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A DONATION

By OLIVER LARNED

"You think you would make a good burglar, do you—never get caught and all that? I'd like to see you try it. A silk stocking like you would soon be taken. You wouldn't have the coolness to save yourself."

"I wouldn't mind trying it just once."

"I'll give you an inducement. I'll bet you a hundred you won't go into the house of some eminently respectable family—whom you don't know, mind you—and rob them of some article."

"That's just the kind of a job I'd like to try. The danger in it would make it fearfully interesting."

"And if you got caught it would give you an excellent opportunity to show your presence of mind."

"So it would. I think I'll go you."

"Here's my check. We'll put the stakes in Hawkins' hands."

This dialogue occurred between Dick Thurston and Ned Chamberlin at a club, and the next night Chamberlin in evening dress sallied forth to burglarize a gentleman's dwelling. He walked slowly up an aristocratic avenue, and, selecting a house midway between two street lamps and standing well back in shadow, he entered the yard and, taking the parts of a burglar's jimmy from his side pocket, began to screw them together in order to secure the length of handle required for leverage. Then, mounting a side porch, he pried up a window and entered a room.

He stood listening for awhile, but, hearing no sound, began to explore. A faint light from without barely enabled him to move without stumbling against anything, and he got his hand on a large uncovered table. Suspecting he was in a drawing room, he was hunting for the sideboard, when there was a sudden burst of light. A young lady stood at the door of the room, with her finger on an electric button. She appeared astonished, not at finding some one in the room, but some one in evening costume.

Chamberlin braced himself for the encounter. It was his right, under the provisions of the bet, to tell any story he pleased, and he decided to tell the true one.

"I beg pardon for the trespass," he said, "but I am sure—that is, if you are a woman of the world—I shall have your sympathy after you have heard the reason for my being here. Last night at the — club I bet a friend a hundred dollars that I would burglarize a dwelling, bringing him some stolen article to prove the robbery. If you will permit me to take away a spoon I will be happy to donate my winnings to any charity you may suggest."

The girl by this time had regained her composure, for Chamberlin spoke softly and did not seem one to be afraid of. Nevertheless she considered him to be one of those villains who dress themselves like gentlemen for the purpose of aiding them to hood-wink whoever they may meet. She pretended to believe his story and, going to a sideboard, opened a drawer and took out a silver spoon with the family

initial letter on it. This she tossed on the dining table and stood waiting for him to withdraw. He saw by the pallor on her face and other signs that she was badly frightened, and he felt a pang at having caused her annoyance. So instead of going at once he stopped to reassure her. Taking a card from his pocket and a pencil, he asked her to what institution he should send a donation. She was not especially interested in any, and for a moment could not think of any. While she was trying to do so an elderly gentleman, with a gray mustache, stepped into the room.

The girl turned paler still, if that were possible, fearing that the story would not go down with the new comer and there would be trouble.

"Uncle," she said, "this gentleman has made a bet that he would rob this house."

"Indeed!" said the uncle quietly.

"Yes, at the — club. He is to win \$100 and give it to any charity I may suggest."

"A hundred dollars! That's no price for a gentleman burglar to pay for the privilege of robbing a house. He might have got away with \$5,000 or \$6,000 worth of property. Couldn't you make it \$1,000, sir?"

Chamberlin was very rich, but rich men don't like to part with their money any better than poor men. He said he might double the amount of his winnings. The gentleman stepped to a telephone in the hall and called for a police station.

Chamberlin was cornered. He called out that he would make his donation \$1,000.

"I have called the police," said the gentleman; "it will now cost \$2,000."

"Done!" cried Chamberlin, fearing that before he could assent the price of his experiment would go up another thousand.

"All right," remarked the gentleman. "Never mind the police. Have you a blank check in your pocket, sir? If so please make the amount payable to St. Luke's hospital."

Chamberlin, who carried a check book always with him, wrote a check for \$2,000 and handed it to the gentleman, who took it and said:

"Gwendolin, this is Mr Chamberlin. I met him once at his club, but he has forgotten me. He can afford to pay for any freak in which he may choose to indulge."

"Goodness gracious!" from Gwen.

Why Lincoln Helped a Bug.

President Lincoln was walking with a friend about Washington and turned back for some distance to assist a beetle that had got on its back and lay on the walk, legs sprawling in air, vainly trying to turn itself over. The friend expressed surprise that the president, burdened with the cares of a warring nation, should find time to spare in assisting a bug.

"Well," said Lincoln, with that homely sincerity that touched the hearts of millions of his countrymen, "do you know that if I had left that bug struggling there on his back I wouldn't have felt just right. I wanted to put him on his feet and give him an equal chance with all the other bugs of his class."—Kansas City Star.

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