## THE SUBURBAN BURGLARIES.

BURGLARIES.

"It was my luck," so Mr. Beck always said. "The whole thing might havy happened to any man."

Byt no person who had heard the stray quite agreed with him. It was luck, of course, that he found the slick, of course, that he found the slick, of course, that he found the showt expoon in the hansom cab. Prying about keenly, as was his worft, he saw the thin, white edge shining behind one of the cushions, and inshed out the curious-looking tenspoon and pait it in his pocket.

Ito had a good look at the number of the hansom and the driver when he got out. The hansom was one of the nestest in London, with a sweet little 12-mile-an-hour mare between the shafts. The driver was a stoutuitl, squarly fellow, with motited face and a big red nose. He was smartly dreased, with nosegay in his button hiele, and a cigar between his teeth.

Mr. Beek dismissed his cab and walked to the shop of Mr. Ophir, the famous jeweiler and silversmith, whose name was on the spoon.

He was received by Mr. Ophir, the famous jeweiler and silversmith, whose name was on the spoon.

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He was received by Mr. Ophir himself—a special mark of distinction—in the little glass payillon in the centre of the gilltering wardhouse.

"Yes," Mr. Ophir knew the spoon well. It was one of a set made by his house in limitation of the old apositio days to tell the difference.

"Who got them?" asked Mr. Beck, going straight to the point.

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"The suburban burglaries," interrupted Mr. Beck, and he slapped his fortheed that was smooth amount and the slapped his fortheed that was smooth amount and.

month ago."
"The suburban burglaries," interrupted Mr. Beck, and he slapped his
big thigh excitedly with broad palm,
an unusual lapse on the part of this
most stolld of men.
But his excitement was surely par-

But his excitement was surely pardonable.

The London police had for the last few months been startled, amazed, bewildered by a rapid series of brilliant burgiaries, all within a fitteen to twenty miles' radius outside London.

"The cribs had been cracked" in the highest style of art, and the artists, with their rich booty, had vanished into space, laving as fittle trail as a fish through the water. They were gentienten who did not stick at trifles Three times, it would appear, they had been interrupted at their work, and three people had been left for dead behind them, and one—a woman—had died.

died. No wonder, then, that Mr. Beck was excited for a moment at the hope that als "luck" had put him on the track of the suburban burgiaries at last. But his excitement was quenched instantly, like a spark failen in water. It was the good-humou.ed, easy-going, imperturable Mr. Beck that walked home to his cozy lodgings to puzzle his plan aut. his cozy lodging to puzzle his plan eut. He plunged into a great easy chair

He plunged into a great easy chair, with a pipestem between his teeth and the spoon before him on the table as a saint sets as a suint sets as a suint to concentrate his meditations. It would be worse than useless, he determined, to arrest, or even question, the driver. If he knew anything he wouldn't tell it, and plainly he could not be held responsible for a sliver spoon dropped behind the cushion of his hansom. If the man were guilty—and Mr. Beck fondly hoped he was guilty—a hint of suspicion would ruin all. So Mr. Beck at and amoked and thought, and, as the smoke grew denser, his thoughts cleared.

"If I could only get quietly inside that fellow's skin," he thought, and with the thought came his plan of cumpaign. Then he put by his little sliver apoon, and smoked his pipe out in vacuous enjoyment.

with the thought came his plan of cumpaign. Then he put by his little silver spoon, and smoked his pipe out in vacuous enjoyment.

The result of his meditations was that Mr. Beck—this time a simple-looking farmer up for the cattle show—had a drive in the same hansom next duy, and found the trap neater and the mare feaster than he imagined. He got in talk with the driver, whose name he discovered to be Jim Blunt. The Occkney driver "smoked" the simple-minded yokel and made game of him. They had several drinks together, and Mr. Beck noted that the spirited little mare was trained to stand quietly as a famb when the driver was away. Next day Mr. Beck was a portly clergyman on a shopping expedition. He took Mr. Blunt's hunsom here, here, and everywhere, and acquired a multitude of parels. A most rental and affable clergyman was Mr. Beck, and particularly affable was his driver, with whom he talked a great deal, and whom he talked into the best of good humour. That was at first. Towards evening the zealous clergyman broached the temperance question, with a distinct personal application, and Mr. Blunt got sullen. In parting the Rov. Mr. Beck pros nited his driver with his exact legal fare, and Mr. Blunt was furlous. He spoke his views fully and freely, and the other looked and listency, storing every trick of face and voice in his retentive memory. Then, with a Christian benediction, and meditatively mounted the stops of his hotel.

