wits about her when the welfare of her paper is concerned, I shall, if you have no objection, fill Henry Alder's place with Miss Baxter."

Mr. Hempstead arched his eyebrows at a trifle. "I thought you didn't believe in women journalists, Mr. Hardwick," he murmured at last.

"I didn't up till yesterday, but since then I have had reason to change my mind."

"Do you think you can fill the position, Miss Baxter?" asked the proprietor doubtfully.

"Oh, I am sure of it!" answered the girl.

Mr. Hardwick smiled grimly. The proprietor turned to him and said, "I don't quite see, Mr. Hardwick, what a lady can do on this paper outside of the regular departments."

"I hardly think there will be any trouble about that, Mr. Hempstead. For example, who would be more fitted to attempt the solution of that knotty question about the Princess von Steinhelmer's diamonds?"

"By Jove!" cried Hempstead, his eyes glittering with excitement. "That is an inspiration. I imagine that if any one can unravel that mystery it is Miss Baxter."

## II.—The Diamonds of the Princess.

(Copyright, 1900, by Robert Barr.)

"What about the diamonds of the princess?" asked Miss Baxter, her curiosity piqued by the remark of the editor.

"That is rather a long story," replied Mr. Hardwick, "and before I begin it I would like to ask you one or two questions. Can you manipulate a typewriter?"

"That depends on what make it is. The ordinary typewriter I understand very thoroughly."

"Good! Have you any knowledge of shorthand?"

"A workable knowledge. I can write about 100 words a minute."

"Admirable, admirable! Your coming to this office was an inspiration. You are just the person I have been looking for."

"You didn't seem to think so yesterday, Mr. Hardwick," said the girl, with a sly glance at him.

"Well, many things have happened since yesterday. We are now dealing with today and with Princess von Steinhelmer."

"She is a German princess, of course?"

"A German princess, but an American woman. She was a Miss Briggs of Chicago, a daughter of Briggs, the railway millionaire, worth somewhere between twenty and twenty-five millions—dollars, of course. A year or two ago she married Prince Konrad von Steinhelmer. You may remember having read about it in the papers."

"Oh, yes, the usual international match—the girl after the title, he after the money; so, but, be that as it may, she was the only daughter of old Briggs and had spent a good deal of her time in Europe, and during her stay in Europe she had accumulated a vast stock of diamonds, some of them very notable stones. I don't know what the whole

collection is worth; some say \$1,000,000, while others say double that amount. However that may be, Miss Briggs became the Princess von Steinhelmer and brought to Austria with her \$1,000,000 in gold and diamonds, which her father gave her as her dowry; but, of course, being an only child, she will come in for the rest of the money when the old man dies."

"Is he likely to die soon? I don't suppose the prince gave himself away for a mere million?"

"Oh, you forget the diamonds! As to the likelihood of old Briggs' death, it didn't strike me as imminent when I had a conversation with him yesterday."

"Yesterday? Is he here in London, then?"

"Yes; he has come over to disentangle the mystery about the diamonds."

"And what is the mystery? You take a dreadful long time to tell a story, Mr. Hardwick."

"The story is important, and it must be told in detail; otherwise you may go on a long journey for nothing. Are you taking down what I say in shorthand? That is right, and if you are wise you will not transcribe your notes so that any one could read them; they are safer in that form. The von Steinhelmer family have two residences, a house in Vienna and an ancient castle in the Tyrol, situated on the heights above Meran, a most picturesque place, I understand, but very shortly you will know more about it than I do, because The Bugle expects you to go there as its special correspondent. Here the diamond robbery took place something like two months ago, and the affair is still as great a mystery as ever. The princess was to open the season at Meran, which is a fashionable resort, by giving a fancy dress ball in Schloss Steinhelmer, to which all the Austrian and foreign notables were invited."

"It was just before the ball commenced that the diamonds were first missed. In fact, the princess was about to put them on—she represented some gorgeously decorated character from the 'Arabian Nights'—when the discovery was made that the diamonds were gone. She was naturally very much upset over her loss and sent at once for the prince, her husband, insisting that the police should be notified immediately and detectives called in, as was perfectly natural. Now, here comes a strange feature of the affair, and this is that the prince positively forbade any publicity and refused his sanction when she demanded that the police should be informed, and yet the prince knew as well as anybody the very considerable value of the stones."

"What reason did he give for his refusal?" asked Miss Baxter, looking up from her notes.

"I am not quite certain about that, but I think he said it was *infra dig.* for the Steinhelmers to call in the police. Anyhow, it was an excuse which did not satisfy the princess, but as guests were arriving and it was desirable there should be no commotion to mar the occasion the princess temporarily yielded to the wish of her husband, and nothing was said about the robbery. The great ball was the talk of Meran for several days, and no one suspected the private trouble that was going on underneath the public event. During these several days the princess insisted that the aid of the police should be invoked, and the prince was equally strenuous that nothing should be said about the matter. Then, quite unexpectedly, the prince veered completely round and said he would engage the best detectives in Europe. Strange to say, when he announced this decision to his wife she had veered round also and opposed the calling in of the detectives as strenuously as he had done heretofore."

