

# A Successful Shadow; Or, A Detective's Successful Quest

Old Sleuth



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A Detective's Successful Quest

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**A SUCCESSFUL SHADOW;**  
**OR,**  
**A Detective's Successful Quest.**

**BY OLD SLEUTH,**

*Author of All the Famous Old Sleuth Stories.*

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## PROLOGUE.

Those of our readers who read our narrative "Two Wonderful Detectives," will more especially enjoy the further adventures of Jack Alvarez. To those who did not read that narrative we will state that this remarkable detective had just solved a great mystery—one of the most remarkable detective feats ever accomplished. He had found that there had been a true heir to a great fortune which had been deposited in a most mysterious manner with a banker, but, alas! when his "shadow" appeared successful in one direction, he encountered a little tombstone in an out-of-the-way graveyard, which appeared to settle beyond all dispute that the heiress had died when a child, and the great fortune which she would have inherited was diverted in another direction. Indeed through a singular combination of circumstances, the detective himself became heir to a portion of the great estate. He did not feel disposed, however, to accept the benefice, and made up his mind that there were actual heirs living who were through kinship entitled to the fortune. He had started out on a former "shadow" without a clue, and in his resolve to find the collateral heirs he also started out minus a single clue, but he was a man, as our readers know, to discover clues, and in a most remarkable manner he succeeded through a series of thrilling adventures in finding a legitimate heir to an immense estate.



## CHAPTER I.

THE SAME OLD INCIDENT OF A MISSING BEAUTY—A WIDOW'S NARRATIVE—AN AROUSED INTEREST—THE POSSIBILITIES IN A NAME—STARTLING SUGGESTIONS—WAS IT A CLUE.

"Mr. Alvarez, I am very poor; I cannot offer you a large reward, but I have saved a few hundred dollars, and those I will give you if you are successful in finding my lost child."

Jack Alvarez, the detective, was seated in his office when a veiled woman entered and addressed him in the language with which we open our narrative.

The detective was a kind-hearted man, well-to-do financially, and as it occurred not immediately engaged on any special job. He looked the visitor over a moment and then said:

"Madam, before I can entertain your proposition at all, I must see your face."

"Is that necessary, sir?"

"It is."

"I am sorry."

"Why?"

"Simply because I fear that you will be so shocked you will not aid me."

"Why will I be shocked, madam? Are you a criminal?"

"I am an honest woman, sir, but oh, how bitter has been my life—yes, sir, it has been one of humiliation and suffering, and now there has come to me this terrible sorrow. It may prove even a greater sorrow than I at present dare anticipate, but I trust not."

"You need not fear to show me your face."

"May I first tell you my story, sir?"

"Yes."

"I was left an orphan at a very early age. I was reared in an institution until I was able to go out to work. I never knew my parents, I never knew my real name. I was deserted in my infancy and I grew up to be quite a fair-looking girl. I can say this now, sir, without any feeling of exultation, for what beauty I may once have possessed vanished in one night, and I am now hideous to look at. When I left the asylum in which I had been placed I went to live with a very kind family, and at the age of twenty I married a poor but very worthy man. My little daughter was five years old when one night our little family was aroused by the barking of our dog. We lived up in the country in New York State. My husband was an invalid and slept in a room adjoining the one I occupied with my child. As I told you, I was aroused by the barking of our dog; I knew it meant danger, and I leaped from my bed and instantly discovered that our little home was on fire. I rushed down the one flight of stairs with my child in my arms, and then returned to aid my husband to escape, but, alas! I was overcome by smoke and flame and fell unconscious, and would have been consumed had not a neighbor rushed in and dragged me forth. I was saved, but when the fire was subdued and they entered the room of my husband, they found him dead. He had been suffocated, and I, alas! was horribly disfigured for life, being terribly burned in the face. This, sir, is a part of my story. I am terribly scarred and, now if you still desire to see my face I will remove my veil before continuing my story."