his handsome the tricyle cart unvitrusively followed, futhful as the little
lamb of Mary in the nursery rhyme.
In this way the patient Mr. Beek found
out many things. He found that Mr.
Hunt was not keen on fares, and waskeen on sport and drink. He spent
his loisure moments—often all day—
in the sanctum of a certain sporting
public-house in the East end, called
the Ram's Horn. There he met a
convivial commercial traveller named
fullnam, and a bookmaker named
drilmes, and the three drank and played cards, while a tricycle cart, with a
heavy; stupid-looking rider, went past
the door occasionally.
Then there was another change: a
startling one this time.
Mr. Paul Beek became Mr. James
Blunt. 'In clothes and figure and
face, and voice, in all his tricks and
ways, the counterfeit was perfect. Mr.
Blunt's wife or mother could not have
found a difference.

Blunt's wife or mother could not have found a difference.

The translated Mr. Beek took to droppling into the Ram's Horn on his own account at odd times, when he had reason to believe that Mr. Blunt was classwhere with a fare. He was made free of the sanctum, and the unsophisticated commercial traveller Fulham and genial bookmaker Grimes received him as "Jim," with rough, unsuspecting cordiality.

They were both big strong men, active and sleek, who spent money freely. They were full of sly, chuckling jokes about business when the three were drinking together. A very little time was needed to convince Mr. Beek, by a hundred traffithints, that he, was on the straight track of the suburban burglars. A dozen times in an hour he seemed on the point of surprising some definite proof. But, lead the talk as cunningly as he might, he could get no further, for the others assumed he knew as much as themselves, and he dare not appear too curlous.

It was a dangerous game. An indiscreet question might arouse suspicion, and suspicion meant death. Besides, it was a ticklish thing playing Box and Cox with the real Mr. Blunt, who had a knack of throwing up his engagements and turning up at unexpected times. Twice Mr. Beck had barely time to slip away quietly before his double appeared.

It was in truth a difficult and a dangerous game, but he played it out coolly and warrily to the close.

Insaincitvely he felt that things grew suddenly to a climax. A gew burglary was on foot; so much he could gather from stray hints. Unfortunately, the coup had been planned with the real Jim Blunt, and so the know-taken for granted. He only learned that a crib was to be cracked some distance outside of London, and that the three were to take part in it. Even the night of the burglary he could not make sure of.

If we done the coup had been planned with the treal Jim Blunt, and so the know-takes one distance outside of London, and that the three were to take part in it. Even the night of the burglary he could not make sure of.

for at any cost to get hold of the secret.

An appointment was made by Mr. Beck with the real Mr. Blunt to call for on old lady at the theatre at eleven punctually. At eleven punctually the mock Mr. Blunt stroided into the inner parlour of the Rem's Horn, with his driving whip under his arm, as though he had just stepped down from the driver's seat of his hansom. He had a bill of whippoord in his hand, and was plaiting a new cracker for his whiphong, as was the habit of the real Mr. Blunt.

Both of his friends were there, smoking eigars and drinking champagne out of a pewter.

"Halloa, Jim!" cried Fulham. "Up to time and before it. Want that for conjght!" pointing to the whippord; "Susie must put her best leg foremost."

Susie was the sweet little mre.

"Have a touch of the whippord yourself," he added, pushing towards him a bright tankerd, crowned with white foam. "That will put courage into you."

Mr. Beck blew off the foam and had

"Have a touch of the wnipoora yourself," he added, pushing towards him a
bright tankard, crowned with white
foam. "That will put courage into
you."

Mr. Beck blow off the foam and had
a deep pull of the foaming liquor that
shone golden in the glass-bottomed
tankard.

"Luck!" he said, shortly, as he put
the vessel down half empty. Mr. Blunt
was inclined to become silent—not to
say sullen—in his cups, and he for the
once was Mr. Blunt.

"Got the tools all right?" he said,
pointing to the pocket of Mr. Grimes,
which bulged and dragged a little as
with a hidden.weight.

"You bet," said Mr. Grimes, and he
exhibited with pardonable professional
yride, a Jimmy, a revolver, and an electric dark lantern, all of the latest and
neatest pattern.

"Noaty fob and neasty night," Mr.
Blunt's understudy grumbled hoarsely,
in the recesses of his powier.

"You're a nice sort, Jim," retorted
Mr. Fulharn, cheerily. "Are you afraid
the draught will give you a cold in your
blooming nut, my rosebud? Want a
big yellow moon and a nightlingle, you
do. It's a picked night for our little
plenic. Hark to the wind, screaming
like a drunken fishwife."

