

THE REFORMED BURGLAR.

My name is Louisa Law, and I am the wife—I am afraid that, to be quite truthful, I ought to say the plain and middle-aged wife—of a hard-working general practitioner in one of the suburbs of London. We have a large family, who at the time of my story were still very young, though now most of them are making their own way in the world. It is needless to add that we have never at any period of our career been over-burdened with money, although we are now in comfortable circumstances, owing chiefly to the fortunate intervention of a reformed burglar. I will tell the story.

One day I was walking down a quiet thoroughfare near Oxford Street on my return from a shopping expedition, when a respectable-looking man, dressed like a mechanic, suddenly stooped just in front of me and lifted—or appeared to lift—something from the pavement. "Might this be your property, ma'am?" he civilly asked, as he held out a purse towards me. "Have you lost your purse?"

Following a custom of very doubtful wisdom, I was at that moment carrying my purse in my hand. Taken off my guard, I involuntarily held it out, to show that it was perfectly safe, without reflecting whether or not it was advisable to do so. "Oh no," the purse does not belong to me. I have mine here all right, as you see."

Before I could divine his intention, before I could even cry out, much less follow him, he snatched my property from my careless hold, and darted like the wind up a narrow court which just there opened into the street; and I was left alone to lament my folly.

The loss was irremediable, for the man was quite out of sight, and no policeman was visible in the quiet street. I felt deeply vexed, for not only had there been much more money in it than a poor doctor's wife could well afford to lose, but also the purse itself was a good one, nearly new, which for additional security I had had stamped on the flap inside with my name and address, so that if I chanced to lose it among honest people, I might thereby recover it again. I made my way to the nearest police station to lay a complaint, but the authorities were not very sanguine that any good would result from the inquiries they promised to make. The whole thing was intensely annoying, the more so that with my purse I had lost all the bills for my day's shopping, together with other useful memoranda, and my railway ticket; and not having a penny in my pocket to buy another, I had to go to the expense of a cab all the way home, which made the adventure indeed a costly one.

I was writing some letters in the dining-room next morning, when my housemaid entered, bearing a gentleman's card, with the intimation that a visitor awaited me in the drawing-room. The name given was "Mr. T. Gerard," with an address in Fenchurch Street.

"But I know nobody of that name," I said dubiously. "Are you sure it is not a mistake?"

"Oh, no, ma'am; he asked for Mrs. Law. And he's quite the gentleman, ma'am, or I shouldn't have shown him into the drawing-room."

A man's ideas of a gentleman hardly corresponded with mine; but certainly the dark-haired, well-dressed young man who presented himself to my gaze on entering must be described as eminently respectable in appearance; and accordingly I asked him to be seated. He wasted no time, but plunged at once into business. Putting his hand into his pocket, he drew out a small parcel, which he handed to me, asking if it was mine. I was agreeably surprised to behold my lost purse, empty, indeed, but for the papers it contained, but otherwise unharmed.

"It is mine. Where did you find it?"

"I am a clerk in the City, madam, employed, as you see, in Fenchurch Street; and happening to be in—Place yesterday afternoon on business for the firm, I picked up this purse—it is needless to say quite empty—at the entrance of a small back street which communicates, I believe, with Oxford Street."

"The turning is near an upholsterer's shop?"

"Yes, madam."

"Then that is the very court up which the man escaped. He must have thrown the purse away as he ran." And in great indignation I related my story.

Mr. Gerard was shocked and grieved to think that such an outrage could be possible in a civilized capital; and heartily wished that he had been at hand to arrest the thief in his flight. He asked if I thought I should recognize the man again, to which I replied that I believed so; and then, as delicately as I could, I began to hint that I really could not think of troubling him to come so far out of his way only to restore my purse. But he was up in arms at the mere suggestion of any reward.

The only thing I could do to show my gratitude was to ring for cake and wine and press them upon him; repeating my thanks many times as we parted, mutually pleased.

"Well, at any rate it's a comfort to think that there are some honest people in the world," I reflected as I returned to the dining-room.

I related the incident to my husband when he returned from his rounds; but instead of being pleased, he rather unsympathetically remarked that it was odd the young man had nothing better to do with his time than waste it in restoring my purse, and that he pitied the firm in Fenchurch Street. Somehow, men never will see these things as women do; they are always so hard to please and so suspicious!

