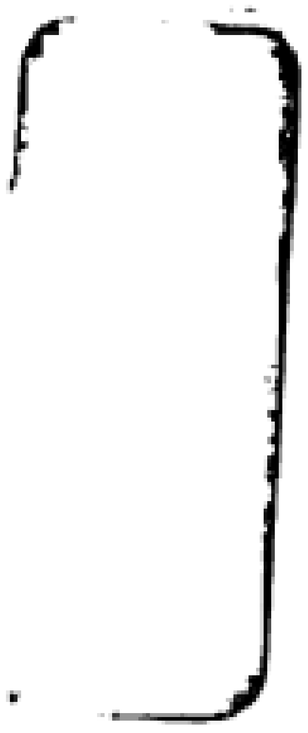
HW 1YQV G

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

KE 5362



Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

X

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Stories of Mystery and Crime

The Leavenworth Case
A Strange Disappearance
One of My Sons
An Artist in Crime
A Conflict of Evidence
The Crime of the Century
The Strange Schemes of Randolph Mason
The Man of Last Resort
The House Opposite
A Master Hand

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Stories of
Mystery and Crime

An Artist in Crime

By

Rodrigues Ottolengui

G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press

Digitized by Google
Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

KE 5362

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

COPYRIGHT, 1892
BY
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

Entered at Stationers' Hall, London
BY G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

The Knickerbocker Press, New Rochelle, N. Y.

Digitized by Google
Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	A Gentleman Thinks He can Commit a Crime and Escape Detection .	1
II.	A Daring and Successful Train Robbery	16
III.	Mr. Barnes Discovers an Artsitic Murder	30
IV.	Diamond Cut Diamond . . .	46
V.	The Seventh Button	56
VI.	Mr. Barnes's Trap	75
VII.	Mr. Randolph has a Fight with his Conscience	95
VIII.	Lucette	115
IX.	The Diary of a Detective . .	129
X.	Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves .	138
XI.	Mr. Barnes Receives Several Letters,	154
XII.	The History of the Ruby . .	169
XIII.	Mr. Barnes Goes South . . .	189
XIV.	An Interrupted Wedding . . .	208
XV.	Mr. Mitchel Explains a Few Things,	223
XVI.	Mr. Barnes Discovers a Valuable Clue	239
XVII.	A New Year's Dinner Party . .	255
XVIII.	Mr. Barnes's Narrative . . .	273

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

AN ARTIST IN CRIME.

CHAPTER I.

A GENTLEMAN THINKS HE CAN COMMIT A CRIME AND ESCAPE DETECTION.

"JACK BARNES never gets left, you bet."

"That was a close call, though," replied the Pullman porter who had given Mr. Barnes a helping hand, in his desperate effort to board the midnight express as it rolled out of Boston. "I would n't advise you to jump on moving trains often."

"Thank you for your good advice, and for your assistance. Here 's a quarter for you. Show me to my section, I am nearly dead, I am so tired."

"Upper ten, right this way, sir. It is all ready for you to turn in."

When Mr. Barnes entered the coach, no one was in sight. If there were other passengers, they were abed. A few minutes later, he himself was patting two little bags of feathers, and placing one atop of the other in a vain attempt to make them serve as one pillow. He had

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

told the porter that he was tired, and this was so true that he should have fallen asleep quickly. Instead, his brain seemed specially active, and sleep impossible.

Mr. Barnes, Jack Barnes, as he called himself to the porter, was a detective, and counted one of the shrewdest in New York, where he controlled a private agency established by himself. He had just completed what he considered a most satisfactory piece of work. A large robbery had been committed in New York, and suspicion of the strongest nature had pointed in the direction of a young man who had immediately been arrested. For ten days the press of the country had been trying and convicting the suspect, during which time Mr. Barnes had quietly left the Metropolis. Twelve hours before we met him, those who read the papers over their toast had been amazed to learn that the suspect was innocent, and that the real criminal had been apprehended by the keen-witted Jack Barnes. What was better, he had recovered the lost funds, amounting to thirty thousand dollars.

He had had a long chase after his man, whom he had shadowed from city to city and watched day and night, actuated to this course by a slight clue in which he had placed his faith. Now, his man fast in a Boston prison, he was on his way to New York for requisition papers. As he had said, he was tired, yet despite his need of complete rest his thoughts persisted in rehearsing all the intricate details of the reasoning which had at last led him to the solution of the mystery. As he lay in his upper berth awake these words reached his ears:

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"If I knew that man Barnes was after me, I should simply surrender."

This promised to be the beginning of an entertaining conversation, and as he could not sleep, Mr. Barnes prepared to listen. Extensive experience as a detective had made him long ago forget the philosophic arguments for and against eavesdropping. The voice which had attracted him was low, but his ears were keen. He located it as coming from the section next ahead of his, number eight. A second voice replied:

"I have no doubt that you would. But I would n't. You overestimate the ability of the modern detective. I should actually enjoy being hounded by one of them. It would be so much pleasure, and I think so easy, to elude him."

The last speaker possessed a voice which was musical, and he articulated distinctly, though he scarcely ventured above a loud whisper. Mr. Barnes cautiously raised his head, arranging his pillows so that his ear would be near the partition. Fortunately, the two men next to him had taken the whole section, and the upper berth had been allowed to remain closed. Mr. Barnes now found that he could readily follow the conversation, which continued thus:

"But see how that Barnes tracked this Pettingill day and night until he had trapped him. Just as the fellow supposed himself safe, he was arrested. You must admit that was clever work."