"What reason did she give for her change of front?" asked Miss Baxter.

"She said, 'I believe, that it was now too late; the thieves, whoever they were, had had time to make away with their plunder, and there would merely be a fuss and worry for nothing.'"

"Do you know, I am inclined to agree with her," said the girl.

"Are you? Then tell me what you think of the case as far as you have got."

"What do you think?"

"I shan't tell you at this stage, because I know of further particulars which I will give you later on. I merely want your opinion now, so that I may see whether what I have to tell you afterward modifies it in any way."

"Well, to me the case looks decidedly dark against the prince."

"That is what Mr. Briggs thinks. He imagines his highness has the jewels."

"Where did you get all these particulars?"

"From Mr. Briggs, who, of course, got them by letter from his daughter."

"Then we have, as it were, a one-sided statement."

"Oh, quite so, but still you must remember the princess does not in the least suspect her husband of the theft."

"Well, please go on. What are the further particulars?"

"The further particulars are that the prince made some quiet investigations among the servants, and he found that there was a man who, although he was a friend of his own, was much more the friend of the princess, and this man had, on the day the ball was given, the entire freedom of the castle. He is a young officer and nobleman, Lieutenant von Schauberg, and the prince knew that this young man was being hard pressed for some debts of honor which he did not appear to be in a position to liquidate. The young man went unexpectedly to Vienna the day after the ball and on his return settled his obligations. The princess, from one of her women, got word of her husband's suspicion. She went to the prince at once and told him she had come to his own opinion with regard to the lost diamonds. She would, under no circumstances, have detectives about the place. Then he told her that he had changed his mind and resolved to engage detectives. So here they were at a deadlock

again. She wrote to her father with great indignation about the prince's unjust suspicions, saying von Schauberg was a gentleman in every sense of the word. I gather that relations between herself and her husband are somewhat strained, so I imagine there is much more in this matter than the lost diamonds."

"You think, then, that she is shielding the lieutenant?"

"Candidly, I do."

"And you think he stole the diamonds?"

"Yes, I do."

"I don't agree with you. I think still it was the prince, and I think, besides this, that he dexterously managed to throw suspicion on the lieutenant. Have they called in the detectives yet?"

"No; they are still at a deadlock."

"Well, what am I expected to do?"

"Mr. Briggs cabled to his daughter—he never writes a letter—that he would come over and straighten out the tangle in 15 minutes. He is certain the prince stole the diamonds, but he did not tell his daughter so. He told her he was bringing her a present of a new typewriting machine and was bringing from Chicago a young woman who could write shorthand and would look after the princess' correspondence—act as secretary, in fact—for it seems the princess has a larger correspondence than she can reasonably attend to, and it seems she yearns for a typewriter. The old man tells me she is very careless about her letters, never being able to find anything she wants and leaving them about a good deal, so he thinks she needs some one to look after her correspondence, and it looks as if her father feared she might leave some compromising letter about, so he wishes to ward off a divorce case."

"No; I think you are wrong there. The father hasn't the slightest suspicion there could be anything wrong with his daughter. It is probable the princess has written some libelous statements about her husband, and it is quite likely the prince is a brute and that young von Schauberg is a most charming person."

"Well, as I was saying," continued Hardwick, "the old man cables his daughter that he is bringing her a secretary and a typewriter. He engaged a female Pinkerton detective to enter the castle as secretary to the princess, and, if possible, to solve the mystery. She is a young woman who, when she left Chicago, was very anti-English, but she became acquainted on the steamer with a young Englishman who was tremendously taken with her, and so at Liverpool she quite calmly broke her engagement with the old man and fulfilled a new engagement she had made with the young man by promptly marrying him. Old Briggs has therefore a new typewriting machine on his hands, and so I was going to propose to you that you take the place of the Chicago Pinkerton person. Briggs has become so disgusted with all these detective women that he gave up the idea of sending a female detective with the machine and doesn't imagine that whoever is sent will be either a detective or a newspaper woman. I was introduced to him the other day by one of those lucky chances that sometimes put interesting items of news in our way, and he told me the whole story and asked me to recommend some one who wrote shorthand and understood the typewriter. I am to dine with him this evening, and I shall cordially recommend you. I may say that Briggs has gone to that celebrated London detective, Mr. Cadbury Taylor, and has engaged him to solve the diamond mystery. So, you see, you will have a clear field. If you can leave for the castle tomorrow night, you may have the pleasure of the company of Mr. Cadbury Taylor. He isn't visiting the castle, but goes straight to Vienna; so, if you work your cards rightly, you can be in his company as far as Munich, and during that time you could find out, perhaps, what he thinks about the case. I know only this much about his theory, and that is, he thinks the right place to begin is in Vienna, where some, at least, of the stones are supposed to have been pawned."

