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"FIVE thousand dollars reward is offered for Miss Maddison," said the station sergeant, yawning over his last hour on duty, for it was two o'clock in the morning. "That's a queer disappearance as ever a ticket for Chicago. A young girl buys a Pullman car, gets to her destination, fees the porter, gets in a street car and is never heard of again. Her aunt telegraphs to know why she doesn't arrive. Her parents telegraph that she left, as arranged. The conductor remembers her, the Pullman porter remembers her, and with all that, she drops out of sight like a falling star. She was one of the prettiest girls in Denver."

"And her luggage?"
"Was claimed by someone the same day and shipped east."
"So she must have left Chicago."
"Not at all. Her checks were presented, but anyone might have got hold of them. Strange, however, that they struck the right place for finding the trunks, unless they were on the train, too."

"And the luggage was claimed again?"
"Not until the mother described the contents of a left trunk at Grand Rapids, which had the girl's initials on it. It was one of the trunks just as the mother had packed it. Five thousand dollars reward and the station sergeant sighed. "I'd like to earn it."

I was going to Grand Rapids, and laughingly remarked: "Well, I'll look out for Miss Maddison, sergeant. What did she look like?" The sergeant opened a locked drawer. "Here's a photograph of her," he said. "She's a beauty—at least, she was. I doubt if she's alive."

"May I have that picture?" I asked, impulsively. "I'll bring it back on my return trip."
The station sergeant laughed. "I got it from a reporter who made a drawing of it for the paper," he said. "But, as you say, I'd recognize Miss Maddison anywhere. She had the loveliest pale-gold hair, that curled in little rings all over her head, just like a boy."
"You've seen her?"
"Certainly. She has often visited her aunt here, and I used to have a beat about her. I saw her last night at the World's Fair. She was only a slip of a girl then. She was nineteen the day before she disappeared."

"Strange story!" I said, carelessly, but I put the photo in my pocket, and presently strolled to the station, to await my train for the East. It was not long before I was comfortably settled for the trip and had impressed my porter with the fact that I was a person of consequence. How it is possible to do this I shall not make public, but the porter, a tall and fine-looking negro, hovered about me with a solicitude which was most soothing.

"We change time at Chicago, porter; what is the right hour?" I asked, as he stooped before me to put in a cinder screen. He pulled out his watch, turning it away from me, and I caught its inner side reflected in the little mirror which was set between the seats, he holding the watch very close to it as he stooped. In the lid was set a woman's picture, at which I stared, as if galvanized. It was a tiny replica of the large photo which at that very moment stretched my breast pocket. What was this son of Ham doing with the picture of the young Denver lady whose disappearance had raised such a commotion? Before I could draw breath, the porter snapped his watch shut, said in deferential tones, "Barely a quarter to three, sah," and straightened his tall form, as the cinder-screen slipped into its groove.

"Have you been long on this run, porter?" I asked, carelessly.
"Yes, sah; run from Chicago to Detroit for several years now."
"And never further?"
"No, sah. I don't know Canada at all."

"Nor west of Chicago, either?" I asked, carelessly still, with my eye on him, as he reached into an upper berth opposite. For just one moment he hesitated, then with a short laugh he answered:
"Well, not much, sah. I've run through to 'Frisco, several times, and once or twice short trips. This is my regular route." Someone rang, and the porter hurried away, but presently he came back. "You goin' through to Canada, sah?" he asked.
"Perhaps so," I said. "If I don't find what I want first."
"Oh, you'll find it, sah," he said, with cheery conviction, and made himself busy over his bed-making again.

I went through to Detroit, after all. I don't know why, except that I hate being routed out at night, and when one has privileges such as I enjoyed it's no matter how far one chooses to travel. At Detroit I gave my man a dollar. "Buy your sweetheart an ice cream," I said, as he profusely thanked me. "My good lady thanks you, sah," he said, merrily. "I see a married man, sah."

"Then what the mischief," said I to myself, "does your wife think of your carrying a white girl's picture in your watch cover?"
As I selected a cigar in the nearest reliable shop, again I thought of the five thousand dollars awaiting an earner, and a solution arrived. "He's got the picture for the very same reason I've got mine," I said to myself. "I mustn't go on any bat with this photo in my possession and be searched by some officious bobby!" and I grinned at what my wife would say if she read in the papers that I was a suspected abductor of Deaver womankind!