"It was the job itself I was thinking
of worse nor the weather," he grumbled, still sulky.

"The job!" cried Fulham, indignantity: "why there never was a neater
thing put up since we went into business. It is as easy as kiss hanks. Hubby is away for a week's shootine, Missle
is young and timid, the builer—the only
man in the Louse—is he heavy sleeper;
told Grimes so himself, and he ought to
know. He has got tworty quild down
as a sleeping draught, and he is to get
twenty more when the Job is through.
He's that forgetful I shouldn't be surprized if he were to leave the kitchen

window oren and the key in the plate closet before he went to bed. Bhi Grincs?" and the wink he gave was full of expression. "The pace is check full of silver, a regular Peruvian mine—the wedding presents alone made a column in the Times—all waiting peacefully to be carried away. If that's a nasty job I'd feel obliged "with elaborate politeness—"for your notion of a nice one?"

"It's a long way to got to" abbases."

way. It's fitteen mile, not an inch more."

I make it better nor twenty."

"Do you think it's en old lady fare you're jawing. It's under fitteen if anything. You goes out by Kensington, you eve, and then you turns round to the."

Mr. Beek was distoding with both his ears, but at this moment the shock head of the pothoy was thrust in at the door."

"Hausom's waiting, gents, and.""
Then he caught sight of the mock Mr. Blunt, and stood with eyes and module extended to the uttermost—a grotesque statue of amazement. He had been honoured with a kick and a curse by the real Mr. Blount a moment before.

But Mr. Beek gave him no time for thought or speech.
"Come along!" he shouted to the other; time's up!"
He bundled the bewildered boy out before him into the street, and discreet-yd diseppeared in the shadow hestle!

drink.

"Set a thief to catch a thief," he multicred, between his teeth. "I'll quantity."

The next second he was astride the machine, scorching down the street in swift pursuit of the vanishing hasson.

For a while he kept pace with it casily enough, slipping in and out through the traffic life an ect. But gradually, as they dieve clear of the town, the long road stretched open before them and the mare-flew.

Mr. Beck settled himself on his bard and the mare-flew.

Mr. Beck settled himself on his bard and the mare-flew.

Mr. Beck settled himself on his hard-addie. The bleyele did not suit him. It was heavy, and the stretch was too short, and the pedals brought his knees within as inch of the hands-bar as they rose. But he struggled on bravely, keeping the shadowy outline of the handsom will in view. The road turned sharply, and the rush of the strong wind came straight against him like a broad hand on his breast holding him back. But he was a powerful rifer, and he put his weight and strength into each drive of the pedal, shoving his way through the wind like a steamer through a current.

It was cruel work. The wind whistled and the aweat fell from his bent, face in big-drops on the road; but he still kept the flying shadow of the hansom in view. The road sloped abruptly, and the vague outline of the hansom gradually merged in the-darkness.

"This game is up!" Mr. Beck muttered through his clenched teeth, but at the same moment came the remembrance of that hansom sradually merged in the-darkness.

"It is same is up!" Mr. Beck muttered through his clenched teeth, but at the same moment came the remembrance of that handle bar. Then he graped the handle-bar tight in the middle, bent head and body over it, and put all the strength of his body into one mad spuit up the hill. It was agony while it lasted, Ilo felt the voins in his forehead swell, his heart humped theredy, against his ribb, and his breath came in labouring sobs, but still the bleyele gilde smoothly and waitiff up his lock less of heart and reaere he

He heard the trup-door

forms crept steatibily in, the last pushing the big portmanteau through to the others.

"I have a glim ready," Grimes whispered, and the gleam of the electric lantern lay along the black passage.

In this way they stole along past the kitchen and wine cellars to a strong oak door with the key stuck in it. It opened on oiled hinges, and the light gilttered on pilee of silver.

"Crakdy!" was Fulham's expressive comment as he and Grimes passed through with lantern and portmanteau, while Blut waited in the passage with revolver ready.

The gaping mouth of the portmanteau seemd to open of its own accord

"I could do with a drink," said Fulnam, straightening his back and wiping his hot face.

