



SERJEANT BOLDS.

Serjeant Bolds of the X division is a man of no mean reputation in his own part of the world—indeed he is looked upon as quite a celebrity in his way. About twenty years ago he had the good fortune to be present at the capture of the chief men concerned in the great Damian House burglary. His share in the arrest was but small, though that was of little consequence to the Serjeant, who increased it mightily as years passed on; and now any one hearing him tell the story would suppose that he alone tackled, captured and brought to justice five of the strongest men the world contains. And many, too, are the tales of his prowess which occasionally follow.

But there is one incident in his professional career that Serjeant Bolds never brings up—an incident he would fain forget. He feels it as a blot on his escutcheon, which he would give ten years of his life to wipe off. It was the occasion of the great annual cricket match, Bridgemere vs. Oldham, held in Squire Broadbent's grounds. The young Broadbents were chiefly instrumental in getting it up, so it caused quite an excitement in the village, and every one in Bridgemere was most anxious as to the result.

About five o'clock, Serjeant Bolds, having finished his tea, announced to his wife his intention of going up to the field to see how they were getting on. Cricket was a very interesting game to the Serjeant. He had been a "dab" at it when a boy, and, according to himself, not one of his hits ever resulted in less than four being added to the score.

There was a great hill to mount on the way to the cricket-field, and, the day being oppressively hot, the Serjeant was nearly exhausted when he reached the top. He took out his handkerchief, mopped his face, and then started off in the direction of the Hall.

He met two of the cricketers coming out of the gate, and somewhat envied them their cool flannel clothing; but on further inspection he found them even hotter than he, for they were each carrying a long cricket-bag, besides a portmanteau between them.

"Here, old chap," one of them called out—"give us a helping hand! We want to catch the six-o'clock train, and have barely a quarter of an hour to do it in. Carry this for us, will you?"—and they handed him the portmanteau. Serjeant Bolds is very good-natured, and thought nothing of tramping back again all the way he had come.

"Is the match over, sir?" he asked, hurrying along by the side of the strangers.

"Over! Yes—some time," answered the younger of the two.

"And which side won, sir?"

"Won!" said the other, laughing. "Why, we won, of course!"

"Then Mr. Broadbent lost?" exclaimed Bolds, disappointed.

"Yes," the man answered rather grimly—"Mr. Broadbent lost."

"Do you find that heavy, old boy?" said the elder and bigger man. "You see it's the balls which weigh. We always have to bring down half a dozen or so in case any get lost. I have the wickets here, and they make my arm ache, I can tell you!"

In spite of their haste, however, they did not catch the train; it was moving out of the station just as they went in. "Confound it!" exclaimed the elder man. "What are we to do? When does the next train go?" he asked, turning to a porter.

"Two hours' time, sir. There's a train that starts from Marbury in 'arf an hour; but that is three miles off. You won't 'ave time to catch that."

"Isn't there a trap or something about this wretched place?"

"No—there ain't no traps 'ere, nor ever was. You might be able to get the pony-phaeton at the Broadbent Arms, but I expect that is up at the cricket-field. So you'll just 'ave to wait for the next train or not go at all, as you please."

"Just you keep a civil tongue in your head, Mr. Barnes," interrupted the Serjeant hotly, "or—"

But the porter waited to hear no more. He walked off in a huff, remarking with a sniff that he was not used to be treated like a dog and he would not stand it now.

Mrs. Bolds keeps a small provision-shop, and a so a little pony-trap for business purposes. The Serjeant was sorry for the young gentlemen; after their day's play, they must be tired, he thought. So he humbly proffered his little conveyance.

"If it won't demean you by enterin' it, for it's naught but a postermonger's cart at best. But Polly she's a good 'un to go, and maybe would get you to Marbury in time."

The men caught at the chance. They hurried after the Serjeant, who lives quite close to the station, and it was not long before all three were seated in the trap and Polly going at a rate she had never attempted before.

The elder stranger drove, while the other sat and chatted pleasantly with the Serjeant. The tongue of the gallant Bolds was loosed, and soon his companion was in possession of all the facts of the great Damian House burglary, besides many other tales of Bolds' unequalled cunning, which were told in a style that grew more dramatic as the Serjeant's audience became more attentive. Certainly these tales had never been received in such a way before. The stranger was doubled up with laughter, and when at last the Serjeant finished up with the usual boastful assertion that "the day

as never come which 'as found Serjeant Bolds unsuccessful in landin' 'is bird, and there ain't a man alive as could get out of 'is clutches," the cricketer seemed almost bursting. He slapped the Serjeant on the back, and said—

"Well done, old chap! You're a deep 'un, you are! I should be sorry for any one who tried to escape you. Why, the guilty would even wither up and collapse at the mere glance of your piercing eye!" The Serjeant glowed inwardly at such open admiration. "You must come down and see us," continued the appreciative young man. "We have a nice little cottage up the river, quite close to Maidenhead. Bring your missus one day, and we will have a picnic and a fine time all together. Now don't forget! I shall write and appoint the day, and shall expect both of you to come."

