

THE SLEUTH

"Darling kind heart!" thought Neil. Aloud he said: "I will return it this evening. As soon as I can turn in my calendar heading."

The little bag was open. "I have only half a dollar," she said, looking at him frankly and blushing. "I need only half that much."

She shyly put the coin on the pedestal. "Ah, don't!" she said, cutting short his thanks. "It is nothing!"

But Neil would thank her, and in great discomfort she turned to fly. "Oh, wait a minute," he said; "there's something else."

She looked alarmed. "What do you want to ask my advice. You see, I've only been in New York three months, and I've moved three times. I haven't had the price to join a class. So I'm friendly."

"Advice? What is it?" "Didn't it strike you as odd that I should borrow a quarter when I said I had only to turn in my tablet to get five dollars?"

"No," she said. "Why don't you ask me why I don't turn my work, and be done with it?" "Well—why don't you?"

Neil felt that he had now paved the way very clearly. "That's what I wanted to ask your advice about. Do you think I'd be arrested if I went down in the street dressed like this?"

"The eyebrows went up sharply. 'Arrested?' she echoed. 'Dressed like that? What do you mean?' 'I wouldn't mind,' said Neil gravely. 'Only if I was arrested I couldn't cash in my calendar heading.'

"Surely you're not in earnest," she said. "Dead earnest," said Neil. "I haven't any other clothes."

"No clothes?" she repeated with her grave air of concern. "Neil said that she suspected him of being demented. He suppressed the desire to laugh. She was so funny—and so sweet. He couldn't resist teasing her a little."

"Pss—! I mean, trousers," he said. She looked quite aghast. He pointed tragically to a scorched ruin before the grate. "Burned up!" he said.

"Burned?" she murmured, wide-eyed. "Only my pair."

"How did it happen?" "Well, you remember it rained yesterday. I got wet. When I went to bed I built a little fire in the grate and hung them before it. The chair tipped over backwards. By the time the smoke awakened me the damage was done forever!" He held up the ruined garment. "I might turn them into knee pants," he said with an innocent air, "but I haven't any long stockings."

"But this is serious!" she said re-bukingly. "What are you going to do?" "I'm asking your advice," said Neil.

"I suppose you haven't had any dinner?"

"Not a bite." Her glance was turned inward for a moment. "I haven't a thing in my room."

But I'll get something. "Oh, thanks!" said Neil. "But I'd rather have pa-trousers than food."

"But how could I?" she said, blushing. "I have another pair being mended at the tailor's in University Place," he said, eagerly. "That's what the quarter is for."

"Oh!" she said, with a catch in her breath. There was a silence. Neil stole a look at her. The round averted cheek was the color of the sunny side of a peach.

"It's just around the corner in University Place," he went on, cajoling. "Next door to the Busy Bee lunch room. His name is Pincushowitz. Good name for a tailor, eh? It's a terrible thing to ask you to do. But you see how I am pleased. If it was any other street in town I wouldn't faint making a dash for it. I could put them on when I got there. But Fourteenth street! You know what it is. I'd be mobbed before I got across the road."

"Of course I'll go," she murmured. "But I scarcely know what—what should I ask for?"

"Oh, thank you!" cried Neil. "Just ask for the pants of the young man who makes clay models. He doesn't know any name. They're blue serge, somewhat shiny in the—where they're worn. The bottoms were frayed, and he was to turn them up and press them for a quarter. You will be saving my life!"

"Oh, don't laugh," she said in a stifled voice, and fled downstairs. Neil ran out into the hall and looked over the banister after her. The sound of her flying feet died away on the interminable stairs. His heart swelled big and warm with the thought of her.

"Little darling!" he said to himself. "So funny and kind and old-maidish and adorable! What joy to have her for a neighbor and a pal! To tease her and love her to death!" A pang of fear promptly attacked him. "Heaven knows who may be ahead of me. Sweet as she is, it isn't possible she has escaped other men up until now."

