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LETTERS FROM VANARAY

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AN UNLUCKY BARGAIN.

Bixby & Co's illustrated advertisement of "cravenette rain cloaks at a bargain" removed Miss Moseley's last scruple. She felt that she must have one. Several hundred others who had arrived at the same decision and the same counter when Anna Moseley reached Bixby's and selected a cravenette with changeable blue silk lining.

Anxious only to secure her purchase, Miss Moseley selected a bill from her well-filled purse, which she thrust back into a jaunty chateleine bag hung at her belt. As she moved away from the counter, she turned abruptly into the arms of a second young woman, upon whose shoe she set her own compact little foot with unintentional emphasis, the two owners coming together with a vicious jar which had the appearance of simultaneous assault.

"Such a little body in gray," said Anna, in relating it to her mother. "She looked like a mouse; but her glare was like an angry lioness, as she drew her foot from under mine, poor thing! Both our bundles flew and when we stooped to catch them, mine slipped out of my hand again, and knock'd Miss Mouse's hat over one eye just as she was straightening up. We never should have disentangled ourselves. I am sure, but for a dear old lady who made way kindly for me to get out."

"She was such a pretty little thing—the one I stepped on. I was sorry, but, of course, I didn't mean to do it. I'll never go into such a jam again, though I did get a bargain! Three dollars saved, at least!"

At this point, Miss Moseley dived a white hand into her bag to demonstrate, by counting her money, how much she had saved. A blank look stole into her brown eyes as, with a hasty movement, she upset the contents of the bag into her lap. "It's gone!" she gasped.

"What?" asked her mother.

"My purse! Oh, my goodness!"

A frantic and truly feminine search into every unlikely spot resulted in nothing. "It's that thing in gray who has it. I am perfectly sure."

As the purse had contained, besides money, a diamond earring of Mrs. Moseley's entrusted to Anna to have the stone secured in its setting, the matter was put into the hands of a detective, to whom the episode was repeated of the encounter with "the gray woman," as Miss Moseley's in her increasing indignation now described her.

The next day Anna was to leave for New York, on her way to Newark, New Jersey, where her dearest college chum was to be married within the week, with Anna's assistance. Leaving the matter of her missing purse in her father's care, the young girl took a check and his advice to "be more careful in future," and promptly forgot all unpleasantness, as she settled herself in Section 17 of the Pullman car "Delilah." She had scarcely fallen into a first sleep, when she was respectfully aroused by the porter.

"Very annoying circumstances, Miss, but a young lady here just made connection with this train, and her brother, who telephoned for her section, seems to have got

things mixed up some ways, so she have nothing secured—less'n you'll be good enough to let her have your upper berth, Miss."

Miss Moseley being really a kind-hearted girl, assented at once, and throwing her cloak over her blue sleeping robe, she awaited the rearranging of her section like a drowsy forget-me-not, while the stranger she had been called upon to "entertain unawares" remained invisible.

There was a whispered consultation and a desperate scramble audible after she had retired a second time, and then silence.

As the train drew into the Grand Central station next morning, Anna stepped out of the car, closely followed by the obsequious porter with her bag, which was seized at once by Mr. Richard Waters, the young man to whose wedding she was hastening, and who had been sent by his lady love to meet her guest.

"How glad and gay and bright New York seemed, and what a nice fellow Dick Waters was, anyhow!"

This rushed through Anna's mind—when, in the midst of one of Dick's gayest sallies, a queer fixed look came into her eyes, and she started forward, involuntarily dragging Dick after her in pursuit of some one, who had given one startled glance at Anna and then darted into the crowd.

"Stop her! There she is! Quick! Oh, do catch her!" in a rush of breathless exclamations. But all her companion saw was a trim little body in gray, who proved quite too quick for them in the unpremeditated chase.

"There isn't any doubt but she has it, else why did she run?" was the close of Miss Moseley's hasty explanation to the bewildered Dick, which explanation lasted, however, until the ferry boat drew into the Jersey City slip. As the two joined the crowd rushing through the labyrinth of fenced alleys to the trains and waiting-room, Dick took a look at his watch, and, catching Anna by the arm, made a sudden dash through the doorway, muttering, "We'll miss that train unless we hurry—I beg your pardon?" he added with careless courtesy, to a man whom he nearly ran over in their headlong stampede. To his surprise the man again got in his way and laid his hand on Dick's arm, as if to draw him out of the stream of people.

"Newark! Elizabeth! Rahway!" The strident voice of the station master was heard calling the train. "Ask the station master, my good man," Dick cried, impatiently, "I shall miss my train as it is, I fear," as visions of the anxious young hostess awaiting them arose before him.

But this time there was no mistaking the grip on his arm, as with his free hand, his detainer showed a detective's badge under the lapel of his coat. Wrath blazed in Dick's eyes, but his companion, whose mind was still occupied by her glimpse of the girl in gray, asked, eagerly, "Is it about the purse?"

A glance of surprise and reluctant admiration flitted across the man's face, as he replied with a half laugh, "Well, you are a cool one! I'll trouble you for both, while you're about it!"

"I don't understand—there was but one stolen, and as I saw the thief a half hour ago, at the Grand Central, I thought you

might be the man employed to look up the matter."

Before the detective could reply, Dick interferred, and at his suggestion all three moved into a side room.

"Now," said Dick, sternly, when they were out of public hearing, "Will you explain why you persist in delaying us? There is some mistake probably on your part. This young lady supposed you might be about to return her purse, which was stolen in Boston a few days ago, when the matter was at once turned over to a detective."

"Why, what should I walk away with but my own bag, I should like to know?" remonstrated the girl.

"Perhaps you'll tell what's in it?" was the incredulous reply.

"Certainly, I ought to know my own things. There's a mackintosh with a blue silk lining."

