

A Burglar Alarm.

Scene—The cottage of Mr. and Mrs. Miggs, a young married couple at Hampstead. Mr. and Mrs. Miggs have just come home from a dance, and are proceeding upstairs. It is two o'clock in the morning.

Mrs. Miggs (stopping suddenly on the first landing): Hush, listen!

Mr. Miggs: What's the matter?

Mrs. Miggs: I heard a noise in the dining room. There it goes again.

Mr. Miggs: I don't hear anything.

Mrs. Miggs (in a hoarse whisper): It's burglars. I know it is. I always said they would come some day when we were out. They have confederates who watch your movements. I can hear the noise now.

Mr. Miggs: Rubbish! It's the window rattling, that's all. I must have forgotten to put the wedge in this morning.

Mrs. Miggs: Hark! What's that? I can distinctly hear them shaking their skeleton keys. And the silver is in the sideboard cupboard. There's the teapot and the card tray the Snythes gave us for a wedding present, and—there! I told you so! (An unusual noise is distinctly audible.)

Mr. Miggs (a little nervously): I—I don't suppose it's anything. Burglars would not come to a place like this. Let's go upstairs. We can look into the matter in the morning.

Mrs. Miggs: Yes; and by that time our silver will be melted down and sold to the Mint or the Bank of England, or whoever the people are that buy that sort of thing. You must go down at once and see what's the matter.

Mr. Miggs (bracing himself up desperately): Yes—of course—I'll go down just

to show you how r-r-ridiculous your fears are. (The noise is heard again). By jove! It does sound as if somebody was there.

Mrs. Miggs: Wait a minute! (She turns to a cupboard behind and produces several lengths of stout box cord). Look here, Henry, take this. Don't get excited. All you've got to do is to rush down to the dining room, and as soon as the burglar hears you he'll try to escape. Then you can throw him down on the hearthrug and secure him firmly with the cord. Be sure and tie the knots tightly. As soon as you have got him securely fastened call up to me, and I'll go and fetch a policeman.

Mr. Miggs: Ye-es, b-but hadn't I better have a poker or something in case I have to—

Mrs. Miggs: That's a good idea! (she creeps softly into the spare bedroom and comes back with a poker in her hand). If he points a pistol at you, you can knock it out of his hand with this (giving him the poker). Keep perfectly cool.

Mr. Miggs: (Shivering a little): I'm c-cool enough. (In taking the poker from his wife he drops it, and it comes to the floor with a loud noise.)

Mrs. Miggs: Hush! Do be careful, or you'll frighten him away before you can get at him.

Mr. Miggs (grasping madly at this one blessed ray of hope, and dropping the poker again with a loud noise than before) Dear, dear—how careless I am!

Mrs. Miggs (after listening for a moment): He is there yet. I heard a tray rattle. I believe he's putting the things into a bag. If you go down now you can just catch him nicely. Don't have any of his nonsense.