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five pound Bank of England notes, folded lengthwise and held in place between the pasteboards by an elastic rubber band. I had thrown the coat over the chair in such a way that the inside pocket was exposed and the ends of the notes plainly recognizable. Over the coffee and cigars one of my guests laughingly called attention to what he termed my vulgar display of wealth, and Johnson, in some confusion at having neglected to put away the coat, now picked it up and took it to the reception room where the wraps of my guests lay about promiscuously. He should, of course, have placed it in my wardrobe, but he said afterwards he thought it belonged to the guest who had spoken. You see he was in my dressing room when I threw my coat on the chair in making my way thither, and, of course, he had not noticed the coat in the hurry of arriving guests, otherwise he would have put it where it belonged. After everybody had gone Johnson came to me and said that the coat was there but the package was missing, nor has any trace of it been found since that night."

"The dinner was fetched in from outside, I suppose?"

"How many waiters served you?" "Two. They are men who have often been in my employ before, but, apart from that, they had left my chambers before the incident of the coat happened.

"Neither of them went into the reception room, I take it?'

mended me to see you. Oh, yes, and to

Johnson, of course. I could not help noticing that this was the fourth or fifth time that Dacre's name had come up during our conversa-

Why to Dacre?" I asked.

"Oh, well, you see, he occupies chambers in the same building, on the ground floor. He is a very good fellow, and we are by way of being firm friends. Then it was he who had called attention to the money, so I thought he should know the sequel."

"How did he take your news?" "Now that you call attention to the fact, he seemed slightly troubled. I should like to say, however, that you must not be misled by that. Lionel Dacre could no more steal than he could

"Did he seem surprised when you mentioned the theft?'

Bentham Gibbes paused a moment before replying, knitting his brows in

"No," he said at last; "and, come to think of it, it almost appears as if he had been expecting my announcement" "Doesn't that strike you as rather

strange, Mr. Gibbes?" "Really my mind is in such a whirl I don't know what to think. But it's perfectly absurd to suspect Dacre. If

you knew the man you would understand what I mean. He comes of an excellent family, and he is-oh! he is Lionel Dacre, and when you have said that you have made any suspicion absurd."

"I supposed you had the rooms thor-



I was startled by the expression in his eyes, they were fixed on a distant corner of the room.

"No. I am certain that not even sus-

"Your man Johnson-?"

"Has been with me for years. He could easily have stolen much more than "Have you the numbers of the hundred pounds if he had wished to do so, but I have never known him to take a penny that did not belong to

"Will you favor me with the names of your guests, Mr. Gibbes?"

"Viscount Stern sat at my right hand, and at my left Lord Templemere; Sir John Sanclere next to him, and Angus McKeller next to Sanclere. After Viscount Stern was Lionel Dacre, and at his right was Vincent Innes."

On a sheet of paper I had written the names of the guests, and noted their places at the table.
"Which guest drew your attention to

the money?'

"Is there a window looking out from the reception room?"

"Two of them." "Were they fastened on the night of the dinner party?'

"I could not be sure; Johnson would know, very likely. You are hinting at the possibility of a thief coming in through a reception room window. think such a solution highly improbable. My rooms are on the third floor and a thief would scarcely venture to make an entrance when he could not but know there was a company being entertained. Besides, the coat was there but an hour or so, and whoever stole those notes knew where they were."

"That sounds reasonable," I had to admit. "Have you spoken to anyone of your loss?"

oughly searched? The packet didn't picion can attach to either of the wait | drop out and remain unnoticed in some corner?

"No, Johnson and myself examined

'Have you the numbers of the notes?" "Yes, I got them from the bank next morning. Payment was stopped, and so far not one of the five has been presented. Of course, one or more may have been cashed at some shop, but none has been offered to any of the banks."

"A twenty-pound note is not accepted without scrutiny, so the chances are the thief may have some difficulty in disposing of them."

"As I told you, I don't mind the loss of the money at all. It is the uncertainty, the uneasiness caused by the incident that troubles me. You will comprehend that when I say that if you are good enough to interest yourself in this ase I shall be disappointed if your fee does not exceed the amount I have lost."

Mr. Gibbes rose as he said this, and I accompanied him to the door, assuring him that I should do my best to solve the mystery. Whether he sprang from pickles or not, I realized he was a polished and generous gentleman, who estimated the services of a professional

expert like myself at their true value. I shall not give the details of my researches during the following few days, because the trend of them must be gone over in the remarkable interview I had somewhat later, and there is little use in repeating myself. Suffice it to say, then, that an examination of the rooms and a close cross-questioning of Johnson satisfied me that he and the two waiters were innocent. I was also convinved that an thief made his way through the "To no one but Dacre, who recom- window, and I came to the conclusion

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