Next day, the truth came to light. Jane sought me out with a very pale face to inform me that some of the drawing-room ornaments were missing. In accordance with the rather senseless custom of the day, my tables and what-nots were crowded with a miscellaneous collection of small articles, many of them valuable. My smooth-spoken young friend had utilised his spare moments well while Jane departed in search of me. A pair of silver-candlesticks, a silver snuff-box, a very costly *etui* of Battersea enamel with gold fittings, and a tortoise shell paper-knife with a silver handle, had disappeared—no doubt for ever. I had been proud of my knick-knacks, which were more valuable than perhaps befitted the establishment of a poor doctor; but they had cost us little, being either heirlooms or wedding presents.

I sat down and cried, of course; while my husband in terse language expressed his opinion of humbugging clerks. We both

scolded Jane for admitting him into the drawing-room, although his respectable appearance had also taken me in; but nothing could bring back our lost property. John gave information to the police, who promised to inquire among the pawnbrokers; but not a vestige of the stolen property was ever forthcoming. Perhaps what annoyed me even more than the serious loss was to think how civil I had been to the deprecator, pressing cake and wine upon him when all the time my property was snugly stowed away in his pockets! How he must have laughed in his sleeve at my simplicity!

The effect of my strictures upon Jane was to make her ever after very chary of admitting any stranger to the drawing-room, actually on one occasion leaving the clergyman of the parish, who was the son of a bishop and the possessor of an honoured historical name, standing forlornly on the hall mat, while she came to inform my husband that "there was a person in the hall who wished to see him!" In short, the annoyance produced by that unlucky purse was almost endless; and for years it was a sore subject in our house, until lapse of time caused it to be forgotten.

Some years afterwards I went down to Brighton to pay a visit to a wealthy old aunt of mine, Miss Symes, who had resided there for a long time. She was between seventy and eighty, but still active and strong, her mental faculties being also in full vigour. A distant cousin of mine, Fanny Gresham, lived with her for the sake of companionship; but her duties were light, for Miss Symes was an old lady of a proud and independent spirit, who disliked being waited upon, and still insisted on transacting all her own business. She was strict in her religious observances, and among the most constant visitors to her house was the vicar of the church she attended.

The first day after my arrival had been chosen by my aunt to hold a drawing-room meeting in advocacy of a mission which was doing much good in the slums of London, and the founder and conductor of which, Mr. David Bryant, was to make an appeal in person. The vicar, Mr. Stephens, was one of the first to arrive with his wife and daughters; and in a short time my aunt's spacious drawing-room was full of people, chiefly elderly.

Doubtless many of my readers have attended similar gatherings, so there is no need to give a detailed account of the proceedings. Mr. Bryant, who was formally introduced to the assemblage by the vicar, was a tall, good-looking, dark-haired man of about forty, dressed in black, with a white tie, which gave him quite a clerical appearance, although he was only a layman. He proceeded to make a long statement of the work and results of the mission, which appeared to be achieving a great deal of good, although until that moment I had never heard of it.

It was very odd, but a fancy seized me, before I had listened to Mr. Bryant very long, that I had surely seen him somewhere before, though I could not remember where. I listened rather abstractedly, being puzzled over this, while one person and another rose to make a few remarks; and last of all, a salver was handed round for donations.

It was a very good collection, so much so that I felt quite ashamed of my modest half-crown, as I looked at the show of bank-notes and sovereigns and half-sovereigns. Some of the old ladies were in tears over Mr. Bryant's touching account of his experience as a missionary in the slums. Then tea and coffee were handed round, and after that the company dispersed, except the vicar and Mr. Bryant, who remained to spend the evening with my aunt.

My conviction that I must have seen Mr. Bryant before became deeper and deeper as the minutes sped on; so at last I asked him boldly whether he had not previously met.

The missionary turned his bright dark eyes upon me with a smile, saying that it was not impossible, although he retained no recollection of the circumstance. He had never visited that part of London in which my home was situated, and many years of his life had been spent abroad; but I might perhaps have seen him on the platform of Exeter Hall or some similar place.

He was evidently in high favour with my aunt, who unbent towards him more than I ever saw her do to a stranger before. But I noticed that Fanny sat by with a disapproving expression on her face.

