TO LET.

BY JOSEPHINE POLLARD.

The placard hung beside the door,
Inscribed in words of jet
That might be seen ten feet or more—
"The basement floor to let."

For days and days it swung about,
The winds of March were high,
And many stopped to spell it out,
And many passed it by.

The house, ancient dwelling, wore
A coat of freshest paint;
The owner had a parlor door,
And she was not a saint.

A woman came along the street,
And as the sign she spelled,
She smiled upon the babe, so sweet,
Within her arms she held.

Then rang the bell, inquired the rent,
When one who held the door
Replied, with looks of coldness bent
Upon the babe she bore:

"How many children do you own?"
The woman answered "two;"
"That's two too many," said the crone,
"We cannot let to you!"

The door was closed against appeal,
The woman turned and smiled
Through tears she sought not to conceal,
Upon her sleeping child.

"My little one! my precious one!"
She murmured with a kiss;
"Were I alone, I still would shun
So cold a house as this!

"As dark and doleful as a tomb,
For all it looks so fair
Outside; since there's not any room
For little children there!"

Beside the dark and stately door
The sign is swinging yet,
And I know why the basement floor
So long remains To Let.

MISS GRACE'S ILLUSION.

Miss Grace Archoll, the youngest daughter of a wealthy city merchant residing at South Kensington, received on her sixteenth birthday a present of a handsome diamond necklace from her godfather. It was an extravagant gift for a young girl, but the donor was rich and eccentric. Miss Grace was naturally highly delighted with her first really good piece of jewelry, and wore it with conscious pride at a little birthday party the same evening. Her parents were away on the continent, or probably they might have objected to this proceeding. In their absence, however, Miss Grace scoffed at the wisdom of her elder sisters who represented, not without a spice of envy, that such ostentation was in bad taste. She received many congratulations on her good fortune from her young friends, who regarded the diamonds with a sort of woe-stricken admiration. On retiring to rest, Miss Grace persisted in carrying the necklace to her room, perversely declining to deposit it in the strong-room, where the plate was kept, being, apparently, rather unduly elated at the sensation it had caused.

In the middle of the night the household was aroused by a loud shriek, and Miss Grace was found on the landing outside her door in a very scared and hysterical state. It was some time before her sisters and the servants could ascertain from her what was the matter; but at length they elicited that she had been awakened by some one moving about her room, and had distinctly heard and seen a man go up to her dressing-table and subsequently disappear through the door. According to her account she had rushed out of bed, too frightened to utter a sound, and had seen the man making his way down the stairs. She had not dared to follow him, but had, with some difficulty, raised the alarm.

This recital naturally caused the greatest excitement. The butler and footman, who slept in the basement, had not yet appeared on the scene, and the terrified women, for there was no male member of the family in the house, began to scream and make a commotion. Somebody threw up a window which opened on the street and shouted for the police. One of the elder girls, more courageous than the rest, went downstairs to put the men servants on the alert. There was a general move toward Miss Grace's room, where it was ascertained that not only the diamond necklace, but a ring and a few smaller articles of jewelry had vanished.

In the midst of the lamentations and paroxysms which ensued the door bell was heard to ring, and several persons mounted the stairs headed by the butler. Among others was a young surgeon named Lake, who resided a few doors off. A constable was also of the party, which was mainly composed of gentlemen who were returning home from a ball in the neighborhood. The cause of the alarm having been explained, a careful search was made for the burglar, but no trace of him was found. A window in one of the landings was discovered to be open, and it was possible he had escaped by it, though the descent must have been perilous. This possibility, however, became a certainty when it was ascertained that all the other windows and doors in the house were securely fastened, and that the thief was clearly no longer upon the premises.

While the search was proceeding, Dr. Lake was requested to step up stairs to Miss Grace's room, where one of the servants had fainted from terror and could not be brought to. The doctor was a young practitioner who was said to be extremely clever at his profession, but he was allowed few opportunities of giving evidence of his ability. In other words, he had no patients though he had been in practice a year or two, and was undergoing that painful period of probation which falls to the lot of most medical men. He had rather a striking face, with keen eyes and a resolute chin, and was decidedly good-looking.

