

TOM PURDOE'S CASE.

The concert being over, Mr. Thurles hailed a passing hansom in 'riccadilly, and he and his wife drove homewards. Mr. Thurles had not been in the best of humours all day, and he lost no opportunity of reminding his wife that the temper was entirely due to that detestable nephew of hers, Tom Purdoo.

"The unbounded impudence of the fellow!" said Mr. Thurles. "After all I said when I made him that last loan, he writes, as bold as brass, telling me he will call this evening about 'a personal matter.' Now what that means—more than I should have liked to have seen his face when he did call, and after he'd read the note I left for him."

"Poor Tom!" murmured his wife pityingly. "Bah! I've settled with him now. I've forbidden him the house and told him to take himself and his begging appeals elsewhere."

Mr. Thurles's groan and grumbling did not cease till his villa in Kensington was reached. Here, his rancour was for a time eclipsed by the disagreeable surprise that awaited him.

A crowd had congregated round the lamp near his gate; the door of the house was wide open and several policemen were stationed at the entrance.

"What's this about—what's this?" cried Mr. Thurles, entering breathlessly. "Well, sir," said one of the officers, "it looks precious like robbery. Sergeant Williams has just been round upstairs, and he says the wardrobe in one of the rooms has been broken open."

Mr. Thurles waited to hear no more. He bounded up the stairs as quickly as his short, podgy body would allow him to bound, and burst into his own bedroom. A sergeant of police, already there, had apparently just completed his examination of the apartment. At the further end of it, between the windows, was the wardrobe, the doors of which hung loosely on their hinges. They had evidently been wrenched open, as also had the strong box which usually concealed.

With blanched visage, Mr. Thurles rushed across the floor, and peered into the gaping iron box. "Gone—gone!" he moaned. "All my wife's jewels—eight hundred pounds—all gone!" Turning round, he shouted wildly, "Who did it? Who is the scoundrel that committed this theft?"

"All we know at present," replied Sergeant Williams, "is that the constable on the beat was stopped by the page-boy, who had been to post some letters and who could not get into the house. The parlor-maid said she would let him in when he received permission to do so, to a birthday party of Mr. Watson's coachman. Well, they knocked and rang till they were tired. Then they began to think there must be something amiss, and they forced the door open. When they got into the hall they found the servant bound to the banisters, gagged and helpless."

"Yes, yes," interrupted Mr. Thurles, impatiently. "Then Lucy, the parlor-maid, must know everything about it. Where is she?" "She's downstairs, sir, in the kitchen."

Mr. Thurles impetuously bounded down below and into the kitchen, where Lucy stood white and trembling before her mistress. "What's this I hear?" cried Mr. Thurles. "Oh, sir," said Lucy, sobbing, "you know I was left alone in the house, when a cab drove up to the door. I opened it and let in the gentleman as you said would call for the letter you left. I gives 'im the letter and 'e reads it. Then, afore I knowed what 'e was about, 'e claps me and over my mouth an' seized my throat with the other. I was so frightened, sir, that I fainted dead away, an' I don't remember no more till I came to, and there I was fastened to the stairrail."

"Why didn't you call for assistance then?" "He'd tied an 'ankercloth over my mouth, an' I couldn't cry out, nor 'elp myself, nor nothing."

"So this," exclaimed the old man, turning sneeringly to his wife—"so this is the handiwork of your worthy nephew, madam. Poor Tom, indeed—ugh!"

The main facts of the robbery, as here narrated, I gleaned from the next morning's paper, before I entered upon my duties at Scotland Yard. On the afternoon of that day, Superintendent Beaver sent for me.

"You've perhaps heard, Hamilton, of this theft at Kensington," he said. "No doubt exists, unfortunately, as to who is the culprit. The servant girl's statement would have put the matter outside the pale of conjecture even if young Purdoo had not thought it best to make himself scarce."

"Then he is missing?" I interposed. "Yes, he's left his lodgings last night and hasn't been seen since. Here is a photograph of the young gentleman I want you to trace."

Superintendent Beaver was giving me instructions as to my quest, when Sergeant Williams, of the West Brompton station, entered the room. He was closely followed by a short, red-faced man, in a light-brown dust-coat, from the pocket of which hung a cabman's badge.

"Stay a moment, Hamilton," said the superintendent; and to the sergeant he added, "You come about the Kensington robbery, I suppose?"

orders to Scotland Yard. In a few hours we received a reply. Mr. Thomas Purdoo had engaged a birth on board the Mercury, which sailed that morning, at two o'clock, for New York.

"Then he's caught in a trap," said Superintendent Beaver. "We have only to wait patiently till he is arrested by the American authorities."

In due time we had a cablegram from New York to the effect that Thomas Purdoo was in safe custody in that city. His extradition was applied for, and I was sent to bring him back to London for his trial. After an eventful passage I returned to England with young Purdoo in my charge.

His own version of the affair, I must admit, was plausible enough; indeed, I caught myself mentally debating, more than once, the possibility of his guiltlessness.

According to his account, he had called at Kensington that night to wish his relatives "good-bye" prior to his departure for America.

His precipitancy was the result of an interview he had had with the parents of Miss Rowell, the young lady whom he had asked to become his wife. As his name, in certain circles was held in bad odour, they had objected to an engagement between him and their daughter, but they expressed the hope that, if he should prove himself capable of retrieving his clouded character, that objection might be brushed aside. To effect this end, Tom Purdoo felt that he must first be reconciled to his business companions, and entirely with his bowing companions, and conscious of Miss Rowell's steadfast love, he had determined to accept the appointment long held out to him by Messrs. Boulton & Chicago, returning to claim his bride as soon as his term of probation had expired.