I had occasion to visit a man whose apartment was in rather an unpopular neighborhood that afternoon, and as we lounged in his sitting-room window I idly asked him what sort of neighbors he had. "Oh, all sorts," he said, cynically. "Poor clerks can't live in swell localities. I have Jews to the right, and shady fellows here and there. They're an inoffensive lot, white, brown and black." I looked across the road, where some very tidy windows stood open. A small shop occupied the ground floor, and "Room To Let" was the legend on a card in the window. Above were the tidy open windows, and just within one of them hung

across a chair a blue coat, gold-buttoned, and a railway porter's cap. "Very decent nigger and his wife live there," said my Bohemian. "I suppose he's a Pullman porter; he's always apparently in bed most of the day when he's home. Wife's a perfect little dandy, with the prettiest voice. Sings very nicely, and is a good-looking. Not a real nigger; more of white than black. One of Topsy's cream-colored niggers. Works somewhere. I often meet her going up-town of a morning. But what am I giving you, did I say? Excuse me. In my lonely life I become observant of any person not quite repulsive. She's drop the neighbors. They're a sorry lot."

I stayed in Detroit for a week, and had business with this man, which took me to his rooms again. While there I heard a beautiful soprano voice singing a rather difficult scrap of an opera song five years old. "That's my cream-colored Dinah," said the man, flippantly. "I wish she'd come and water her window-boxes. It's time she looked after them." Just as he spoke the curtains parted and a slim arm came out, holding a small shower watering-pot. The singing woman began to water her flowers, and I could see her small brown face peering down as she carefully showered her plants. Her dark hair lay in little curls upon her forehead, and her eyes looked hard and suspicious across the narrow street. When she caught sight of us watching her, she became mute and drew partly back. "She's a nice little thing, and not bold, as you see," said my client, observing her. "Even these humble folk have the good of life. They took those rooms about three years ago, and I quite enjoy them. Just a tidy pair. He's a great big chap; very good-looking for a darkey. See! there he is, at the other window." There he was in his shirt-sleeves, my porter of the train from Chicago. "We both drew back, as he leaned from the window and looked up and down the narrow street. The woman at the other window also leaned out, and called to him, pointing to a straggling strand of nasturtium which trailed nobly independent from her flower-garden. She reached her arm very far out and tried to imprison the trailing flowers, and rip! went the dark cambric, laying bare a couple of inches of her upper arm. I started and exclaimed:

"What's the matter?" said my client, curiously, as the cry burst from my lips.
"Oh, nothing. She's torn her dress," I answered, as she disappeared, and the porter withdrew into the seclusion of the room opposite.
But I have extra good eyes. I had seen her bare upper arm, and as sure as I saw alive it was as white as the driven snow!

It was quite dark that night when I entered the small shop, wearing my worst coat and a newly-purchased cheap hat, in which I felt very much over-dressed.
"You've a room to rent?" I asked the old mother who sold wurst and other delicacies.
"Yah, mein herr; vater, komm!"
Vater came, and we soon struck a bargain. "I will pay you for a month," I said. "And when I get my trunk, will send it. My name is Jones. Put the trunk in for me."

"Yah," said vater. "It is a nice room, and maybe some good eeten is by the shop."
"You could send up my breakfast each day?" I inquired.
"Yah, for ein mark—twenty-five cent."
"Very good. Send it to-morrow morning at eight o'clock," and I took myself to my small hall bedroom, only separated from the porter's menage by a plastered wall. During the evening I journeyed out most of the time, chasing several things at the queer little shops and grinning as I saw across the way the head and shoulders of my client, propped up in an easy chair.

Presently a soft, clear soprano voice began to sing very sweetly next door, and a tinkling accompaniment on a rather fair piano was audible. The woman played and sang with evident pleasure and ability. And she was the wife of a colored porter! She sang so softly that I didn't catch the words at first, but presently I entrapped a line which was not English. My heart beat quicker. No one can imagine the strength of the impulse that guided me, as I gently set my door ajar and intently listened. The door opened, and I saw a woman, and she paused before my door. "You dere, mister?" she asked. "You don't light de gas?"

"No; I have bad eyes. I am resting them after working," I mendaciously explained.
"Dose singin' bees nice?" she asked.
"You like dem?"
"Is it your daughter who sings German?"
"Ach, no; das ist Frau Jackson. Ach! She is schmart singer, hein?" and the old woman opened quickly and the girl came out.
"You want me?" she called to the retreating German.
"No; ad my chilt; nod ad all. Only I wait to hear 'Du bist wie Eine Blume.'" That is nice singin'."