Hastening back into his room, he consulted his little mirror. "Lord! what a sight! This artistic carelessness stuff can be carried too far." He violently attacked his unruly hair with the brushes.

"Could I take her to dinner out of that five?" he anxiously asked the glass. "We could walk to Garlotti's. With tips it would cost one dollar and thirty cents. Think of having that across the table. . . . Heavens, she would inspire a maudlin to flights of wit! . . . But to live for a month on three dollars and seventy cents afterwards—it can't be done. Oh, hang it! I'll sell my soul again, and do another calendar-heading."

After finishing with himself, he violently set to work to put his room in order. Then he had to tidy himself again. Still she did not come. He became seriously anxious. Had her courage failed her at the door of the tailor's? Had Pincushowitz refused to deliver the pants? Maybe the little Jew had insulted her delicacy. He would naturally suppose—Neil turned hot and cold.

A hundred times he went out and looked down the stairs. At last he heard a muffled voice from the landing below:

"Please go into your room and close the door."

"But why?" asked Neil. "What has happened?"

"Please go in and close the door!" she repeated, with a plaintive note. He obeyed, wondering. There was a scurry on the stairs, a brief pause outside his door, and a slammed door in front. Neil stuck his head out. There were the trousers safe enough, hanging nakedly from the door-knob. "Pincushowitz didn't have any wrapping paper!" he said to himself.

CHAPTER II.

Returning from the lithographers who employed him, with his money in his pocket, Neil made haste to knock upon the door of the front hall room. There was no answer. At the same time a certain quality in the stillness within suggested that the tenant was at home.

Neil was filled with resentment. Returning to his own room, he left the door standing open, and making a pretense of working, waited to confound her.

Sure enough, in the course of an hour she opened her door. Seeing him on the watch, she made as if to go back, but changed her mind and came toward the head of the stairs with chin up.

"I knew you were there all the time," said Neil, morosely. "Oh, was it you who knocked?" she said, with an unconvincing air of innocence. Her face was a study. She wished to lie to him, but her essential honesty rebelled, and her pride suggested that it was none of his business anyway.

"You knew it was I," said Neil, accusingly. "So many people, canvassers, beggars, come through the halls, I never open my door," she said.

"They don't trouble me much," said Neil. With an offended air she made to go on downstairs.

It was impossible for him to remain angry with her. "Oh, never mind," he said, quickly. "Your room in your

castle, of course, I just wanted to pay you back. Here."

She dropped the coin in her bag, blushing. "I accepted another order for a calendar," he said, talking for talk's sake to detain her for a while, "so I'll be in funds this month. They wanted the Courtship of Miles Standish in high relief, but I persuaded them to give me a simple, little Arabesque box with 'Hilgenreiner Brewing Company' inside it."

She smiled and made to go on. "Haven't you got a word to throw me?" demanded Neil, all ready to be offended again.

She turned a face of genuine distress towards him. "I don't wish to be unfriendly," she said. "But there's nothing to say, is there? We don't know each other."

"Let's get acquainted, then," said Neil. "Come to dinner with me at Garlotti's, and we'll get acquainted fast enough."

She looked at him with a startled "Oh!" She quickly recovered herself. "I'm sorry I can't go," she said, soberly.

"Why not?" he demanded. "I have an engagement."

Neil immediately fell prey to a gnawing jealousy. "Oh!" he said, seeking to read her secret with probing eyes. "Well—make it to-morrow night."

She shook her head. "Another engagement?" he inquired, sarcastically. "No."

"Then why not?" The soft and charming girl developed unexpected reserves when she was pushed too far. She looked at him full. "Because I don't wish to," she said clearly.

Neil was reduced to sullenness. "Oh! Since you put it that way, I beg your pardon," he said, stiffly. "I thought you were human and friendly. My mistake."

"I am friendly," she said, resentful in turn, "but you won't let me be friendly."

"Then why won't you come out with me?" "You talk about friendliness," she said, warmly. "If I were another man you would not presume to cross-examine me!"

