

OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND.

Oh! where is the being that blindly
Will hold as the faith of his kind
That proverb of spirit unkindly
Which says, "Out of sight, out of mind?"
That heart were a wilderness lonely
Which could not this saying deny,
Did it question the memories only,
That affection will never let die.

We think of the loved in our grieving,
For we know they would feel with our care;
In our joy, for our faith is believing,
They would join, and we would they could share.

'Tis thus in our sorrows and pleasures,
Come dear ones, whom fate may remove,
And, though far "out of sight," the heart's treasures
Are nigh in the "mind" of our love.

MY BROWN GREAT-COAT.

We had just locked up the safe, and I had put the key in my pocket. (I am the accountant of the North and South of England Bank at its Padsey Branch, W. R. Yorks.) I had got my hat on, and had taken up my umbrella, when a man came running into the bank with a bag of money in his hand.

"Am I in time?" he cried. I shook my head. "Dunce take it!" he said, "and I'm off to Liverpool by the next train, and then to America."

"Sorry for it," I said; "but we can't take the money."

"Well, then, what is to be done? Here's twenty-two thousand pounds in this bag, and those drafts of mine come due in a couple of days. Well, you'll have to take 'em up," he said; "I can't unless you take the money in tonight."

I knew that those drafts were coming due, and that our manager was a little anxious about them, for they were rather heavy, and the other names on them were not very good. Black, too—that was the man with the money-bag—Black was a capital customer; and not only a good customer himself, but he brought good accounts with him, and we were a young branch, and on our mettle. Well, here was the money to meet the drafts, anyhow, and I should have been a great fool to send it away just because it was after hours. So I counted it all over. There was about nineteen thousand in checks and notes, and three thousand in gold.

"Come and have a glass of beer with me," said Black, "on the way to the station."

I put the bag of money in my desk, and locked it up. I would come back presently, and have it placed in the safe. I walked to the station with Black. We had some beer together, and then he went off Americaward, and I on the way to Nemophillar Villas. You see I was rather in the habit of calling for a glass of beer as I went home, and then going on, and consequently, from the force of habit, I'd got home before I remembered the bag of money. I was vexed, too, because we had a tea-party that night, the first since our marriage, and it began at six o'clock, and I'd promised to be home an hour earlier, to draw the corks and help to get things ready. And here it was six o'clock, and I had to go all the way back to the bank. All the way back I went, as hard as I could pelt. However, the money was all right in my desk, and now I would put it in the safe.

"Tell Mr. Cousins"—our manager, you know—I said to the servant who'd let me in, "that I want the key to the safe."

"But you had it in your pocket," say you; which shows that you are not acquainted with the rules and regulations of the North and South of England Bank, which say that the accountant or chief cashier shall be responsible for the due custody of the cash while it is in his possession in the daytime, and that at night all moneys and securities shall be carefully secured within the office safe, which shall be secured by two keys, one of which shall be in the custody of the manager, and the second in that of the accountant and cashier.

"But," you say again, "as long as you had one key, what did you want with two?" There, I own the regulations are obscure. They were drawn up by somebody without any literary skill. If they'd consulted me about 'em, I could have suggested a good many improvements. What they meant to say was, that the safe was to be secured by two locks, and that a key to each, not interchangeable, the one with the other, was to be in the custody, &c. Now, you understand why I wanted Mr. Cousins's key.

"Eh, my?" said the servant, opening her mouth wide, "and what might you want Mr. Cousins's key for?"

Just as stupid as you, you see. I was mad with the girl. I own I always get out of temper with these Yorkshire people. If you ask 'em the simplest question, first they open their mouths and gape at you. When you've repeated the question twice, they shut their mouths and think for a bit. Then the idea seems to reach the thing that does duty with them for brains, and excites a sort of reflex action, for, by jingo! instead of answering your question, they go and ask you one. And that makes me so mad. Oh, they're a very dense race, these Yorkshire people.

"Why, to open the safe, you stupid?" said I. "Where is he?"

"Don't ye know?" says she.

"Know?" I cried, in a rage. "Why should I ask you for if I did know?"

"Didn't thou know that he were at thy house?"

Ah! so he was. I'd nearly forgotten that he was one of the guests at my wife's party. Clearly, I couldn't get the safe open, and I didn't like to leave the money in my desk, thinking I'd give it to Cousins with my key, to put it in the safe when he returned.