"Madam, you need not be ashamed to remove your veil. Your scars were honorably won; you should be proud—yes, I will look upon your face."

The woman removed her veil, and indeed she did have two ghastly looking scars, but she had exaggerated her disfigurement, for despite the scars hers was not an uncomely face to look upon. Her eyes were beautiful, and the detective was led to say with chivalrous truth and gallantry:

"Madam, you may once have been so beautiful, over-sensitiveness causes you to exaggerate your misfortune, but enough, tell me your story. Tell me about the loss of your child."

The woman's voice was very musical; she spoke in low tones and her pronunciation and general demeanor betrayed the fact that gentle blood ran in her veins.

"As I told you, sir, my husband was suffocated, and I was left a widow with one little child, a daughter. I will not dwell upon my sorrow, but kindly permit me to say that the horror of that catastrophe has never passed from my mind, and I have been a sad woman; and now, alas! it appears as though a greater sorrow were about to overwhelm me."

"Not if I can aid you, madam."

"It is refreshing and gladdening to hear you say so. I had been told that you were a wonderful and very kind man, and a hero whom any one could trust. I need the services of a brave, discerning man."

"And if I can serve you, madam, I will; continue your narrative."

"After the death of my husband I removed with my infant daughter to New York City, as it was necessary that I should earn a living for my child. I was ambitious to give my daughter a good education—yes, give her opportunities that were never vouchsafed her mother. I was a very skillful needlewoman, and taking cheap apartments I applied for work at some of the large stores, and my skill soon secured me employment and I continued to live economically in order to save money to educate my child; and, sir, I succeeded. I worked steadily and was always successful in securing work, for as I have said, I was a very expert needlewoman, and so the years sped by until my child became sixteen, and, sir, I can say that she was indeed splendidly equipped as far as education is concerned. I intended that she should become a governess and thus be surrounded by environments in line with her education and refined tastes. She was always a dutiful and loving daughter, cheerful where I was sad; hopeful where I was despondent. One year ago my daughter became appointed as governess in a well-known family and they treated her in the kindest manner, and became very much attached to her—indeed they treated her more as an equal than as an employee. As I have said, my daughter is not only very beautiful, but splendidly educated, and during her residence with the family I have named she met among their guests a young German, who claims to be a baron. This young baron fell in love with her, and from what information I can obtain his love, or pretended love, was not reciprocated by my child; and now comes the mystery. One day my daughter went out to do a little shopping; she has not been seen by any of her friends since, and I am almost distracted with apprehension. She is very beautiful, as I've said, and I felt that she was perfectly safe while living with the family where she was employed. I was told by a person with whom I am acquainted that I should put the affair in the hands of a

detective at once, and I was referred to you."

"And who referred you to me, madam?"

The visitor mentioned the name of a person whom our hero knew well, and after a moment's meditation the detective demanded:

"How long has your daughter been missing?"

"It's now nearly a week since she went forth and failed to return."

"And what is the name of this baron?"

"He is known as August Wagner. He claims that is but an assumed name, and that he is really a baron and heir to great estates in Germany."

"Did your daughter ever speak to you about this young man?"

"Yes."

"And did she show any indication to look favorably upon his professions of attachment?"

"On the contrary, she showed the utmost aversion to him, and it is possible that because of her aversion she has run away and hidden herself so as to escape his attentions, or it is possible he has persuaded her to elope with him. Her friends favor the latter idea."

"By her friends you mean the family with whom she resided?"

"Yes."

"They are favorable to the baron?"

"They appear to be, and strangely, since my daughter's disappearance they have turned against her."

"Against your daughter?"

"Yes."

"Where is the baron?"

"He is still a visitor at the Richards' home."

"Richards is the name of the family with whom you resided?"

"Yes."

"And they still entertain the baron?"

"Yes."

"Have you seen the baron?"

"I have."

"And what does he say?"

"He says he knows nothing about my daughter."