"Oh, yes, clever enough in its way, but there was nothing specially artistic about it. Not that the detective

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

was to blame; it was the fault of the criminal. There was no chance for the artistic." Yet Mr. Barnes had used that very adjective to himself in commenting upon his conduct of this case. The man continued: "The crime itself was inartistic. Pettingill bungled, Barnes was shrewd enough to detect the flaw, and with his experience and skill in such cases the end was inevitable."

"It seems to me either that you have not read the full account of the case, or else you do not appreciate the work of the detective. Why, all the clue he had was a button."

"Ah! Only a button—but such a button! That is where I say that the criminal was inartistic. He should not have lost that button."

"It was an accident I suppose, and one against which he could not have guarded. It was one of the exigencies of his crime."

"Exactly so; and it is these little accidents, always unforeseen, though always occurring, which hang so many, and jail so many, and give our detectives such an easy road to fame. That is the gist of the whole matter. It is an unequal game, this between the criminal and the detective."

"I don't catch what you are driving at?"

"I 'll give you a dissertation on crime. Attend! In ordinary business it is brains *versus* brains. The professional man contends with his fellows, and if he would win the race towards fortune he must show more brains. The commercial man competes with other tradesmen all

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

as clever as himself. So it goes from the lawyer to the locksmith, from the preacher to the sign painter. It is brains rubbing against brains, and we get the most polished thought as the result. Thus the science of honest living progresses."

"What has this to do with the criminal class?"

"One moment. Let the philosopher teach you in his own way. With the criminal it is different. He is matched against his superior. Those in his own class do not contend with him; they are rather his partners, his 'pals,' as they term it. His only contention therefore is with the detective who represents society and the law. No man, I suppose, is a criminal from choice, and it is the criminal's necessity which leads to his detection."

"Then all criminals should be caught."

"All criminals should be caught. That they are not is a strong argument against your detective; for every criminal, we may say is actuated by necessity, and therein lies the possibility of his defeat. For example: You may claim that the expert burglar lays his plans in advance, and that the crime being premeditated he should be able to make such careful pre-arrangements that he could avoid leaving tell-tale marks behind him. This, however, is rarely the case, for this reason: the unexpected often, if not always, happens, and for that he has not prepared. In a moment he sees prison ahead of him, and his fear steals away his caution, so that, as we have seen, he does leave a clue behind him."

"But when you say the unexpected happens, you admit

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

the possibility for that to occur which could not have been premised, and therefore could not have been guarded against."

"That is true as the case stands. But remove the necessity which actuates our criminal, and make of him simply a scientific man pursuing crime as an art! In the first place, we get an individual who will prepare for more accidents, and secondly, would know how best to meet emergencies which occur during the commission of his crime. For example: if you will pardon the conceit, were I to attempt a crime I should be able to avoid detection."

"I should think that from your inexperience as a criminal you would be run to earth—well, about as quickly as this man Pettingill. This was his first crime you know."

"Would you be willing to make a wager to that effect?" This last remark fairly startled Mr. Barnes, who instantly understood the meaning, which, however, at first escaped the other listener. He waited eagerly for the reply.

"I don't grasp the idea. Make a wager about what?"

"You said that were I to commit a crime I should be captured about as quickly as Pettingill. If you wish, I will wager that I can commit a crime which will be as much talked of as his, and that I will not be captured, or rather I should say convicted. I would not bet against arrest; for, as we have seen in this very case, the innocent are sometimes incarcerated. Therefore I stipulate for conviction."

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"Do I understand you to seriously offer to commit a crime merely to decide a wager? You astound me!"

"No more perhaps than Pettingill has surprised his friends. But don't be alarmed; I shall assume all responsibility. Besides, remember it is not crime that is scowled upon in this century, but detection. I wager with you against that. Come, what do you say; shall it be a thousand dollars? I want a little excitement!"

"Well, you shall have it. At least you shall have the excitement of paying the thousand dollars to me; for though I think you are not really intending to become a criminal, in either event I may as well profit by your offer."

"What do you mean by 'in either event'?"

"Why, if you do not commit a crime you pay; and if you do, I am sure that you would be caught. Then, however much I should regret your disgrace, I warn you that I should cut you dead, and take your money."

"Then you accept the wager?"

"I do!"

"Done. Now for the conditions. I am to have one month in which to plan and commit my crime, and one year for avoiding the detectives. That is, if I am free at the end of one year, and can prove to you that I committed a crime within the stipulated period, I win the wager. If I am in jail awaiting trial, the bet cannot be settled until the law has had its way, and I am either proven innocent or guilty. Is that satisfactory?"

"Perfectly. But what class of crime will you commit?"

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"My friend you are inquisitive. The wager is on, and my boasted caution must begin. Therefore, I must not tell you anything of the nature of my intended crime!"

"Why, do you suppose for an instant that I would betray you?"

"Well, yes, that idea does occur to me. Listen. As I said before, the necessities of the criminal prove his Nemesis. The necessities involve the object of the crime. That is always a good starting-point in following up a mysterious case. The more unusual the object the better, since it will fit fewer people. Plunder is the commonest and therefore the least promising to trace from. Revenge is common also, but better, because the special revenge connected with the deed must lead to the special individual most likely to execute such revenge. In this instance, I mean my own case, the object of the crime is so unique, that the detective who discovers it should be able to convict me. A crime committed to decide a wager is perhaps new."