"As regards your visit to your uncle's house," I said, "surely the reading of his letter would not detain you twenty minutes, the time the cabman said you kept him waiting."

"Neither did it. I couldn't leave England without informing them of my intention in some way, so I asked the servant for a sheet of note-paper. She took quite a quarter of an hour in finding it."

"Was the maid present when you wrote the note?" I asked. "No; I told her I would let myself out. I left the paper behind in two, on the hall table."

Most certainly the letter he mentioned had never been forthcoming; possibly, it really existed anywhere outside his imagination, it had been blown away by the draught from the door when he left, and so on. To most minds the fact that the stolen valuables were not now in his possession would have been sufficient evidence of his innocence, but I knew from experience that an intelligent thief always has ways and means of his own for disposing of his ill-gotten wares.

To most minds the object could be a charge like that against the nephew of her employer? Moreover, she couldn't have gagged and found herself in the position in which she was bound, and there had not been another soul in the house.

To me, the whole affair was most puzzling and unsatisfactory. During the railway journey from Liverpool to London I racked my brain for a probable solution of the enigma. The manner in which the whole truth came to light was subsequently made known to me, and I here proceed to set it forth as it actually occurred.

On the following day, a rough-looking man, clad in a greasy frock-coat and well-worn tweed trousers, knocked at the tradesman's entrance to Mr. Thurles's house and asked to see Miss Belcher.

"Miss Belcher?" repeated the housemaid, who opened the door. "Oh! yes, you mean Lily I'll call her."

Lucy, now prim and spruce as ever, soon put in an appearance. Prompted by curiosity the house-maid lingered in the passage, well within earshot. She was presently joined by the cook.

"D'ye want me?" said Lucy. "What is it? I've no time for dawdling!"

"Well, I brought yer a message from Joe Holliday. Yer knows 'im, I s'pose?"

As Holliday happened to be Lucy's sweetheart, she did not seek to deny the acquaintance. At the mention of his name, the cook and housemaid drew a few steps nearer.

"An' what's he want sendin' messages for?" said Lucy. "Can't he bring 'em 'isself?"

"That's just where it is. He didn't like to bring this one. Fact is, 'e's made it up agin 'er Mary, at Captain Swift's."

I sat that morning ruminating over the knotty points of the case. It was a desperate case, which, played off upon any less judiciously disposed person than Lucy, might have resulted in a deplorable fiasco. As it chanced, however, it had worked to a marvel.

In less than an hour's time, both Holliday and his guilty coadjutor were in custody. At Holliday's lodgings the greater part of the stolen jewels were found intact.

Tom Purdoo did not go to America, after all. His "period of probation" was passed—and passed creditably—in London.

A TOO DEVOTED HUSBAND

"Yes," said Mrs. Cameron, "I like him well enough, I suppose."

Mrs. Cameron was just nineteen, a bride of six months, and a lovely hazel-eyed, brunette. She had everything that heart could desire, and, consequently, wasn't exactly pleased with anything.

Mrs. Cameron liked pink, and Mr. Cameron had furnished her boudoir in rose-colour and silver. She was partial to flowers, and her husband had given a standing order to a florist to keep her wants supplied.

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VOL. V., NO. POOR MABEL'S

THE SAD STORY OF DREAR AND LONELY. Intense Excitement Over Mysterious Death—Revelation of a Crime—Remarkable Evidence in the Evidence.

MONDAY, Feb 2.—On Tuesday January 4th the Moncton were started to be Hallett, the sixteen-year old son of Mr. and Mrs. H. T. died suddenly either during early that morning.

Those who had seen the little child daily work as usual, were naturally shocked beyond almost inclined to be first, but the lowered blinds residence and the early visitor taker left no room for doubt that Hallett had been seized with in the night, and died early in spite of all that could be her life. It was generally the family physician, Dr. Carter, and endeavoured sufferer, but during the day that the doctor had not returned until after the patient was date preparations were made

MABEL GLENNIE S. and in spite of the intense weather, which would have to keep a body in perfect to least a week, the interment o'clock the next day. Had it not been for the is possible nothing more heard of the matter, but as friends of the dead girl had the shock of her sudden burial sufficiently to think through the mental ex- putting two and two together to the conclusion, in which will presently apper- investigation into the cause necessary, and after the u seems inevitable in such was laid before the proper an investigation ordered.

The day fixed for the ex- quest and the exhumation Saturday, January 28th, night three young men ca of Mr. Burch, caretaker and asked to be shown grave. As they were all Burch, he refused, and no marked, "If you lit that row, you will get your Mr. Burch was alarmed, a man on guard for the night.

The next morning, in Coroner Keith, of Petito- jury, Dr. Mitchell of Dor- der, C. T. Purdy of the pro- active solicitors of the first girl, Mr. and Mrs. Stev- opened and the body exh- to one of Mr. Burch's ho- was viewed by the jury. corpse, which looked like eleven or twelve years table, and unveiled to the were strong men among who turned away to con- piteous a sight was prese- left eye was a contusion congealed, the fleshy part were marked all over; n of the coffin under the ri- right call there was a lar- and above that spot the l- and abraded. The offi- the body, mentioned that were completely covered.

The cause of death gi- certificate was "Inflam- and heart failure," but examination showed the a perfectly healthy state- trace of inflammation brain was healthy and th- showed any abnormal h- heart which gave evidenc- fatty degeneration, but- cians who conducted W- Dunlap, Purdy and Chur- to state that the weakn- cause death, unless in- shock, and all agreed th- unusual thing for a girl