He soon disposed of his patient, whom he restored to consciousness by the simple and summary method of dousing her head with cold water. He then turned to Miss Grace, who was now quiet and composed, and looked very pretty in her fair hair down her back, her flushed cheeks and her smart dressing-gown, which showed off her girlish figure to advantage. He knew the family rather intimately, in a neighborly way, and had, in fact, spent the evening there an hour or two previously, so he accosted her without ceremony, and proceeded to feel her pulse, keeping his eyes fixed upon her.

"You seem to have recovered your fright, Miss Grace," he said, in a matter-of-fact tone.

"Yes, thank you," she replied, with evident nervousness.

"Where did you put the necklace before you went to bed?" he inquired, abruptly.

"I put it—I mean I left it—on the dressing-table with the other things," replied Miss Grace, flushing more becomingly than ever.

Dr. Lake left her side, and strode over to the fire-place, where he stood chatting on the hearth-rug, leaning against the mantel-shelf. A few minutes later the butler came up to report the result of the search, which, as before stated, was futile. A comparative sense of security being now restored, the gentlemen who had responded to the cries for held took their departure, Dr. Lake among them. The constable lingered behind a minute or two to partake of the refreshment which the butler offered him after his arduous labors. When he left the house he found the doctor smoking a cigarette at the gate, apparently waiting for him.

"Have you searched the garden?" inquired Dr. Lake, rather impatiently.

"Yes, sir," replied the constable; "me and the butler went round."

"Did you find any footsteps beneath the window through which the man escaped? I suppose you didn't think to look," he added sharply, seeing the constable hesitated.

"Well, sir, it wouldn't be much good, not in the dark," said the constable, rather sulkily. "I am coming round first thing in the morning."

"You have your lantern. Surely the chance of obtaining an important clew ought not to be neglected. It might rain before the morning. Let us make a careful search at once," said Dr. Lake in an authoritative tone, leading the way to the rear of the house.

The constable followed with an aggrieved air, evidently resenting this amateur interference, and his manner was decidedly insolent as he pointed out that the gravel path beneath the window in question showed no footprints. Dr. Lake, however, not the least disconcerted, fell back a step or two and looked up at the house.

"After all, it is hardly likely that the fellow would have dropped from that height on to a hard gravel path," he said, meditatively. "He must have jumped sideways on to that bed yonder. Just bring your lantern here a minute."

This surmise turned out to be correct, some shrubs were found to be trampled down, and there was a deep impression of footmarks, showing where the man had jumped, with less distinct indication of his subsequent progress. He appeared to have fallen into the midst of the flowerbed, and then to have run across the lawn, though on the grass all traces of him were lost, owing to the dryness of the ground.

"That's him clear enough, sir," remarked the policeman, more respectfully.

"Well, you must point this out to the inspector in the morning," said Dr. Lake; "meanwhile, we had better cover up the marks, to prevent their being obliterated by the rain or a predatory cat."

"There seems to be a box over there by the out-house," said the policeman, after turning the light of his lantern in various directions.

"The very thing. It will cover the marks and keep them intact till the morning," said Dr. Lake stepping across and fetching a shallow deal box which the constable referred to.

This was carefully placed over the footprints and was found to protect them completely. Dr. Lake bade the constable "Good-night!" and hurried home to bed, while the officer, with a virtuous feeling of having thoroughly done his duty, returned to his beat.

The next morning an inspector called, and inquired into the circumstances of the robbery. What seemed to strike him as extraordinary was that the thief should have gone straight to Miss Grace's room and stolen a jewel which she had only possessed a few hours. He was strongly inclined to suspect some of the servants, for they were the only persons who would be likely to know of the young lady's new treasure, and that she had it in her room that night. He cross questioned all of them, however, without eliciting anything to justify his suspicions, and, on the other hand, there were the footprints in the garden, which clearly pointed to the robbery having been committed by some person from outside. Miss Grace could throw very little light on the mystery, having only seen the dim outline of the man, and being unable to say whether he was tall or short.

On hearing of the occurrence Mr. and Mrs. Archoll immediately returned home, feeling nervous about remaining away after what had taken place. Inspector Davis called upon Mr. Archoll an hearing he had come back, and from his business-like manner was evidently on experienced officer.

"Have you any clew?" was naturally Mr. Archoll's first inquiry.

"Well, this is an extraordinary case, sir," said Inspector Davis, evasively. "It rather beats my experience. Do you know a Dr. Lake, sir."

