

A JUSTIFIABLE CRIME.

I.
"Oh, LD man, I want your advice."

Debenham broke a piece of silence that had lasted some ten minutes or so.

"It's rather a curious affair," he began, diffidently. "It happened last night. I wanted to go to Bayswater to see my old nurse, who lives there. I took the bus at Oxford Circus. As I dare say, you remember it was a nasty night, wet and foggy, and the vehicle was soon full; in fact, by the time we reached Westbourne Grove there was only room for another. Here we picked up our last passenger. She was a young lady."

"And of course you contrived that she should sit by you," I said.

"You would have done the same yourself," Debenham retorted. "Any man would, for she had the sweetest face. It's haunted me all night—it has, really. I dare say she was about 18, or perhaps 20—not more. She had brown eyes, very brown eyes—you know, the kind that seem to speak almost—and they were shaded by long lashes. She had brown hair, too—the kind of hair that twists itself into a lot of little curls—natural curls, you know. I wonder why all girls don't wear their hair that way. Then her mouth—her mouth—"

"Never mind the mouth," I interposed, hastily, seeing that he was about to indulge in an extravagant flood of rhapsody. "It was an ideal mouth, I haven't a doubt."

"She sat down next to me," he went on. "There wasn't much room, and she thanked me when I moved. She had the sweetest voice."

"Well, there's nothing curious about that. I believe you said—"

"I'm coming to it if you'll only give me time," he returned, in an aggrieved tone. "You've no patience. It was when the conductor came round for fares. Then she felt her purse; she found it was missing. At first she thought she must have dropped it, and I searched the floor and under the seat. However, it wasn't there. Poor girl! I never saw any one so distressed in my life. It seemed she had £5 in it, and it was evidently quite a fortune to her. Well, I paid her fare for her, and we got out together."

"I don't think you need tell me any more," I said dryly.

Debenham stared.

"Why not?"

"Because I know the rest."

"How the—"

"Yes, I do. You lent her the £5, of course. My dear fellow, you've been had."

"I didn't do anything of the kind!" Debenham retorted hotly. "She wouldn't let me. That's what I came to ask your advice about. I thought that as you were a lawyer you might be able to suggest something, but I wish I'd never mentioned it to you."

Of course I hastened to soothe his ruffled plumes, and in a little while he went on with his tale. It appeared that he had seen her home, and that he had learned her name. It was Charnley—Kate Charnley. She was a dressmaker, and lived with her sister.

II.

"And you want to help them, eh?" I said, after a time.

"Yes, but it'll be a difficult matter. They're clergyman's daughters, and very proud. I don't see what I can do. It's awfully riling, you know, Kenion, to have a pile of money and not be able to do a little good with it once in a way. It's a shame that this girl should have to slave at a sewing machine all day while a great strong beggar like me lounges around killing time."

"I suppose you want to refund this £5."

"Yes; I can't do more, but I don't even see how I can do that."

"Well, you might order a gown of some sort from them."

"Don't be an ass; men don't buy gowns."

"You could say it was for your sister."

"But I haven't got a sister, and if I had she'd never let me choose her gowns for her; besides, she'd have to be fitted on and all that, you know."

I was obliged to admit the force of these arguments, and a fresh period of silence intervened. Debenham had risen, and was pacing the floor in a state of perplexity.

"How would it be if I inclosed the money in an envelope and sent it anonymously?" he said at length.

"You might do that, certainly," I replied, after a little consideration.

"But she'd be sure to know who sent it."

"Well, that doesn't matter, as you are not likely to see her again."

Debenham stopped and turned his eyes full upon me.

"What's that? Not see her again? But I must see her again. I—I feel that my fate is—linked with that girl, Kenion."

"Oh, very well; then that squashes the idea entirely, unless—Look here, why not assume the character of the thief yourself, and send her a letter saying you have repented and return the money?"

"But I don't want her to think that I'm a bad lot."

"Well, she needn't know that you sent it. You can pretend to be an ordinary pickpocket."

"So I can. I never thought of that."

By Jove, it's a grand idea! Where's the pen and ink? What shall I say? Give us a lift, old chap. You're a dab hand at this sort of thing."

I took up my pen, and, after a little thought, dashed off the following letter:

"Dere miss: This is from me, the bloke wot tuk yer purse. I sents the muny bak because yer father was once very kind ter me when I was down on mi luck, an I poas yer needs it a sight more than I does, yer humble servant, "BILL NOKES."