Serjeant Bolds beamed; such condescension on the part of a young gentleman he had never before experienced. Nor was this all; for, when they reached Marbury, just in time to catch the train, the elder stranger pressed half-a-crown into the Serjeant's hand, and thanked him heartily for his assistance.

"And here's another," said the younger man. "And don't you forget the day up the river!"

Polly walked most of the way home—she was too exhausted to do much more; and the Serjeant was in no hurry to get back. He sat and wondered what he should do with his five shillings.

"Two as pleasant-spoken young gentlemen as ever I came across!" he said, finishing an account of his adventure to his wife and a friend who had dropped in to keep her company. "Never in all my born days did I see such generous young gentlemen as them!"

Mrs. Bolds was elated. A day up the river! She had never had such an experience.

Mrs. Brown, the baker's wife, was consumed with jealousy.

"A day on the river ain't much!" she remarked, with a sniff.

But Mrs. Bolds scarcely heard her; she was thinking of the opportunity of wearing her purple satin gown. Her last new bonnet must be smartened up a bit too; besides which, she must not forget the gorgeous red sunshade the Serjeant had bought her two years before.

Mrs. Bolds' meditations were interrupted by several thundering raps at the door. She hurried to open it, and it seemed to her as if most of the neighborhood poured in.

"Where is Serjeant Bolds? Serjeant Bolds is wanted! What—haven't you heard? A great robbery up at the Hall! All the best silver plate gone! Mrs. Broadbent's jewel-case missing! They want Serjeant Bolds up there! No—there is no clue, no clue whatever!"

This, in disconnected sentences, was the news that was imparted to Bolds and his wife.

The Serjeant stood up immediately, ready for action. He strutted up to the Hall, with the crowd following, in a way that must have struck terror to the minds of the burglars, had they seen him.

It was all quite true; every piece of plate was gone, every jewel missing. There were consternation and clamour everywhere; no one seemed to know the exact facts of the burglary, and all appeared to talk at once.

The entrance of Serjeant Bolds restored order for a time. He insisted on silence, and went the round of the place, questioning the servants one by one. He was in his element, and his heart swelled with inward pride as the Squire confided to him all his misfortunes.

The servants knew nothing; no one had been seen. What was to be done? Suddenly a kitchen-maid came forward to speak; she had not appeared on the scene before, and Serjeant Bolds held up his hand to command attention.

"About half-past five it was," she began, visibly delighted at being the centre of so much observation. "About half-past five I saw two men get out of the dining-room window with bags in their hands. It was when most of us had gone over to the field to take the tea. I thought nothing of it at the time. As they were in cricketing flannels, I took them for some of the players."

"There was not a player off the field at that time," broke in young Broadbent. "The match wasn't over until half-past seven. Those must have been the burglars! Did anyone else see them?" he asked.

"They had two longbags and a portmanteau with them," went on the little kitchen-maid. "They seemed awfully heavy to carry, and the men were hurrying along in the direction of the station."

"Send some one there to inquire immediately!" cried the Squire.

But the bold and gallant Serjeant's jaw had dropped, and his eyes swelled to an enormous extent. His legs trembled and almost failed to support his body. He waited for no further investigation, but elbowed his way through the crowd and slunk home as quickly as his legs could carry him. Those two half-crowns seemed to weigh him down and hinder his progress. What if the story should get about? What if it should be known that Serjeant Bolds had helped two thieves to get away with their booty—he, Serjeant Bolds, whose very name was terrible to the burglar's mind? When he reached home, beads of perspiration were trickling down his face.

The story did get about—and it would not have been the surly railway-porter's fault if it had not. He published it far and wide, with manifold additions of his own. Mrs. Brown, too, was quite a lion—or lioness, perhaps—for the time being. The tea-parties at which she related the story of Bolds and his water-party were numerous.

Until the excitement subsided the Serjeant found it wiser to take to his bed and decline to see any one; and it was a long time before he ventured out again to face his many acquaintances in Bridgemere.