"And he claimed to have loved her?"

"Yes."

"Does he exhibit any sorrow or anxiety?"

"He does not, and this to me appears very significant."

The detective was thoughtful. He recognized that indeed the baron's sudden indifference was significant.

"He has not offered to aid you in finding her?"

"He has not."

"And the Richards family, do they exhibit any anxiety?"

"They do not."

"This baron is their intimate friend?"

"He appears to be."

"And they suggest that he knows where she is?"

"Not exactly; they merely declare that my daughter was not abducted, that wherever she is her absence is voluntary."

"And the Richards family appear to have turned against your daughter?"

"Yes."

"And previously they were very fond of her?"

"Yes, apparently."

"The apparent change has come since her disappearance?"

"Yes."

"Madam, I will undertake this case. What is your daughter's name?"

"Amalie Speir."

The detective gave a start, and we will here explain the cause. Amalie was the name of the heiress to the fortune which he at that moment held in trust. Ordinarily there would not be much significance in two persons having the same given name, but our hero was a man subject to wonderful discernments—a man who builded on the slightest incident—and from that instant he had more than an ordinary interest in the missing Amalie Speir, and that interest within a few hours was to grow into a thrilling intensity under later very singular coincident discoveries.

## CHAPTER II.

A MOST SINGULAR AND WONDERFUL COINCIDENCE—THE  
DETECTIVE STRIKES A NEW TRAIL—A DENOUEMENT MOST  
WONDERFUL—POSSIBILITIES AND PROBABILITIES BEYOND  
PERADVENTURE.

"And your name?" asked the detective, in an apparently indifferent tone.

"My name is Amalie Speir."

The detective repeated:

"Your name is Amalie?"

"Yes."

"Then your daughter is named after you?"

"Yes."

The detective tried to appear indifferent as he asked:

"What was your name, madam, before your marriage to Mr. Speir?"

"I do not know."

"You do not know?" repeated our hero.

"No; I was called Amalie, that is all I can remember. You see, sir, I most always have lived with strangers, and if my last name was ever mentioned in my hearing it was done so rarely that I never remembered it."

"Have you ever sought to find out what your name was previous to your marriage?"

"I have, but I have failed."

There was intense eagerness in the tones of our hero's voice despite his effort to

conceal his interest when he asked:

"Madam, do you know your age?"

"Yes, to a day."

"How old are you?"

"I am forty-six sir, a little past."

"Do you know the date of your birth?"

"Yes, sir, I was born July 20, 18—."

The detective figured in his mind, and there came a strange gleam in his eyes as he said:

"Madam, you can count upon my services."

"May I ask, sir, why you are so interested in my age and my maiden name?"

"You may ask certainly, but I shall not answer your question at present. I may tonight; tell me where you reside and this evening I may call upon you and I may have some news of your daughter."

The woman gave her address and went away, and the moment the detective was alone he leaped up, and pacing rapidly to and fro across the room, muttered:

"Great Jerusalem! of all the strange, weird and remarkable incidents, this beats them all in its fateful significance. There is the little grave marked Amalie Canfield, died aged four years. Great ginger! here is a nameless Amalie who may have been older than the child Amalie Canfield."

We will here state to those of our readers who have not read Jack's former adventures as related in "Two Wonderful Detectives," that they will understand the detective's excitement as they proceed with the narrative.

Jack did not waste much time in words. He left his rooms, also a note for his brother, his partner as a detective, and started for New Jersey. Fortunately, he caught a train, and an hour later alighted at a station, and rapidly he walked along the road for a couple of miles, when he arrived at a little graveyard. He entered the cemetery and almost ran to a little grave, and dropping down he fixed his eyes on the tombstone, and there he read:



"AMALIE CANFIELD.  
"Born, ————. Died, December —, 18—."