"There, that'll do, I didn't think you had a chance to open it."

At this point of aggravation, Anna forgot all her own woes at the reappearance of the doorway of the gray with a-the-wisp. The girl came rapidly in their direction, looking much distressed but in no way abashed.

"Without the slightest premeditation, Anna sprang toward her, exclaiming, eagerly, "Give me the earring, and I'll never let them touch you; I don't care for the money, you must have needed it dreadfully. Papa says there are such cases!"

"Stop!" the little gray figure seemed to dilate with indignant denial. "How dare you speak to me in such a way! I tried to think you couldn't have stolen my pocket-book, for you didn't look like a—such a person, although you were very rude. But here you are with my bag!" She glanced with an identifying eye at the bag, still clutched tightly by the officer of the law.

"Your bag," said Anna, fire glowing in her eyes. "Perhaps you will tell me what is in that bag?"

"Certainly," was the confident answer. "A rain cloak lined with changeable blue silk, is on the top."

"A very good guess so far," concealing her surprise with the sarcasm. Just at this moment a blue-coated policeman came into the rear of the room unnoticed, and stepping briskly up to Miss Moseley, whose tall figure completely obscured the small person sitting in front of her, the newcomer addressed her in a low voice—

"I am sorry to say I must take you under my care, madam."

"For what?" was the startled question.

"For the taking of a pocket-book at Bixby & Co's, which contained a diamond earring!"

"And \$20," added Anna. "Let me complete the inventory. Will you kindly tell me how you came to arrest me for stealing my own pocket-book?"

"I ain't to be put off so easy, Miss; my orders came by telegraph to arrest on arrival of night express from Boston, young

woman in gray, occupying Section 17, Pullman Delilah."

"Light breaks in upon me! I am glad to be able to pass your attention over to the right person. There is the young lady of whom you are doubtless in search, since it is only my wrap which is gray. She certainly did not, however, occupy Section 17."

"I certainly did!" the gray girl rose, defiant: "at least, I was in the upper berth!"

"Oh you were my guest!"

"Yes! and you?"

They whirled upon each other with eloquent faces, only to sit down more helplessly bewildered than before.

"Wait a moment, ladies!" The detective had gathered his wits and checked the girls as both opened their lips to speak.

"Which of you has had a purse stolen?"

A simultaneous response paralyzed Dick, as well as the officer.

"On what date?"

"Last Tuesday!" The duet continued.

"Where?"

"At Bixby & Company's."

It was really getting ridiculous, but at each reply the victims looked more deadly serious.

"You say," turning to the shorter young woman, "that this bag is yours, and the contents, beginning with a rain cloak lined with blue, are yours?"

"It surely is!" The little lady's voice sounded weary and tremulous. With a quick movement Anna opened the clasp of the bag as it stood by the officer, and pointing to the disputed garment, said: "Let her put it on, then!"

This test would plainly be conclusive, since Miss Moseley was as tall and stately as the other young lady was petite. An officer shook out the cloak and encircled with the shorter woman's shoulders, anticipated triumph gleamed in four bright eyes, changing rapidly with Miss Moseley to blank dismay, for the cravenette would have hardly reached to Anna's slender ankles.

Dick, who had slipped away to the telephone in the waiting-room a short time before, returned at this juncture with a beaming countenance.

"I have just phoned the conductor of the Delilah and found that a travelling bag is held for orders, which was left in the ladies' dressing-room."

"Oh," exclaimed Anna, "I sent the porter back to the berth for mine. I thought I left it there, and he must have taken yours as they are alike. I cannot say how sorry I am, but I couldn't have known, could I?"

"I would never have thought of it, but for my pocket-book," said the woman in gray.

"But it was my pocket-book that was stolen," persisted Anna.

"So was mine!" said the other, "and you asked me—queer, that I suspected you right away?"

"Why, so did I—I mean, you were so angry, that I thought when I missed it—for if that nice old lady hadn't let me out."

A low whistle from the detective arrested their attention.

"An old lady? Old Hodgdon, I bet a penny. It's just one of her dodges! Nice old party—mild—spectacles—hmm! Same old girl—guess me, I'll have to leave you to settle this among yourselves. Sorry to

have disturbed you—I think I know where to lay my hands on Betsey inside three hours."

"How much did you lose?" asked the little lady in gray, when they had talked it over the next day at lunch with Dick's fiancée, who insisted on knowing all about it.

"Fifty dollars and twenty-seven cents, and mamma's earring!" replied Anna. How much did you?"

"A dollar bill, fifteen cents and ten postage stamps. It was really the stamps that I felt the worst about—they go so fast."

And Dick who had just slipped noiselessly into the doorway, laughed, the mean thing.

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one carefully to his lips, and looking at the red liquor with an expression of sweet anticipation, said, just before emptying his glass: "Dan don't drink."

Poached Eggs with Cream Sauce.

One pint of water, one teaspoonful of vinegar, one saltspoonful of salt, as many eggs as are required. Put the water, vinegar and salt into a very clean frying pan, and when boiling, slip the eggs carefully into it without breaking the yolks. When set, remove from the water with a skimmer and drain thoroughly before placing on a warm dish. Pour the water out of the pan and put in a teaspoonful of flour and a tablespoonful of butter smoothly together, and add the cream; add a little mixed parsley, salt and a dash of cayenne. Boil three minutes, pour over the eggs, and serve at once.

Irish Moss Blanc Manger.

Pick and wash 1/2 cup of Irish moss. Then put it into 1 pint of boiling water with 4 figs and a rind of one lemon. Let it simmer until moss is well dissolved. Then add juice of one lemon, and 1/2 cup of sugar. When sugar is dissolved strain into a cold, wet mould. This is excellent.

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