"How will that do?" I said, as I tossed it across the table.

"Splendidly—splendidly!" he cried, as he ran his eyes over it. "It's worthy of Bill Sikes himself. I'll send it off this very minute." And he thrust it in an envelope with a £5 note.

"You'll let me know how it answers?" I said, as he took his hat.

"Oh, yes." And then, with a hasty good-night, he went flying down the stairs to catch the post.

III.

The following morning it happened that a matter of business took me in the vicinity of Debenham's chambers, and, having half an hour to spare, I determined to call and see if he had heard anything in connection with his plot.

As I was about to enter his sitting room, however, I heard the sound of voices, and a hasty glance showed me that he was engaged. A young lady was standing by the table, facing Debenham, who looked as guilty as any schoolboy caught in an orchard.

"I got it back this morning," the girl was saying. "A man who is employed on the railway picked it up as he was on his way to work."

"I—I am very glad," Debenham murmured, nervously. "He must have been an honest fellow."

"Yes," she said. "But the strange part of it is that by this morning's post there came a letter from a—a thief, inclosing a £5 note. You can read it if you like."

And she handed him the precious missive I had concocted.

He read it in feigned astonishment.

"I never heard of such a curious thing," he murmured. "It's positively— isn't it, you know?"

Of course, this childlike attempt at deception didn't deceive the girl.

"Mr. Debenham," she said, "you wrote this letter—you sent this note."

"I? Really, Miss—"

"Oh, yes, you did. It's no use denying it. No one else knew of our loss."



"I SEARCHED THE FLOOR AND UNDER THE SEAT."

There was a pause. Debenham stood looking very red and foolish.

"Come, you'd better confess," she said, at length.

He rumped his hair in a reckless fashion.

"It seems impossible for a fellow to do a good action in this world," he cried. "He's sure to be found out."

"Then you did send it?"

"Ye-es. You see, you wouldn't let me help you, and so—I struck me that it would be a capital idea to pretend that I was a thief!" (the lumbag! his idea, indeed.) "I never thought for a moment that you'd see your purse again, and if you hadn't done so, my little dodge would never have come to light."

"No, I don't think it would," she answered; "for that was a most realistic letter you wrote."

Debenham groaned.

"You can't think what an effort it cost me," he said.

"What an effort, indeed!"

"I do hope you will let me keep it as a memento?"

"Yes—if you will promise to forgive me."

"Oh, there is nothing to forgive! It was very good of you."

At this moment I caught a glimpse of her face, and I was forced to admit that Debenham had some reason for his extravagant praise.

"And you will not think the worse of me for—trying to deceive you?" he went on. Really, he was getting post-

tively absurd; from his voice one would have supposed that he was a prisoner suing for his life.

"Oh, I think better of you!" she cried. "I shall never forget your kindness." And as she gave him her hand she blushed in a ridiculous fashion.

Then Debenham made an ass of himself. Instead of simply shaking hands and saying good-morning, he held her fingers and said nothing, but just stared at her in a moonstruck kind of way that was quite idiotic, and she drooped her head like a little silly and went the color of a peony; then— But at this point I could stand it no longer, and I quietly withdrew.

Of course I was not in the least astonished when Debenham rushed into my chambers the same afternoon and, with a good deal of stammering, confessed that he was engaged. He seemed amazed when I betrayed no surprise; but I didn't tell him that I had been a witness of his folly.

I was presented to the future Mrs. Debenham and her sister a few days later. When Debenham asked me what I thought of her, I told him she was one of the nicest girls I had ever met; but, as a matter of fact, she is much inferior to her sister, who, I don't mind admitting, indeed, that she is the nicest girl I have ever met, and I shouldn't wonder—

But there, that's "another story."—Answers.

BERNHARDT AT THE BEGINNING.

Old Pen Picture of the Divine Sarah by Octave Feuillet.

Just thirty years ago Octave Feuillet, in a letter to his wife, drew the following pen picture of Mme. Sarah Bernhardt, then at the beginning of her career:

"A queer girl, indeed, is Sarah. It is the first time in my long career that I have met with a genuine actress, a comedienne of the eighteenth century, elegant, eccentric, insolent, and bold."

