

JENNIE BAXTER: JOURNALIST

BY ROBERT BARR.

II.—The Diamonds of the Princess.

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The detective smiled and gazed upward for a few tantalizing moments at the roof of the carriage.

"Here we have," he said at last, "an impetuous prince who marries an American heiress, as so many of them do. The girl begins life in Austria on \$1,000,000, say \$200,000, and a case of diamonds said to be worth another \$200,000 at least—probably more. Not much danger of running through that very speedily, is there, Smith?"

"No; I should think not." "So the average man would think," continued the detective. "However, I have long since got out of the habit of thinking; therefore I make sure. The first problem I set to myself is this: How much money have the prince and princess spent since they were married? I find that the repairs on the Schloss Steinheimer, situated in the Tyrol, cost something like \$40,000. It is a huge place, and the Steinheimers have not had an heiress in the family for many centuries. The prince owed a good deal of money when he was married, and it took something like \$20,000 to settle those debts—rather expensive, as continental prices go; but, if one must have luxuries, one cannot save money. Not to weary you with details, I found that the \$200,000 was exhausted something more than two months ago—in fact, just before the alleged robbery. The prince is of course without money; otherwise he would not have married a Chicago heiress, and, the princess being without money, what does she naturally do?"

"Pawn her own diamonds!" cried Smith enthusiastically. "I thought it much more probable she would apply to her father for money. I asked him if this was the case, giving him the date, roughly speaking, when such a letter had been sent. The old man opened his eyes at this and told me he had received such a letter. 'But you did not send the money?' I ventured. 'No,' he said; 'I did not. The fact is, money is very tight in Chicago just now, and so I cabled her to run on her debts for awhile.' This exactly bore out the conclusion at which I had already arrived. So now, having failed to get money from her father, the lady turns to her diamonds, the only security she possesses. The chances are that she did so before her father's cable message came, and that was the reason she so confidently wished information to be given to the police. She expected to have money to redeem her jewels, and, being a bright woman, she knew the traditional stupidity of the official police, and so thought there was no danger of her little ruse being discovered. But when the cable message came saying no money would be sent her a different complexion was put upon the whole affair, for she did not know but if the police were given plenty of time they might stumble on the diamonds. All that is necessary for me to do now is to find out how many persons there are in Vienna who would lend large sums of money on valuable jewels. The second is to find with which one of those the princess pawned her diamonds. In my opinion, the diamonds never left Vienna. You see, the ball had been announced, and immediate money was urgently needed. She pawned the diamonds before she left the capital of Austria, and the chances are she did not intend any one to know they were missing; but on the eve of the ball her husband insisted that she should wear her diamonds, and therefore, being a quick-witted woman, she announced they had been stolen. After having made such a statement, she of course had to stick to it, and now, failing to get the money from America, she is exceedingly anxious that no real detective shall be employed in investigation."

At Dover Miss Baxter, having notes of this interesting conversation in shorthand, witnessed the detective bid good-by to his friend Smith, who returned to London by a later train. After that she saw no more of Mr. Cadbury Taylor and reached the Schloss Steinheimer at Meran without further adventure.

Miss Baxter found life at the Schloss much different from what she had expected. The princess was a young and charming lady, very handsome, but in a state of constant depression. Once or twice Miss Baxter came upon her with apparent traces of weeping on her face. The prince was not an old man, as she expected, but young and of a manly, stalwart appearance. He evidently possessed a fiendish temper and moped about the castle with a constant frown upon his brow.

The correspondence of the princess was in the utmost disorder. There were hundreds upon hundreds of letters, many of which she could not tell whether they had been answered or not, and Miss Baxter set to work tabulating and arranging them. Meanwhile the young newspaper woman kept her eyes open. She wandered about the castle unobserved, peered into odd corners, talked with the servants and, in fact, with every one, but never did she come upon a clue which promised to lead to a solution of the diamond difficulty. Once she penetrated into a turret room and came unexpectedly upon the prince, who was sitting on the window ledge, looking absently out on the broad and smiling valley that lay for miles below the castle. He sprang to his feet and looked so fiercely at the intruder that the girl's heart failed her, and she had not even the presence of mind to turn and run.

"What do you want?" he said to her shortly, for he spoke English perfectly. "You are the young woman from Chicago, I suppose?" "No," answered Miss Baxter, forgetting for the moment the role she was playing. "I am from London."

"Well, it doesn't matter; you are the young woman who is arranging my wife's correspondence?" "Yes." "The prince strode rapidly forward and grasped her by the wrist, his brow dark with a forbidding frown. He spoke in a hoarse whisper: 'Listen, my good girl! Do you want to get more money from me than you will get from the princess in ten years' service? Harken, then, to what I tell you. If there are any letters from—from men, will you bring them to me?' Miss Baxter was thoroughly frightened, but she said to the prince sharply: 'If you do not let go of my wrist, I'll scream. How dare you lay your hand on me?'"

The prince released her wrist and stepped back. "Forgive me," he said. "I'm a very miserable man. Forget what I have said." "How can I forget it?" cried the girl, gathering courage as she saw him quail before her blazing eyes. "What do you want me to do?" "I want you to bring to me any letters written by—by—"

"Written by Von Schaumburg?" cried the girl, noticing his hesitation and filling in the blank. "A red wave of anger surged up in the prince's face. 'Yes!' he cried. 'Bring me a letter to her from Von Schaumburg, and I'll pay you what you ask.' 'It is contrary to my duty to the princess,' she began hesitatingly, when he stopped and turned fiercely upon her. 'What is contrary to your duty?' 'There are letters, tied very daintily with a blue ribbon, and they are from a man. The princess did not allow me to read them, but locked them away in a

secret drawer in her dressing room, but she is so careless with her keys and about everything else that I am sure I can get them for you, if you want them.' 'Yes, yes, I want them,' said the prince, 'and will pay you handsomely for them.' 'Very well,' replied Miss Baxter. 'You shall have them. If you will wait here ten minutes, I shall return with them.' 'But,' hesitated the prince, 'say nothing to the princess.' 'Oh, no! I shall not need to. The keys are sure to be on her dressing table.'

Miss Baxter ran down to the room of the princess and had little difficulty in obtaining the keys. She opened the secret drawer into which she had seen the princess place the packet of letters, and, taking them out, she drew another sheet of paper along with them, which she read with wide opening eyes: then with her pretty lips she blew a long, astonished whistle. Taking both the packet of letters and the sheet of paper with her, she ran swiftly up the stair and along the corridor to the room where the prince was impatiently awaiting her. 'Give them to me!' he snapped, rudely snatching the packet from her hands. She still clung to the separate piece of paper and said nothing. The prince stood by the window and undid the packet with trembling hands. He examined one and then another of the letters, turning at last toward the girl with renewed anger in his face. 'You are trifling with me, my girl,' he said.

"No, I am not," she said stoutly. "These are my own letters, written by me to my wife before we were married!" "Of course they are. What others did you expect? These are the only letters, as far as I have learned, that any man has written to her, and the only letters she cares for of all the thousands she has ever received. Why, you foolish, blind man, I had not been in this castle a day before I saw how matters were. The princess is breaking her poor heart because you are unkind to her, and she cares for nobody on earth but you, great stupid that you are."

"Is this true? Will you swear it's true?" cried the prince, dropping the packet and going hastily toward the girl. Miss Baxter stood with her back to the wall, and, putting her hands behind her, she said: "No, no; you are not going to touch me again. Of course it's true, and if you had the sense of a 6-year-old child you would have seen it long ago. And she paid \$50,000 of your gambling debts!"

"What are you talking about? The princess has never given me a penny of her money; I don't need it. Goodness knows, I have money enough of my own."

"Well, Cadbury Taylor said that you—oh, I'll warrant you, it is like all the rest of his statements, pure moonshine."

"Of whom are you speaking? And why did my wife protect that wretch, whom she knows has stolen her diamonds?" "You mean Von Schaumburg?" "Yes."

"I believe the princess does think he stole them, and the reason the princess protects him is to prevent you from challenging him, for she fears that he, being a military man, will kill you, although I fancy she would be well rid of you."

"But he took the diamonds—there was nobody else." "He did nothing of the kind. Read that!"

The prince, bewildered, took the sheet that she handed to him and read it, a wrinkle of bewilderment corrugating his brow. "I don't understand what this has to do with the case," he said at last. "It seems to be an order on the bank at Vienna for the diamonds, written by the princess herself."

"Of course it is. Well, if the diamonds had been delivered, that paper would now be in the possession of the bank instead of in your hands."

"Perhaps she mislaid this order and wrote another."

"Perhaps. Still it might be worth while finding out."

"Take this, then, to the princess and ask her."

"It is not likely she would remember. The better plan is to telegraph at once to the Vienna bank, asking them to send the diamonds to Meran by special messenger. No one there knows that the diamonds are missing."

"I will do so at once," cried the prince, with more animation in his voice than Miss Baxter had previously noticed. His highness was becoming interested in the game.

(To be continued next Thursday.) Summer Excursions to Salt Lake and Ogden.

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