He still tells his old tales, still brags of his promptness in catching his "game." Only on the jewel and plate robbery at the Hall is he for ever silent; for, thanks to his "promptness," not a single piece was ever seen or heard of again. Mrs. Bolds' purple satin gown, too, has remained in its box ever since, for no further invitation to the river picnic has been received by either Serjeant Bolds or his wife.

JENNIE WREN.

MINNIE MAY'S DEPARTMENT.

MY DEAR NIECES:—

The adaptability of crape tissue paper for all sorts of useful and ornamental articles is such that the making of various dainty trifles out of this pretty and cheap material has become a favorite pastime of the rich, and a very profitable occupation of the poor. As some of my readers may not have seen this new paper, I will describe it for their benefit. It is much tougher and more durable than the ordinary tissue paper, and so closely resembles the material from which it takes its name that it can be used for a variety of purposes where the ordinary kind would be perfectly useless. It is sold in rolls three yards long and eighteen inches wide, in every diversity of shade and color—price twenty cents. A still more beautiful kind, with tinted edges for making flowers, is sold at thirty cents a roll. A flower-pot cover is one of the easiest and prettiest things to make. Measure the height of your pot and cut the paper accordingly, allowing two inches extra at the bottom and three at the top for a frill. Then measure pot around at largest part, and allow your paper one-half as long again, to give sufficient fullness. Turn down the extra depth of paper evenly at top and bottom, run a drawing-string in the middle of the double part—embroidery silk of same shade is the best—and leave the ends long enough to tie together when putting around the pot. Draw the upper and lower edges of each frill through your fingers to give it extra fullness. For a large flower-pot the frills should, of course, be much deeper, and an additional row of paper, of a lighter shade, placed in the middle of the frill, adds much to its beauty. Yellow and cream, olive and pale green, pale green and white, are very pretty combinations. A still more simple cover can be made by merely drawing the edge through your fingers and then fastening it around the pot with a piece of ribbon two inches wide, tied in the middle with a pretty bow. Ferns, palms, begonias, etc., add so much to the appearance of our table and rooms during the long months in which we have no flowers that it has been a delight to many to be able so easily to decorate the unsightly pots in which they grow.

A very pretty lamp-shade may be made, to use with any common lamp that has a globe support to keep the paper away from the chimney, by using two tints of paper, white and pink. Take a piece of paper, wide enough to pass around the largest part of the wire support, and allow enough in addition to make it hang rather full; allow a sufficient depth to cover the wire from top to bottom and enough in addition to make a heading of three inches at the top and enough at the bottom to fall well below the edge of the wire support. Cut this first shade in white. Cut a second one as long, but an inch shorter in depth, top and bottom, of the pink. Three inches from the top of the white, which will be two inches below the top of the pink, run your gathering-string or thread. Gather up tightly and tie in the groove about the wire frame, drawing the heading or double ruffle out from the chimney, and with a few dexterous manipulations of the fingers forming the frills into large fluted curves. Draw the lower edges of paper through the fingers also, to make it appear wavy. A photograph frame that I recently saw was extremely pretty, and so easily done, too. Cut a piece of cardboard the size and shape wanted, with opening in the middle to correspond with your photo, and then cover it with pale green crape tissue paper, sew a large bunch of purple violets at the top left-hand corner, so that the flowers will spread out across the top and down the side of the frame, then paste on your cardboard back, to have it neatly finished on wrong side. Of course the flowers are made of paper also, the stems of the violets being of a deeper shade of green than the frame. The manufacture of flowers looks difficult, and it requires patience and care, but the adaptability of the crape paper is so wonderful—it seems to assume almost of itself the desired shape. A Frenchwoman who has spent many years in making paper flowers never had any instruction whatever. She took scissors, fine wire, paper, and real flowers; when she couldn't get the latter she took some good colored pictures of them instead, and tried and tried again until she succeeded in making them to her complete satisfaction.

In addition to the above, any number of fancy articles for the dressing table can be made, such as mats, glove and handkerchief boxes, pin trays, and little baskets for the innumerable little trifles that are always going astray. Directions for making these I will gladly give to any of my readers who would like to try experiments; illustrations could be given at the same time, if desired, and if the paper is difficult to procure, it could be forwarded at the prices mentioned, with two or three cents in addition for postage.

MINNIE MAY.

"The mark of a saint is not perfection, but consecration. A saint is not a man without faults, but a man who has given himself without reserve to God."