The detective rose to his feet, his handsome face all aglow, and he again muttered:

"Here is a mystery—a little mystery—but it can be explained. One or the other Amalie died. It's my opinion Amalie Stevens lives, and after all I have at last found the heir to a million. I lose the fortune, but the true heiress will get it. Yes, I'll swear I am on to the final solution, the most successful shadow I shall ever make. It is the greatest catch of my life—yes, although I lose half a million, and I'd rather lose a million than to learn that I have been misled. I must go slow—yes, very slow—but as it stands I believe I've struck it at last."

The detective returned to New York, where he arrived early in the afternoon. He had a close friend, a very wealthy banker, for whom he had done a great service. He proceeded direct to the home of the banker, an old gentleman, but a man of great vigor considering his age, both mentally and physically.

"Hello, Mr. Wonderful," was the banker's salutation as our hero entered his presence. "Where did you come from? I have not seen you for several months."

"No, but I am here now."

"And your presence means that you have made another of your wonderful discoveries."

"I think I have."

"What is it."

"I believe I have found an heir to the Stevens' fortune."

"I thought you would some day, if there was a surviving heir."

"I believe there is, and I can put my hand on her at any moment."

"Who is the party?"

"Amalie Stevens."

The banker started, and exclaimed:

"I thought you had positive evidence of the child's death?"

"I thought I did, but, alas! it appears now that I was mistaken. I cannot tell yet, but I will know to-night, I will as sure as my name is Jack Alvarez."

Again we say to our readers the significance of the above conversation will be duly explained as our narrative proceeds.

Our hero returned to his lodgings. He had gained very important facts and he intended to justify them, and early in the evening he proceeded to a plain little house where the lady, Mrs. Amalie Speir, resided. He found Mrs. Speir awaiting his presence. He was led into a neatly furnished room, and taking a seat spoke about some everyday matter, but his keen, restless eyes were wandering about that room. He was a man of marvelous quick perceptions, and he discerned that no matter what had been the early surroundings of the woman who lived in those rooms, her natural tastes were those of a lady.

"You were to bring me news of my daughter."

"News for your daughter," corrected our hero, and after a moment he added: "Madam, it is possible I have a very remarkable revelation to make to you; it is possible that a strange fate brought us together."

"I care only for my daughter, sir. If you have anything to communicate that concerns my daughter proceed, otherwise I am too distracted to discuss any other matter."

"I desire to ask you a number of questions concerning yourself, and it is possible that these questions may concern your daughter more intimately than you suspect. I ask you to listen to me patiently, and answer my questions calmly and truthfully as far as your memory will permit."

"Let me ask, have you made any discoveries concerning my daughter?"

"As yet, no, but I propose to begin my quest to solve the mystery of her disappearance this very night. I will tell you frankly, I do not believe you have anything terrible to dread as concerns your child."

"On what do you found your belief?"

"On the facts that you have revealed to me. Of course I cannot say anything positive at present; by to-morrow I may give you a more decided opinion, but I desire now to talk about a matter which under any circumstances is very important—yes, important to you and to your daughter also—if no real disaster

has overtaken her. I believe and trust she is alive and well. I found my belief on evidences that I cannot make plain to you; and now answer me. Madam, is there no name that is familiar to you, no name that awakens memories when you hear it?"

"I cannot recall that there is."

"Have you any suspicion why you were named Amalie?"

The woman did not make an immediate reply.

Jack saw that he was making headway, and said:

"Did you ever hear the name Canfield?"

"I cannot recall that I ever did."

"Let me see, did you ever hear the name Amalie Stevens?"

The woman turned deathly pale, and after a moment in a trembling tone asked:

"Why do you mention that name?"

"Never mind, answer me."

"Yes, I know something about the name Amalie Stevens."

"What do you know?"

"Answer me first: Have you any reason to believe that you know anything about a person named Amalie Stevens?"

"I may."

The woman meditated a long time and said:

"Wait a moment; I have perfect confidence in you; I will show you something."

