

My Little Wife

My little wife provides,
And perfect love abides.
The bread is spongy, the butter soft,
The marmalade is sweet and hot.

A French Detective's Story.

This is how I came to be mixed up with certain detectives of the Rue de Jerusalem, the Scotland Yard of Paris.
A friend of mine, a solicitor, had among his clients a firm of East India brokers, into which had recently been admitted, as a partner, the son of the scolar member of the house.

To me was intrusted the task of getting back the bonds. It was agreed that I was to start the next day; that I was to pay as little as possible for the recovery; and that I was to keep the whole affair as much as possible in the dark.
Some of the peculiarities of the French detectives and their system struck me very forcibly, even before I landed at Boulogne.

I thanked my new acquaintance very much, and told him that though I had a letter of introduction from the French Embassy to the chief de police correctionnelle in Paris, I should be very glad indeed to avail myself of his services.
In the train, as well as in the steamer, my friend talked a good deal about our English police system, and more particularly about our English detectives.

"We," he continued, divide our police into two great divisions—the police politique and a police correctionnelle. Of the former you have none at all. So much the better for you. The police correctionnelle we subdivide into two categories, those who wear uniform and those who don't. The former are for keeping order in the streets, at the doors of public buildings, and other places where there are crowds; also, they have to deal with ordinary thieves, house-breakers, and rogues of the lower orders. For instance, if I happened to be passing through the streets of Paris and saw a light, a tumult or other disturbance, I would not dream of interfering. It would be the business of the sergents-de-ville to do so.

"But," said I, "do you not approve of our secret police, or detectives?"
"No," said the Frenchman, "I do not. I may be wrong, but they do not appear to me to know the very commencement of their work. For instance, as your London detectives go along the street the policeman on duty speak to him, or give him a nod of recognition, or if he is a superior, salute him. You saw me a little while ago at Boulogne—was there then in the train on our way to Paris—was a number of sergents-de-ville when we disembarked. Did any one of them make me a sign of recognition?"

"You don't suppose that I always go about in the same costume? It is true that I leave my house every morning in the same dress; and if you were to ask my companion, or any of my neighbours, who and what I am, you would be told that my name was so-and-so—je suis docteur, et que je suis dans les affaires—which is equivalent to what you English call 'something in the city.'"

"If you ever, if I may ask the question, use disguise or dresses so as to make yourself pass for something else than what you really are?"
"Maia, comment!" replied the policeman, "that is one of our special duties. A member of the special police who could not pass himself off for what he is not would not be worth twenty francs a month in the way of salary. I have at different times disguised myself as a priest, as a dragoon, as an infantry officer, as a carpenter, as a printer, as a cocher de fiacre. I have waited at a table in a restaurant as a garcon of the establishment; I have wheeled a truck with luggage on it from the Chemin de Fer du Nord to the Grand hotel; I have smuggled cigars, passed myself off as a comestible, and assisted in taking tickets at the station. In fact there are few situations and fewer trades to which I have not for a time belonged, and to which I hope I have done a certain amount of honour."

"Look here," replied my companion, "this is Thursday; we shall arrive in Paris about 7 o'clock this morning. If Monsieur will make me a bet of a dinner for four persons at any restaurant the lower passages, I will wager that before Sunday night I will speak on three separate occasions to Monsieur, that he will not on either occasion recognize who I am until I disclose myself, and that at each time I will speak to him for at least five minutes."
Thinking it impossible that any one person could by change of dress, or what not, deceive me as to his identity three times in four days, I at once agreed to make the bet. In due time we arrived at the station of the Chemin de Fer du Nord; I betaking myself to my hotel and my companion to his own home.

After breakfast I set off to present my credentials at the Rue de Jerusalem; which, as most people know, is the headquarters of the Paris police. Upon sending up my letter and card, I was shown to the room of the "sous-chef de police correctionnelle," which, as I have mentioned before, is a totally distinct department from that of the political police. The gentleman into whose presence I was shown had very little the appearance which in England we perceive in our police-inspectors. He was a well-dressed, clean-shaven man of about 50 years of age, and looked more like the manager or head of a banking establishment than as if he had anything to do with the detective police. He was seated at a large writing-table, upon which were a multitude of letters and other papers duly docketed. Within reach he had three or four handles of electric-bells, and half a dozen elastic speaking tubes, by which he could communicate in an instant with any part of the building. On one side of the room was a large glass door, beyond which I could perceive quite plainly some three or four sergents-de-ville were sitting, so that they could see all that passed in their chief's room, and be ready to come in at a moment's notice, although they could not hear what was said.