"Its very novelty is your best safeguard."

"Yet there are two ways by which it may be discovered, and that is two too many. Had I undertaken this affair secretly there would really have been but a single way for one to learn my secret,—my own confession. As men have been weak enough to do this before now, I should even in that instance have taken precautions. But with my secret in the possession of a second party, the position is more complex."

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"I assure you on my honor that I will not betray you. I will agree to forfeit five times the wager in such an event."

"I prefer that you should be perfectly at liberty in the matter. I expect it to be thus: in your own mind at present you do not think that I shall carry out my purpose. Therefore, your friendship for me is undisturbed. Then you count that, if I do commit a crime, it will be some trivial one that you may bring your conscience to excuse, under the circumstances. But let us suppose that a really great crime should be reported, and for some reason you should suspect me. You will hurry to my rooms before I get out of bed, and ask me flatly whether I am guilty. As flatly I should refuse to enlighten you. You would take this as a confession of guilt. You would perhaps argue that if your surmise were correct you would be an accessory before the fact, and to shield yourself and do your duty you would make a clean breast of it."

"I am beginning to be offended, Bob. I did not think you would trust me so little!"

"Don't get angry, old man. Remember that only a few minutes ago you warned me that you would cut me dead after the crime. We artistic criminals must be prepared against every contingency."

"I did not think when I spoke. I did not mean it."

"Yes, you did, and I am not at all angry. Let it be understood then that you will be at liberty to repeat the facts about this wager should your conscience prick you. It will be best for me to expect and be prepared for such

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

action. But you have not asked what the second danger of discovery is. Can you guess?"

"Not unless you mean as you suggested, your own confession."

"No, though that really makes a third chance. Yet it is so simple. Have you noticed that we can hear a man snoring?"

"No!"

"Listen a moment! Do you not hear that? It is not exactly a snore, but rather a troubled breathing. Now that man is in the third section from us. Do you see the point?"

"I must confess that I would not make a detective."

"Why, my dear boy, if we can hear that fellow, why may not some one in the next compartment be listening to our *tête-à-tête*?" Mr. Barnes fairly glowed with admiration for the fellow's careful consideration of every point.

"Oh, I guess not. Everybody is asleep."

"The common criminal from necessity takes chances like that, without counting on them. I shall not. There is a possibility, however remote, that some one, in Number Ten say, has overheard us. Again he may even be a detective, and worse yet it might be your Mr. Barnes himself."

"Well, I must say if you prepare against such long odds as that you deserve to escape detection!"

"That is just what I will do. But the odds are not so great as you imagine. I read in an afternoon paper that Mr. Barnes had remained in Boston in connection with

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

properly securing his prisoner during the day, but that he would leave for New York to-night. Of course the newspaper may have been wrong. Then in saying "to-night" it may have been inaccurate; but supposing that the statement were true, then there were three trains upon which he might have started, one at seven o'clock, one at eleven, and this one. One in three is not long odds."

"But even if he is on this train, there are ten coaches."

"Again you are wrong. After his hard work on this Pettingill case he would be sure to take a sleeper. Now if you recall the fact, I did not decide to go to New York to-night till the last minute. Then we found that we could not get a whole section, and were about to bunk together in a lower berth when, several more people applying, they determined to put on another coach. Therefore, unless Mr. Barnes secured his ticket during the day, he would inevitably have been assigned to this coach."

"Had you any special reason for suggesting Number Ten?"

"Yes. I know that Number Six is unoccupied. But just as we started some one came in, and I think took the upper berth of Number Ten."

"Mr. Barnes began to think that he would have exceedingly difficult work to detect this man in crime, were he really to commit one, in spite of the fact that he knew so much in advance. The conversation continued:

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"Thus, you see, there are two ways by which my object may become known, a serious matter if unguarded against. As, however, I recognize the possibilities in advance, there will be no difficulty whatever, and the knowledge will be of no value to any detective, even though he be your Mr. Barnes."

"How will you avoid that danger?"

"My dear boy, do you suppose for an instant that I would reply to that, after pointing out that a detective may be listening? However, I will give you an idea. I will show you what I meant when I said that Pettingill had blundered. You said that he had lost only a button, and thought it clever in Barnes to trace him from the button. But a button may be a most important thing. If I should lose one of the buttons of my vest, whilst committing a crime, Mr. Barnes would trace me out in much less than ten days, and for this reason, they are the only ones of the kind in the world."

"How does that happen? I supposed that buttons were made by the thousand?"

"Not all buttons. For reasons which I need not tell the possibly listening detective, a friend travelling abroad had a set made especially, and brought them back to me as a present. They are six handsomely cut cameos, half the set having the profile head of Juliet, and the others a similar face of Romeo."

"A romance?"

"That is immaterial. Suppose that I should plan a robbery in order to decide this wager. As necessity

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

would not urge me either as to time or place, I should choose my opportunity, let us say when but one person guarded the treasure. That one I should chloroform and also tie. Next, I should help myself to the designated plunder. Suppose that as I were about to depart a sleeping, uncalculated-for pet dog should jump out and bark furiously? I reach for it and it snaps at me, biting my hand. I grapple it by the throat and strangle it, but in its death throes it bites my vest, and a button falls to the ground and rolls away. The dog is at last silenced. Your ordinary burglar by this time would be so unnerved that he would hasten off, not even realizing that he had been bitten, that blood had flowed, or that the button was lost. Mr. Barnes is sent to the house the next day. The lady suspects her coachman, and Mr. Barnes consents to his arrest, not because he thinks him guilty, but because, as the mistress thinks so, he may be, and then more especially, his arrest will lull the fear of the real culprit. Mr. Barnes would observe blood on the ground, on the dog's mouth, and he would find the button. From the button he would find Mr. Thief, with his hand bitten, and there you are."