Mrs. Speir left the room, but in a few minutes returned, bringing with her a little garment, age stained, but otherwise perfect. She held the garment up to the light and pointed to a letter mark. The marks were fine—very fine—but the detective had his glass with him. He subjected the letters to inspection and plainly made out the two letters A. S., and there shot a thrill through his frame, while the woman watched him with eager eyes, and she said:

"I never heard the name Stevens, but when you mentioned the combination Amalie Stevens, I remembered the letters on this little garment. I have often studied over them; for, sir, since matters have gone so far, I will say that I have always felt that there was a mystery in my life which would never be cleared up."

"Who wore this garment?" asked Jack.

"I did."

It was the detective's turn to become thoughtful. He had made a most extraordinary discovery—indeed, in his own mind he had found an heir to millions in this modest and hitherto unfortunate woman. Jack meditated for a long time, and Mrs. Speir at length asked:

"Will you tell me, sir, what this all means? I know you are not wasting time. You know or suspect something. Is it possible that after all these years I am to learn who my parents were?"

The woman spoke in the plural, and the detective, desiring to be evasive, could safely say:

"I fear, madam, that is a mystery that can never be wholly solved, but I have something to show you."

The detective always carried the photograph with him, and our readers will understand later the story of the photograph. He showed the picture to the woman, and she almost fainted, so intense was her agitation. Jack observed her agitation, and there came a look of triumph in his face. He could discern, as he believed, that after all he had made a successful "shadow."

"Where did you get this picture?" demanded the woman, in an agitated tone.

"You recognize it?"

"I do."

"You knew the original?"

"I did."

"She still lives?"

"She does."

"Where?"

"Here."

"What do you mean, madam?"

"I have the mate to that picture, as I live."

"You have the mate to the picture?"

"I have."

"Where?"

"Here."

The woman drew a locket from her bosom and handed it to our hero, who at a glance recognized that the locket portrait and the daguerotype were pictures of the same child.

"You say you know the original of these two portraits?"

"I do. Oh, strange, strange, I never noticed it so strikingly before, but either picture might be taken as a portrait of my dear child at the same age. How wonderful the resemblance! and here I am a scarred-face woman, hideous to gaze upon—so hideous I always go veiled. It's wonderful, it's wonderful."

The detective saw that the woman was really talking to and communing with herself, but after a moment he asked:

"Madam, was that picture taken for you when you were a child?"

"It was."

"You are certain?"

"When you see my daughter you will have proof—sufficient proof. Tell me, sir, what does it all mean—where did you get that picture?"

"Shall I tell you the history of that picture?"

"If you please."

"Madam, I will, and you must prepare to listen to a very remarkable story. A

little more than forty years ago a gentleman in New York received a visitor. The gentleman was a young banker; his visitor deposited with him a large sum of money, placing the money in trust. The banker was to hold the money for twenty years and then open a letter that was given to him. The banker invested the money but lost the letter, and at the expiration of twenty years found himself the custodian of a large fortune without any knowledge as to its owner. It was at this time that he called in detectives, but they failed in solving the mystery, and twenty years elapsed, when the case was given to me. The banker furnished me no clue, and I started out to solve the mystery by methods not necessary to explain. I learned that the man who deposited the fortune was named Jake Canfield, and was killed the very day he left the money with the banker. Further discoveries led up to the fact that the man Jake Canfield left a supposed granddaughter, and just as I discovered these facts the letter was found, and it was further learned from the letter that the supposed granddaughter was really the child of a man whose life Jake Canfield had saved. This latter gentleman was named Harold Stevens, and he had a child, and in view of his own approaching death he confided his child to the care of Jacob Canfield, and—"

At this moment the woman, Mrs. Speir, uttered a cry, and would have fallen had not the detective held and assisted her to a chair. She revived after a little and the detective resumed his strange narrative.

## CHAPTER III.

ONE MYSTERY SOLVED—A SUCCESSFUL "SHADOW" INDEED—  
ON A NEW "LAY"—IN A GAMBLING ROOM—A NEW  
ACQUAINTANCE—THE DETECTIVE PERPLEXED—FALSE OR  
TRUE?—A RIDDLE TO BE SOLVED.

It was evident that Mrs. Speir, who was bright and quick of perception, had discerned partially what the ultimate conclusion of the narrative would be, and it was her excess of emotion that affected her, but as stated she speedily recovered and the detective immediately continued his story:

"As I said," resumed Jack, "the gentleman, Harold Stevens, confided his child to old Mr. Canfield because he had reason to know that Jacob Canfield was an honorable man, and he also confided to this old fisherman a large fortune in trust, but for reasons that will never be known he made the singular conditions that his child Amalie should be kept in ignorance of the fortune until she was twenty-five. The old man, fearing to keep the money, transferred the trust to the banker, a Mr. Townsend, and left the letter of instructions, which was not found until after forty years; and now, madam, I come into the romance. Once more I started out to find this heir; I learned that Jacob Canfield had placed his ward in charge of friends to care for, but we could not discover who these friends were, and I was compelled to go it blind. I had found the picture which I showed you and learned a name. I spent weeks in prosecuting my search, and at length found a little grave in an out-of-the-way cemetery, and on the tombstone was engraved: 'Amalie Canfield, died December 20, 18—, aged four years.' This age about accorded with the age of Amalie Stevens, and we were forced to conclude that Amalie Stevens was known as Amalie Canfield. I gave up the search, concluding that there was no heir unless Harold Stevens had left other heirs than his own child. I have been looking for those heirs, and had about given up all hope of ever finding them when you came to me."

There followed a moment's silence and then the woman asked:

"What do you conclude now?"

"I will tell you; I believe that Jacob Canfield did have a granddaughter, and that this granddaughter was but a little younger than his ward. I believe he placed his granddaughter in the care of certain people, and that this child died, while the real heiress, Amalie Stevens, survived."

"You believe now that Amalie Stevens survived?"

"I do."

"And why have you told me this strange, weird narrative?"

"Madam, do you not guess?"

The woman did not answer, and the detective again produced his daguerreotype, and pointed to the name Amalie Stevens.

"What does this suggest, sir?"

"That is a portrait of Amalie Stevens, and Amalie Stevens is the heiress of Harold Stevens, and you claim to be the original of that portrait. Madam, if this can all be substantiated you are a very wealthy woman. I will tell you candidly, I believe you are the heiress; I believe your claim can be established. Remember, your baby clothing was marked A. S. We need but one more proof."

"And what is that?"

"You say your girlhood lineaments are preserved in your daughter?"

"Yes, in a most remarkable manner."

"Then all we have to do is to find your daughter, confirm your claim, and all the evidence under present conditions is gained, and you shall be recognized as the heiress, and the fortune will be surrendered to you."

"Who holds this fortune?"

"I do, madam—yes, the banker is now an old man. He turned the fortune over to me to hold in trust for any heir that might be found, or failing that the money under the original plan as outlined in the letter was to be mine through the banker, who under certain conditions became the heir."

"But how will I prove all the facts in court?"

"There is nothing to prove in court; I alone am to be convinced that you are the



heiress, and all I have to do is to transfer the property over to you—yes, let me learn, or rather, be satisfied that you are really Amalie Stevens that was, and the whole property is yours."

"Sir, you are a most extraordinary man."

"I am?"

"You are."

"How?"

"You tell me if the heirs are not found the property is yours."

"That is true; part mine, and part goes to charity."

"And you have been searching for parties to whom you might give this fortune?"

"No, madam, I give nothing; I've been searching for parties to whom this fortune belongs."

"And you think it belongs to me?"

"Frankly, I do."

"Again I say you are a remarkable man, and now I will ask one favor. If it should prove that the fortune is mine do not mention the fact to a living soul until you receive permission from me."