"Good-night," said the clear, sweet voice—the cultured, white voice! "Guten-nacht, mein chilt. Schlafen sie wohl," said the guttural German voice; and I stood in the dark, with many queer thoughts.

I gazed before my open door. "Is anyone there?" she said, nervously. "A blind man, young lady, who has rented this room to-day, and thanks you for the boy to take it out!"
"Oh! I did not know the room was taken," said she, hesitating. "There is a box of mine in it. Shall I send down for the boy to take it out?"
"Don't trouble until to-morrow," I said. "It will be quite safe. I shall lock my door, madam." Then she very gently closed the door, and the house was perfectly still.

And I waited until very late before I cautiously lit my gas and found under the sofa bed the box of the porter's wife. It was a very good box, indeed—expensive, and not much used—and on the end were three letters—E. G. M.—which certainly did not spell Jackson! Very early in the morning I drew the door open, and found a locksmith to open a locked trunk. He soon had the trunk open, and I saw a key which fitted it, and took it before he had time to look at its contents. As a married man, I could appreciate the cost of the key which it contained, none of

which I dared disturb. I gingerly opened the hat-box. There, tucked in one corner was a dainty gray card-case, which I very carefully took out. Several cards were in it, and on each one was engraved "Emily Gordon Maddison!" I took one of them, hid it in my own pocketbook, and replaced the card-case in the hat-box. I then looked at the trunk, which he carried into the next room, and during the day I heard some more singing—such happy carols that I almost thought—until I stealthily glanced into my pocketbook at the card. "What under the canopy could have led this sweet young lady to bestow herself upon a nigger?" I asked, furiously. "To leave home and family and associations, and live in a grubby city slum and yet be happy enough to sing in the second or third morning I heard a deep mellow voice blending with her clear treble I had a murderous impulse to begin an assault upon a son of Ham!"

Before I became solicitor for the railway I had taken five years of criminal practice, and had come across some queer cases. But here was I, by a curious fatality, mixed up in a complication at once weird and interesting to a degree. "I shall go to Denver," I said, suddenly, when I had received at my supposed hotel an imperious telegram from my wife, asking when I was coming home to arrange our holiday trip. So on the next evening I boarded a train, and as soon as I stepped into the sleeper I encountered the tall form and dollar smile of my friend the colored porter.

"Evening, sah. Yes, the parlor is vacant. I got a message from town 'bout an 'accident,'" he said, politely. "You go clear through this time, sah?"
"Yes, to Chicago," I said.
He regarded me with reminiscent eye and smiled. "Got what you was looking for, sah?"

I started and stared, then answered thoughtfully, "I think so, John; I think so." For I remembered my words of a fortnight earlier.
"That's good, sah. Tole you you would, you know," and with a low chuckle the porter showed me to my state-room.

I fell asleep as comfortably as old travelers do, and neither dreamed of Jackson nor his white helpmeet. When I awakened he was abroad. There was a hideous jolt and a loud call, and a crash of rending timbers. The door burst open, and the porter shot in, his arms outstretched as he plunged. Together we fell to the floor, to the roof-structure—he over me, and then there was a sickening interval of faintness, which lasted but a moment, and cool night air blowing upon me, and someone deeply groaning close by.

I stretched up an arm and touched a warm face. "Oh, God! Is that you, sah?" said a deep bass. "We're wrecked, sah, an' a beam is lying 'cross my back. It's close on good-bye time, I guess, for me!"

I put up my hand again. "I'm all right, porter, but a cut on the head," I said, weakly. "I shall call out for help," which I proceeded to do with my reeble might.

Then the deep voice went on. "I've done, sah. This big beam's broke my back. I feel it coming. Oh, God! and Lady-bird's all alone!"

A sudden terror rang through his voice. I touched his face again. "See here, porter; is Lady-bird your wife?" I asked, gently stroking his cheek. "Don't give in yet. Tell me what you want me to do, when we get out of this wreck."

"Dol!" he screamed. "You can't do nothing, sah. She's all alone except for me. She left all of 'em for me," and his voice trembled. "She's an angel, sah, is my wife, sure enough. God help her!"

