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A Detective Episode

By ANDREW CUMMINGS

I had been ambitious for some time to try my hand at detective work. Having an uncle who was at the head of a detective bureau, I persuaded him to give me a trial. He said he would as soon as he had a simple case, for since I was not experienced he would not trust me with a difficult one.

In due time he called me to his office and said to me:

"I have a letter from a woman this morning to say that Jim Harker, a crook we have been looking for, is to leave the city by a certain train tomorrow. We have him corraled, but he is going to make an attempt to break through. The reason given by the informer is that he is going in company with another woman, who is her rival. Such communications may be sincere or they may be tricks to cover a retreat. I can give you a man to assist you if you like."

It occurred to me that if I were successful my assistant would claim the credit, and if I failed he would point out wherein I had been mistaken. I preferred to choose my own helper and took with me Frank Walker, a chum of mine who had written a detective story remarkable for its ingenuity. He would have been glad of an opportunity to show that he could do as well in real detective work as in fiction had he not considered the case beneath his ability.

I had been shown a photograph of Harker on file in the rogues' gallery and noted his features carefully, fixing them in my mind. Consequently I had no difficulty in recognizing him when I saw him in the station in company with a flashily dressed woman, who betrayed her anxiety for him constantly, despite her efforts to conceal it. Walker from the start manifested a disposition to take the most important part of the work into his keeping, leaving the unimportant part to me.

"I think we had better divide the watch between us," he said. "They are liable to separate, and we should have it arranged which one you will shadow. I'll take the man, if you like, and you take the woman."

I suggested that we had better arrest them both at once, but Walker seemed desirous to make something dramatic of it and remonstrated, urging that we must first get them where they could not get away. I yielded to him, and when the fugitives entered the car we got in too.

"I don't understand, Frank," I said, "why the crook is leaving town without disguising himself. He is an exact duplicate of his picture."

"That's what spoils the job," was Walker's reply. "It's altogether too dead easy."

A woman sat in a seat on the other side of the aisle from us who seemed to be interested in us. I whispered to Frank a caution not to appear to be watching our quarry, for I suspected this person of having noticed us doing so. Presently Frank went to the end of the car for a drink of water, and while he was gone the woman opposite came to me and said in a low tone.

"Reckon you're on to Jim Harker. I'm the party that gave the information on the bloke. Don't try to take him unless you're armed and get him where he can't shoot. He's a desperate man. The woman with him is wanted, too, but if you get him you'll do well. Don't try to do too much."

By the time Walker returned to his seat the woman had returned to hers.

As we approached a town of importance just before we pulled into the station the woman with Harker got up and went to the saloon, which was at the rear of the car. A moment later Harker bolted to the front car door. Frank dashed after him, and I started to go in the other direction to the saloon when the woman who had given us the information got in my way.

"Where are you going?" she cried excitedly. "Don't you see that your man has gone out by the forward door?"

"Let me pass!" I said angrily. "My friend is going after him. I'm to get the woman."

"See here," she retorted, bristling. "I've put you on to this thing, and I don't propose to have it spoiled by your stupidity. I tell you Jim Harker has gone in the other direction."

She kept me as long as she could, then let me go by. When I got to the saloon I found it empty. The woman had gone out by the rear door. I went on to the platform, but there were so many persons moving hither and thither that I could not distinguish her among them.

There seemed nothing for me to do but wait for Walker's return. Within half an hour he came in with his quarry. Frank had armed himself with a revolver, a deputy sheriff's badge and a pair of bracelets, the latter articles being now on his prisoner's wrists.

"I got him," said Frank, evidently very proud of himself.

"I'm glad you didn't get killed on the job," I replied. "Mine was too smart for me."

We took the crook back with us to a police station.

"What are you givin' us?" exclaimed the sergeant. "That fellow is made up."

He was not only made up, but he turned out to be a woman. Harker, in female togs, had escaped through the rear door of the car.

"Frank," I said to my assistant, hereafter you had better stick to writing detective stories. You're not up to the real thing."

AN UNFASHIONABLE FISH.