"But how should you avoid all that?"

"In the first place, were I really wise, I should not have tell-tale buttons about me at such a time. But let us suppose that the time had not been of my own choosing, then the buttons might have been with me. Assured as I should have been that the only person in the house lay chloroformed and tied, I should not have lost my nerve

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

as did the other individual. Neither should I have allowed myself to be bitten, though if the accident had occurred I should have stopped to wash up the stain from the carpet while fresh, and also from the dog's mouth. I should have discovered the loss of the button, searched for and recovered it, untied the victim, and opened the windows, that the odor of chloroform could pass off during the night. In fact, in the morning the only evidence of crime would have been the strangled dog and the absence of the pelf."

"It is easy enough to explain your actions under supposititious circumstances. But I doubt if in Pettingill's shoes you would have been able to retain your presence of mind, and recover the lost button which led to his final arrest."

"It is possible that you are right, for had I been Pettingill I should have been coerced by necessities as he was. Yet I think I should not have planned such a robbery, choosing my own time as he did, and then have taken with me such a button. But from Mr. Barnes's standpoint, as I said before, very little of the artistic was needed. The button was constructed of a curious old coin. Mr. Barnes went the rounds of the dealers and found the very man who had sold Pettingill the coin. The rest was routine work."

"Well, you are conceited, but I don't mind making a thousand out of your egotism. Now I am sleepy, however, so good-night."

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"Good-night, old man. Dream of a way to earn an extra thousand, for I shall win."

For Mr. Barnes himself sleep was now more impossible than ever. He was attracted to this new case, for so he counted it, and was determined to trap the individual who wagered against his acumen. It was a long step towards success to know as much as he had overheard. He would not lose sight of his man during the allotted month. He enjoyed the prospect of allowing him to commit his crime and then quietly taking him in the act. Carefully and noiselessly he dressed himself and slipped out of his berth. Then he crept into one opposite, so that he could have his eye on number eight, and settled down for an all-night vigil.

"It would not surprise me if that keen devil were to commit his crime this very night. I hope so, for otherwise I shall have no sleep till he does."

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER II.

A DARING AND SUCCESSFUL TRAIN ROBBERY.

THE train was just approaching Stamford, and from the window in the section which he occupied Mr. Barnes was watching the sun glowing red over the hilltops, when he heard approaching him the guard who had assisted him to jump aboard the night before. The man was making mysterious gestures, from which Mr. Barnes understood that he was wanted. He arose and followed the porter to the smoking-room.

"I think you called yourself Barnes," said the man, "as you jumped aboard last night."

"Yes, what of it?"

"Are you Mr. Barnes the detective?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because, if you are, the conductor wants to see you. There was a big robbery committed on the train during the night."

"The devil!"

"Exactly, but will you come into the next coach?"

"Wait a minute." Mr. Barnes went back into the main part of the coach and tip-toed towards number eight. Gently moving the curtains, he peeped in and looked long and earnestly. He saw two men undoubtedly

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

sleeping soundly. Satisfied therefore that he could leave his watch for a brief period, he followed the porter into the next coach, where he found the conductor waiting for him in the smoking-room.

"You are Mr. Barnes the detective?" asked the conductor. Mr. Barnes assented.

"Then I wish to place in your hands officially a most mysterious case. We took on a lady last night at Boston, who had a ticket to South Norwalk. As we were approaching that point a short time ago she was notified by the porter. She arose and dressed preparatory to leaving the train. A few minutes later I was hurriedly summoned, when the woman, between hysterical sobs, informed me that she had been robbed."

"Of much?"

"She claims to miss a satchel containing a hundred thousand dollars, in jewelry."

"You have stated that adroitly. She claims to miss! What evidence have you that she has met with any loss at all?"

"Of course we cannot tell about the jewelry, but she did have a satchel, which is now missing. The porter remembers it, and we have searched thoroughly with no success."

"We have stopped at New Haven and at Bridgeport. How many persons have left the train?"

"No one has left the sleepers."

"When you say that no one has left the sleepers, I suppose you mean you saw no one leave?"

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"No! I mean just what I said. I have sent the porters through the coaches and they report that all our passengers are in their berths. But here we come to a point. If no one has left the train, then the thief must be aboard?"

"Certainly!"

"The woman when she discovered her loss concluded to remain aboard and go on to New York. All the other passengers, save one, are booked for New York. That one is a man, and he is now dressing, as his destination is Stamford. If he leaves he may take the jewels with him, yet what am I to do?"

"State the facts of the case to him. If he is innocent he will willingly submit to being searched. If, however, he refuses,—well we can be guided by circumstances. Call him in here now."

A few minutes later a foreign and distinctly French-appearing man entered. In speech he disclosed his origin, but the accent was slight. He was of fine appearance, dignified and gentlemanly.

