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Advertising Manager, Canadian Courier

then, should he do? Certainly he could ring his bell, hand the goose over to a waiter, and request him to have it placed in a refrigerator for the night. But Jimmie, like all young Englishmen, had a pious horror of unusual situations, and a terrible fear of looking ridiculous, and he thought that it would seem very strange if he was found with a trussed and prepared goose in his chamber; the situation might be decidedly embarrassing.

Looking round him in search of a notion, Jimmie suddenly conceived a brilliant utilitarian one. He would fill one of his wash bowls with water and immerse the goose until next morning. The water would certainly keep it cool—this, at any rate, was the best thing he could do. Accordingly, having divested himself of coat and waistcoat, and turned up his wristbands, he prepared to make the goose safe for the night. He filled the bowl nearly to the brim, and divesting the goose of its linen and cambric, tenderly lifted it out of its soft bed of tissue paper. And in doing this Jimmie became aware that the goose was not the only article which the wickerwork hamper contained.

HIS fingers, straying around the goose's back, came in contact with some hard substance that lay beneath it. They instinctively strayed further; they met more similar substances. And then Jimmie, greatly wondering, realized that these substances were small parcels, lying in the tissue paper padding beneath the Michaelmas goose.

This realization at first conveyed nothing, suggested nothing, to him. All that came into his mind just then was a sudden remembrance of his school days, or of such of them as were marked with a white stone because of his reception of a tuck basket. He remembered that in those welcome gifts there used to be numerous small parcels in addition to the piece de resistance, which was usually a huge plum-cake. He also remembered the feelings of inquisitive delight with which he used to open one parcel after another. Something of the same sort of pleasure filled him now as he gently lifted out the goose, and looked into the hamper to ascertain what lay beneath it.

There, before Jimmie's wondering eyes, lay three small parcels wrapped in ordinary soft brown paper, carelessly tied about with thin string. They might contain lollipops; they might contain tobacco; he had an insane notion that they might harbour the various herbs out of which the proper stuffing for the goose was to be manufactured. But as soon as he took up the first, which was also the largest, he knew that he was handling a book. Even then he was unconscious of anything more than ordinary curiosity when he unwound the wrappings of the book. He expected to see—just a book.

Jimmie Trickett was not a bookish young man. He had no inclinations towards literature. When he wanted to read, he amused himself with French novels, or the last thing on motoring, or a recent volume on golf; sometimes he toyed a little with Ruff's "Guide to the Turf"; on occasion he waded through one of his friend Nicholson Packe's novels. He was not the sort of young man, however, who knows an Elzevir from a Caxton, and he would have yawned with ennui if he had been obliged to spend an hour in those rooms of the British Museum in which the rarer specimens of the printing and book-making art are so jealously treasured. Nevertheless, when Jimmie looked at the book which he dug out of its paper bed from beneath the goose, he knew that he was looking at something remarkably rich and rare, something that was probably worth many, many times its own weight in gold. It was a fat, podgy little volume, bound in old purple calf, its covers were secured by a quaintly chased gold clasp, its leaves were of vellum, beautifully preserved, every page was decorated and emblazoned in colours wonderfully fresh. This was no ordinary book; it was something very, very far from ordinary.

Suddenly Jimmie remembered the conversation of the evening before, the conversation in the Marquis

of Scraye's room at the Ritz Hotel. Why, this, of course, must be that book that Scraye had told them about, the book—whatever did Scraye call it?—oh, yes, a Book of Hours, which had recently been stolen from Sir or Lord somebody-or-other's house. Without a doubt this was it! And since it was there—there, actually there before him, taken by himself from its hiding-place beneath the innocent goose!—why, why—what might there not be in the other small parcels that lay by it? He suddenly pushed goose and Book of Hours aside and turned with feverish eagerness to the wickerwork hamper.

Two minutes later, when he came to full possession of his senses, Jimmie found himself sitting at the table, his chin propped on his hands, staring with all his eyes at these objects. There was the Book of Hours with its purple binding and golden clasps; there was a curious old chain of gold; there was the gold cross, studded with diamonds and precious stones which had been purloined from Scraye. There they were, oh, yes! and there he was, in Paris, staring at them, while the subdued hum of life in the streets outside came gently to his ears. Incredible! Marvellous! But true.

Jimmie sat in that position while a good ten minutes went by. But he was not thinking of the cross, or the book, or the chain. He was thinking of the girl he had left an hour and a half previously. And his thoughts tumbled over each other.

Being of an eminently generous and loyal nature, Jimmie Trickett was not going to believe for one moment that Eva Walsden (he had extorted the girl's Christian name from its owner during the little dinner in the Rue Royale) knew anything of the valuables which lay before him. He had fallen in love with her, that was enough for him to warrant her in his eyes. No, no! She was a catspaw. She was an innocent pawn in the game. She was being used, had been used, by the people who were in the background. But—

A COLD perspiration suddenly bedewed Jimmie's forehead. He started up and paced the room, clenching his fists in his pockets.

"By Gad!" he growled. "If she'd been caught with these things on her!"

This notion so appalled him that he dropped into an easy chair and groaned. Then, realizing that groaning and growling could do no good, he got up again, helped himself to a drink from the tray which had been brought up, took a bite out of a dry biscuit, and thought.

Of course, he saw it all now. That hat-shop in South Molton Street was a receiving shop; Madame Charles was—what? Receiver, at any rate, of these stolen goods; possibly the arch-contriver, the prompter, the guiding spirit in these astonishing thefts. These gifts, these Michaelmas geese, braces of birds, strawberries out of season, what not, were so many covers for sending the proceeds of each skilfully planned robbery to Paris—who on earth would even think of finding valuables under a saddle of Welsh mutton, or a dozen of the finest English peaches? And Monsieur Charles, epicure, was, of course, the recipient, the sharer, the confidential agent. Oh, it was a fine game, a daring game, and so far it seemed to have been played beautifully and easily.

"But I'll swear she knows nothing about it!" muttered Jimmie, savagely. "She's been had for our Cockney brother would call the fair Mug! And by George, I'll see her through it! What an extraordinary slice of luck that the porter chap should make that mistake with the hamper. All right, all right! just wait until to-morrow!"

Then he securely locked the stolen articles in his dressing case, and went to bed and presently slept, to dream that he was a knight-errant, riding forth to rescue Eva Walsden from the tangled thorn-brakes of danger and destruction to which the snares and wiles of evil folk had brought her perilously near.

(To be continued.)