

## The Case of Jennie Brice

Continued from page 3

hump beneath. I showed Mr. Holcombe the splasher dotted with ink as usual.

"I'll take it off and soak it in milk," I said. "It's his fountain pen. When the ink doesn't run he shakes it, and"—

"Where's the clock?" said Mr. Holcombe, stopping in front of the mantel, with his notebook in his hand.

"The clock?"

I turned and looked. My onyx clock is gone from the mantel shelf.

Perhaps it seems strange, but from the moment I missed that clock my rage at Mr. Ladley increased to a fury. It was all I had left of my former gentility. When times were hard and I got behind with the rent, as happened now and then, more than once I'd been tempted to sell the clock or pawn it. But I had never done it. Its ticking had kept me company on many a lonely night, and its elegance had helped me to keep my pride and to retain the respect of my neighbors. For in the flood district onyx clocks are not plentiful. Mrs. Bryan, the saloon-keeper's wife, had one, and I had another—that is, I had had.

I stood staring at the mark in the dust of the mantel shelf, which Mr. Holcombe was measuring with a pocket tape measure.

"You are sure you didn't take it away yourself, Mrs. Pitman?" he asked.

"Sure? Why, I could hardly lift it," I said.

He was looking carefully at the oblong of dust where the clock had stood. "The key is gone, too," he said, busily making entries in his notebook. "What was the maker's name?"

"Why, I don't think I ever noticed!"

He turned to me angrily. "Why didn't you notice?" he snapped. "Good God, woman, do you only use your eyes to cry with? How can you wind a clock time after time and not know the maker's name? It proves my contention—the average witness is totally unreliable."

"Not at all," I snapped. "I am ordinarily both accurate and observing."

"Indeed!" he said, putting his hands behind him. "Then perhaps you can tell me the color of the pencil I have been writing with."

"Certainly. Red." Most pencils are red, and I thought this was safe.

But he held his right hand out with a flourish. "I've been writing with a fountain pen," he said in deep disgust and turned his back on me.

But the next moment he had run to the washstand and pulled it out from the wall. Behind it, where it had fallen, lay a towel covered with stains as if some one had wiped bloody hands on it. He held it up, his face working with excitement. I could only cover my eyes.

"This looks better," he said and began making a quick search of the room, running from one piece of furniture to another, pulling out bureau drawers, drawing the bed out from the wall and crawling along the baseboard with a lighted match in his hand. He gave a shout of triumph finally and reappeared from behind the bed with the broken end of my knife in his hand.

"Very clumsy," he said; "very clumsy. Peter, the dog, could have done better."

I had been examining the wall paper about the washstand. Among the ink spots were one or two reddish ones that made me shiver. And seeing a scrap of note paper stuck between the base board and the wall I dug it out with a hairpin and threw it into the grate, to be burned later. It was by the merest chance there was no fire there. The next moment Mr. Holcombe was on his knees by the fireplace reaching for the scrap.

"Never do that under such circumstances," he snapped, fishing among the ashes. "You might throw away valuable— Hello, Howell!"

I turned and saw a young man in the doorway, smiling, his hat in his hand. Even at that first glance I liked Mr. Howell, and later, when every one was against him and many curious things were developing, I stood by him through everything and even helped him to the thing he wanted more than anything else in the world. But that, of course, was later.

"What's the trouble, Holcombe?" he asked. "Hitting the trail again?"

"A very curious thing that I just happened on," said Mr. Holcombe. "Mrs. Pitman, this is Mr. Howell, of whom I spoke. Sit down, Howell, and let me read you something."

With the crumpled paper still unopened in his hand, Mr. Holcombe took his notebook and read aloud what he had written. I have it before me now:

"Dog meat, \$2.40 per hire—that's not it. Here. Yesterday, Sunday, March 4, Mrs. Pitman, landlady at 42 Union street, heard two of her boarders quarreling, a man and his wife. Man's name, Phillip Ladley. Wife's name, Jennie Ladley, known as Jennie Brice at the Liberty Stock company, where she has been playing small parts."

Mr. Howell nodded. "I've heard of her," he said. "Not much of an actress, I believe."

"The husband was also an actor, out of work, and employing his leisure time in writing a play."

"Everybody's doing it," said Mr. Howell idly.

"The Shuberts were to star him in this," I put in. "He said that the climax at the end of the second act"—

Mr. Holcombe shut his notebook with a snap. "After we have finished gossiping," he said, "I'll go on."

"Employing his leisure time in writing a play," quoted Mr. Howell.

"Exactly. The husband and wife were not on good terms. They quarreled frequently. On Sunday they fought all day, and Mrs. Ladley told Mrs. Pitman she was married to a fiend. At 4 o'clock Sunday afternoon Phillip Ladley went out, returning about 5. Mrs. Pitman carried their supper to them at 6, and both ate heartily. She did not see Mrs. Ladley at the time, but heard her in the next room. They were apparently reconciled. Mrs. Pitman reports Mr. Ladley in high good humor. If the quarrel recommenced during the night the other boarder, named Reynolds, in the next room heard nothing. Mrs. Pitman was up and down until 1 o'clock, when she dozed off. She heard no unusual sound.

"At approximately 2 o'clock in the

To be continued.

## School News

Contributed

One week ago last night at the home of F. B. Guthrie, the Faculty and Senior class of the High School, were entertained with games and other amusements. A mock graduation exercise was held, the Faculty being the graduating class instead of the real 1915 class. Much was learned of interest to all in the class history, by Mr. Ford, while Mr. Guthrie, in the Class Poem, gave evidence that the future generations might see his name in the English Literature. The Valedictory, given by Miss Dillon, gave us the impression that we would most assuredly see her in the first rank of women orators in the near future. On account of the absence of Miss Jones, who was unable to be present, we were not able to learn of the future of the class thru the prophecy, but we all expressed confidence in them and were sure they would make their mark. After a delightful luncheon, at a late hour, everyone left for their several homes, the class of 1915 to study (?), the Faculty to slumber.

## I. O. O. F. Attention

I. O. O. F. will hold a joint meeting at Gresham, the evening of April 26th, to celebrate the 96th anniversary of the founding of the order.

Lodges of Estacada, Sandy, Boring, Rockwood and Gresham will take part in the entertainment.

Both Odd Fellows and Rebekas are requested to make arrangements with the transportation committee, of which E. B. Byers is in charge here.

W. E. Morand of Boring is chairman of the general committee and Ray Todd of Gresham, secretary. Addresses will be delivered by a number of the grand officers. Over 500 members and friends are expected to be present.

Signed E. B. Byers.

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