Neil's sense of justice compelled him to confess the hit. He climbed down. "Oh, I suppose you're right," he muttered. "I forgot myself. I'm sorry."

At the sight of his confusion she melted enchantingly. "It's not such a serious crime as all that," and she gave him one of her rare smiles. Nor did she offer to run away now.

It promptly intoxicated him again. "Say, you must think I'm a regular lobster!" he said, ardently. "Oh, no!" she said, with a slightly bored air.

It was lost on him. "You will come out with me sometime?" he insinuated. The smile was called in. "It's out of the question," she returned firmly. "There's nothing more to be said about it."

Then she did go. Neil was provoked to the mad extravagance of dining himself at Garlotti's. He enjoyed it very little, for after he got there he felt mean thus to be spending his money in solitary gratification. Afterward with the young man's instinct of warding off trouble—some thoughts he went to three moving picture shows in succession.

He got home before midnight with a headache, and without having attained his object, for as soon as he lay down in his bed the troublesome thoughts came thronging.

How sweet she was, and how baffling! She had looked hurt when he accused her of unfriendliness; yet she had turned him down peremptorily. What did that mean? What was the matter with him that she didn't like him? Yet she did seem to like him, but kept him at arm's length, too.

Humility was not one of Neil's virtues. That such a soft, appealing, adorable creature should dare to set her will against his drove him wild. He would show her! But how, if she didn't care? Somehow she seemed to be able to put him in the wrong. She made him cut an inglorious figure in his own eyes. Unpardonable in her! Oh! confound her, anyway, for being so maddeningly sweet!

At intervals his old self would arise and administer discipline. "Here you! Cut it out! You're in a fair way to make a fool of yourself. This will interfere with your work. Get a grip on

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yourself. She's only a girl like a thousand others. You can't afford it!" And so forth and so forth.

And then he would fall to speculating on the mystery that enveloped her. What sights could life have shown her, a mere girl, that made her eyes so deep and quiet and wistful with the recollection? Only pain borne in silence can lead human beings an immortal dignity like hers. What had she been through? Indeed she was not a girl like all the others. He had never seen a pair of eyes that could play on his heartstrings like hers.

In short, self-discipline was a failure. He was no sooner dressed next morning than he opened his door and fixed desirous eyes on the door down the hall. He went without his breakfast for fear he might slip out while he was gone. Work was a hollow pretense. The old beggar stood untouched under the cloth. The sculler made feeble sketches for calendar headings and tore them up. The door he watched was never opened. By and by a sharp anxiety attacked him. Suppose she were taken sick in there alone! A lively recollection of yesterday's rebuke kept him as yet from inquiring.

In the middle of the day he heard the postman's whistle, and for a diversion, traveled downstairs on the slim chance of finding a letter. Since the responsibility of the post-office department ended at the street door each of the tenants maintained a mail-box in the entry. All of different sizes and designs, the collection hung on the wall like nests in a chimney.

As he came down the last flight Neil was astonished to see the girl of his thoughts in the act of unlocking her box. How had she got there before him? He lingered inside, meaning to accost her in the greater privacy of the stair hall. The light was behind her, and Neil could not read her expression.

Something suggested, however, that she was changed from the day before. She did not get a letter and Neil's jealous heart was glad, instead of coming in, she immediately turned into the street again.

Neil involuntarily followed her, hatless as he was. She had not been home since early morning, he knew, and he suspected not all night.

She turned east, and crossing the wide esplanade under the shadow of Lincoln, entered Union Square, with its high green fences and clutter and wrangle of subway construction. She walked with the curious hurried aimlessness one sees so often in New York. Neil became sure that something was wrong. She seemed in a desperate hurry to get somewhere, yet suddenly she stopped and sat down on a bench. It was as if her legs had refused to carry her further.

As he drew closer Neil saw her face. He was prepared to read trouble there, but he was shocked by what he saw. She was as white as paper, and a look of wild terror dilled her eyes. Her hands pressed her breast, as if she thought of a fainting here listening to the bay of the hounds.