Mr. Barnes sat at the window looking out. The conductor with considerable hesitancy explained the case concluding with:

"You see, my dear sir, this is an awkward business, but we are so sure that the thief is still aboard, that——"

"That you hesitate to allow me to leave the train, eh, Monsieur, is it not so? Yet why should there be any trouble? An honest man must never be hurt in his feelings when he is asked to assist the law, even though for

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

the moment he is himself a—what you call it—suspect? In this case it is so simple, if only the honest men will make no trouble. They will say to you—'Search me.' You do so, and at last one comes who says, 'You insult me.' That one is of course the thief, eh, Monsieur, do you not agree with me?" He turned towards Mr. Barnes, addressing this last remark to him. The detective looked at him a moment steadily, as was his wont when he meant to remember a face. The Frenchman returned the gaze undisturbed.

"I said almost the same thing to the conductor before you came in," said Mr. Barnes.

"Exactly so. Now then with your permission I will disrobe. Look, if you please, most carefully. My honor is at stake. The more carefully you examine, the less suspicion can attach to me hereafter."

The conductor made a thorough search, emptying every pocket and taking every precaution. He did not expect to find anything, but it was essential that extreme care should be observed. Nothing was found, and the man resumed his clothing.

"Now, if you please, I have with me but two small satchels. If the porter will bring them I will unlock them for you. I have no trunk, as I only went to Boston for a day's trip."

The satchels were brought, examined, and nothing found.

"Now, gentlemen, I suppose I am free, as we are at my station. I shall only remain here a few hours and will

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

then go on to New York. If you should wish to see me again I shall stop at the Hoffman House. Here is my card. *Au revoir.*"

Mr. Barnes took the card and scrutinized it.

"What do you think?" asked the conductor.

"Think? Oh, you mean of that fellow. You need not worry about him. There is not a shadow of suspicion against him—at present. Besides, should we ever want him, I could find him again. Here is his name—Alphonse Thauret—card genuine too, of French make and style of type. We can dismiss him now and turn our attention to the other passengers. Do you suppose I could have an interview with the woman?"

"You shall have it if you wish. We will not consult her wishes in the matter. The affair is too serious."

"Very well then send her in here and let me have a few words with her alone. Don't tell her that I am a detective. Leave that to me."

A few minutes later a tall woman apparently about forty-five years of age entered. She was not handsome yet had a pleasing face. As she seated herself she looked keenly at Mr. Barnes in a stealthy manner which should have attracted that gentleman's earnest thought. Apparently he did not notice it. The woman spoke first.

"The conductor has sent me in here to see you. What have you to do with the case?"

"Nothing!"

"Nothing? Then why——"

"When I say I have nothing to do with the case, I

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

mean simply that it rests with you whether I shall undertake to restore to you your diamonds or not. I look after such things for this road, but if the loser does not wish any action taken by the road, why then we drop the matter. Do you wish me to make a search for the stolen property?"

"I certainly wish to recover the jewels, as they are very valuable; but I am not sure that I desire to place the case in the hands of a detective."

"Who said that I am a detective?"

"Are you not one?"

Mr. Barnes hesitated a moment, but quickly decided on his course.

"I am a detective, connected with a private agency. Therefore I can undertake to look up the thief without publicity. That is your main objection to placing the case in my hands is it not?"

"You are shrewd. There are reasons, family reasons, why I do not wish this loss published to the world. If you can undertake to recover the jewels and keep this robbery out of the newspapers I would pay you well."

"I will take the case. Now answer me a few questions. First, your name and address."

"My name is Rose Mitchel, and I am living temporarily in a furnished flat at —— East Thirtieth Street. I have only recently come from New Orleans, my home, and am looking for suitable apartments."

Mr. Barnes took out his note-book and made a memorandum of the address.

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"Married or single?"

"Married; but my husband has been dead for several years."

"Now about these jewels. How did it happen that you were travelling with so valuable a lot of jewelry?"

"I have not lost jewelry, but jewels. They are unset stones of rare beauty—diamonds, rubies, pearls, and other precious stones. When my husband died, he left a large fortune; but there were also large debts which swallowed up everything save what was due him from one creditor. This was an Italian nobleman—I need not mention his name—who died almost at the same time as my husband. The executors communicated with me, and our correspondence culminated in my accepting these jewels in payment of the debt. I received them in Boston yesterday, and already I have lost them. It is too cruel, too cruel." She gripped her hands together convulsively, and a few tears coursed down her face. Mr. Barnes mused a few moments and seemed not to be observing her.

"What was the value of these jewels?"

"A hundred thousand dollars."

"By what express company were they sent to you?" The question was a simple one, and Mr. Barnes asked it rather mechanically, though he was wondering if the thief had come across the ocean—from France perhaps. He was therefore astonished at the effect produced. The woman arose suddenly, her whole manner changed. She replied with her lips compressed tightly, as though laboring under some excitement.

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"That is not essential. Perhaps I am telling too much to a stranger anyway. Come to my apartment this evening, and I will give you further particulars—if I decide to leave the case in your hands. If not I will pay you for whatever trouble you have in the interim. Good-morning."

Mr. Barnes watched her leave the room without offering to detain her or making any comment on her singular manner. Without rising from his seat he looked out of the window and strummed on the pane. What he thought it would be difficult to tell, but presently he said aloud, though there was no one to hear him :

"I think she is a liar."