"Til get one," said Grimes, "I knowthe way to the place." He came back
with a bottle of champaign in each
hand and one under his arm. "Friend
hand and one under his arm. "Friend
hand and one under his arm. "Friend
in court," he explained. They got the
forks out in a trice and drank the
forks out in a trice and drank the
forks out in a trice and drank the
forming liquor out of eliver.
"Nasty job thie," sold Fullano, with
a wink at Grimes, "eh. Jim?"
"Awtiu hight." replied Grimes, with
responsive wink: "sorry you came
Jim?"
"Aw in light." replied Grimes, with
responsive wink: "sorry you came
Jim?"
"Who are you coming at?" growted
Blunt. "I see nothing wrong with the
night or the job, or-the drink either for
the matter of that."
"Who are we coming at?" We are
coming at you. You don't like this and
you don't like that, Aren't, you ashmed
of yourself, Miss Molly?"
"For-two straws I would give you a
wipe across the blooming mug. I was
readier for the same than you were."
"Just listen to him, Fulham, will
you?" "ered the Justy Indignant
Grimes. "If you was as ready as I
"Ayo. and readler!"
"Ayo. and readler!"
"The coming his bedd in her
right hand a revolver, grasped light be hier the burglar her
was a merely an unwelcono in
teruption of business.
"Drop lift." he muzzle pointing at her
self and the but at the burglar, which
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prudent Fulham thought it time to intervene in the interest of peace.

"You're a brace of bally idiotes," said the peacemaker. "Bushness first and pleagure aftorwards. You may bash cach other into small bits when we have, sof the swag safe. Here, lend a hand with the portmanteau, Grimes; it's time to be rambling."

"What about upstairs" said Blunt, "What about upstairs" said Blunt, returning to business, the more anxious to show pluck and gunpition from Grimes' sneets. "There will be whips of tewels where there is so much plate." Have a try while Grimes and I bring this load out to the trap," said Fulham: "here's a second lanter."

"Heavy!" grunted Grimes, as they ugsed the portmanteau along the passage.

"You'd like it light, would you!" chuckled Fulham.

As Blunt crept cautiously up the broad staircase, his stockined feet sank misslessly in the deep velvet pile of the carpet. He paused for a moment at the drawing-room door, and let a beam of light from his lantern fall across the pileh darkness of the big room.

"Nic-nacs and pictures and crockery ware." he muttered contemptuously:
"Tim not takin' any, thank ye."
"Softly as a great cat the burly ruffian moved up to the next floor, along the narrow lane of light the lantern made for him through the darkness. In the still silence he could hear the tick of the internal stand gently on the door-knob to the left and turned it. The light of the lantern flashed back in bis dazzled yes from a great mirror that fronted lim as he.entered, and shone and gilt-tered on the jewels that lay scattered on the dressing-table.

## of a long hill, and the fast-following bleyele almost ran Into It. But Mr. Bock, who had been expecting a halt, saved and steatled biniself with a firm grip on the back rall, and watted and listened. Positively and Unquestionably the finest Tea in the world, that about it.

the finest Tea in the world, that's all there

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out in a brilliant glow of a dozen electric lights.

Turning round sharply he saw a lady
fronting him, not five yards away. She
was graceful and beautiful as a statute
in her long white night robe, fastened
with a knot of blue ribbons at herthroat. Her naked feet peeped from
under the white lace trimmings, pure
white on the rich carpet. Down to her
wast her halr fell in a tangle of ripples and curls. Her face was white,
even to the lips, but her blue eyes shone
big and bright, and she held in her
right hand a revolver, grasped tight by
the barrel, the muzile pointing at herself and the butt at the burgin, which
was her crude notion of shooting.

Jim Blunt was not in the least affect-

Blunt whipped out his revolver and pointed it right side forward straight at her breast.

The scream was frozen on the lady's lips by sheer amazement, when, straight behind the rufflan, sho saw his own counterfeit suddenly appear, moving swiftly and silently as-a shadow. The revolver in Jim's hand went up with a sudden jork, boring a round black hote in the white ceiling. A strong arm gripped Blunt's buil neck from behind, and brought him choking and sprawling back on the carpet. The next moment he lay with handcuffs on his wrists and a gag between his teeth prone and helpless.

Again the lady screamed shrilly.

"Not any more, please, Virs. Meredith," said a familiar voice, persuasively.

"Mr. Beck!" she gasped out in

dith," said a familiar voice, persuasively,
"Mr. Beck!" she gasped out in utter amaxement.
"Take it cooly, my dear lady; the surprise is nearly as great on my part. I assure you, at this pleasant meeting. I will oxplain everything later on. Just now I have a lot to do that worlt wait. I am afraid I must leave this brute here with you. Don't look trightened! He's quite harmless now. I'll the his feet and kick him into the bathroom."