A nice mess I got into when I reached home, for you see it had been arranged that I was to go up-stairs and dress before anybody came, and that then our room was to be made ready for the ladies to take their bonnets off—for they were not all carriage people. Well, you never saw such a thing. When I got home and crept up-stairs to dress—the people had all come, so the servant said—there were six muffs and four bonnets, and five pork-pie hats, and half a dozen shawls on the bed; and one lady had left her everyday curls hanging over the looking-glass! Upon my word, I really don't like to perform my toilet among all these feminine gear; and there was no lock on the door; and my dress-clothes were all smothered up amongst these muffs and things. But I got through pretty well, and had just got one of my legs into my trousers, when bang-atrop-dop-dop! such a rattle at the knocker, and I heard my wife scuttling away into the hall. They were the Markbys, our trump cards, who kept their own carriage, and everything grand.

"So kind of you, my dear!" said my wife, kissing Mrs. Markby most affectionately. I could hear the reports where I stood.

"So delighted! Really, how nicely, how beautifully you arrange everything! I can't have things so nice, with all my servants and!"

"Run upstairs, dear, do!" said my wife; "you know the room—my room, right hand at the top of the stairs."

I heard a flutter of female wings on the stairs. What was I to do? If I could have managed the other leg I wouldn't have minded, but I couldn't. I hadn't worn those dress things for a good while, and I don't get any thinner as I grow older. No, for the life of me, I couldn't dispose of that other leg at such short notice. What could I do? I could only rush to the door and set my back against it. Did I tell you this was our house-warming-party? I think not. Did I tell your our landlord had altered the house for us, making our bed-room larger by adding a slip that had formed a separate room? I think not; and yet I ought to have told you all these circumstances to enable you to understand the catastrophe that followed. I a word, the door opened outwards. I'd forgotten that peculiarity—never having had a room so constituted before, and never will again. The door went open with a crash, and I bounded backwards into Mrs. Markby's arms. Smelling-salts and sal-volatile, was there ever such an untoward affair! The music struck up for the dances as I hopped back into my room. I hid my head among the bolsters and muffs, and almost cried, for I'm such a delicate-minded man. Yes, it hurt me a good deal more than it did Mrs. Markby, for—would you believe it?—she told the story down below to the whole company, with pantomimic action; and when I showed myself at the door of the drawing-room I was received with shouts of inextinguishable laughter. I think I called the Yorkshire people dense just now, didn't I? Well, I'll add another epithet—coarse—dense and coarse. I told 'em so, but they only laughed the more. The guests were gone, the lights were out; slumber had just visited my eyes, when right into my brain, starting me as I had been shot, came a noise, a sort of dull, bursting noise. I wasn't really certain at first whether I had heard a noise or only dreamed of it. I sat up in bed and listened intently. Was it only my pulse thumping into my ears, or were those regular beats the tramp of somebody's muffled feet? Then I heard an unmistakable sound—creak, creak, creak—a door being opened slowly and cautiously. All in a moment the idea flashed into my head—twenty-two thousand dollars! You see, all this dancing and junketing, and laughing and chaffing, had completely driven out of my mind all thought of the large sum I had in my possession. I had left it in my great-coat pocket, which was hanging up in the hall down stairs. Puff! a gust of wind came through the house, rattling the doors and windows; and then I heard a door slam and a footstep outside, of some one stealing cautiously away. Away down stairs I went like a madman, my one thought to put my hand on that great coat. It was a brown great-coat with long tails, and two pockets behind, and a little cash pocket on the left-hand side in front, and this breast-pocket, in which I had put the bag of money. This pocket wasn't, as is usual, on the left-hand side, but on the right. There was no other coat hanging on these rails, only my wife's water-proof. What a swoop I made to get hold of that coat! Great heavens! It was gone! I had carefully barred and chained the front door before I went to bed—now it was unfastened. I ran out into the street, and looked up and down, hopelessly and bewildered. It was a damp and dark night; the lamp at the corner threw a long, sickly ray down the streaming pavement, but there wasn't a soul to be seen. Everything was still and cold and dark. The money was clean gone—yes, it was gone. I repeated these words mechanically to myself as I crawled up-stairs. All the results of this loss pictured themselves clearly before me—dismissal from the bank, ruin of all my prospects, utter ruin, in fact. What could I do? to what turn? The blow that had fallen upon me was so heavy and sudden that it had benumbed my faculties. My chief desire was to crawl into bed, and fall asleep,

hoping never to wake. But morning would come, sure enough—morning and its attendant miseries. Then the thought came to me: Should I go to bed and say nothing at all about it? No one knew of my having received that money, not a soul but Black, the man who had deposited it. I had given no receipt for it, no acknowledgment. Black had gone to America—a hundred things might happen—he might never return; at all events, here was respite, immediate relief. I could go to the bank next morning, hang up my hat as usual—everything would go on as before. If Black returned, my word was as good as his. The notes and checks could never be traced home. But I don't think I retained this thought long. Do you ever consider how much resolution and force of will it takes to intimate a course of crime and deception? I'd neither the one nor the other; I should have broken down at once. I couldn't have met that fellow's eye and told him I had never had this money. I woke my wife—she'd slept through all the trouble. "Mary," I said, "we're ruined—there's been a robbery."

"A robbery!" she cried, clasping her hands; "and are the men gone?"

"Yes," I said.

"Oh, thank Heaven!" she said, "then we're safe. Never mind the rest, Jack, as long as our lives are safe. But there's my water-proof, Jack—oh! do run and see if they've taken that!"

Then I told her the story of the twenty-two thousand pounds. She wouldn't believe me at first, but when she heard the whole story she was frightened enough. Yet, she had wits about her more than I had.

"You must run off to the town hall, Jack," she said, "and set the police to work. They must telegraph to all the stations, to London and everywhere. Oh, do go at once, Jack, this very moment. Every second lost may be ruin to us."

Away I went to the town hall. This was a big, classic place, with an immense portico and a huge flight of steps; but you didn't go into the portico to get to the police office, but of the rudimentary style of architecture, and you went along a number of echoing stone passages before you reached the superintendent's office.

When I told the superintendent the story—"Ah," he said, "I think I know who did that job."

"Oh," said I, "how thankful I am! Then you can put your hands upon him and get back the money. I want the money back Mr. Superintendent, never mind him. I wouldn't mind, indeed, rewarding him for his trouble, if I could only get the money back."

"Sir!" said the Superintendent severely, "the police ain't sent into the world to get people's money back, nothing of the sort; we aren't going to encourage composition of felony; and as for putting our hands on Flashy Joe—for he did the job, mark you—well, what do you think the utility or the subjects for? Where's your evidence?"

I was obliged to confess I hadn't any; whereat the Superintendent looked at me contemptuously.

"Now, let's see into this matter," said he, after he had made some notes on a bit of paper. "How came they to know you'd got the money in your coat?"

I said I didn't know.

"Ah, but I know," said the Superintendent. "You went to get a glass of ale after you left the bank, young man?"

I was obliged to confess I had done so.

"That's how property gets stolen," said he, looking at me severely. "And what's more, you had a glass with a friend? Ah! I knew you had. And perhaps you got talking to this friend of yours?"

"Yes, indeed, I had."

"Very well; and mentioned about the money you'd just took?"

"Very likely."

"Then this Joe, depend upon it, was in the crib at the time and heard you, and he followed you back to the bank; and you haven't got blinds, but a wire-netting over the window, and anybody outside can see you counting out the gold and silver."

"That's true," I said.

"Yes; I see it all," said the Superintendent. "Just as Joe saw it. He follows you up from here to yonder, and he sees you put your money into your coat-pocket; and then he follows you home, and when all's quiet he cracks the crib. Oh, it's all in a nutshell; and that's how property goes. And then you come to the police."

"But if you know it's Joe, why don't you send after him and catch him?"

"Oh, we know our business, sir; you leave it all to us; we shall have Joe tight enough, if not for this job, anyhow for the next. We'll give him a bit of rope, like."

I couldn't put any fire into the man, do what I could; he was civil, that is for a Yorkshireman; impassive; he'd do what was right. I'd given the information; very well, all the rest was his business.

So I came home, miserably despairing. It was just daylight by this time, and as I opened the shutters the debris of our feast was revealed; the lees of the lobster-salad, the picked bones of the chickens, the melted residuum of the jellies, whilst about everything hung the smell of sour wine. I sat down amid all this wretched mess, and leaned my head on my arms in dull, miserable lethargy. Then I sprang up, and as I did so I caught sight of myself in the looking-glass. Good heavens! was this wretched hang-dog fellow myself? Did a few hours' misery change a man like this? Why, I was a very felon in appearance, and so I should be thought to be. Who

would believe this story of a robbery? Why, the police didn't believe in it, else they'd have taken a different tone. No, I should be looked upon as a thief by all the world.

"Then my wife came down stairs, and, with a few touches, restored a little order and sanity, both to outward matters and my mind. She brought me some coffee and an egg and some bread and butter, and after I had eaten and drank I didn't feel quite so bad."

"Jack," said she, "you must go to London at once and see the directors. Have the first word, and tell them all about it—all the particulars. It is only a little bit of carelessness, after all, and perhaps they'll look over it."

"Yes; that's all very well," I said, "but how am I to get there? I've got no money. This wretched party has cleaned us right out."

"Borrow some of Cousins."

"He asked me to lend him a sovereign last night, and I couldn't."

"Now, you'll say, 'Here's a man without resource. Why didn't he pawn his watch?' To tell you the truth, that's what I had done the week before, and the money was all gone. 'Then, under these circumstances,' you'll add, 'it was immoral to give a party.' But, you'll bear in mind, the invitations had been out for a fortnight, and then we were in funds."

"Well, Jack," said my wife, "you must get the man—the P. B.—to give you some more money on the watch. Sell it to him right out. It must be worth at least ten pounds, for it cost thirty, and you've only had five upon it. Sell the ticket."

"Yes; but where was the ticket? Why, in the little cash-pocket of my brown great-coat. Still, I had heard that, if you'd lost a ticket, you could make the man give you another; and Brooks, the pawnbroker, was a respectable fellow, who, perhaps, would help me out of my difficulty. I went to him anyhow, on my way to the station. I felt like a ticket-of-leave man as I went into his shop, but I put a good face upon it."

"Brooks," said I, "that watch, you know the ticket—it's stolen." Brooks gave a most portentous wink. He was a slow-speeched man, with a red face, and a tremendous corporation.

"Nay," he says, "my lad; thou'rt wrong there."

"What do you mean?" I said, coloring up furiously. Every one suspected me, it seemed.

"What, it might have been stolen once, but it aren't now; 'ave got it here. There is how it were. A cadding sort o' chap comes in, and he says: 'Master, what'll you give me for this ere ticket?' Now, you know the hact don't allow us to give nought in that kind of way, but I say to the chap, 'Let's have a look at it;' and then I saw it was yours, and I said to the man, 'My lad, you aren't come honestly by this.'"

"And you gave him into custody; he's in prison?" Old Brooks, what a capital fellow you are!"

"Nay," he said; "I knowed better nor that. Do you think I'd expose a customer? I know you gents don't care about these little matters getting abroad, and so I slaps my first on the counter, and I says, 'Hook it!' just like that. And away he went like a lamp-lighter."

I sank down on the counter, overpowered with emotion.

"And what's more," went on Brooks, "he never took up the money I'd lent him for the coat."

"What coat?" I cried.

"A very nice brown coat he put up with me. About fit you, I should think. See, here it is."

It was my identical brown great-coat, wrapped up in a bundle, and tied round with my own handkerchief. I made a dart at it, opened it, plunged my hand into the breast-pocket; there was the bag of money—there were the twenty-two thousand pounds. How did I go to the bank that morning? on legs or wings? and how did I get home as soon as I had put the money safe away? Mary knew by my face it was all right; and didn't we have a dance of joy all round the house! My burglar had only been a sort of sneak, after all, who got in at an open window and bolted with the spoils of the hall. But if he had taken the pains to look into the pockets of the coat he'd have been a rich, though perhaps a miserable and insecure, man, and I should have been utterly and deservedly ruined.

THE FORCE OF HABIT.—According to a rural exchange, Farmer Brown was not well educated; indeed, he was guiltless of a knowledge of reading and writing, and his system of etiquette belonged to the barbaric ages. His daughter Jane was quite the reverse of her father in all these respects, and at the time we write of was entertaining at dinner a large party of the neighboring farmers and their wives, at her father's house, on the occasion of her return from the boarding-school. It may be inferred that her father's intelligence and behavior were a source of perpetual solicitude to Jane, and previous to the party she instructed her father that when speaking of anything he should add, for fear of offending any one, "the present company excepted." He was half an hour late for dinner, and, tired of waiting, Jane invited the guests to begin operations. They had not long begun ere Mr. Brown rushed abruptly into the room, in a stream of perspiration. "Why, dear papa," said Jane, "what kept you so late?" "The fact is, Jane," replied he, "I've been visitin' neebor Smith's pigs, and they're the finest lot of hogs I ever seed, the present company alius excepted."