"Oh, this is a delightful case, and I shall enjoy it. Has there been anything published yet about the robbery?"

"Not a word. Nobody knows anything about it except the prince and princess, Briggs, myself and yourself and perhaps one or two of the servants in the castle—oh, yes, and Cadbury Taylor."

Miss Baxter was early at the station before the continental train left. She walked up and down the platform, hoping to see Mr. Cadbury Taylor, with whose face and form she was familiar. She secured a porter who spoke French and pretended to him that she knew no English.

"I desire," she said, "to get into a first class compartment with a gentleman whom I shall point out to you. I shall give you 5 shillings, so you must let me have your whole attention. My luggage has been labeled and registered; therefore you will not need to bother about it, but keep your eye on me and follow me into whatever carriage I enter, bringing with you the baggage and this heavy package."

The heavy package was a typewriter in its case. Shortly before the train left there snarled into the station the tall, thin, well known form of the celebrated detective. He had on a light tunic that reached almost to his heels, and his keen, alert face, was entirely without beard or mustache. As he came up the platform a short, stout man, accosted him.

"I was afraid you were going to be late," said the detective's friend, "but I see you are just in time as usual."

"A railway station," said Mr. Cadbury Taylor, "is not the most inspiring place in London for the spending of a spare half hour; besides, I had some facts to get together, which are now complete, and I'm quite ready to go. If the train is—"

"I have secured a smoking compartment here, where we shall be alone."

"That's right, Smith," said Cadbury Taylor. "You are always so thoughtful," and the two men entered the compartment together.

Just as the train was starting, "Take your seats, please!" Miss Baxter made a bolt for the compartment in which the detective and his friend sat together in opposite corners.

"I beg your pardon," said Smith; "this is a smoking compartment."

The lady replied to him volubly in French, and next instant the porter heaved the typewriter and baggage on the seat beside her. Smith seemed to resent the intrusion and appeared about to blame the porter, but the man answered rapidly as he banged the door.

"The lady doesn't speak any English," and the next moment the train moved out of the station.

"There was no need," said the detective, "my dear Smith, to depend upon the porter for the information that the lady could not speak English. She is the secretary to a very rich employer in Chicago and came from that city to New York, where she sailed on the Servia alone, coming to England to transact some special business of which I could here give you full particulars if it were worth while. She came from Liverpool to London over the Great Northern railway and is now on her way to Paris. All this, of course, is ob-

vious to you, Smith, and I am sure you will not forget to mention it to the most casual observer, and so, my dear Smith, we may discuss our case with as much security as though we were entirely alone."

"Do you expect this Austrian diamond mystery to prove difficult?" asked Smith.

"Difficult? Oh, dear no! To tell the truth, I have solved it already, but in order to give the American a run for his money I am now on my way to Vienna. If I solved the problem offhand for him in London, he would have no more appreciation of my talent than you had a moment ago when I explained why I know this French girl came from Chicago. My dear fellow, everything in this world is simple except one thing, and that is to find any problem that is difficult."

"Then who stole the diamonds—the lieutenant?"

The detective smiled and gazed upward for a few tantalizing moments at the roof of the carriage.

"Here we have," he said at last, "an impeccable prince who marries an American heiress, as so many of them do. The girl brings life in Austria on \$1,000,000, may \$500,000, and a case of diamonds said to be worth another \$500,000 at least—probably more. Not much danger of running through that very speedily, is there, Smith?"

"No; I should think not."

"So the average man would think," continued the detective, "however, I have long since got out of the habit of thinking; therefore I make none. The first problem I set myself is this: How much money have the prince and princess spent since they were married? I find that the repairs to the Schloss Steinhelmer, situated in the Tyrol, cost something like \$40,000. It is a huge place, and the Steinhelmers have not had an heiress in the family for many centuries. The prince owed a good deal of money when he was married, and it took something like \$60,000 to settle those debts—rather expensive, as continental princes go; but if one must have luxuries, one cannot save money. Not to weary you with details, I found that the \$500,000 was exhausted something more than two months ago—in fact, just before the alleged robbery. The prince is of course without money; otherwise he would not have married a Chicago heiress, and the princess being without money, what does she naturally do?"

"Pawn her own diamonds!" cried Smith enthusiastically.

The detective smiled.

"I thought it much more probable she would apply to her father for money. I asked him if this was the case, giving him the date, roughly speaking, when such a letter had been sent. The old man opened his eyes at this and told me he had received such a letter. But you did not send the money; I ventured, 'No,' he said. 'I did not. The fact is, money is very tight in Chicago just now, and so I cabled her to run on her debts for awhile. This exactly bore out the conclusion at which I had already arrived. So now, having failed to get money from her father, the lady turns to her diamonds, the only security she possesses. The chances are that she did so before her father's cable message came, and that was the reason she confidentially wished information to be given to the police. She expected to have money to release her father, and being a bright woman, she knew the traditional staple of the

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