I'll the his feet and kick him into the bathroom."

He drew the serviceable ball of whipcord from his pocket, and strained it tight coll after coll round Blunt's legs and arms till he lay parcelled up, stiff and helpless as a log.

"You can have the malds roll him downstairs into the cellar if you like later on," said Beck, "No, not the butler. I have taken the liberty of turning the key on the butler. He's not to be trusted. You had best leave him where he is till I come back for him."

him, where he is till I come back ror him, "
High; His keen car caught the noise of the men below, elimbling back through the window. There was not a moment to lose. He pushed the prostrate and helpless Binnt with his foot across the carpet into the bathroom, and turned the key in the door, "Good-bye, Mrs. Meredith," he said, readjusting a faile nose that had got slightly displaced during his exertions. "Our friends have heard the a shots. I don't wish to give them the trouble of coming up. I'll meet them on the stairs."

trouble of coming up. I'll meet them on the stairs."

Ho passed out quickly, closing the door after him. Not a moment too soon.

"That you, Jim ?" said Fulliam, in a cautious whisper.

"Stoy your nelse; it's all right; I'm coming in the identical voice that was at that moment corred up by the gag in the mouth of the recumbent

Mr. Blunt. "Stow your noise; it's all right; I'm coming."

He Joined them on the landing opposite the drawing-room door.

"Why the devil did you use the barkers?" growled Grimes.

"Cause I had to; sho was squealing like a mad steam engine. I laid her out safe the second shot. She"tell no tales, but it's about time to be off. I've got the swag safe enough; it like the state of the showed the heap of trinkers that poor Blunt had so industriously collected.

"Right you are," answered Fulham; "the luggage is up and the mare ready."

There was a pounding noise on the shoor of the bathroom over their heads. "Listen," said Grimes; "there is someone kicking. You haven't made a clean job of it, Jim; she wants another doser of lead. I'll quiet her."

He turned to go up the stairs, but Rock's strong hand dragged him back. He knew whose hob-nailed boots were kicking. "Let be, I tell you; it's her last kick. She's got a brace of bullets in her skull. I can do my work without your helping."

He pushed Grimes roughly down the stairs before him, Fulham following. So through the window they passed, apd down the laneway, where the hansom stood and the mare ready waiting, with ears cocked.

Grimes and Fulham got to their places and Beck climbed to the driver's seat, with the bly portmanteau tted in front of him.

He closed the wooden apron across their knees, and let the plate-glass shutter down half way to meet it. The gallant little mare started as fresh as ever, and they bowded swittly on noiseless, rubber-tired wheels back to town.

Grimes and Fulham had carried a couple of bottles of champagne with them, and hoise of popping corks was heard presently in the interior of the hansom. After a brief interval a bottle's neck was protruded through the trap-door at the top.

"I'm not taking any," said the driver," I have the mare to look after.

ine trap-goor at the top.
"I'm not taking sny," said the driver; "I have the mare to look after, and you."
"Good o'd Jim." Said Grimes effusively, elated at the prospect of more drink to share; "we can trust Jing to see us safely through. He knows where we are bound for better nor ourselves." Which was truer than he thought.
The two bottles were duly emptied and the two Inside passengers were pleasantly drowsy, though not in the least drunk. They leant back on either side on the comfortable cushlons, while the hansom sped on its smooth, noise-less way to London.

Now they are sweeping through the silent town in the streets seemed a little unfamiliar to their steepy, half-ofened eyes. But they had the most perfect cenidence in Jim.

Their confidence was rudely shatter-defended exceptions and the most perfect cenidence in Jim.

Their confidence was rudely shatter-defended exceptions and the most perfect cenidence in Jim.

Their confidence was rudely shatter-defended to Scotland Y. and station. The plate-glass shutter was let slip down with a clash on the wooden apron. In with a clash on the wooden apron. Man with a clash on the wooden apron. In the form his seat to the pavement.

"Hurry up' hurry up!" he shoutden as of the more came rushing out, while the two figures trapped in the has som stygicle madly like wild beasts in a cage. Here are two of the suburban burglars, with their lugsage, come to stay. Kindly help the gentlemen out and, make them confortable. I must go lack for the Peter's.

Hs Has Taind Ir.—Mr. John Anderson, Kinions, writed: "I renture to say low, if any, have recoived greater benefit from the nee of Da. Thouss' ECENCRAID OIL, it an I have. I have used it requirely for over ten pears, and have recommended it to all sufferers I knew of, and they also found it of great virtue in cases of severe broughtids and incipient constantial.