Having relieved himself thus, he returned to his own coach. He found two gentlemen in the toilet room allowing themselves to be searched, laughing over the matter as a huge joke. He passed by and entered his own compartment, which the porter had put in order. One after another the few passengers arose, heard of the robbery, and cheerfully passed through the ordeal of being searched.

At last his patience was rewarded by seeing the curtains of number eight moving, and a moment later a fine-looking young man of six-and-twenty emerged, partly dressed, and went towards the toilet. Mr. Barnes sauntered after him, and entered the smoking-room. He had scarcely seated himself before a man entered, who was evidently the other occupant of section eight. Whilst this second man was washing, the conductor explained to the other about the robbery, and suggested that he allow himself to be searched. By this time the conductor was

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

becoming excited. They were within a few minutes of New York, and all his passengers had been examined save these two. Yet these two looked more aristocratic than any of the others. He was astonished therefore to observe that the young man addressed seemed very much disturbed. He stammered and stuttered, seeking words, and finally in a hoarse voice addressed his companion :

"Bob, do you hear, there 's been a robbery !"

His friend Bob was bending over the water basin, his head and face covered with a stiff soap lather and his hands rubbing his skin vigorously. Before replying he dipped his head completely under the water, held it so submerged a moment then stood erect with eyes shut and reached for a towel. In a moment he had wiped the suds from his eyes, and looking at his friend he answered most unconcernedly :

"What of it ?"

"But—but—the conductor wants to search me."

"All right. What are you afraid of ? You are not the thief, are you ?"

"No—but——"

"There is no but in it. If you are innocent let them go through you." Then with a light laugh he turned to the glass and began arranging his cravat. His friend looked at him a moment with an expression which no one but Mr. Barnes understood. The detective had recognized by their voices that it was Bob who had made the wager to commit a crime, and it was plain that his friend already suspected him. His fright was occasioned by

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

the thought that perhaps Bob had stolen the jewels during the night and then secreted them in *his* clothing, where if found the suspicion would not be on Bob. Mr. Barnes was amused as he saw the young man actually searching himself. In a few minutes, with a sigh of intense relief, having evidently discovered nothing foreign in his pockets, he turned to the conductor who stood waiting and expectant.

"Mr. Conductor," he began, "I fear that my conduct has seemed suspicious. I can't explain, but nevertheless I am perfectly willing to have you make a search. Indeed I am anxious that it should be a thorough one." The examination was made and, as with the others, nothing was found.

"Here is my card. I am Arthur Randolph, of the firm J. Q. Randolph & Son, Bankers." Mr. Randolph stood a trifle more erect as he said this, and the poor conductor felt that he had done him a grievous wrong. Mr. Randolph continued: "This is my friend, Robert Leroy Mitchel. I will vouch for him."

At the name Mitchel, Mr. Barnes was a trifle startled. It was the same as that which had been given by the woman who had been robbed. At this point, Mr. Mitchel, a man of forty-five, with a classic face, spoke:

"Thanks, Arthur, I can take care of myself."

The conductor hesitated a moment, and then addressed Mr. Mitchel:

"I regret very much the necessity which compels me to ask you to allow yourself to be searched, but it is my duty."

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"My dear sir, I understand perfectly that it is your duty and have no personal feelings against you. Nevertheless, I distinctly refuse."

"You refuse?" The words came from the other three men together. It is difficult to tell which was the most surprised. Randolph turned pale and leaned against the partition for support. Mr. Barnes became slightly excited and said:

"That amounts to a tacit acknowledgment of guilt, since every other man has been searched."

Mr. Mitchel's reply to this was even more of a surprise than what he had said before.

"That alters the case. If every one else has submitted, so will I." Without more ado he divested himself of his clothing. Nothing was found. The satchels of both men were brought, but the search was fruitless. The conductor glanced at the detective helplessly, but that gentleman was looking out of the window. One who knew Mr. Barnes could have told that he was fearfully angry, for he was biting the end of his moustache.

"Here we are at the Grand Central," said Mr. Mitchel. "Are we at liberty to leave the train?" Receiving an acquiescent nod the two friends walked to the other end of the coach. Mr. Barnes abruptly started up and without a word jumped from the train as it slowly rolled into the great depot. He went up to a man quickly, said a few words in an undertone, and both went back towards the train. Presently the woman who had been robbed came along, and as she passed out of the building Mr. Barnes's

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

companion followed her. He himself was about to depart, when, feeling a light tap upon his shoulder, he turned and faced Mr. Mitchel.

"Mr. Barnes," said the latter, "I want a few words with you. Will you breakfast with me in the restaurant?"

"How did you know that my name is Barnes?"

"I did not know it, though I do now"; and he laughed in a complacent manner which jarred on Mr. Barnes. The detective felt that this man was getting the best of him at every turn. But for all that he was only the more determined to trap him in the end. Accustomed to think quickly, he decided to accept the invitation, considering that he could lose nothing and might gain much by a further acquaintance. The two men therefore went below to the eating-room, and seated themselves at a small table. After giving the waiter a liberal order, Mr. Mitchel began:

"Won't it be best for us to understand one another from the outset, Mr. Barnes?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"I think you do. You asked me a moment ago how I knew your name. As I said, I did not know it, though I suspected it. Shall I tell you why?"

"Certainly, if you wish."

"Perhaps I am a fool to show you your first blunder in this game, since you are evidently enlisted against me; but as I sent my friend off alone, purposely for the chance of doing so, I cannot resist the temptation."

