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OUR MUTUAL SECRET.

How that venerable patriarch, Father Time, with his sand-glass and sickle does keep his pace. It will now be almost twelve years since I, Hugh Penscarden, might have been occasionally seen in the Courts of Session or, Justiciary in our besutiful "modern Athens," arrayed in wig and gown, practising my profession as an advocate.

Two years had elapsed since I had become a full-fledged pleader, and

within the last few months my business had been rapidly increasing, and my previous inability to convince fifteen of my countrymen to my own ideas was a matter I was beginning to be tolerably adept at.

The analytical precision with which I sifted out every favorable detail, the impressive earnestness which characterised my forensic addresses unmistakeably possessed incalculable weight, and finelly in a brilliant peroration I made a touching appeal to their hearts and consciences, and delicately and gracefully alluded to the manifest perspicuity, which would be strikingly displayed by returning a verdict in favor of my client.

Of course, this at least candid egotism is entre nous, or as the Scotch

have it, "atween corsels."

One afternoon I was at work in my chambers, when my junior clerk ushered in one of the city detectives.

With a "good-day, sir," he immediately launched upon his errand,

which I briefly narrate.

First of all permit me to inform you that only the other evening, while at the house of Mr. Cullen, an old friend of our family, I was introduced to Miss Nellie Kinloss, his niece, on a visit to Edinburgh

When I take a retrospective glance at that memorable day I cannot honestly confess that an exquisitely moulded figure, with a pair of liquid brown eyes, had any unusual attraction for me.

Imagine my consternation when Detective Spynie told me that this estimable young lady was at the Central Police Office accused of shop-lifting, and that she had asked to see me.

It appeared that several articles of clothing had been stolen during the last few days from a drapery warehouse, where Miss Kinloss had called to make some purchases.

On this particular day four pairs of gloves were suddenly discovered to be missing, and on a preconcerted signal all exit was shut, and the customers were compelled to undergo the process of being searched.

All came unscathed out of this disagreeable business except my unfortunate lady friend, in whose pocket was found one pair of unworn gloves, which were identified as being stolen. On this irresistible proof she was arrested and detained in custody.

I at once saw her on my arrival at the police station, and there, with toarful eyes and agonizing look, she implored me to obtain her liberation and to use my utmost ability in clearing her from this foul blot on her character.

The first request I speedily obtained on consultation with the Procurator Fiscal, having lodged bail as a guarantee for her future appearance at court; but as to the last, that was a difficulty which would tax my mental strength.

Her gratitude to me was delineated in every feature of her beautiful countenance, and her eyes were perfectly radiant with it; and yet across that pretty face there rested a dark dismal shadow, which I determined I must instantly dispel.

Very prudently she desired me to keep the secret of hor accusation from her friends, and this we were successful in doing.

I had critically examined the evidence upon which this charge was based, verdict of "not proven," by merely producing witnesses to prove the hitherto irreproachable character of my client, but I was anxious to prevent the case coming to trial, and besides, I would not have been content with "not proven," which literally signifies exemption from nunishment but If the case did come to trial my first thought was I could easily obtain a tarnished reputation.

It would occupy unnecessary space were I to detail my every process in unravelling the tangled skein; suffice it to say that my efforts, like most well

directed and painstaking actions were crowned with success.

First of all, by judicious advertising, I, strange to remark, stumbled upon two elderly ladies (in metaphor only) who had been making purchase, and were ready to testify that they observed my friend onter, seat heiself. down close by, and remain there until the hue and cry was raised about fir minutes afterwards.

Their only excuse for not asserting this at the time was the purely facful aversion to appear as witnesses, to being convoyed to the police statical and to being precognosced, &c.

This poor paltry and unreasonable apology I will not attempt to dikk upon further than expressing my unmitigated disgust of such collous cales. lating wretches.

I was so gratified at my good fortune in uncerthing these two spins that I fairly jumped for joy. Though I had cherished a faint hope of getting somebody who could adduce some proof similar to this, my most me

guine expectations did not paint it with so rosy a hue.

During the few days of my investigation, Miss Kinloss had called est afternoon at my chambers, and, really, her delight when I apprised by the latest intelligence was frantic. Then, and only then, for I am frail avowing the truth, did I experience a new emotion to which I had be hitherto unsusceptible.

"What was it !" I was half inclined to ask myself, when my inquivas smothered before articulation by the magic whisper, "Love."

The creature of my adoration had been branded as a felon, but I assisted in evading that cruel and terrible blow from the sword of jet which, Damocles-like, was hanging over her head.