"For, by design or accident, he certainly saved your life, sir!" "Oh, he meant it all right," I said, with a catch in my voice. "He made straight for my state-room when we collided, and spread his arms above me. God have mercy on him!" Then I bethought me of my friend the clerk in Detroit, and the five thousand dollars reward offered by the parents of Miss Maddison for information as to her whereabouts.

"I'll give him a chance to earn that some day," I said. "For I don't want to have a hand in the matter till after I have just one talk with the Lady-bird!"

Very soon a man came in with a wife for me, two, three of them! My wife's first—only three words, "Thank God! Coming." My partner's—"Will be down by special this morning." The Lady-bird—"Send body to Mrs. Jackson."

Second street, Detroit. Wire when to meet it! Then, for all the horror and the sadness, I slept for hours.

My wife sat at my bedside when I awoke, pale but smiling. Only those who enjoy happy married life can guess how our first words and thoughts were infinitely personal; but suddenly an idea struck me. Here was my natural helper in the case of the Lady-bird. So, while we sat hand in hand, I told her what you know from this tale, showed her the two pictures and enlisted her warm sympathy. "You must go to her," I said, decidedly. "Go to the Cadillac, send a carriage for her, and get that damn stuff off her face and hands. I suppose the hair-dye will take time." My wife put her hand over my mouth. "Don't swear over it, dearest," she reproved. "She shall be beautiful Miss Maddison once more if there's a face-doctor in Detroit worth her salt. She's my sister or yours, and has run away with a theatrical troupe. Could you stand the disgrace?"

I kissed her emphatically. "Jella, you're a trump!" "Not an ace of spades, anyway," said my beaming wife. "I'd adopt a whole nigger family, I am so grateful for your escape—so grateful to that brave, good porter-man. Just leave it all to me, honey, and you'll see how I can manage."

A week after I was shown into a room at the Cadillac, where my wife sat with a slender woman in a crapsawn. Her face was pale, and on her small head was a luxurious crop of golden curls, over which that most pathetic of the many crowns of womanhood, a widow's cap, was perched. To a mere man, ignorant of the barber's art and the mysterious toupee, the change was magical. My wife rose and took the slender woman's hand. "Mrs. Jackson, this is my husband, who has something to tell you. Be brave, my dear sister," she said, and kissing the pale cheek of the porter's wife—Miss Maddison—she left us alone.

I cannot report that interview, but it is one of the short times I don't desire to live through again. My brain usually so alert and well-regulated, was simply at loose ends. I was now the blind lodger, now the Peeping Tom across the road, now the man of business, and, above all, the man for whom another man had faced death and been taken at his word. Mrs. Jackson, being quite unassuming, had decidedly the advantage of me. I gave her the watch and the message, the latter as well as I could. Then I dodged her tremulous thanks, her tremulous lips upon my hand, and bolted from her presence in a complete state of demoralization.

"We are going home soon, husband, are we not?" asked my wife, when she had somewhat calmed me.
I sent for my friend of Second street, and invited him to earn five thousand dollars. Needless to say, he left for the West on the next train, with a bee in his bonnet and an address in Denver in his breast pocket. In due time a couple of notices appeared in the Denver papers to the effect that Miss Maddison had reached home a widow, having eloped three years before with a secret lover and on his death returned and been welcomed with enthusiasm.

My wife and myself advised the Lady-bird to keep her own counsel, and she did so, her married life being amply vouched for by my wife—and myself. "Tell her I did, worshipping her," he said, in almost fierce tones. "Tell her if it could be done over again I couldn't do different; but tell her to go back. She'll understand. Tell her if hell lasts forever and I'm in the midst of it, I've no complaint to make. I've had my heaven. Can you reach me again, sah?"

I knew perfectly what was coming, and touched not his face, but his body. "Can you get my watch, sah, and put it in your clothes?" Will you take it to her? My address is written on it, on the chain's case. Will you just give it to her yourself, sah?"

"Indeed I will, if you don't get there first," I said, cheerily, feeling in the vest pocket and taking out the watch. "Look like robbery, porter. I continued, stowing it away in my pocket. "See here, if my legs weren't pinned down, I'd try to help you. Now, I am going to call out again—a lantern is coming this way."

My shouts soon brought some scared rescuers, who succeeded in freeing my legs and dragging me from the wreck, when I promptly fainted and was carried to a shed near by. When I came to, my first words were, "Where's the porter?"

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