

ing back the cab, got the horse on its feet. All the while Mr. Nobbs was watching the operations from the window; and I noticed one of the men was surveying him very attentively.

"Your name is Judd, isn't it?" the man at length remarked.

"No; it isn't.—What do you mean by addressing me, sir?" indignantly replied Mr. Nobbs.

"Woll," said the man—whom I at once surmised was a member of the detective force—"that's the name you gave, anyhow, when you were had up on the charge of feeling the pockets of the gent's clothes who was drowned in the Serpentine a week ago. I know you, although you've had a clean shave."

I started on hearing this statement; my suspicions, ridiculous as they seemed at the time, had turned out to be correct after all; while Mr. Judd, alias Nobbs, turned as pale as death.

"Come out of that cab," said the detective.

"You've no right to detain me," said Nobbs. "I was discharged this morning."

"Because nothing was known against you.—But look here, old man, what have you got in that bag?"

"Only some old clothes, I assure you," said the crest-fallen Nobbs.

"Come inside, and we'll see," said the detective, seizing the bag. "Out of the cab—quick! and come with me to the office."

Mr. Nobbs complied with a very bad grace; while the corporal and I followed, wondering what was to happen next.

We entered the room in the interior, and the bag was opened; but it apparently contained nothing but the clothes.

"There is certainly no grounds for detaining the man," said an inspector standing near.

Mr. Nobbs at once brightened up and cried: "You see I have told you the truth, and now be good enough to let me go."

"All right," said the detective. "Pack up your traps and clear out!"

Mr. Nobbs this time complied with exceeding alacrity, and began to replace the articles of clothing, when the detective, seemingly acting on a sudden impulse, caught up the valise and gave it a vigorous shake. A slight rustling sound was distinctly audible.

"Hillo! what's this?" cried the officer.—Emptying the clothes out of the bag, he produced a pocket-knife, and in a trice ripped open a false bottom, and found—about two dozen valuable diamond rings and a magnificent emerald necklet carefully packed in wadding, besides a number of unset stones.

The jubilant detective at once compared them with a list which he took from a file, and pronounced them to be the entire proceeds of a daring robbery that had recently been committed in the shop of a West End jeweller, and which amounted in value to fifteen hundred pounds.

Mr. Nobbs, alias Judd, now looking terribly confused and abashed at this premature frustration of his plan to clear out of the country with his booty, was formally charged with being in possession of the stolen valuables. He made no reply, and was led away in custody.

Before returning to the guard, I remarked to the inspector. "I thought, sir, when he gave me a sovereign for looking after his bag, that it was more than it was worth; but now I find that I have been mistaken."

"A sovereign!" cried the inspector. "Let me see it."

I took the coin from my cartouche-box, where I had placed it in the absence of an accessible pocket, and handed it to him.

He smilingly examined it, and threw it on the table. "I thought as much," he remarked; "it's a bad one!"

Mr. Nobbs, alias Judd—these names were two of a formidable string of aliases—turned out to be an expert coiner, burglar, and swindler who had long been "wanted" by the police. He was convicted, and sentenced to a lengthened period of penal servitude.

A few weeks after Mr. Nobbs had received his well-earned punishment, I received a visit from a gentleman, who stated that he was cashier in the jeweller's establishment in which the robbery had been committed. He informed me that his employer, having taken into consideration the fact that I was to a certain extent instrumental in the recovery of the stolen jewellery, had sent me a present of thirty pounds. I gratefully accepted the money, which, as I had seen enough of soldiering, I invested in the purchase of my discharge from the Household Cavalry. Such is my story of the Mysterious Valise.

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