"Yes; there is a young surgeon of that name living a few doors off, replied Mr. Archoll, with some surprise.

"I think I should like you to call upon him with me, sir," said the inspector, rather mysteriously. "I want to ask him a question or two."

"Certainly," said Mr. Archoll, rising from his seat. "Let me see; didn't he come in that night when the alarm was raised?"

"Yes, sir, I believe he did," said the inspector dryly.

Young Dr. Lake happened to be at home, and received them in a small room, where he was sitting in a ragged shooting-coat and slippers, enjoying an evening pipe.

"How do you do, Mr. Archoll?" he said, cordially. I did not know you were back."

"I only arrived an hour or two ago," replied Mr. Archoll, as they shook hands. "This is Inspector Davis, who wishes to ask you a question or two with reference to that affair at my house the other night. By-the-by, I have to thank you for coming to the rescue."

"Don't mention it," said Dr. Lake, turning rather curiously toward the detective.

"You were soon up and dressed, sir," remarked Inspector Davis, seating himself stiffly on the edge of a chair in obedience to a gesture from the doctor. "The butler tells me you came round immediately."

"Yes. I had not been to bed," returned Dr. Lake. "After returning from spending the evening at Mr. Archoll's house, I sat up smoking and reading."

"You no doubt noticed the young lady's necklace," said the inspector, glancing at Mr. Archoll.

"Particularly, and admired it very much," replied Dr. Lake, looking him straight in the face.

Inspector Davis appeared a trifle disconcerted by the directness of the doctor's answer, and assumed a more deferential tone.

"Have you any objection, sir, to let me see one of your boots?" he inquired, glancing at the doctor's slippered feet.

"You will find the pair, I have just taken off in the corner there," said Dr. Lake, with rather an uneasy laugh.

The inspector had pounced upon them almost before the words were uttered, at the same time producing from his pocket a piece of paper on which was traced the outline of a foot. The doctor's boot fitted the diagram exactly.

"What does this mean?" inquired Mr. Archoll as the inspector looked up with a complacent expression.

"This is a diagram of the footprints made by the person who stole your daughter's necklace when he sprang from the staircase window," explained the detective, looking sharply at Dr. Lake.

"I wish to speak to you alone a minute, Mr. Archoll," said the latter, changing color. "Will you be good enough to step into the next room a minute, inspector?"

Mr. Davis looked at Mr. Archoll doubtfully, but as the latter gave him no encouragement to remain, he followed the doctor rather reluctantly into the adjoining apartment.

"Those infernal footprints have upset my plans, said Dr. Lake confidentially, as he returned and proceeded to unlock a drawer in his desk. "Here is the necklace and the rest of the things. You will find them all there," he added, laying a small parcel on the table at Mr. Archoll's elbow.

"Good God! what is the meaning of this, Lake?" exclaimed Mr. Archoll, starting violently.

"It is easily explained. While the search was going on at your house the other night, I was sent for to attend a servant who had fainted in Miss Grace's room. I was at once struck by your daughter's demeanor. Her pulse was singularly calm considering her recent fright. She gave me the impression of acting a part, and I could not refrain from asking her rather abruptly where she had placed the missing jewelry. Being taken aback, her eyes involuntarily turned toward the fire-place before she answered me, and, following her glance, I perceived that the ornamental shavings in the empty grate had been slightly disarranged. I immediately guessed that the things were hidden there."

"By—by the thief?" suggested Mr. Archoll, turning pale.

"No. By Miss Grace," rejoined Dr. Lake, quietly. "I stepped across the fireplace, and, when no one was looking, I plunged my hand into the grate and grasped a parcel, which I put in my pocket. Nobody saw me except Miss Grace."

"Grace saw you?" exclaimed Mr. Archoll.

"Yes. She was watching me apprehensively, divining, I suppose, that I had discovered her secret. But her mouth was closed, and she could say nothing."

"Then you mean to insinuate that my daughter deliberately raised a false alarm?" said Mr. Archoll, sternly.

"Undoubtedly. But I unfortunately made the discovery too late," resumed the doctor. "A hue and cry had been raised; Miss Grace had given a detailed version of her story before half a dozen persons, including the servants, and the details of the supposed robbery were bound to get abroad. I took the jewels to relieve the young lady from embarrassment in the future, and to endeavor to avoid the unpleasant gossip which would arise if the truth of the matter became known. The best way of doing this seemed to be to give some color to the robbery, and to let the neighbors think it had actually taken place. The jewels I intended to restore to you—as I have now done—in order that you may some day or other solemnly go through the farce of replacing them. Nobody will then be the wiser and Miss Grace will be spared an unpleasant scandal."

