

it was plain to Merridew that his scheme for keeping the grass widower from dissipation had failed. Hennessy had forgotten about the chess engagement, or, if he had remembered it, had not scrupled to break it.

Merridew felt incensed. He solaced himself with Hennessy's cigars and whisky and waited on, determined to give Hennessy his opinion of him, and to claim the half sovereign as fair forfeit under the terms of the invitation.

At twelve o'clock he decided to wait no longer. The servant had gone to bed, and instead of leaving a note, he left a 'booby-trap' over the door of the dining room, rightly conjecturing that when Hennessy found his hat driven down over his eyes by Webster's dictionary, he would remember his engagement. Merridew felt rather ashamed of the booby-trap, as being a stale and somewhat puerile joke, but for the moment he was too sleepy and annoyed to plan a better. Inspiration comes when least sought, however. When he opened the front door a much better idea for getting even occurred to him. A heavy, measured tread was approaching along the pavement which there was no mistaking. Merridew left the door open and strolled down to the gate as if he were taking a breath of fresh air before going to bed.

He gave the policeman good evening and after chatting with him for a few minutes, asked him if he would mind keeping a special watch on the house, as he, Merridew, had noticed a rough looking man prowling about earlier in the evening. The policeman said that any burglar who might try the house was already as good as in his custody. Merridew, to keep him up to the mark, gave him a glass of Hennessy's whisky, extra stiff.

The policeman continued his beat, and Merridew, instead of going home, turned back into the house. He shot the bolt and put out the gas, and then crept upstairs to Hennessy's dressing room which looked over the front garden.

One o'clock came, and with it a few passers by from the last train. The garden gate clicked, and Merridew, looking

through the half closed window—the dressing room was in darkness—saw a man walk unsteadily up to the path. It was Hennessy. 1

After five minutes fumbling he managed to get his key in the keyhole, and uttered an exclamation of triumph. On finding that the door was bolted, he changed his note, and Merridew shook with laughter.

He shook the door fiercely, but there was no disguising that he was locked out.

He stumbled over the flower bed and went round the corner of the house to the scullery window. It was about six feet from the ground and about two feet square but by standing on an inverted flower pot and going through a kind of acrobatic performance, it was possible for a man very much in earnest to get through. Hennessy had done so before when the servant girl had absent-mindedly bolted him out and had bragged about the feat afterwards. Hennessy, as I have said, was one of those men who can do anything, from getting through windows to riding horses which circus riders refuse to mount.

On this occasion he was half in and half out of the window when he was seized from behind and hauled down into a potato bed.

'Got you this time,' said the policeman, pinning him against the wall. 'Will you come quietly, or are you going to make a fool of yourself?'

'Go away, you blockhead,' said Hennessy fiercely. 'This is my own house, and I've been locked out.'

'Have you, now?' said the policeman with withering sarcasm.

'Come along with me, and be bolted in. That'll make it even, old chap. It's no good struggling.'

Having convinced himself of this, Hennessy relieve his feelings by cursing the policeman until he was exhausted. He had a good vocabulary, and by the time he had finished the policeman's patience was exhausted too. He told Hennessy to come along and proceeded to fail him over the flower bed towards the garden gate.