



AN APRIL FOOL JOKE.

THE DOINGS OF A BOLD, BAD BOY, WHO MUST HAVE BEEN READING THE PAPERS!

A MONTREAL DETECTIVE STORY.

ON the 1st April, 1788, a daring burglary took place in the large store of Chump & Co., in St. Paul street, in this city. The value of the goods stolen was fully \$500,000. The goods taken consisted of bales of silk, cotton, linen and other goods; of hundreds of boxes of kid gloves, laces, satins, and other valuable materials. The store was completely stripped, even the stairways being removed, the large office safe carried off, as well as the office partitions and furniture. The burglars must have taken fully a week to their nefarious work, and it was remarkable that they were not disturbed. It was rumored at the time that the faithful bookkeeper, who had been in the employ of the firm for nearly half a century, had also been taken off by the enterprising robbers, in order to cover up certain defalcations, but this can hardly be believed, as he belonged to one of the best families, was a constant church goer, and had been endorsed by the leading aldermen of the city.

However, the matter was placed in the city detectives' hands, and they have worked assiduously at the case for a century. From time to time the robbed merchant has called at the Central Police Station, not in any spirit of impatience, but rather to see if he could be of any assistance. On his first visit, about seventy-five years ago, he was informed that certain particulars had been obtained, but that it would not do at all to make them known at that juncture, as it might cause the burglars, who had already been spotted, to take alarm and flee, and there was no knowing what they might do in their desperation. They might not only take flight, but they might also take the city with them. "I might say," continued the mysterious and wonderful detective, "that the expenses in this case have been very heavy and it comes hard on us

detectives; as you are aware, no doubt, we do not receive munificent salaries from the city," and he winked one of those detective winks by which he had made his wonderful reputation.

The merchant took the hint and left a well-filled purse behind him when he departed. And the detective went back to his cogitations—and his pipe.

And the work of unravelling the mystery went on.

Twenty-five years later the merchant visited the detectives again. He of the mysterious wink was out, but another of the noble army of unpaid martyrs was in his place. He smoked a cigar, however. Coming forward, he asked the merchant his business.

"I have just called about that robbery of my establishment fifty years ago."

"Oh, oh, my good man! I am not working on that case, but I know the particulars. It is against our office etiquette to tell you. I am sure you will understand this. I would say that it is altogether too soon to expect any particulars. We must proceed cautiously, and we have been hampered by the lack of funds to prosecute our enquiries."

The hint was again taken and another payment made. The detective, who had a knowing smile, smiled benignly and took the filthy lucre, relit his cigar, and immediately returned to his onerous duty of scanning the papers.

The years rolled by and the detective sworke assiduously. The merchant died. His son, however, had the temerity to call upon the city detectives about ten years ago.

Introducing himself, he said:—"I am the son of Mr. Chump, who was robbed ninety years ago. I hope matters are going on all right. Of course, I am not impatient, but I would like some information, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith."

"Well, young man," replied he of the mysterious wink, "you are young, you must know that detective work is not done in a day in this city. We proceed here on the principle that it is better that one guilty man should escape than that ninety-nine guilty men should suffer. However, we are doing the best we can."

"Yes," replied the owner of the mysterious smile, "we have to proceed in the proper manner. Supposing we told you the particulars, and they should get into the papers, our reputation would be gone. All our proceedings must be secret. We always work in the dark."

"Yes, I always thought so," replied the young man, "but what if you should never discover the perpetrators?"

"Impossible! Impossible!!" chorused the two detectives, together; "we have yet the pawnshops to visit."

"But why have you not visited them before?"

"The pawnshop is our great reliance, and it never fails us. We can visit them any time, you know, and will do so before you call again. Say you come back in ten years and we will have something to tell you."

And the young man went away full of hope.

Yesterday he called. The detectives were jubilant.

"Any news?" he asked.

"Yes! great news! great news!"

"What is it?"

"We are proud to inform you we have got a clue."

"A clue?"

"Yes! A CLUE!"

"What is it?"

"The robbers are dead."

And the detectives went back to their arduous duties. And the young man went home happy. The robbers had not escaped.

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