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WHEAT

said that it was no worse for me than it was for him. The logic of that, I said, I would not dispute, but I asked him to ransack my maisonette and take whatever pleased him, but to spare the letters. He merely said "Pickles!" and—would you believe it?—Annette just now said something very much of the same sort.

"Ah! and there was Tottie's photo, too—wasn't there?—which I was going to take as a memento of this 'ere maisonette," he said, as he took the photograph of Rosie Langton from his discarded coat and put it in with the letters. "Well, ta-ta!" and he laughed as he went down the stairs.

I was indescribably relieved by his departure, and I could not forbear watching from my window his exit into the street. At the corner of the square was a policeman, who looked at him, as I thought, curiously, as he walked jauntily along with the coat flung over his arm, and then followed him round the corner. Immediately I had a relapse from my pleasure at knowing he was gone, and began to be tormented with suspicions.

I made things as clear as I could in my rooms, and, summoning Mrs. Jones, demanded breakfast.

"Dear me, sir!" she said, "I thought I see you go out 'arf an hour back!"

"Good gracious!" I thought, "this is the beginning of it."

Mrs. Jones brought up the morning paper with the breakfast things, and I snatched at it eagerly. No news, I thought, would be good news. The fire might have destroyed all traces of the theft, and we—I actually thought "we"—could move about the world without a breath of suspicion blowing on us.

I have noticed that if there is something you want particularly to see in the paper, you have to search page after page, and finally, after a quarter of an hour's search, the paragraph turns up in a column you could have sworn that you glanced down half a dozen times at least. Of course, on this occasion the first thing that met my eye was—

BURGLARY IN X SQUARE.

Nothing about the fire! I eagerly read the paragraph. It ran:

"Last night burglars broke into No. 25, X Square, the town residence of Mr. Bostock, the principal partner in the banking firm of Bostock, Binns and Bostock. It appears that in the afternoon Mrs. Bostock was summoned to the bedside of her husband, who, we regret to say, met with a somewhat serious accident while hunting in Leicestershire, and the house was left in the charge of the servants. It is a fortunate occurrence that they should have stayed up somewhat late yesterday night, anxiously awaiting news of their master's condition, or the burglary might have gone entirely unnoticed. Our representative learnt from Mr. Higgins, Mr. Bostock's house-steward, that late last evening, as some of the maidservants were going up to bed, it was discovered that Mrs. Bostock's bedroom was on fire. Prompt assistance was given by the servants themselves and others, and the fire was already almost extinguished when the fire engines appeared on the scene. On entering the room it was found that numerous drawers had been rifled, and it is believed that Mrs. Bostock's jewels have all been carried off, the fire being probably caused by the burglars, in their alarm at the approach of the servants, dropping a light upon some inflammable material. We have no further news to hand, but the police, who were immediately communicated with, are making diligent inquiries."

That began the wretchedest day I ever spent. After breakfast I walked out with the firm determination of giving the policeman at the corner the full benefit of my knowledge. But

the policeman did not happen to be at the corner, and I strolled on. It was some time before I came upon a member of the force, and by that time, whether it was from some odd compunction which made me want to give the fellow a chance, or from the idea that it was too late to do any good by giving information now, or from the memory of the close proximity of a loaded revolver, I had made up my mind not to say anything at all about it.

When I reached Regent Street, a placard of an enterprising evening paper warned me of new discoveries. I read that the trap-door had been found to be open, and shuddered. In the next edition there were stories of a suspicious character having been in the house last night. I groaned as I read them. The fifth edition gave a tolerably accurate description of my visitor and me, and I had a fit of despair. The police had a clue. In the "specials" was news of an arrest. I hurried home and found that I was wanted at the police-station.

Now this is how I stand. The Law looks upon me with suspicion, pooh-poohs the pistol, throws doubt upon my intrepidity (before unquestioned) and thinks my behaviour unworthy of a citizen. If I escape being taken up as an accessory after the fact, it is as much as I can hope for.

And then there is Annette — Annette is furious at my having given up her letters, and won't listen to reason for a moment. The presence of Rosie Langton's photograph in the same pocket as the letters has also been the subject of a most disagreeable conversation between us, and she treats my simple and true explanation with contemptuous incredulity. In short, I'm in an awful scrape all round.

But what would you have done in my place?

MORE ABOUT BREAD.

(Ottawa Journal)

WHEN a loaf of bread reaches the household table, its cost has included not merely human labour utilised in connection with the machinery of a flour mill, or of even both a flour mill and a farm. The loaf represents also wide-reaching considerations of the value of land, the material cost of fertilizers, buildings, transportation, and rent, and the cost of the brains occupied in operating the latter matters. The cause of Socialism, which is in principle a noble and admirable cause, is desperately unfortunate in the absurdity of statement of many of its advocates. We suppose no one feels this more than the really intelligent and broad-minded Socialists.

THE TRUTH ABOUT FRUIT.

(Vancouver World.)

THE fruit-growers of British Columbia want the same rate in-t-o Winnipeg as is enjoyed by the Ontario fruit-growers. The rate on apples and pears from the Okanagan to Winnipeg is quoted as 75 cents per hundred, while the rate from Ontario to Winnipeg is given as 55 cents per hundred. This difference is serious, and its importance becomes fully apparent when it is remembered that the cost of production and of living in British Columbia are both considerably higher than in the East. The Dominion Express Company grants identical rates east and west. On the other hand, it is contended that the reason why British Columbia growers do not do more business in Winnipeg and the Northwest is not the competition of Ontario growers, but the competition of the growers of Washington and Oregon, who, it is stated, dump second-grade fruit into Winnipeg at prices which are tempting to the dealers.



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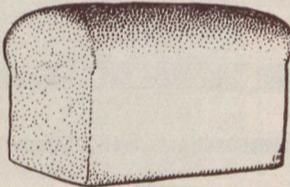
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