"Contrary to the habit of all other actresses, she comes to the rehearsals in full dress, or, at least, in a toilet arranged after her own fashion. She always wears velvet—a velvet dress, a velvet hat, a scarf of black lace over her shoulders, and a little ruffled collar. In this way, with her hair like that of a poodle dog, and with some fresh flowers in her hand, she repeats her part with care and somber gravity, and occasionally with attitude à la Rachel. At the close of the act she prances about like a ballet girl, skips upon one foot, and then sits down at the piano to accompany herself while singing a queer negro air. She has a very sweet voice. Then she gets up and begins to walk about with long strides, like a clown, laughing in everybody's face, and chewing chocolate candy, with which she always has her pockets filled. At times she takes out a little case, in which there was a small brush, which she rubs over her lips to give them a ruby color, after which she laughs, shows her white teeth, and recommences to munch her chocolates."

"Nothing could be more amusing than to see Croizette and herself, after a rehearsal, running out, followed by their mothers. They start off like frightened hares, with their heads up and Rabage hats thrown back upon their enormous blond wigs. Swinging their little umbrellas, they walk and laugh loud enough to make people turn round and stare at them. At last they go into Chiboust's confectionery shop and there stuff themselves with cakes."

THE COST OF WARS.

Some Enormous Amounts that Nations Have Suffered.

The fearful madness that war inevitably proves itself to be to those that engage in it and to the world—the awful waste and desolation it causes, lost sight of by the foolish and heedless under the glamour of its influence and becazing excitements—are well shown by certain statements of fact which have been gathered from the "History of Civilization," by Paul Courier, and have gained some circulation, says City and State. They cannot be too widely set forth and pressed upon popular attention. He says:

Algeria has cost France 1,560 times the net profit of its annual revenues Madagascar, up to 1896, cost the same nation \$85,000,000, and there is nothing really to show in return. Tonquin has produced mainly disease and constant slaughter. The effort to keep San Domingo," he says, "cost France more dearly than all the crimes of her great revolutions." And so, too, he sums up in a striking statement the effect marvellously ruinous of a recent well-remembered African war upon another European power. "Abyssinia," he says, "has cost Italy \$15,000,000 and thousands of lives, or more than enough to drain the Pointine marshes and cover the mother country's dry hills with fruit trees and forest trees and fill that ancient sunny land with prosperous, contented and happy homes."

A New Musical Instrument.

A new musical instrument is the product of the inventive skill of Carl Brown of Columbus, Ohio, who is also the inventor of improvements to the guitar. The new instrument consists of a sort of zither and an ordinary mouth harp in combination. The quality of the tone of the mouth harp is greatly improved and the musician is enabled to play an accompaniment to his harp solo.

"Clean as a Whistle."

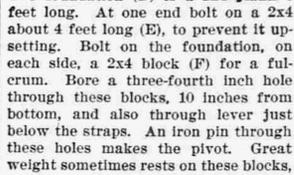
The origin of the saying, "as clean as a whistle," is ascribed to the "whistle tankard" of olden times, in which the whistle came into play when the tankard was emptied or "cleared out" to announce to the waiter that more liquor was required.

A man can lay claims to greatness when his private affairs begin to interest the public.



Handy Wagon Jack.

With this jack the heaviest load that can be put on a wagon can be lifted by one man, and thus, if a break occurs with a load on, it need not be unloaded to take a wheel off for repair. It is made with a lever in two joints (A and B), fastened together with straps of iron (C), in such a way that the part A works upon the straps C, which are firmly bolted to the long part of the lever (B) as a hinge. The foundation (D) is a 2x4 plank 6 feet long. At one end bolt on a 2x4 about 4 feet long (E), to prevent it upsetting. Bolt on the foundation, on each side, a 2x4 block (F) for a fulcrum. Bore a three-fourth inch hole through these blocks, 10 inches from bottom, and also through lever just below the straps. An iron pin through these holes makes the pivot. Great weight sometimes rests on these blocks,



WAGON JACK.

so they should be bolted together at top with a block between. At the other end of foundation plank bolt on a 2x4 (G) so that the lever will work close to it, and bore three-fourth inch holes in G two inches apart. Make a pin of hard wood to fit these holes, to hold the lever at any point desired. Make lever of tough wood; flatten where iron straps are bolted on, and also where it comes in contact with G. The top of lever (A) is placed under axle. If it does not reach block up each end of E.—Ohio Farmer.

Points About Growing Potatoes.

The quantity of seed potatoes required for an acre will depend a great deal upon the size of the potatoes and the size of the pieces each seed potato is cut into at planting time. As a general rule it requires from ten to twelve bushels planted in rows 3 feet apart and 18 inches apart in the row. This is supposing that the potatoes are of medium size and are cut so that each piece will have two or three eyes. The land should be rich. Loam well fertilized with stable manure is as good as any soil that can be had. If the potatoes can be planted on clover sod, so much the better. Prairie sod well cut up into a mellow seed bed. Ordinarily the second year after breaking the prairie is better than the first. Ground which had no crop last year and was covered with weeds will contain a great number of weed seeds and much labor will be required to keep the potatoes clean.—Orange Judd Farmer.

A Movable Fence.

The illustration, from the American Agriculturist, shows a kind of fence panel with which either small or large yards can be made for pasturing pigs out of doors in summer—a fence that can be taken up and moved to a new location when it is desired to move the occupants of the pen to new ground. The posts of each panel of fence extend about twenty inches below the lowest board, and are sharpened. If desired, hooks and staples can be placed on each end part, so that two panels can be hooked together at the corners. Un-

less the ground is very loose, causing the stakes to be insecure, this will, however, hardly be necessary.

Handy Water Supply.

I have a good wind pump on the north side of the house, about four yards away. It is over a good well which seldom, if ever, goes dry. The water is soft. The water is forced through a two-inch piping up into the house tank, which is a large galvanized tank in the kitchen. It has a box frame over it and a large lid to cover it up. When the tank lacks just a few inches from running over in the house it begins to flow out at a standing pipe. It flows through piping under the ground to the cellar. It goes in at a piping to the milk trough. It flows to the lower end of the cement trough, and then when the trough is so full it begins to run out, but still leaves a certain amount in the trough. After it leaves the cellar it flows through piping under the ground to the lower side of the horse lot, where it comes up in the large tank. There are two other tanks on the place that this same pump fills. Now, we have everything full of fresh water, and you may be sure that the

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The most important requisite of the tobacco plant is potash. This can be told by anyone who has noticed the great proportion of ash which tobacco, whether in cigar or pipe, leaves after it has been burned. On the other hand nitrogenous manure, which makes a rampant growth of leaves, does not produce the finest quality. The leaves are thick and do not show the delicate texture of the leaf which indicates high qualities. Of course tobacco land needs to be rich, so as to make a large leaf, but to secure tobacco that will burn freely there should always be an excess of potash in the soil. Stable manure is objectionable, not only because it generally lacks potash, but because in midsummer when it heats it furnishes such an excess of nitrogen that the leaf is gorged with sap. A small amount of nitrate of potash on the seed bed will give the tobacco plant a start, so that when transplanted into land only moderately rich it will make as large a leaf as necessary, and give it very superior quality.

Children or Taxes.

Children are at a premium in Madagascar. One must have them or pay a tax to the authorities. This is the latest decree issued by the government of Madagascar. For some time the population of the island has been decreasing. The government authorities sat in council a short time ago, and decided upon a tax to be levied upon every man who, at the age of 25, is unmarried, and upon every married man who, at that age, has no children. The tax is three dollars and seventy-five cents a year. Every girl must pay a tax of one dollar and eighty cents a year as long as she remains single after she passes her twenty-fourth year, and every married woman does the same until she has children as the result of her marriage.

The Offering of Song.

The Music Committee—Now, here is a singer whose enunciation is perfect. You can understand her quite readily when she sings. The Committee on Church Discipline—Well, if we go to employing singers who can be readily understood, we've got to revise the hymnology to conform to our creed, that's all.—Detroit Journal.

Siberian Gold.

There are now about 40,000 miners at work in the gold mines of Siberia. The grains of Siberian gold are said to be on an average larger than those of any other part of the world. You can always hear of a man whose wife can wrap him around her little finger, but did you ever personally see

cooks in the kitchen have had a good supply of fresh water, for all the water pumped by the pump first went through the house tank, and it all had to flow through the milk trough, the milk and butter are kept cool. We have it arranged handy for bathing. The water never gets warm on the house tank, for fresh water is constantly flowing through. The piping is below freezing point.—Charles W. Lovelaw, in Practical Farmer.

Waste on the Farm.

Good management both on the farm and in the household demands that all source of waste be guarded against and that all by-products be utilized to the best advantage. That the kitchen and table waste are generally realized. Don't waste your cold bread; and after each meal take the bread that is left, carefully cut off all the top crust, place these in some sour milk, same as you use for making bread, in time to become thoroughly soaked before making bread for another meal. Then when you are ready to make your bread take one or two of the soaked biscuits, crumble them up and mix well with your dough, and your bread will be lighter, and it will not take as much lard as the ordinary way. Those that try it will be pleased with the result, for it is a great saving and makes a nice delicious biscuit. Don't depend upon the top of your stove for anything. There is nothing like a good oven for making nice preserves.

There is little or no danger of scorching, and the long slow cooking results in clear, delicious preserves. Don't waste fuel by keeping fire when not necessary. While ironing on top, do your baking or preserving in the oven. Don't let the cheese mold. Use it in preparing cooked dishes. Don't neglect your household duties, but let each one of us make our duties as light as possible. Use judgment in our work. Learn to apply the old saying, "Let your brains save your heels." To imagine some one else has an easier time than we do does not lighten our tasks, and only results in making us disagreeable and unhappy. Women should realize and with the realization accept the fact that their household duties are something to be taken up and carried on cheerfully and uncomplainingly, making the home happy and pleasant for all in it.—Mrs. J. R. Brenton.

Better Use of Cotton Seed.

It seems almost incredible now that the old-time practice with Southern cotton planters was to pile all their cotton seed in heaps after it was separated from the cotton, and after it was rotted down it was used as manure. Now all the oil is pressed out of the cotton seed, and the meal is found to be an excellent feed for stock. This does not lose its material value, however, but probably makes it more effective, as the meal, after it has passed through the animal, can then be rotted down into a much stronger fertilizer than it could while in the seed. It is such economies as this in the use of all parts of the cotton plant that make it possible to grow cotton at much lower prices than anyone could have thought could be done in the old wasteful times.—American Cultivator.

Rubber Shoes for Horses.

While improved roads enable a horse to draw a load with less exertion, the bounding on the hard surface has a rather serious effect on the joints of the animal's leg, causing them frequently to go lame from no other cause whatever. This is to be remedied by the elastic tread shoe, which offers at all times a soft cushion for the animal's foot and yet a firmer one than the ordinary type of metal shoe. This is done, further, without the use of screws, which have the objection of soon becoming loosened by the constant hammering. The shoe proper, which is fastened to the hoof in the usual way, has an inclined wall around the outer surface, inside of which a rim of rubber is placed which acts as the cushion. The latter is held firmly in place by a securing plate clamped to the shoe by three depending pins, one of which is supplied with a bolt. This holds the three parts securely together. Rubber for this purpose is very durable, and lasts a long time, and when finally worn out can be readily replaced without any special knowledge of horseshoeing. The rubber gives a sure footing at all times, and on all characters of road, while such is not the case with the metal shoe, for the latter sometimes becomes smooth, when a sheet of asphalt presents almost as dangerous a surface as one of ice.

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QUEEN VICTORIA.

Sang a Duet with a Professional Before Her Court.

An interesting anecdote, and believed to be little known in America, is told of an occasion when her Majesty Queen Victoria, took part with a common, ordinary virtuoso in a duet. A famous grand opera company, singing in London at the time, was "commanded" to appear before the Queen at Windsor. The opera selected by her Majesty was, as usual, one that had been very popular in the early days of her reign, namely, "The Daughter of the Regiment," and that old-time favorite singer, Aynsley Cooke, played one of his best parts, Sergeant Sulrice. After the conclusion of the performance, with which the Queen was evidently delighted, the members of the company were regaled with a sumptuous dinner, and when this agreeable episode was drawing to a close one of the chief officials of the royal household came to Aynsley Cooke and requested him to come into the drawing-room, where her Majesty wished to see him. The barytone willingly obeyed the command, and was cordially greeted by all the members of the royal family present.

The Queen asked Mr. Cooke if he could sing in the duet for Figaro and Rosina, from "The Barber of Seville," and the singer replied, "Yes, your Majesty, I could sing it backward." To which the Queen smilingly said: "Very well, Mr. Cooke, you take the part of Figaro and I will sing that of Rosina." Signor Paolo Tosti, who had acted as music master to most of the younger royalties, was at the piano, and the duet proceeded. Cooke introduced all the familiar business produced on the stage, smiled approvingly as the Queen sang the florid music, pulled out his watch to time her, as she sang the long roulades, and at the end the duetists were rewarded by a torrent of applause.

The Marquis of Lorne then approached the vocalists and gravely informed them that their efforts were approved, and that they might both consider themselves engaged! At which they all laughed heartily. Cooke used to regard this as one of the most pleasing recollections in his long and varied career.