And this in the middle of New York at mid-day with hundreds passing to and fro, none giving a second look. He slipped into the seat beside her. "Good morning," he said, with an amiable assumption of fatuousness.

She turned her eyes on him without recognition. "Watching the animals march?" he said, making himself as much like a clown as he could.

"Oh—you're the young man in the back room," she said dully. "Please go away, I wish to be alone."

"Oh—you're the young man in the back room," she said dully. "Please go away, I wish to be alone."

Neil could not resist it, seeing those eyes. "You're in trouble," he said bluntly. "Can't I help?"

"I have neuralgia," she said with a curious painful eagerness. "That's what makes me look so pale and haggard. There's nothing to do but wait till it goes."

"You were not home all night," he said at random. By her terrified start he knew it was true. She quickly made an effort to recover herself. "Nonsense!" she said. "I got up very early because I could not sleep."

"What's the use of making believe?" asked Neil quietly. "Why do you force yourself on me?" He was not to be discouraged. "I am your friend," he said.

"Friends!" she cried. Her voice began to shake hysterically. "Men can't be friends with women! They always want something. I tell you I have nothing for you—nothing! Now go and let me be!"

But Neil sat tight. After a long time she asked: "Why don't you go?" Neil smiled with obstinate good nature.

"It would be easy for you find out if I want something," he said. "If things are very bad with you already, it wouldn't matter if I turned out no good, would it? And on the other hand I might not be a bad lot, you know."

She searched him deep with her wild, pained eyes. "I don't believe there's such a thing as decency or manliness," she murmured.

"Maybe not," said Neil. "Well, I will try you!" she said wildly. "If I could have a friend—But it isn't possible. It doesn't matter, anyway. . . . No questions, mind, Oh, it's only a little thing, anyway. I think in this silly way! You mustn't mind. It's my head."

"Fire away!" said Neil, with a stolid air, calculated to quiet her. She made a piteous effort to speak in a natural, off-hand way.

"I want something out of my room. My photographs off the bureau. Those terrible stairs I'm not equal to them. So you see—it's only a little thing after all. Here's the key. The portfolio stands on a chair in plain view—and

two photographs. They are the only photographs there. Don't forget to lock the door after you. And hurry. Oh, please hurry!"

(To be continued.)

English War Bread.

War bread made from Government regulation flour has caused so much illness in England that chemists and bakers are working together under the direction of crown officers in an effort to eliminate the "rope disease" which affects the bakings. Many bakers who eat the bread develop severe cases of indigestion, while children break out in sores in many parts of the body.

In addition to the ill-health among the consumers of the war bread the monetary loss from ruined bakings has reached a large sum and is growing larger. Affairs become so serious that a delegation of the London Master Bakers' Association called on the Prime Minister and urged a return to the 75 per cent. flour.

One case was cited in which a baker had to destroy 3,600 loaves of bread, largely because mould had ruined it. In another instance a baker sold 1,200 loaves of spoiled bread to manufacturers of pig food and was compelled to suffer a double loss, for when the authorities heard of the matter the baker was arrested and fined \$250 for "wasteful extravagance in war time."

A. F. May, secretary of the metropolitan committee for war savings and food economy, attributes most of the trouble to too large a proportion of non-glutinous materials in the flour. In some cases it was found that bakers were using peanuts, called by the English money nuts, to mix with the flour.

So far "rope disease" has baffled the investigators in the British Isles. One London baker in testifying before an investigating committee gave it as his opinion that "rope" is a second fermentation which arises in the baking and is further developed through keeping the bread for the stipulated twelve hours.

DISEASE COMES THROUGH THE BLOOD

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Nearly all the common diseases that afflict mankind are caused by bad blood—weak, watery blood poisoned by impurities. Bad blood is the cause of headaches and backaches, lumbago and rheumatism, debility and indigestion, neuralgia, sciatica and other nerve troubles. It is bad blood that causes disfiguring skin diseases like eczema, and salt rheum, pimples and eruptions. The severity of the trouble indicates how impure the blood is, and it goes always from bad to worse unless steps are promptly taken to enrich and purify the blood. There is no use trying a different medicine for each disease, for they all come through the one trouble—bad blood.