Fine in Flavor and Food Value, Yet Our Anglers Discard It.

It seems as if there are fashions in fish just now as there are in wearing apparel. A fish that brings in German markets nearly four times as much per pound as our fresh mackerel and considerably more than haddock is thrown away by our fishermen because no one wants to eat it. Yet those who eat it praise it for its delicate flavor. Even the English like it. Every year they consume 3,000 tons of it. Yet we will have none of it.

This fish is known as the goosefish, anglerfish, devilfish and monkfish. True, its appearance is against it, but still the epicures in England and Germany demand it because it is delicious. Analyses made by the bureau of fisheries on samples show that goosefish contains considerably more protein than flounder, slightly more than a cod, a little less than halibut and considerably less than sirloin steak.

The goosefish has an average length of three feet and is broad and flat, somewhat resembling the flounder in general outline. The only way to get it, says a Philadelphia woman, is for the housewives to club together and demand it. At the present time fishermen do not take the trouble to bring it home, but discard it from their nets.—Popular Science Monthly.

CLAWS OF THE CANARY.

They Should Be Carefully Trimmed Every Few Months.

As a canary grows old it will be noticed that its claws get long and catch on the perches and wires as it hops about the cage. In a state of nature the activity of the bird as it moves about on the ground or among twigs and limbs keeps the claws properly worn down. Confined in a cage, the canary is less active, and, while the rate of growth of the claws remains the same, they are subject to much less abrasion.

It is necessary therefore to trim them with a pair of sharp scissors every few months. It is important to watch the condition of the claws carefully, as by catching they may cause a broken leg. In each claw a slender blood vessel extends well down toward the tip. This may be seen on close examination through the transparent sheath of the claw. In trimming cut well beyond this canal and take special care not to break the leg while handling the bird.

In cage birds the horny covering of the bill as well as the claws sometimes becomes distorted through growth without sufficient wear. The tips of the mandibles may be pared down with a sharp knife, but care must be taken not to cut deep enough to reach the quick.—United States Department of Agriculture Bulletin.

If She Were Free.

A woman of criminal tendencies serving a prison term was asked, "If you were given absolution, freedom to spend one night in the great city wholly uncontrolled, where would you go—to the theater, dance hall or where?" She replied: "I would choose a warm night after a rainy day, a night when all the electric lights wore halos around their heads and everything was foggy. I'd go to the park and walk for an hour up and down the paths, where I could see the reflections of the misty lights in the wet stone pavements. Then I'd like to go to some quiet place where I could hear organ music for another hour. Then I'd go to bed satisfied. But before I got to bed I'd open and shut my door for five minutes steadily. I'd want to know that it wasn't bolted!"—Buffalo News.

Father Fails Again.

Did you ever watch the bright young man father has picked out as the man with a future and invited home for dinner?

The B. Y. M. has read somewhere in his youth that B. Y. men are supposed to fall in love with and marry the boss' daughter. And he sits and stares a her, nervous as the dickens because he can't decide which is worse—losing his job or following precedent.

And the daughter plays the tune she knows on the piano and wonders "Whatever possessed father to bring that around here?"—New York Evening Sun.

A Slap at Her Complexion.

"Is it true that Mrs. Dubwaite and Mrs. Twobble are no longer on speaking terms?"

"Yes. I fear the breach will never be healed."

"What did they fall out about?"

"They met on the street one day. Mrs. Dubwaite said to Mrs. Twobble, 'My dear, how do I look?' Mrs. Twobble kissed her effusively and said, 'My dear, you are a work of art!'"—Birmingham Age-Herald.

Water Soaked.

"The Glithers baby threw a big bundle of stock into the fire yesterday morning."

"What a loss! It was destroyed, of course?"

"No; Glithers bought the stock from a promoter. It was too full of water to burn."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

A Concession.

"After looking at the postal stamps of other countries, I have come to the conclusion that you can't beat ours."

"Maybe not, but, all the same, it gets lots of lickings."—Exchange.

More Than a Half.

"Oi hear that Casey is havin' trouble wid his better half."

"Yis; she wants to be the whole thing."—Pearson's Weekly.

Nature fits all her children with something to do.—Lowell.

A SOPRANO-TENOR

By NORMAN THORNDYKE

After a number of ventures in a musico-theatrical way I organized a comic opera company, which I took "on the road." My singers were not such as one expects to hear at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, but were good enough for the audiences they were intended for. When I was examining candidates for my first lady's part a young woman came to me who desired the position. I tried her voice, but could not quite place it. It was not exactly a soprano nor was it exactly an alto, being between the two. Sometimes it sounded a little like a man's tenor. I did not exactly fancy it, but no other woman presented herself for the position except one who wanted too large a salary, and I engaged the applicant. Miss Winifred Richie she gave as her real name and told me that I was at liberty to use it on the bills.

Miss Richie was a very good looking young woman. She was attractive in all respects excepting that in ordinary conversation her voice was pitched rather low for a woman and seemed a trifle harsh. But this did not prevent her turning the heads of several of the male singers. Marionelli, my tenor, whose real name was O'Grady, became desperately smitten with her, and his attentions being not to her liking I was in constant dread of losing one or both of them in the middle of the season and out on the road, where I could not repair the deficiency.

The trouble with O'Grady was that he was not a man of any refinement, and no rebuff could stand him off. One day my leading lady came to me and said that if I did not find a way to relieve her of his attentions she would take the matter into her own hands.

"What course will you take?" I asked. "Will you stick a pin in him?"

"No; I'll stick nothing into him, but he'll get an eye that will keep him off the boards for a week."

I smiled at the idea of a woman repelling a lover in such fashion. Then I asked her in what way O'Grady offended her. She replied that in love scenes on the stage which they were compelled to act together he was much more demonstrative than was necessary in a stage embrace.

I had a talk with O'Grady, in which I told him that Miss Richie would no longer accept his attentions, and unless he would let her alone I would send him off as soon as I could replace him. But my warning was not effective. In the very next performance he offended again. Nothing occurred until the curtain was lowered at the end of the act, when Miss Richie landed a blow on O'Grady's eye that turned it a sickly green.

I was much put out with Miss Richie for incapacitating my tenor and rated her soundly.

"Miss Turnlee, my understudy," she said, "is quite capable of taking my part, and I will take O'Grady's part."

"What!"

"I'll take O'Grady's part. I can sing tenor."

After she had convinced me that she was serious I tried her voice and found that it was a far better tenor than soprano.

"What does this mean?" I asked her.

"It means that I can sing in two different voices."

The next performance was given as she had suggested, Miss Richie being dressed as a man, and she produced a far better impression than O'Grady. Indeed, as a male singer she was of far more value to me than O'Grady or than she was in a soprano's part.

His love for Miss Richie had not been enhanced by the blow he had received from her, and now that he had been discharged on account of it he was in a fury with her. He rushed into the wings and began to abuse her. When she had given him the black eye she had taken him unawares. Now he confronted her as an enemy. But she had the advantage of being untrammeled by skirts and stepped toward him with clinched fists. Naturally averse to such an altercation with a woman he had so recently loved, he retreated. But she followed him up and by a quick stroke landed her fist under his jaw, lifted him off his feet and sent him sprawling on the boards.

Hearing something drop, I ran to the scene of action and prevented any more fighting. I put O'Grady out and told him not to show himself to me or any of my company again.

The next day I made a new contract with Miss Richie, doubling her salary, to sing tenor parts and put her understudy permanently in her place. My tenor was soon recognized by a few persons who had seen him in a woman's part, and it began to be whispered that he was Miss Richie and not Signor Marascherio, as he was advertised. The fact that I had a woman singing a man's parts drew the curious, and my attendance increased. In time they became so large that I gave my tenor another raise, and finally he was receiving as much in a month as before he had received in a year.

I brought my company back to my starting point when the warm weather came on and disbanded it. I asked Miss Richie if she would sign a contract for the next year, and she agreed to do so on condition that her true sex should be known. Then a secret came out.