I followed my cousin into her room for a confidential talk before going to bed that night, being curious to ascertain what I could learn from her respecting my aunt's new friend.

"Who is this Mr. Bryant, Fanny?" I asked, as I took a seat.

"Odious man! Don't mention him, Louisa; I detest him too much!"

"Why, what harm has he done you?"

"Harm! He has come here and inveigled himself into aunt's good grace, getting a lot of money out of her on one pretence and another, and making her believe he's a saint and a hero, when he's nothing of the sort! He almost lives in this house now, and from morning till night we hear nothing but his praises."

"I thought his mission was in London. How comes it that he is here at Brighton?"

"He gives out that he was ordered down here for rest and change of air. He came first about three months ago, and managed to scrape acquaintance with Mr. Stephens, who took an immense fancy to him, and introduced him to aunt. And now, as I told you, he is always coming here; and aunt is so besotted with him, that unless something is done soon, I really believe she will let him coax her out of half her fortune. I hope I'm not more greedy than the other people; but you and I are the only relations she has in the world."

"I can see you don't believe in him."

"Not a bit! I'm convinced he's nothing better than an impostor, and his mission and all his other schemes are only dodges to get money out of people. For instance, there was that large collection this afternoon, thank goodness, I only gave sixpence, for who is to know that he doesn't keep all the money himself?"

"Does he not furnish accounts?"

"Oh, yes; he professes to give you a balance-sheet; but it would be easy to have anything he liked printed, new to satisfy people. No one could tell whether it was correct or not.—Didn't you say you fancied you had seen him before?"

"Yes; but, unfortunately, I can't recollect where."

"Well, time will tell," said Fanny,

"what he is, but I can never believe in him."

It was indeed true that aunt was besotted with him, as Fanny had said. When I ventured, a few days later, after Mr. Bryant had been in for dinner and made himself very much at home, to hint that I thought his manner was rather proprietor-like for a comparative stranger, she repudiated the idea in the strongest terms she could muster. "Well," I said, "of course I don't know anything about him, but it seems to me you give him a great deal of liberty."

"What does that matter, when I know him to be a man of honour? But I suppose you'll be calling him a swindler next, as Fanny did the other day."

"I must say, aunt, that I do think it would be better to be on your guard in dealing with a total stranger."

"Well, really, the way you young people"—I was fifty, by-the-bye—"take upon yourselves to lecture your elders nowadays is something astonishing! Surely, Louisa, a woman of my years might be trusted to exercise discretion! Do you suppose I should allow a plausible impostor to take me in? Mr. Bryant is what he professes to be, beyond a doubt."

I was afraid to say any more, although I was really very uneasy; for almost insensibly the stranger had succeeded in gaining such an ascendancy in my aunt's house that he would have been very difficult to dislodge.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Rocky Mountain Forest Fires.

Those who are unfamiliar with the pine-clad slopes of the Rocky Mountains can have but little conception of the destruction wrought by fire which passes through these forests. The ground is covered to the depth of a foot or more with the pitchy accumulations of centuries of forest growth. Pine needles, cones, dead branches, and resinous trunks of fallen trees form a forest floor that catches fire like tinder and burns like a furnace. A spark from a camp fire, pipe, or cigarette, may ignite this forest floor, which may smoulder for hours or days before bursting into flame. This flame once started, the fire moves rapidly before the wind, constantly finding, as it moves along, new food in the evergreen trees burns as readily as hay soaked in kerosene oil. Each tree, as the fire touches it, becomes a huge torch, which flares up for a moment and then goes out, but in that moment the tree's life has been destroyed, and the thousand trunks of the forest are left to stand for years, black monuments of the fire's destructive force. Before a gale, such as often rages in the mountains, a fire which has got into the thick timber rushes onward with a fury which is indescribable, and destroys in an hour timber that a century of growth cannot replace.—*Forest and Stream.*

England's Great Prosperity.