"Then the footmarks the inspector referred to——"

"Were mine, of course," interposed Dr. Lake, with a laugh. "No thief having jumped from the window, there naturally were no footmarks, a circumstance which would at once have put the police on the right track, and led to unpleasant disclosures. I therefore slipped round unobserved to the garden and made the marks to which I subsequently drew the constable's attention. Unfortunately I rather overreached myself, and the inspector, being evidently a sharp fellow, as you see, suspected me."

"Your story is most extraordinary!" exclaimed Mr. Archoll, greatly agitated. "I really cannot—I must decline to believe my daughter acted as you say, unless she tells me so with her own lips."

"By all means tax her with my statement," returned Dr. Lake. "Go to her with the things in your hand, and I have no doubt she will confirm what I have told you."

"I will certainly see her instantly," said Mr. Archoll, taking up the parcel and springing to his feet.

He left the house hurriedly, while Dr. Lake, after seeing him out, strolled into the adjoining room and chatted with Inspector Davis on different matters. After a short absence, Mr. Archoll returned, looking very white and agitated.

"Inspector Davis," he said, immediately entering the room, "Dr. Lake has given me excellent reasons why I should not proceed further in this matter. I would prefer to let it drop. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," said the inspector, looking deeply disappointed, and looked meaningly in the direction of the doctor.

"Please understand that your suspicions concerning Dr. Lake are entirely groundless," added Mr. Archoll, divining what was passing in the other's mind, "and oblige me by saying as little as possible about the affair to any one. Here is something for you. Good evening."

Whatever the "something" was, it entirely reconciled Inspector Davis to this unexpected turn of events, for he took his departure with a profusion of thanks and a polite bow to both gentlemen. When they were alone, Mr. Archoll said:

"You were quite right, Lake. The foolish girl has confessed. It was an elaborate piece of deceit. What possessed her to do such a thing I cannot imagine," he added, looking dejected and humiliated.

"This is no occasion to distress yourself, Mr. Archoll," said Dr. Lake, earnestly; "Miss Grace's escapade has been frequently perpetrated by young girls of her age in various forms. It does not necessarily imply a bad or deceitful disposition, but arises from a sort of hysteria—a morbid craving for unwholesome excitement, and a desire for an undue amount of sympathy. She was evidently in a high state of exultation on that evening, and could not resist the temptation of making herself the center of a fresh excitement. Take my advice and keep this denouement a secret, even from your other daughters.

"I am very much indebted to you for your thoughtfulness," said Mr. Archoll, grasping the young man's hand. "As to the necklace, I will, perhaps, restore it to her a year or two hence, under cover of the subterfuge you suggest; but she deserves to lose it, though I am sure she is heartily ashamed of what she has done and will never be so foolish again."

Seven Wonders of Corea.

"The seven wonders of Corea are as follows," says an English traveler: "The first is a certain hot mineral spring near a place called Kin-shintao, the healing properties of which are believed to be miraculous. Its virtues are in constant vigor, and so great are they that they have never failed in efficacy within the memory of man. No matter what disease may afflict the patient, a dip in these healing waters will prove as sure a cure as a bath in Jordan did to leprous Naamar. The second wonder is also connected with water. There are two springs situated at a considerable distance from each other—in fact, there is almost the breadth of the entire peninsula between them. These have two peculiarities—while one is full, the other is empty; and the Coreans seem to believe that somewhere deep in the bowels of the earth there is a mysterious tide, which ebbs and flows with marvelous rapidity at stated intervals of time, filling one spring while it empties the other. But the strangest part of the phenomenon is that the water is so strongly sweet that whatever is cooked in it, no matter how bad it may be of itself, immediately acquires a most delicious taste. The third is called Cold Wind Cavern. There is a cave somewhere in the mountains, in which a mysterious wind blows perpetually—a wind so cold as to pierce to the very bones, and so strong that the most powerful man is unable to stand up against it. The fourth wonder is the ineradicable forest. There is a large grove of pine trees that sprout again directly they are cut down. It matters not what injury is done to the root—nothing will avail to destroy it, but up it will sprout again in time, like a phœnix from its own ashes. The fifth wonder is still more wonderful still. This is a floating stone; and a temple has been reared in its honor, called the Fou Shih Miao. In front of the temple stands, or appears to stand, the extraordinary stone. It is of great bulk, and a sort of irregular cube in shape. To all appearance it is resting on the ground, and perfectly free from all support on any side. But if two men, standing at opposite ends of it, hold each the opposite ends of a thread, they will find themselves able to pass the thread under the stone without encountering any obstacle. In other words, the stone is actually hovering a little way above the earth. The sixth wonder also consists of a stone, but a stone of a more practically useful nature. It is called the warm rock, and forms the summit of a hill upon which there is a pavilion, or kiosque, for the benefit of travelers. Here they may rest and pass the night. However cold the weather may be, there is no stove, nor any need for one; the stone on which the resting-room stands diffuses its wonderful and benign warmth through every room in it, and the poorest may bask in its comfort. The seventh wonder is a drop of the sweat of Buddha. Around the large temple where it is enshrined, for thirty paces square, not a blade of grass will grow; there are no trees, no flowers; the very birds and animals desert it, instinctively recoiling from profaning with their footfall a plot of ground so holy."

The Revised Bible.

The Independent is strongly in favor of using the revised version of the Bible in the church, and puts the matter in this way: "The proper question should be whether a minister has any right to use any other than the revised version of the New Testament. We hold that he has not. We hold that it is wrong to use the common version, when the revised version can be had for fifteen cents. It is a question simply of loyalty and reverence for God's inspired Word. Here are two accessible versions, one made from a comparatively imperfect text by the inexact scholarship of over two centuries ago; the other made from a carefully studied text, by the much nicer scholarship of to-day, and by a more imposing body of scholars. Which version best represents the inspired original is not a question in dispute. It is agreed, by all whose opinion is worth considering, that, barring some points of mere English style, the new version is a very great advance on the old. That being the case, one who uses in worship the old does, to the extent of the differences between the two, disguise and conceal the Bible from his congregation. He reads what is not God's Word when he can read what is His Word. He reads in many passages wrong sense or nonsense, in place of good sense. He does this because he gives King James' revisers the reverence which belongs only to the Holy Spirit."

PHOTOGRAPHY.

W H Towne, of the San Francisco Gallery, corner of Morrison and First streets, Portland, has excellent facilities for producing good photographic work. His gallery is large and conveniently arranged, and as far as beauty is concerned, is one of the handsomest on the Pacific coast. The work done at Mr. Towne's is unexcelled anywhere, for he keeps abreast of the times in all advances of the art. One of Mr. Towne's great specialties is children's pictures, and he has taken many excellent ones of them. A visit to Portland should not be made without a call at the San Francisco Gallery, where our readers will always be sure of a cordial reception, even if they only desire to look at Mr. Towne's works of art instead of sitting for a photo.

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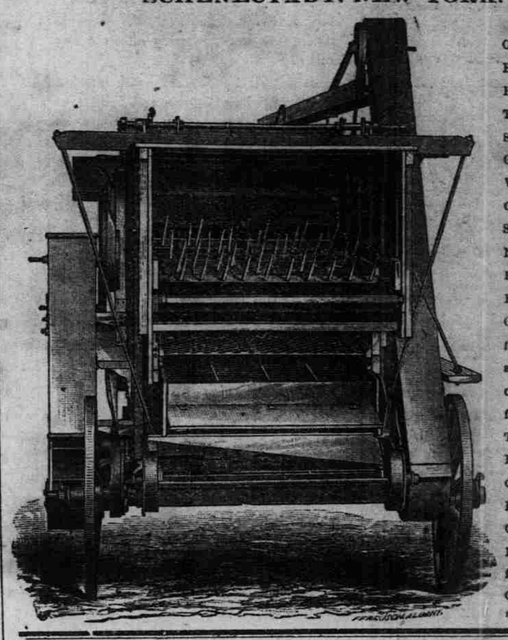

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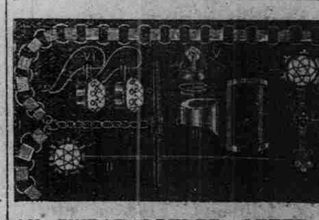

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