Tom Thurston, a good tenor singer who could sing marvelously like a woman in falsetto, hearing that I wanted a soprano, had appeared to me in woman's garb and applied for the place as Miss Richie.

GOOD GOVERNMENT.

The People Themselves Are to Blame if They Do Not Have It.

The story is told that at the time Massachusetts was considering the ratification of the federal constitution Samuel Adams, the noble pioneer of American independence, was wavering in his support. The mechanics and workingmen of Boston called a meeting at the old Green Dragon tavern and passed resolutions earnestly urging that the constitution be ratified and adopted. Those resolutions they put into the hands of a brass founder to be delivered to Mr. Adams.

"How many were present when these resolutions were adopted?" asked Adams.

"More, sir, than the Green Dragon would hold," said the sturdy mechanic.

"And where were the rest?"

"In the street," replied the brass founder.

That casts a significant side light on that crucial period when we were engaged in the task of bringing strength out of feebleness and order out of chaos by establishing a national government. What could be more interesting than to see the mechanics of Boston solemnly considering and discussing the most remarkable document, as it has been called, that any body of men ever put forth? The same serious and constant consideration of matters of public concern by the same class of people is essential to every hour of the existence of the government.

It is time that the responsibility for bad men in office, for "invisible government," for venal and corrupt practices in public servants, be put upon those whose neglect of duty enables evil influences to control the election. The better element is always in the majority in every community and can always control the situation if it desires to do so. When things get insufferably bad and the people are thoroughly aroused, how quickly are desirable changes brought about! But when the people seem to have dispensed of the particular condition that then arouses them they fall back into a state of indifference and let the sinister influences have the field again.

Truly, eternal vigilance is the price of good government. We cannot find or enjoy it through any other means. Our blessed old republic was not framed for laggards or cowards, but for brave men and women, ever and always alive to the duties and obligations that rest upon them as citizens.—Senator William E. Borah in Youth's Companion.

Ideas Are Dollars.

Some large business firms employ a man whose sole duty it is to read every trade journal, every technical paper or pamphlet and every magazine in order to get new ideas about the conduct of their business. Such information is laid each day before the heads of the various departments, who in turn pass it down the line to men under them and see that the new idea is tested.—By this means each worker is kept in touch with what other men are doing in his particular line, and so his personal efficiency is increased. Almost everything can be done in a manner a little better than the present way, and modern business demands to know and practice the best. Ideas are dollars.

Making a Garden.

A garden should not be considered as a piece of wild nature nor plants regarded as architectural ornaments, for one must not do violence to the other. Above all must there be harmony. Otherwise the builder has labored in vain, for he has not made a picture that artists care to reproduce.

In garden building never imitate nature with intent to deceive, but where natural beauty already exists make use of it and add to it. Banks to be restrained often have large outcropping rocks. Make use of them even if the remainder of the wall is of distinctly different material. Merely assist nature.

"Fourth of July" in March.

Fireworks on Independence day are denied the children and grown folks of Alaska for the simple reason that the July nights are almost as light as the days, and it does not pay to attempt pyrotechnic displays if there is no darkness to show them off by contrast. Consequently it has become the custom in many Alaskan cities, including Fairbanks, to hold a Fourth of July celebration on March 4, when the nights are still very long. Then there is abundant opportunity for displaying fireworks of every variety.

Finding One's Ideal Weight.

Dr. Harvey G. Beck of the University of Maryland has told a simple way to calculate what one ought to weigh. First, he said, put down 110; then subtract 5 feet from one's height and multiply the number of inches that remain by 5½. Add this product to the original 110 and the sum is one's ideal weight.

And He Was Alive.

"That fellow was an impudent fraud. How did he manage to wheedle money out of you?"

"Oh, John, he told me such a sad, pitiful tale about his poor wife who was a widow with six little children!"—Baltimore American.

Agility of the Kangaroo.

The gray kangaroo of Australia measures about seven feet from its nose to the tip of its tail. It can run faster than a horse and clear thirty feet at a jump.

That man lives twice who lives the first life well.—Herrick.