"Stop a moment, Mr. Mitchel. I am not such a fool

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

as you take me to be. I know what you are going to say."

"Ah, indeed! that is clever."

"You are about to tell me that I made an ass of myself when I spoke in the coach upon your refusing to be searched."

"Well, I should not have put it quite so harshly, but the fact is this: When you deliberately followed Randolph into the toilet-room, I became suspicious, being, as I was, at your heels. When the conductor spoke to me, I refused purposely, to watch the effect upon you, with the result, as you now see, that I had my suspicion confirmed. I knew that you were a detective, and, that point gained, there was no further reason for refusing the conductor."

"As I said, I acted like an ass. But I did not need this warning. It will not occur again, I assure you."

"Of course I see now that you overheard our conversation last night, and such being the case you naturally suspected me of this robbery. But I am wondering, if you did overhear our talk, why you did not watch me all night." To this Mr. Barnes made no reply. "I have one favor to ask."

"What is it?"

"That you reveal to no one the fact that I have undertaken to commit a crime. You of course are at liberty to play the ferret, and convict me—if you can."

"As surely as you commit a crime, so surely will I convict you of it," replied Mr. Barnes. "It will be perhaps to my interest to keep what I know to myself, but it will

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

not do to make any promises to you. I must be free to act as circumstances direct."

"Very good. I will tell you where I am stopping, and I give you permission to call to see me whenever you please, day or night. I have a suite of rooms at the Fifth Avenue. Now let me ask you one question. Do you think that I committed this robbery?"

"I will answer you with a question. Did you commit this robbery?"

"Capital. I see I have a foeman worthy of my steel. Well—we will leave both questions unanswered, for the present."

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER III.

MR. BARNES DISCOVERS AN ARTISTIC MURDER.

WHILST the meal was progressing, a man silently passed through the room. No one would have guessed that he had any special motive in doing so, for he noticed no one. Neither would one have supposed that Mr. Barnes observed him, for he had his back turned. Yet this was the same individual who upon his instruction had followed Rose Mitchel when she left the train.

Breakfast over, the two men started to leave the restaurant. Reaching the stairway which leads above to the main floor, Mr. Barnes courteously stood aside to allow his companion to ascend first. Mr. Mitchel, however, with a wave of the hand, declined, and followed Mr. Barnes. Whether either had any special design in this was a thought occupying the minds of both as they silently passed up-stairs. Mr. Mitchel had a slight advantage, in that being behind he could watch the detective. There seemed, however, to be little to see. To be sure the man who had passed through the restaurant was idly leaning against the doorway, but as soon as Mr. Barnes's head appeared, and certainly before he could have been noticed by Mr. Mitchel, he stepped out into the street, crossed over, and disappeared into the bank building opposite.

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Had any signal passed between these two detectives? Mr. Mitchel, despite his shrewdness in sending Mr. Barnes up-stairs ahead of him, saw none, yet this is what occurred: Mr. Barnes said adieu, and walked away. Mr. Mitchel stood in the doorway, gazing after him till he saw him enter the elevated railroad station; then, looking carefully about, he himself walked rapidly towards Sixth Avenue. He did not glance behind, or he might have seen the man in the bank step out and walk in the same direction. They had been gone about five minutes when Mr. Barnes once more appeared upon the scene. He stopped in the doorway, where the other detective had been leaning. Keenly scanning the panelling, his eye presently rested upon what he was seeking. Faintly written in pencil were the words "No. —— East Thirtieth." That was all, but it told Mr. Barnes that Rose Mitchel had been followed to this address, and as it tallied with that which she herself had given to him, he knew now that she could be found when wanted. Wetting his finger against the tip of his tongue, he drew it across the words, leaving nothing but a dirty smudge.

"Wilson is a keen one," thought the detective. "He did this trick well. Saw my nod, wrote that address, and got out of sight in an instant. I wonder if he can keep an eye on that shrewd scoundrel? Pshaw! I am giving the fellow too much credit. I must leave it to Wilson for to-day anyway, as I must get through with this Pettingill matter." Half an hour later he was at head-quarters talking with his assistants.

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Meanwhile Wilson followed Mr. Mitchel to Broadway :hen down to the Casino, where he stopped to buy tickets ; then out again, and down Broadway to the Fifth Avenue Hotel, which he entered. He nodded to the clerk, took his key, and passed up-stairs. Evidently he lived there. Wilson of course had no further definite instructions. From Mr. Barnes's backward nod, he had understood that he was to shadow this man, and under the circumstances it was his simple duty to do this until relieved by further orders. In these days of telephones it is easy enough to make hurried reports to head-quarters and then continue the pursuit. The Fifth Avenue is not a promising place in which to watch a man, provided the man knows that he is being watched. It has three exits—one on Broadway, and one each on Twenty-third and on Twenty-fourth Streets. Wilson flattered himself that Mr. Mitchel was unsuspicious, and therefore whichever way he might leave the building, he would first return his key at the desk. He consequently kept that point in view. Not half an hour had elapsed when his man appeared, gave up his key, as expected, and passed out by the Broadway door. Crossing the Avenue, he walked down Twenty-third Street, eastward ; Wilson followed cautiously, going through the Park. At Third Avenue Mr. Mitchel climbed the elevated stairway, and Wilson was compelled to do the same, though this brought him unpleasantly close. Both men took the same train, Mr. Mitchel in the first coach, Wilson the last. At Forty-second Street Mr. Mitchel left the train, and crossed the bridge, but instead