The sous chief received me not only well, but courteously. He heard my story, and without expressing an opinion as to whether I could carry out the views of my employers and recover the bonds, said he thought he knew the man who would suit me—qu'il s'en occupait. He then touched one of the bell-handles, and immediately spoke through one of the tubes to some person or persons in another part of the house. Having received a reply to his queries, he told me that the man he wanted would be with us in a minute, and then began talking on indifferent subjects. In a very short time some one knocked at the door, and upon being told to come in, there entered quite a young man, almost as well-dressed as his superior, and who, if I had been asked the question, I should have put down as one of the ordinary flaneurs on the boulevards. The sous-chef introduced me to him, saying he was an individual well up in all the resources—resources was the word he used—of commercial Paris; and that if I would go with him and tell him my whole story he could, no doubt, help me, and if it were possible to do so recover the bonds. He then took me by the hand, wished me "bonne chance," said he would be glad to see me again, and hoped that I would be able to give a good account of the Paris police on my return to London. I then went forth with my new guide, thinking how utterly unlike both he and his chief were to anything I had seen in the way of police detectives in London.

My experience of Frenchmen, extending over a period of many years, taught me that, if they really wanted one of them to help them, the first thing to do is to ask him to breakfast—to that meal which is eaten at 11 or 12 o'clock, and which bears a strong likeness to an elaborate English luncheon. I accordingly asked the individual under whose care I had been put, to come with me to breakfast at a certain restaurant in Place du Havre, where, having a weakness for sole à la Meuniere, one of the specialties of the house, I usually eat my midday meal when staying in the pleasant of European capitals. My companion promptly accepted the proffered civility, and, as we jogged along in a fiacre, I explained to him the nature of my business in Paris, and how anxious I was to recover the lost bonds for my friends without letting the public know that the latter had been robbed.

The detective said he did not think there would be any difficulty about the matter. He hoped, and indeed, he believed that, if the bonds had been pawned or pledged in Paris, he could find without much difficulty where they were, and that no respectable firm would take in pawn, or bonds from an individual they did not know; that those firms who did business of this sort would advance a very small portion of the actual value, and that if I was prepared to pay a little more than had been advanced the bonds would no doubt be recovered. Thus talking we arrived at the Place du Havre, and both did full justice to the excellent breakfast placed before us. After coffee, cigars and champagne, we separated, my comrade walking down with me as far as the Grand hotel, where he took leave, promising to see me about 3 o'clock on the afternoon of the next day, at the hotel where I was lodging, the Bedford, in the Rue de l'Archeveque. During our walk between the Place du Havre and the Grand hotel was anxious to see whether my companion was recognized by several sergents-de-ville that we met on the road; but nothing of the kind took place. No one, whether of the police or not, appeared to have the slightest idea that this individual was anything more than one of the well-dressed loafers who may be counted by the thousands in Paris. He was well-dressed, but not in any way dandified; and from the crown of his hat to the sole of his boot there was nothing whatever about him that spoke of his profession. If I had been asked to guess who he was, I should have said he was a clerk in some merchant's office or a bank, and that although not wealthy, he was tolerably prosperous and well-to-do man. His manners were good and free, without being presuming; he spoke and acted as being quite my equal, and yet with nothing but the favoured of true French politeness. His willingness to help me was expressed more as if he was anxious to show kindness and civility to a foreigner than as if he expected to be in any way rewarded for what he did. He never in any way so much as hinted at money or money's worth being needed to carry out his work, and when I spoke to him of his expenses he would incur in making his inquiry, and of my willingness to place funds in his hands for that purpose, his answer was, "These are matters which you will arrange by-and-by with the chief. I am only acting under his orders."

After leaving the detective's office whose services were thus placed at my disposal, I walked back by the boulevards to the Madeleine, on my way to the rue de l'Archeveque. Happening to pass a linen-draper's shop, and noticing some socks which looked fancy, I went in to look at them. Not being so vain about the size and whether or not they would fit me, the woman of the shop very civilly offered to send round some pairs of different sizes from which I could select. I gave her my address at the hotel; which was but a short distance off, and I had hardly arrived at the Bedford before

one of the waiters tapped at my door and announced that a man had brought me some socks to look at from a shop on the boulevards.