Sir J. Lubbock, who is an experienced banker as well as a man of science and a politician, evidently believes that the cycle of lean years has fairly passed. He told the London Chamber of Commerce recently that prices were rising everywhere, and that the Clearing House returns, which two years ago were six thousand millions, were last year seven thousand millions sterling, a rise of fifteen per cent. in the great barometer of pecuniary transactions. The tonnage of our shipping increased both absolutely and relatively, so that half the ships of the ocean carried the British flag—will nobody give us the statistics of coasters also?—and of 6,800,000 tons which passed through the Suez Canal last year, 5,400,000 tons were British, an amazing and, to us at least, inexplicable fact. Why should we thus beat countries like France, Italy, and Austria, which have every advantage of us in position for the Oriental trade, and can produce any number of cheap sailors? Is it all natural adaptability for a seafaring life, or ready command of capital, or both together? We should like to comprehend, too, if we could, why, when Asia produces some of the best sailors in the world, and possesses some of the richest merchants, she secures almost no part of the carrying trade. The Arabs have a sort of genius for the sea; yet they do not carry now even the pilgrims from India to Mecca.

Our Salmon-Packing Industry.

Mr. B. Young, president of the British America Salmon Packing Company, which operates on the Fraser and Skeena rivers in British Columbia, was in Toronto the other day, having just arrived from England. Mr. Young says the first shipments of last season's pack arrived in London while he was there. The pack is always sold in advance, and he regretted that prices were dull for the coming season, being a dollar a case less than last year—a case containing 48 one-pound cans. Last year was a good year, the best, in fact, in the history of the industry. Judging from the past this year will be a fairly good year, next year will not be as good, and 1892 will be, comparatively speaking, a failure. The sixteen canneries on the Fraser turned out last year 300,000 cases. In 1888, the bad year, it was only 80,000. This year Mr. Young estimates the pack at 150,000 cases. The Skeena river has six canneries with an output of 60,000 cases last year. Besides these there are several other canneries on the Pacific coast. The dulness of the market, he thought, might perhaps be due to the unprecedentedly large catch of 1889. Mr. Young will interview the departmental officials in reference to the fishing regulations.

Public Opinion.

The most important thing in life
Is what the neighbors say.
The thing that stops or starts up strife
Is what the neighbors say.
No matter what the case may be,
Just look around, and you will see
The thing that governs you and me
Is what the neighbors say.

Your wife thinks when she gets a dress,
What will the neighbors say?
She almost rests her happiness
On what the neighbors say.

The girl with a new diamond ring,
A seal-ring, or some such thing,
Thinks, as she gives her head a fling,
What will the neighbors say?

You know yourself how much you care
For what the neighbors say,
Sometimes the hardest thing to bear
Is what the neighbors say.

You may pretend that you don't mind,
But still you wince when they're unkind—
The chief thing in this life, you'll find,
Is what the neighbors say.

PERSONALS.

Tolstoi, the Russian novelist, has thirteen children.

Emin Pash now speaks twenty-seven different languages and dialects.

Gen. von Capri, the new chancellor of the German empire, is unmarried.

The czarowitz and his brother, Prince George, will visit this continent the coming summer. Both are young, the future Czar being but 22 years of age.

The most remarkable contribution in the English periodicals on Bismarck's retirement is said to be a paper in the *Contemporary Review* entitled "King and Minister; a Midnight Conversation." The conversation is imaginary, at very like what such an interview would be.

The only totally blind member of the present British House of Commons is Mr. Macdonald of Ireland. He is brought into the lobby by Mrs. Macdonald every night and given over to the charge of one of his colleagues. She returns almost nightly to lead him home to dinner, and restores him to his parliamentary work when he is needed at 10 o'clock.

Writing from Samoa, Robert Louis Stevenson says: "I've arranged for the purchase of 400 acres of land within a mile or two of Apia and I hope to have a house there and to make it a home for myself and wife. It's a delightful place, on a piece of rising ground, with a splendid view of the country and the sea beyond. Sydney and Auckland are not far off things go. As a speculation from a business point of view, the affair would be madness. But it will serve my purpose."

There died at Rheims the other day a woman who illustrated the wonderful aptitude of French women for carrying on business enterprises, and who combined in herself rare administrative ability with practical benevolence. Madame Pommeroy became the head of a great champagne house on the death of her husband at the close of the Franco-Prussian war. She personally directed the entire establishment, amassed a large fortune, and was princely in her charities and in her patronage of art.

The Russian Imperial family are at present considering what route should be chosen for the sea voyage which the Czarowitz and his brother, the Grand Duke George, will undertake in the course of the present year. A Reuter's telegram from St. Petersburg says it is still undecided whether they will make a simple cruise in European waters, followed by a voyage direct to Vladivostok, or take a more extended journey, with stoppages at different points on the Indian coast. The two Grand Dukes will probably start in the autumn.

Miss M. E. Braddon, dearer to the novel-reader's heart than Mrs. Maxwell could ever be, is described as fair of skin, sandy of hair, and stout of figure. She works hard four days of the week, and plays three days. Among her recreations are horse-back-riding, playing, and entertaining her friends. She is a collector of bric-a-brac, a lover of Dickens, a genial hostess, and an accomplished cook. She has published more than fifty novels, is married to her publisher, who is rich, and after all the "copy" she has produced she still writes a legible hand.

It is reported in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* that in repairing the house of Goethe a bundle, including seventeen love letters written by the author of "Faust," has been found in a hole in the wall. They were all in the handwriting of the poet, dated in 1774, and addressed: "An die Jungfer Klarchen Laubenthaler in der Goldfiedergasse." Tied up with these letters were five manuscript poems in Goethe's handwriting, four of which appear in the edition of his collected works, though the fifth, called "Liebesgluck" has never been printed, "probably," says the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, "on account of its very free contents." There were also a miniature of Goethe as he was at about 20, twenty-nine letters signed by Klarchen, addressed to "Dr. Goethe, the younger," and a miniature representing a beautiful young girl, as well as two locks of hair, one dark blond and one light blond, which are supposed to have been Goethe's and Klarchen's. Klarchen is thought to be the girl whom Goethe was in love with before he knew Lili Schonebaum. This girl, as he said, he "carried in his heart like a flower of spring." Klarchen is also supposed to be the original of the character of the same name in Goethe's "Egmont."

The Simplicity of the Scriptures.

To appreciate the simplicity and sublimity of the Genesis of Moses one has only to place it in contrast with the scientific enunciation of the facts contained in the taking of sentence of the inspired word. Taking the latest declarations of the science which ignores the personal God, regarding the time and manner of the origin of the material universe the New Genesis, according to Dr. Parker, of London, would run something as follows: "Fourteen hundred and eighty-two billions of ages ago there was an infinitesimal and sub-microscopical deposit of carbon; which simple substance commenced a series of eccentric and immeasurable gyrations, revolving at a pace, technically called a velocity, which no mathematical formula can even rudely express; when suddenly there struck out a primary compound, ages afterward known as quartz; and in course of millenniums primary compounds yielding carbonate of lime, gypsum and silicates; and then began the mysterious process of crystallization. After countless eons we come upon the formation of chemical rocks, igneous and aqueous as the case may be, both kinds having concretionary, nodular, or sparry textures. Ages after ages came Feldspathic lavas, Augitic lavas, &c." Now place beside this account (which those who are familiar with the attempts of science to state these far-off events, will not accuse of being exaggerated) the account as found in the Genesis of Moses. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." What simplicity is here and yet what grandeur and comprehension. It covers everything, as to time and explains everything as to manner by the one word "God." That the cosmogony of the old lawgiver will soon give place to that of those who would dispense with the intervention of a personal and independent Will, is a statement that few will be rash enough to hazard. It does not appear particularly difficult task to find fault with Moses and the record he has left us; but if we want to know the superior excellence of his story we have only to try and replace it. Then we discover that it is like trying to get enough candles together to make up for the loss of the sun.

ELECTRICITY.

Some of the More Recent Uses Which Has Been Put.

At a recent meeting of the British Association at Newcastle, Lord Armstrong related a wonderful incident, which illustrates the laws of diffusion of electric currents through conductors. A bar of steel about a foot long, which he was holding in his hand, was allowed accidentally to come in contact with the two poles of a dynamo in action. He instantly felt a painful sensation of burning, and he let the bar drop. He found his fingers, where they had been in contact with the bar, severely blistered. The bar was found immediately afterward to be quite cold. This proved the outer surface of the steel to have been intensely heated, and that not enough of heat was generated sensibly to warm the whole bar; in other words, that an exceedingly high temperature existed for an exceedingly short time in an exceedingly thin skin of metal.

The electric snow plough, which clears the track more quickly and efficiently than an ordinary snow plough drawn by twelve horses, has shown its superiority so convincingly during the past winter that a prominent company are at work on and have nearly completed a special electric sweeper and track cleaner for cleaning the track of dust, dirt, slight snowfalls, and other impediments to the good running of the cars.

Some important developments in the application of electricity to mining may be looked for, from the fact that Mr. Edison and his assistants have taken quarters for a year in Charlotte, N. C., to pursue experiments in the adjacent district, which is declared to be the richest mineral region in the world.

According to present appearances electricity may be superseded for rapid suburban transit purposes, under certain peculiar conditions, by the sliding railway, to experiment further on which an overhead line is to be constructed in Paris between the Place Clichy and La Vilette, capable of carrying 12,000 passengers an hour each way. The distance (about four miles), including stoppage at three intermediate stations, is intended to be traversed in seven minutes. The experimental line exhibited recently in Paris is to be re-erected at the Edinburgh Exhibition.

An incident which occurred in the early days of the installation of arc light plants, and which illustrates some of the benefits conferred by electric industries, is related by Prof. E. H. Thomson. An arc light machine of about eight or nine lights' capacity, with bare wire lines, was put up in a large brewery in Philadelphia, two arc lights lighting the stable, in which there were thirty or more valuable horses. One evening a fire started in the hay loft, in the story above, where there were no lights of any kind used, and soon the flame and smoke spread to the stable room and menaced the horses. The proprietor happened to strike the idea of starting up the electric lights at this juncture. Their brilliant rays saved the animals, which were removed without trouble, and the lights were kept burning during the progress of the fire. Its spread was limited by the efficient work of the firemen the lights were not extinguished, but assisted them in their efforts very materially.

It is estimated that although there are over 100,000 telephone talks a day in the city of New York there are probably a million people here who have never yet talked over a telephone. The long-distance telephone service has been made very efficient, as may be gathered from the fact that the roar of Niagara Falls can now be distinctly heard in New York city over its lines.

For a number of years exhaustive information on electricity in storms, with special regard to the influence of atmospheric electricity on the telegraph service and on telegraph apparatus, has been collected by the Imperial Telegraph Department, Berlin. At present 800 telegraph offices have instructions to keep a record of the cost, duration, and direction of storms. From the observations made it appears that, while not altogether free from the influence of atmospheric electricity, such influence is materially smaller in the case of underground wires as compared with wires above ground. In regard to town telephone wires it is worthy of remark that notwithstanding the violence of several of the storms in the towns having a telephone system, the accidents from fighting compared with former years were strikingly few, and the assumption does not, therefore, appear to be without justification that the wires stretched over the roofs afford effective protection in equalizing atmospheric electricity.

Electricity is designed to play a permanent part in domestic life. Electric cooking utensils, utilizing its heating properties, have been designed, and in some instances put into practical operation. One of the latest novelties in this respect is an electric flatiron. It consists of a hollow flatiron in the interior of which a coil is placed which is heated by the current passing through it. The ease and comfort derived from the use of such a device, in hot weather especially, is apparent.

The question whether or not electricity is manufactured is now being tried in certain courts. If it is manufactured, the producers in numerous States are liable to taxation. Benjamin Franklin held that electricity was not manufactured, but was taken from one body to be delivered to another, and that practically nothing was lost in the transition. Hitherto our scientific men have held this to be true in a broad sense.

In the Sikkim expedition a telegraph office was opened which enjoys the distinction of being the highest in the world. It is situated at Bhutong, at an altitude of 13,500 feet, nearly 2 1/2 miles above the level of the sea.

A simple method of curing the troublesome creeping of salts on batteries is described by Mr. Ernest Gerard. This is to smear the surfaces to be preserved with a thin coat of vaseline. The vaseline is unchangeable by air, is not attacked by most chemicals, is easily applied, keeps in place, and does not cover up from sight the parts to be protected.

Depended on the Result.

Passer-by (to Tommy, who has just been fighting).—"Wouldn't your father whip you if he knew you had been fighting?" Tommy.—"Well, that depends. If the other boy whipped me, pop would whip me too; but if I licked the other boy, pop would just say, 'I wouldn't fight, if I were you, Tommy.'"