

B. S. STODARD.

The world is full of mystery, Which no one understands...

There was a time when we were not, And there will be again...

We live as if we should not die, Blindly, but wisely, too...

If death to each man in his turn is coming soon or late...

Before my heart's fire pondering long, As I were a diviner...

New Year, if you are bringing Youth As you are bringing Age...

You can bring nothing but surprise And nothing will dismay...

I have beheld your kiss, New Year, Fully fifty times, and none That was so happy and so dear...

Good by, since you have gone, Old Year, And my past life, good-by...

TIMOTHY.

He came along, leaning heavily on a crutch. He managed to climb upon the platform of the car...

Tim looked around and saw standing the center of the room a small man of mild appearance...

"So, my boy, this is your home?" said the gentleman.

"Yes, sir," answered Tim. "Is this the little sister you told me about?"

"That's Bessie; she's my sister," said Tim, opening his eyes in amazement.

"You never did?" said the man, laughing.

"Not that I know of." "Do you remember an old woman that you gave up your seat to in the car this morning?"

"Yes, sir." "I am that old woman." "What?" exclaimed Tim, jumping up so quickly that he hurt his lame foot...

"I said I was that old woman," repeated the gentleman.

"Of course not, but I will explain. My name is Benson, and I am a detective. I was—"

"What are you Benson, the great detective?" asked the boy, interrupting Mr. Benson.

"I am Mr. Benson, the detective. I was shadowing a thief this morning. I dressed up like an old woman and got on the same car with you, and that's the way I came to make your acquaintance. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir, I think I do. Did you catch the thief?"

"He is in jail now," replied Mr. Benson smiling at the boy's question.

"I am glad of that," said Tim. "I am glad of something else," said the detective.

"What is that?" asked Bessie. "I am glad that I found your brother, Timothy, you are just the boy I have been looking for. The boy with a lame foot that will get up and give an old lady a seat though her garments are poor, is too much of a gentleman to live in a garret and eat dry bread, cold beans and apples for his supper."

"But you were a man," said Tim. "You did not know that, the principle is the same. Do you know what I want you to do?"

"No, sir." "I have a good home. I want you and Bessie to go home with me and my boy and girl. What do you say?"

The children were so astonished at first that they did not know what to say. But when Mr. Benson went away the children were with him. On the street they found the great detective's carriage, in which they were taken directly to his house.

Their days of suffering from poverty, cold and hunger were over. This was several years ago. Timothy has become a large man. Bessie is a beautiful woman; married, rich, charitable and respected. As for Mr. Benson he is yet in the detective business, but he has a partner, and that partner is Timothy Burns.

rection that had been taken by the tall, nervous man. The car went along, taking our little hero with it. A few blocks further and he got out. He went into a wood yard near by and busied himself all day splitting short boards and slabs in thin pieces. These he put up in small bunches, then they were ready for market, and sold all over the city as kindling wood. He could do this work, because he could sit on a block, and with a little hatchet he could earn something to support himself and his sister.

When this day's work was done he went home. He earned from twenty-five to thirty-five cents a day; owing to his lameness he had to pay ten cents a day car fare; but this would not last long; his wounded foot was fast healing. Before he went to the top of number 116 he paid five cents for a loaf of bread, three cents for some apples, and three cents for some cooked beans. This would make his little sister and himself a nice supper and breakfast, and then there would be some left for her dinner. He had a few pennies left. All but five he must put in a little bag to pay rent; the five was for car fare the next morning. In a few days he hoped to be able to walk to his work and return, then he could save ten cents more. He, in that way, could earn enough to get his sister a new frock which she needed very badly. Such were his thoughts as he mounted the rickety stairs to his home.

"O, good," said a pretty little bare-footed girl about ten years of age, as he opened the door. She jumped out of the chair and met him with a kiss before he had got half way across the room.

"What's good, Bess?" said he, returning the kiss.

"You have got home; how is your foot now?"

"Better." "Say, Tim, I did not eat all of my dinner."

"You ought to, Bess," replied the brother, placing his purchases upon a rickety stand, which was the best piece of furniture in the room. She undid the packages; got from a box a couple of plates and two tin cups. Supper was ready.

"Good supper to-night, Tim," said Bess a few moments after, looking up from her eating. "Why, who's that?" she exclaimed, pointing toward the door.

Tim looked around and saw standing the center of the room a small man of mild appearance. He had come in so quietly that neither of the children noticed him.

"So, my boy, this is your home?" said the gentleman.

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THE ENFIELD COURT ROBBERY.

CHAPTER I.

"When are you going to return Lady Dasant's visit, Aunt Frances?" asked my niece Amy one lovely morning in August. "It is quite a fortnight since she called."

"In a day or so," I replied, knowing the duty must be performed, particularly as Lady Dasant's had, since she called, sent us an invitation to a ball which was about to take place at Enfield Court. In my inmost heart I should have been pleased to have Lady Dasant's visit more than once.

"What do you think of our going to Enfield this afternoon, Amy?" I said presently. "I think it would be delightful," she replied. "Shall we walk or drive?"

"We drive, decidedly," I rejoined. The day was lovely, and I inwardly hoped that Lady Dasant might be enjoying the beauties herself, and that we might thus continue our drive, having done our duty by leaving cars.

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niece always; some one is sure to carry her off soon. "I am in no hurry for that time to come," I replied. "But, Lady Dasant, do you mind telling me one thing; who is Mr. Mauleverer?"

"Who is Mr. Mauleverer?" repeated Lady Dasant, with a shade of sarcasm in her voice. "Well, my dear Miss Courtney, I believe he is of very good family, very well off, and I know he is very charming, and moves in the very best society. You may be quite sure, had he not been very desirable in every way he would not have been our guest."

Some one else just then claimed Lady Dasant's attention, and she moved off, leaving me to digest at my leisure the satisfactory remarks she had made relative to Amy's admirer.

Very good family—very well off—very charming, and so forth. I was glad to hear it, and could scarcely avoid a feeling of exultation when, on our return home, Amy told me that she had asked her to be his wife, and she had accepted him.

"I was after my unwanted disapprobation, sleep seemed to have forsaken me; Amy's engagement was all I could think of until daylight began to struggle into existence; then I suppose I fell asleep, and might have slept for hours had not my old house-maid, Margaret, burst into my room without any ceremony, and awakened me with the startling tidings that Enfield had been on fire, and that the gold plate, also nearly all Lady Dasant's diamonds had been stolen!"

"It seemed altogether too dreadful to be true, but very shortly afterward Mr. Mauleverer himself appeared, and fully confirmed the tidings. He had distinguished himself greatly by his bravery in endeavoring to extinguish the flames, and in doing so had burned his right hand rather severely."

"I thought you might have an exaggerated account of it, so I came over at once," he observed, with a glance toward Amy. "What was discovered?" I asked. "What can have originated the fire? and above all, who can have taken the plate?"

"And the diamonds?" asked Amy. "That remains to be seen," replied Mr. Mauleverer. "On my way here I telegraphed to Scotland Yard, and no doubt a sharp detective will unravel the mystery."

Partly in order to make it more convenient for guests at a distance, partly because Lord Dasant himself objected to late hours, the hall had begun at the unfashionably early hour of nine o'clock; by half-past two it was over, and by three o'clock comparative silence had reigned over Enfield. The butler had judged it safe—never dreaming of danger—to lock up the supper-room, the shutters of all the windows being strongly barred as usual. My maid, and the key in his coat pocket, that she might retire to bed, while the rest of the servants gladly followed his example.

Neither bolts nor bars, however, defended the diamonds. Lady Dasant replaced them with her own hands in their cases, which without any anxiety whatever, she laid upon her toilet table. To-morrow they would, as usual, be deposited in the safe, where they were ordinarily kept. She dismissed her maid, and she went to her room; one of her daughters undressed the eldest from her throat, and shortly afterward—as it came out in evidence—Miss Dasant left her mother's room, crossed the corridor, and was just about to enter her own room, when in the darkness some one brushed past her. The circumstance did not alarm her; it was no doubt one of the servants, so she thought no more of it.

Only a dressing-room adjoined her bedroom, and her account of the affair was that a few minutes after she had got in bed she distinctly heard the handle of her dressing-room door turn, and she fancied she heard a very quiet step in the dressing-room, which, in a sleepy way, she fancied was her maid.

Lord Dasant heard nothing—had nothing to tell; he wished he had. If any one had brushed past him in the corridor, or he had heard anything in the dressing-room, there would have been neither robbery nor fire. As it was, the stealthy footsteps must have approached the dressing table, and with a deliberation almost incredible, some one must have opened the cases and abstracted the contents. The circlet, the bracelets, and a pair of magnificent earrings—all were gone. The gold plate had also been cleverly carried off; only a few minor articles being spared.

At first all the energies of the household were directed toward subduing the fire. It evidently had its origin near the supper-room, which chanced to be directly below Lady Dasant's rooms. At all events, it was owing to her being awakened by a strong smell of fire, that the alarm was given in time to save not only the house, but some of the inmates who might otherwise have perished in the flames. And from this late it appeared Mr. Mauleverer had a narrow escape. He had behaved "splendidly," so the Dasant's said; and as my nephew-elect I was proud to hear it.

Upon further investigation, it was found that while the robbery at Enfield Court had been most carefully planned and premeditated, the fire had evidently been an accidental part of the thieves' programme, as a hastily done-up bundle, containing some valuable articles, was discovered just outside the supper-room window, as if dropped in a hasty exit. Happily, the fire had been subdued in time to save the greater portion of the house, but the damage done to the dressing-room, and the loss caused by the robbery, was very considerable.

In due time two detectives came down from London, and the excitement continued unabated in the neighborhood while they remained, but nothing transpired. They maintained an amount of stolid reticence which to the curious was most provoking, and finally they departed without having apparently done anything toward solving the mystery, far less securing the thieves.

Gradually things seemed to settle down, and the robbery at Enfield was replaced in my mind by my entire absorption in Amy's engagement, to which I had given a qualified consent, on the condition that Mr. Mauleverer's family were satisfied with the connection, and that pecuniary matters were properly adjusted. Now that he had actually declared himself, I was anxious to ask questions and ascertain everything I possibly could as to the antecedents of the man who was to be my darling's husband.

He was well connected. His mother was dead, but his father was alive, and lived in great seclusion at his own property, which was situated in Yorkshire. He was reputed to be rich, but on this point I could gain no definite information. Still, remembering Lady Dasant's "very well off," I was not much troubled on the score of money matters. I had felt it incumbent upon me to invite him to spend a few days with us before he left Yorkshire, and it seemed natural that he should come to us. I told him frankly that Amy had very little money of her own—something less than two thousand pounds; but at my death I intended to leave him everything, which I felt sure he would approve of being tied up and strictly settled upon herself.

I thought his expression changed a little when I mentioned this, and still more so when I casually asked him in a friendly way if he always meant to be an idle man, for he had left the army, it appeared, and I was anxious, for Amy's sake, to see some symptom of his wishing to get an appointment or occupation of some kind.

Meanwhile, Amy seemed satisfied, but my doubts—born of my extreme affection for her—began to arise and refused to be silenced. Mr. Mauleverer had written to his father announcing his engagement, but as yet neither line nor message from the old gentleman had reached us. It was not treating Amy properly, although Amy's entreaties to me were so strong, and I was anxious to see that Alfred said everything would be all right; I sent her a line, and I was fully resolved to see matters either ended or placed on a satisfactory footing before much longer time elapsed.

In the meantime Mr. Mauleverer received one morning a telegram, which he informed contained the news of the illness of an old friend of his in London. He must start immediately if he wished to see him alive. If I did not mind he would leave his heavy luggage behind him and only take a small portmanteau. Unless something very special hap-

pened to detain him he would be with us again in a couple of days. His adieux were really short, but impressive. He seemed really sorry to leave Amy, who was, however, enabled to bid him a cheerful goodbye on the strength of his speed of return.

On the morning of the second day after he had taken his departure, Amy was evidently expecting a letter from him—not unreasonably, as I thought, as it was natural she should wish to hear that he had reached his destination. Perhaps that was the cause of my own almost nervous feelings as post-time approached. I could settle down to nothing.

"Amy, darling," I said presently, "suppose you take the garden scissors and snip these geraniums for me; they want it badly."

So Amy stepped out on to the little lawn with its still brightly filled parterres, and I watched her from the drawing-room window with feelings of mingled love, anxiety and apprehension, for do what I might I could not get over the sense of some impending calamity—something sorrowful for her. Soon afterward she joined me, radiant with her letter, the first she had ever received from him; a very ardent, gentlemanly epistle. I was obliged to suppose I fell asleep, and might have slept for hours had not my old house-maid, Margaret, burst into my room without any ceremony, and awakened me with the startling tidings that Enfield had been on fire, and that the gold plate, also nearly all Lady Dasant's diamonds had been stolen!"

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