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THE TICKLER

more! They'll talk about my reception forever, if you do!"

Astro laughed. "That's one thing I'm afraid I can't do. You see, the Countess isn't quite so innocent as you are, Mrs. Selwyn."

"It was a pretty big chance you were taking, seems to me," said Valeska, as Astro drove her home. "Of course she grabbed the stone so tightly that it printed the marks of the facets on her white glove; that part of it was easy. But how could you be sure? You didn't look at half the people's hands."

"You noticed the way she held her fingers when I spoke to you, didn't you? I didn't have time, then, to explain. But I knew by that that she was or had been a pickpocket. The professional dipper works with his first two fingers, and almost always carries his hand with them extended, and the other two fingers curled up out of the way."

"But why did you look at her left glove, instead of the right, as you did all the others?"

"I had noticed at supper time that she was left handed. Where I took my long chance, my dear, was when I trusted to you to find out what she did with the brooch. I confess that when I dropped on the floor and waited for your signal, I was rather anxious. It was up to you, then, to make me or break me. But I was sure I could trust you, and you did beautifully."

Valeska herself had been more anxious during that few minutes than she confessed. There was, however, one more thing to be straightened out in her mind.

"What I don't understand is who put out the lights," she remarked. "I forgot to tell you that I was standing near the wall where the electric switch was and immediately the lights went out some one brushed past me roughly, and something twitched at my waist. I wonder who it was?"

Astro cast a look down at her side and smiled. "Oh, that settles something that bothered me," he said musingly. "Clever little buckles on your corsage, my dear! I wondered how that pompadoured chap happened to have his left coat sleeve cut in such a queer way; but I was too busy to think it out. I wish now I had given both of them over to the police. I expect he's a diamond cutter, fast enough! Mrs. Selwyn is lucky that six or seven different persons won't be wearing pieces of her emerald next year."

The next Master of Mysteries story "The Lorrson Elopement," will appear September 12.

Englishmen in Canada

BY EXETER HALL.

A MAN is too apt to judge things generally from his very limited experience about men; it is a safe rule to wait a while before passing an opinion on the country and the customs which prevail. I heard of a man who came to this new world of ours and was so overcome by feelings of homesickness that he did not get any farther than Montreal, and yet this blessed nuisance had the unbridled impudence to announce a lecture on Canada when he got back to his mother's lap again. Oh, ye hardy Norsemen, how shall the graves contain you when your sons so dishonour your fearless history of the past? Let us be thankful, brothers, that there are but few cases on record like this. Speaking of lecturing, this is a temptation against which every very young man in the ministry has to steel his heart. When the Rev. A. B. C.

announces that he will lecture on "His Life," we are at once impressed that something unusual has taken place in the career of the said A. B. C. more particularly as it appears that he has not favoured the terrestrial sphere with his presence more than a quarter of a century—perhaps hardly that. We are further informed that the lecture is one of the said A. B. C.'s "popular efforts," which leads up to the conclusion that this very young man has more than one of these entertaining deliveries. Tickets are purchased without delay, and we appear in due course as expectant auditors. The prodigy tells us a lot of pretty little incidents about the home life which are interesting to the children. The climax is supposed to be reached when A. B. C. relates that one day when three years old he fell into a washtub, and providence and another woman pulled him out, and that as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, etc. We fail to see any connection between this incident and a call to the ministry, although this was strongly urged. The whole affair was sheer twaddle, and we felt as we went home that perhaps it would have been better to have left A. B. C. in the tub. — *Christian Guardian.*

The Open Road

BY MAUDE GOLDRING.

Out past the bars of Square and Place,
And streets where toilers bear their load,
Past all the hurrying populace
There runs the Open Road.

How white its ribbon measures out
The sun-baked acres round the town!

How hoarse the People's empty shout
Behind us travels down!

They fret, but we, with scrip and staff,
Take pilgrims' way some dusty eve.
Behind the People snatch and laugh
Over the toys we leave.

Beyond us lies the healthy hill,
Lone valleys where the brown streams meet,
The low-roofed cot, the turning mill,
The waving plains of wheat.

Before us still the wide skies arch,
The primrose West with rose is strewed,
And shadowy cloud-battalions march
Across its solitude.

The wild-flower clusters brighter twine,
The wild birds' note more clearly rings,
And from the shade of beech and pine
Look forth the forest things.

But, far behind, through dusty days
The People fret against their bars,
And set no foot in open ways,
Nor eye the evening stars.

And some have paused by purple slope
To hear the echo of their sighs,
Turned back to bring the People hope,
And toiled to make them wise.

For air and the blue heav'n are free
(Say they), and peace is not for few.
And these must share, as well as we,
The stars and morning dew.

These must come forth with pilgrim song,
With light-weighted scrip and strength'ning rod,
For unto all the roads belong,
And the straight paths of God.

—*The Spectator* (London).

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