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

ot taking the annex for the Grand Central Depot, as one is expected to do, he slipped through the crowd to the main platform and took a train going back down-town. Wilson managed to get the same train, but he realized at once that his man either knew that he was followed, or else was taking extraordinary precautions. At Thirty-fourth Street station the trick was repeated, Mr. Mitchel crossing over the bridge and then taking an up-town train. What puzzled Wilson was that he could not detect that his man had noticed him. It seemed barely possible, as they had encountered crowds at both places, that he had escaped unobserved. He was more satisfied of this when, at Forty-second Street again, Mr. Mitchel once more left the train, crossed the bridge, and this time went forward, taking the coach for the Grand Central. Evidently all the manœuvring had merely been prompted by caution, and not having observed his shadow, the man was about to continue to his true destination. Mr. Mitchel had entered the coach by the first gate, and was seated quietly in the corner as Wilson passed on, going in by the gate at the opposite end. A moment later the guard slammed the gate at Wilson's end, and pulled the bell-rope. As quick as a flash Mr. Mitchel jumped up, and before he could be prevented, had left the coach just as it started, carrying away Wilson, completely outwitted and dumbfounded. As soon as the train stopped he darted down-stairs, and ran back towards the Third Avenue station; but he knew it was useless, as it proved. He saw nothing of Mr. Mitchel.

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Wilson was greatly disheartened, for he was most anxious to stand well with Mr. Barnes, his chief. Yet in revolving over the occurrences of the last half hour he could not see how he could have prevented the escape of his man, since it was evident that he had intentionally acted in a way to prevent pursuit. If one but knows or suspects that he is being shadowed, the Third Avenue elevated road, with its bridges at Thirty-fourth and Forty-second Streets, offers the most effectual means of eluding the most skilful detective. If Wilson had known anything whatever about the man who had escaped him, he might have been able to guess his destination, and so have caught up with him again by hurrying ahead and meeting him, as he had frequently done when following noted criminals with whose haunts he was acquainted. In this instance he was utterly in the dark, so could do nothing but swear.

If he could not report where Mr. Mitchel had gone, at least he might discover at what time he returned to his hotel, and possibly Mr. Barnes might receive some valuable hint by the lapse of time. With this idea, Wilson returned to the Fifth Avenue Hotel and waited patiently. He telephoned to head-quarters only to hear that Mr. Barnes had gone back to Boston to bring Pettingill to New York. Seven o'clock arrived, and yet his vigil was unrewarded. It suddenly occurred to him that as he had seen Mr. Mitchel purchase tickets for the Casino, that might be a good place to watch, though of course there was no certainty that they were for that night. Upon this

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

meagre hope he hastened up-town and stationed himself where he could keep an eye on all who entered. At ten minutes past eight he was about concluding that his task was useless when a cab stopped, and to his intense satisfaction he saw Mr. Mitchel alight, and then hand out a handsomely-dressed woman. Wilson had prepared himself for this possibility, by purchasing a ticket of admission, so that he followed the couple into the theatre, determined not to lose sight of his man again. The opera over, he found it easy to shadow the two, as the woman declined the proffered cab, perchance because the exhilarating, though cold night air made a walk home inviting. He was, however, somewhat amazed at last to see them enter the very apartment-house on Thirtieth Street to which he had traced Rose Mitchel in the morning. His mind was at once set at ease, for since both of his birds had flown to the same dove-cot, it seemed plain that they were connected. Evidently it was to this house that Mr. Mitchel had gone after eluding him in the morning. At least so argued the astute detective.

Wilson had waited opposite the building perhaps an hour, lulled into abstraction of thought by the silence of the neighborhood, when he was startled by hearing a piercing shriek, loud and long continued, which then died away, and all was still again. Whether it came from the apartment-house or one of the private dwellings next to it, he was in doubt. That it was a woman's cry he felt sure. Was it a cry of pain, or the shriek of nightmare? He could not tell. That solitary, awful cry,

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

disturbing the death-like stillness, seemed uncanny. It made him shiver and draw his cloak closer about him. If it had only been repeated, after he was on the alert, he would have felt better satisfied; but though he listened intently he heard nothing. Ten minutes later, another thing occurred, which attracted his attention. A light in a window on the fifth floor was extinguished. There was certainly nothing suspicious about this, for lights are usually put out when one retires. He noticed it because it was the only light which showed from any of the windows during his vigil. Whilst he was thinking of this, the door opposite opened and a man emerged. Judging it to be Mr. Mitchel, he hastily followed. That there might certainly be no mistake, Wilson walked rapidly enough to reach the Avenue corner ahead of the man, when he crossed, so timing himself that he passed in front of the other just as they both reached the street lamp. Taking a quick, but thorough look, Wilson saw that it was not Mr. Mitchel, so abandoned the pursuit, going back quickly towards the apartment-house. He had proceeded but a few paces, when he met Mr. Mitchel coming rapidly towards him. Breathing a sigh of relief, he passed, then crossed the street, and with his usual skill readily kept Mr. Mitchel in sight till he entered the Fifth Avenue Hotel. Wilson saw him take his key and go up-stairs, so that he felt that his vigil was over for that night. Looking at his watch he noted that it was just one o'clock. Going into the reading-room he wrote a report of the day's occurrences and then calling a messenger, sent it to

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY