

have been carried out in any case, whether he got the benefit of the spoil or not.

Tom soon found that, as his companion had promised, the part he was called on to fill was not a difficult, or apparently, a perilous one. He was to keep careful watch for any alarm while the others secured the booty, and be ready to carry off any articles brought him and conceal them, until the thieves had completed their work, and were prepared to decamp with the whole of the plunder.

The night was dark and still, and Tom waited a good half-hour, hidden beneath a gloomy ever-green without catching the slightest sound that indicated any likelihood of his companions' stealthy depredations being suspected. Several valuable articles were handed to him from time to time, and he crept to the end of the garden and stowed them under the fence at an easy point for a hurried departure. He was awaiting the reappearance of his companions, and congratulating himself on the singular success of the whole scheme, when he was suddenly startled by a slight but shrill whistle, apparently at some hundred yards' distance. Immediately after he heard the quick, cautious steps of the plunderers.

'Hook it sharp, Morris!' said one of them, as they passed his hiding-place. 'Some prying Bobby's got wind of us, worse luck!'

All the gang dashed down the garden together, and were over the fence in a twinkling, though they managed to carry a good part of the booty with them. The policeman, however, whose whistle had summoned help was on their track. In the darkness by the fence he might have lost traces of the fugitives had they not, in their hot haste, dropped a silver milk-jug, on which the light of the pursuer's bullseye fell, thus guiding his steps.

Tom had fallen slightly behind, or, rather, his companions' fleet footstep had distanced him; he was the last to slide down the slope and hurry across the rails. And justice was close at his heels. The policeman saw that some of the gang had finally escaped him, but was making desperate efforts to overtake the solitary straggler, whom he felt he could easily have overpowered and secured. But fortune seemed, at that moment, to favor crime rather than law and order. 'Bobby,' in his eager pursuit of the culprit on unfamiliar and difficult ground, stumbled among the brambles, and the grass being very slippery from recent slight rain, was unable to regain his footing; he fell heavily and slipped the whole distance to the bottom of the cutting on to the rails, where he lay with a broken thigh, partially stunned, too, with the force of the shock, his head having been severely struck more than once in the fall.

By this time Tom Morris had reached the top of the opposite slope, and was just about to make his way through the stubborn, prickly hedge. The cry uttered by his unfortunate pursuer as he fell, brought him, however, to a standstill. He turned, noticed the huddled, motionless heap down there on the line, and immediately a rush of conflicting thoughts and motives struggled together in his soul for the mastery. The fellow was helpless now, and Tom smiled to himself grimly. There was no need to hurry, for he would be pursued no farther. He could get home comfortably now, with the valuable burden he carried, and make a good thing of it after all.

Yet Tom did not move. Some strange influence seemed to fascinate him as he turned back again and glanced at the prostrate figure. It did not stir. Could the fellow be dead? A pang of conscious guilt smote Tom's heart

as the thought occurred to him he shuddered as he shrank from the horror of blood-guiltiness. But a deep groan escaped the wounded man at this instant, and reassured Tom. No, the policeman was not dead, but he must be badly hurt, for still he did not rise. And he must not lie there; it was well on toward morning now, and the first train would soon be over that very line!

'It's no business of yours,' whispered the devil in Tom's ear. 'The fellow got there of his own accord; let him get off again as best he can; he'll soon get up when he hears the train coming. Get on to your pals as fast as you can, or you'll have daylight here, and be caught.'

But Tom hesitated. He had given ear to the devil before, and his prompting had entangled him in guilt which a week ago he would have shrunk from in loathing. He let conscience speak. 'If you allow that fellow-creature to lie there unaided, you are a murderer,' said the small voice, sternly. 'Go and help him. If you are captured, it is only common justice, after all. You have entered on the way of transgressors, and must expect to find it hard, but there is no need to make it harder by adding the blackest of all crimes to the transgression you have already committed against God and man. Would you save your child's life by the blood of another?'

Tom winced at the thought, hesitated a moment, and then, hiding his burden under the hedge, began slowly and cautiously retracing his steps down the incline. The sufferer below, who had recovered consciousness, was watching his movements, greatly astonished and perplexed, and, indeed, not a little alarmed. What could the burglar possibly be approaching him for? Very probably he carried fire-arms, but surely he could not be about to take the life of a pursuer now that it was perfectly easy to escape unmolested. Tom came to the side of the prostrate man.

'Much hurt, mate?' he asked.

'Pretty bad, I guess,' was the reply, the speaker being still more puzzled.

'Well, you mustn't lie here; you're half on the line,' went on Tom, 'and there'll be a train in very soon. Can't you move?'

'No,' returned the policeman; 'I can't raise myself. For pity's sake, man, send me help. I was only doing my duty in trying to run you in.'

'I know that,' said Tom. 'I haven't done my duty for a good while, so I may as well do it now. If I go for help you'll be cut to pieces in five minutes. I guess I'd better give it first and go for it afterwards.'

Tom was a broad, powerfully-built fellow, and as he spoke he stooped down and raised the injured man gently in his arms.

'How will that do, mate?' he said, as he moved the unfortunate 'Bobby' out of reach of immediate danger. 'If I'm a thief, I ain't a murderer; and God knows,' he added passionately, 'I never laid my hands on another man's goods afore to-night, and I don't think I'll be in a hurry to go thieving again—at all events,' he continued, with a touch of grim humor, 'not if I have to look after the bobby's safety as well as my own!'

But the prostrate policeman scarcely heard the last words; it was his turn now to decide a perplexing question. Here was a thief and a burglar—an amateur possibly, but a thief by his own confession. Now, was it not the chief duty of his calling to catch thieves, or, failing that, to do all in his power by which their capture and identification should be accomplished? He could not capture or detain this thief by his side, to be sure, for he was himself utterly helpless; but

it was his duty to make his future capture easier by narrowly observing him. His bull's-eye had not been broken in the fall; he held it fast in his hand even now, and it still shone brightly. Should he turn it on the man who had just saved his life, and thereby largely increase the probability of lodging him safely in jail? It seemed a strange return for the kindness he had just received, a mean advantage to take of a generous action; besides, it was possible that the man might be so infuriated at such a proceeding that he would even, in a moment of passion, take the life he had saved, if he found himself in greater danger of being brought to justice.

The struggle was sharp and short, and duty won the day. With something of the feeling of the headsman who asks the forgiveness of the victim he is about to decapitate, the constable murmured feebly (for he was in very severe pain)—

'Blessings on you for saving my life! You shall not suffer for it if I can help it; but—this is my duty, and I am sworn to it as solemnly as any redcoat'; and with that he flashed the blazing light in the face of the man who had snatched him from the jaws of a horrible death, the rumble of the approaching train sounding at that moment close by.

The movement, though a slight one, cost him acute pain, and he sank back with a groan, and an exclamation which, in the roar of the passing train which just then swept by, was not heard by his companion. The flash of light in his face startled and annoyed Tom.

'He might have let me get off,' thought the thief, who had just afforded his natural foe such kindly help. 'One good turn, surely, deserves another.'

Tom would perhaps have made off instantly had not the passing train blocked the way, and when the last carriage whirled by he was startled tenfold more by the exclamation repeated again from the lips of the helpless man at his feet.

'Why—Tom Morris—Sue's husband! How came you here?'

The bull's-eye flash had revealed to its owner much more than he had expected. Some six years ago he had parted from his only sister Sue, not without fond regrets, but with every hope for her happiness, as she was marrying a steady workingman, and the young couple had begun their married life as professing Christians. But trouble had come; trouble, indeed, had been partly invited, for Sue's husband had fallen in with some godless companions, and, against his conscience, had made them his constant associates. He never got drunk nor ill-treated his wife, nor was guilty of any criminal dishonesty towards his master; but his work was so carelessly and shiftlessly done that after a while he lost his situation and got into serious difficulties. Times were hard, employment very scarce, and Tom and Sue moved into another neighborhood, in hopes of doing better. Sue's brother, Robert, often wrote, and sometimes came to see her and sent her help; but at last, to his consternation, he suddenly lost sight of her. Tom, ashamed alike of his conduct and his companions, and not choosing to be 'watched,' as he phrased it, refused to allow his wife to hold any further communication with her brother, and Robert also removing to a distance, owing to his police duties, the two had entirely lost sight of each other. Tom, however, had obtained regular work, and had been able to provide comfortably for his wife and child for several years past; indeed, he had been vexed that he had cut himself off