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POETICAL JAPS.

Whole Nation Most Poetical Race On Earth.

"Perhaps it would not be far wrong to say that the Japanese are the most poetical nation in the world," William N. Porter says, in the introduction to this compilation, "A Year of Japanese Epigrams." "From their earliest school days children are taught the conventional rules for composing verse; and, having in addition all the inherited knowledge and poetic appreciation handed down from past generations, it is not surprising to find that verses are composed and jotted down upon all occasions and on all subjects. Poetry is in the air; poetical parties take the place of our bridge drives; picnics are given, when the guests are invited to view some specially fine flowering trees and are expected to compose verses, which are then written upon narrow strips of paper and attached to the branches; and each January a National Poetical contest, called Uta-awase, takes place, when each one in the land, from the highest to the lowest, is allowed to send in a verse on a special subject chosen by the Emperor. The results are carefully sorted out, classified and finally reduced to the few best, which are then read out and published in the newspapers."

"Verses are to be found on pictures, screens, fans, china, towels, handkerchiefs; most newspapers and magazines publish poetry; the people sing while at work. I have even known a



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Japanese student to produce verses in the unromantic smoke of a north of England town.

"The oldest and most classical meter is the tanka, a five-lined verse of thirty-one syllables, and for many years this was the only kind of verse known in Japan. But in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a kind of literary pastime came into fashion called renga; one person composed the first three lines of a tanka verse and the other players had to extemporize a suitable last couplet or vice versa. From this arose the custom of composing a complete verse in three lines only, consisting of seventeen syllables, five-seven-five, which was called haikai, haiku, or hokku.

Most people will be inclined to think that no real poetry can be written within such narrow compass; for each hokku is complete in itself. It does not stand merely as one verse in a longer poem. But that is just where the skill of the hokku writer comes in. The nation that can produce those miracles of Lilliputian carvings and paintings, which can only be appreciated by the aid of the magnifying glass, and complete little landscape gardens with fish ponds and growing trees within the space of a small terraced area, are adepts at this sort of thing. The writer in a few striking words strives to convey the suggestion of an idea of the outlines of a picture against a background of mist, and the reader is left to fill in the details for himself. Indeed the hokku writer does in verse what the artist does with his suggestive brushwork, sketching in a few strokes, hinting at his meaning, and leaving the rest to imagination."

THE OLD OAKEN BUCKET.

(With apologies wherever needed.) How dead to my heart are the scenes of my childhood

When winter is here and the coal bin is low! In dreams I go back to the deep-langued woodland

That gave us the backlog we burned long ago. The jolly old backlog, the mug of hot cheer—

Of comfort like these did our grand-father tell. When grandmother sat with her candle beside her

In that little, old cabin that stood near the well. That little red cabin, That wood-heated cabin

That old-fashioned cabin that stood near the well. When summer is hot on the wheat and the popples,

And bumblebees buzz in the gray-flow-ered beam, How far from our mind then the plumber's big shop is!

Our modern conveniences work like a charm. But oh, when the mercury drops like a rocket

And water pipes burst, then I'm longing to sell. And go back to the house with its moss-covered bucket,

That ice-spangled bucket, That bucket that never froze down in the well.

Then, turn, O my heart, to the scenes of my childhood, The coal is quite gone and the fire is dead;

Both meatless and wheelless, we long for the woodshed That yielded our measure of bacon and bread;

No meters to pay, and no plumber's bill soaring, But a jolly old backlog a-sizzling and roaring

And a never-leak bucket to hang in the well—

The old oaken bucket, The iron-bound bucket; Hurrah for the bucket that hangs in the well!

—Florence Doyce Davis in New York Times.

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