I desired that the man should be shown up. He brought his parcel in with him and stood facing me as he nudged it, talking about the weather, of the few strangers that were in Paris and the usual gossip of a would-be civil Paris shopman. I did not look at him very fixedly, but noticed that he was a man of about 30 years of age, with full black beard and moustache, black and somewhat long hair and respectfully, although not fashionably, dressed. He showed me several pairs of socks, which I measured with some of my own from my portmanteau. I selected a pair, but was more than double what I had had to pay in the most fashionable west end shop in London. We argued the point amicably together, and when I produced a 100 franc note wherewith to pay him he said he had no change, but would go down to the bureau of the hotel and ask for what he needed. I stated these particulars to show that the man was some time in my room, and that we had a considerable amount of conversation together. He was turning to go out of the door, but once pulled off his rig, his beard and whiskers, and stood revealed to me as my travelling companion from Dover to Paris. He grinned with delight as having scored one of the three points he had made to win his bet. For my own part I was so astonished I could hardly speak. The disguise had been perfect, and the manner in which he had followed me from the shop—into which a short half hour before I had no idea of entering—was astounding that I told him at the time he deserved to win the game from what he had already done. But this would not satisfy him. A Frenchman, no matter what his occupation may be, invariably takes pride in his work, and this detective was as proud of having outwitted me as a general would be of having gained a great victory. He resumed his wig and beard so as not to excite surprise in the people of the hotel, and going with him to the bureau I procured change for my note and paid him for the socks. The latter, it appeared, belonged bona fide to the shop where I had been. But how Monsieur X had got the position of them, or why the woman of the shop had allowed him to bring them to my hotel, are mysteries I have never yet been able to solve.

The next morning, while I was still discussing an early breakfast, a visiting card, on which was inscribed the name "Archille Dubrac," was handed to me, with the intimation that the gentleman of that name wished to see me. Anxious as I was to obtain news of the lost property, and thinking that "Archille Dubrac" might be the name I had not caught when introduced to the detective at the Rue de Jerusalem, I was not a little disappointed when my visitor was ushered into the room. He was an elderly man, with short-cut, curly hair, white, drooping moustache and a very pale face, and began a long, rambling statement about being assistant or clerk in a certain financial firm, to which firm, upon a day he named, some foreign bonds payable "to bearer," and worth 250,000 francs (25,000 pounds) had been entrusted for safe-keeping. The principal facts of the man's statement were easy enough to understand, but what between his rambling voice and his evident desire to conceal certain details I could not exactly make out his story, and ended by asking him whether he would accompany me to Rue de Jerusalem and state there what he had told me.

"Ave le plus grand plaisir," replied he, in a familiar and altogether changed voice, and there, pulling off his wig and adjusting his moustache, sat revealed once more my travelling companion, Monsieur X! I had certainly been taken in, if possible more completely than the first time, and I again offered to pay my bet as fairly lost. This, however, my friend would not hear of, and said he must either win a third time or pay for the dinner he had lost. In the meantime he must tell me that he had really been sent by the chief de bureau in the Rue de Jerusalem to announce to me that a part, if not the whole, of the bonds had been discovered; and that they were in the hands of a very respectable firm in Rue Notre Dame de Nazareth. "And now, mon ami," said the Frenchman, "all you have to do is to remain quiet for the present, and not to move in the affair. In two or three days we hope to carry through your wishes. And as to our little bet, gar' vous, monsieur!" With this he gave my hand a shake and disappeared, chucking to himself behind the zhok white moustache before going down stairs.

During the next two days, which I, nothing loath, employed in looking up my friends, visiting the theatre, and otherwise killing time, I regarded with suspicion, every Frenchman who approached me, thinking to discover, in every strange face, the right, twinkling eyes and triumphant smile of my clever enemy. On the evening of the second day I went to see a friend of from the Massas station, and, strange to say, that, although I had only at the eleventh hour made up my mind to accompany him, it was here I lost my third and last point in my bet with Monsieur X. As our fiacre drove up, one of the regular-ticketed porters came forward to take my companion's trunk. In lifting it from the roof of the carriage he let it fall. Upon this I spoke to him somewhat angrily. Frenchman-like, he returned my abuse, and, for at least five minutes, we stood face to face, slanging each other in the choicest of French language. My friend, who was an Englishman, stood by, anxious to put in a word to help me, but not knowing exactly how to do so. All of a sudden the porter put down the trunk, and asked me to speak to him in the street. Taking me under the gauntlet, and looking cautiously around, he pulled off his cap and a curious sort of skin-mask which covered the forehead, nose, and upper part of the face, sitting closely like a glove, and there stood Monsieur X.

I at once declared that I had fairly lost the bet and invited him and any other two friends he liked to bring to dine with me, the next day at my favourite restaurant in the Place du Havre. We then returned to the most central part of Paris, my companion having in the meantime changed his clothes at the house of a friend in the neighbourhood. The history of the finding of the bonds is soon told. In three or four days after my

arrival in Paris the police had the whole affair at my finger's ends. It was just as they suspected. The securities had been pledged to a very low money-lending firm for something under five hundred pounds, they being worth twenty times the amount. A little—or I should say not a little—pressure was put upon these "hylocks," who for a premium of two thousand francs (240) were made to disgorge what may truly be called their plunder. They managed these things, if not better, at any rate more promptly in France than in England. The Paris police gave the holders of the bonds the chance of restoring the bonds to me, or of appearing before the judge d'instruction. Both individually and collectively, this firm could not be said to have had a clean bill of health. It was not the first, nor yet the second, nor third time, that they had been mixed up with money affairs which, to say the least of it, were excessively shady. They consented at once to give up what they were told was stolen property. The result was that within ten days of my leaving London, I returned there, having fulfilled my mission my expenses being all paid, and a check for a hundred guineas handed to me as a remuneration for my trouble.

The Lornes Learn Tobogganing.

Here is an extract of a letter from Canada, published in the London Truth, which gives an account of tobogganing: "The Governor-General tried his hand at it, and a bit of his coat loose somehow under the toboggan, which is always fatal. Over he went in the steepest part of the second plunge, but luckily the snow was too soft to hurt. Then he took it into his head to try going down a shorter hill with a jump right on to the skating-rink. We tried hard to dissuade him, for if persons are shot off with such an impetus on, the ice is a very different landing to the soft snow, and we knew what would happen if the Princess caught sight of him. However, off he went; the toboggan rose straight in the snow as a horse does to a fence, shot on the ice and right across the rink all safe. Then several gentlemen followed him. By this time up came the Princess, who, we had hoped, was safe at the bottom of the big slide, and too busy hauling up her toboggan to notice us. Of course nothing would suit her but that she must try it at that instant herself, so all that could be done was to level the snow-bank a little, so as to make the toboggan jump a little less violently, and put some to catch her on the other side, and put some to catch her on the other side, and off she went. Luckily she kept the toboggan quite straight and sat like a rock, so she spun across right to the curling rink, where the long-strop, as he was christened, caught and broke her shock, which might otherwise have damaged the toboggan. She is wonderful plucky, but His Excellency would not let her try it any more. You have no notion how popular the Princess is. She and His Excellency and her ladies go out on a snow-tramp on Sunday afternoons, and she has invented such a pretty walking costume. It is a dark blanket coat, with hood lined and piped with red, red ash round her waist and a red sash, and the gentlemen wear a dark something like a top without the petticoat."

A Fighting Band.

The band, whose strains inspire courage even in the timid, is generally placed behind the troops in action, so as to be sheltered from the enemy's fire; but when the battalions separate and advance in troops, the musician's position becomes critical, and sometimes fight alone may save them. In the battle of Koniggratz it happened that the band of the Sixty-seventh Regiment (Prussian) was cut off from their battalions and discovered to the enemy, who immediately attacked the defenceless musicians. They were almost unarmed, and, in the desperate struggle which arose, some fought with their musical instruments for weapons. Many were wounded, several killed—among the latter two intimate friends, one a married man; the other one charged by the anxious wife of the former to take good care of her husband and to watch over him. His promise that either both or none should return proved a true prophecy; the faithful friend was killed when endeavouring to ward off the blow which an Austrian soldier was about to deal on the other man's head. He sank down, calling out: "I do not surrender!" and expired. The Austrians challenged the surviving men to lay down what arms they had; but Gernemond was intent on revenging his friend; refusing to surrender he fought like a lion, till several stabs from the bayonets and a shot in the side laid low the hero.

A Model Statue of Faith.

Monsignore Anstio, King Humbert's Chaplain-in-ordinary at the Quirinal, is a man of ready wit. He was intrusted with all the arrangements of the recent memorial service for King Victor Emanuel, which was celebrated in the Pantheon, where the body of the first King of Italy is resting, on the anniversary of his death. The splendid catafalque was adorned with a variety of emblems significant of the human virtues and Christian graces of the Re Galantuomo, and its summit was or was with a statue of the grace which is supposed to be most characteristically Christian—Faith. A visitor called the attention of the Royal Chaplain to the smallness and meanness of this symbolical figure he observed that, as it was destined to be placed at so great an elevation, the artist should have supplied a much larger statue. "His size is most appropriate," replied the Monsignore. "I was very careful on this point, and gave the exact measure of the figure which I required." "And why, is it so small?" replied his interlocutor. "You see," answered Anstio, with his Italian smile, "it is a modern statue of Faith, and I thought that it ought to correspond with the very meagre proportion of modern Faith. When Faith grows bigger she shall certainly have a bigger statue, if I am alive, and have the ordering of the business."

POPULAR song in England.—"By, Baby Bunting, Dicky's gone a-bunting to get a little Afghan skin to wrap the British lion in."