"I do not recognize your right to place me under any such restriction, but I will so agree all the same to oblige you."

"And you will never regret your decision; and now, sir, how about my child?"

"I propose to search for your child."

There came a sad look to the face of Amalie Speir, as she said:

"If anything evil has befallen my child this fortune is yours."

"What evil do you fear?"

"There are several. One is that this baron has bewitched her. If this shall prove true, in mercy never reveal the story of the fortune. I will never need it, and that wretch shall never enjoy it. No, sir, if my child has become his victim, I should

wish her in her grave."

The detective did have grave misgivings as to the possible fate of the missing girl, and knowing who she was, for in his own mind he was perfectly satisfied, he determined to devote all his time and his best energies to discovering what her fate might be.

"Madam," he said, "one fact is assured, since what has developed you can trust me."

"I can; you are a noble man."

"Then do not make any efforts yourself to find your child; leave all to me."

"I will."

The detective made a great many inquiries concerning the Richards family with whom Amalie Speir had resided. Mrs. Speir, however, knew but little about them. He made an arrangement, however, that he would call upon Mrs. Speir on the following day and then went forth. He had such a description of the young baron that he did not doubt being able to recognize the man at a glance, and when he left the humble home of Mrs. Speir he proceeded to the home of the Richards family.

Jack had determined upon a very novel plan in order to assure the safety of Amalie Speir in case he should become satisfied that she had been abducted. He had thought the matter over very calmly, and had arrived at a very positive conclusion in one direction. He arrived at the Richards house at a very fortunate moment, for lo, the very man he had started to "shadow" had just issued forth. The detective recognized the man at once and started to follow him, and saw him enter a low gambling house on the East Side. The detective followed the man, saw him put up a few chips, and start in to gamble. His face betrayed great anxiety, although he had only a few dollars at stake, and he was a loser. Our hero got into the game and bet recklessly. Jack could afford to lose when set to accomplish a given purpose, for he had plenty of money to spare. He was very reckless and had taken a seat beside the baron, with whom he engaged in conversation, and soon he learned that the pretended nobleman was "broke."

"Luck went against you," said our hero.

"Yes, it always does."

"Permit me to give you a chance to win your money back."

"Sir, you are a stranger."

"A friend in need is a friend indeed."

"But I have no right to accept your money."

"You have if I offer it to you."

"But why should you offer me money?"

"I believe your luck will change."

"Alas! no, luck is against me, I cannot lose your money."

Here an enigma confronted our hero. If this man was a fraud, as had been represented, he would have accepted money from any source. The question arose, Was he refusing the money fairly or was he merely playing a game?

"I have good luck as a rule," said Jack; "I will play for you."

"There is no reason, sir, why you should play for me."

The detective was more and more perplexed. He had been led to believe that the baron was a cold-blooded fraud, and yet here he was displaying the qualities of a proud and honorable man, with a high sense of honor.

The detective played on and luck turned in his favor. He won a little money. The baron had gotten up from the table, but stood over our hero's chair and occasionally a word would pass between the two young men. Jack admitted that he was mystified—all at sea concerning the real character of the so-called baron. He discounted prior prejudice, which, as is known, goes a great way in forming conclusions, and yet he did not understand the young man. Finally our hero rose from the table and said:

"My luck was much better than yours."

The baron was certainly a very handsome young man. His manners were those of a gentleman, and his language and general demeanor indicative of one who had been well born, and we repeat, in view of all statements concerning the young man, our hero was mystified.

"Come," he said in an offhand way, "let's go and have some supper."

"Why do you ask me?"

"I need a companion; you are a good fellow and a loser. I am a good fellow and a winner. You will go with me?"

"As you insist I will; you appear to be a very charming gentleman."

Jack led his new friend to a fine restaurant and they were soon seated at a table, and our hero undertook to order a very sumptuous meal, also some very choice wine; but later, to his surprise, he observed that the baron did not touch the wine, and Jack said:

"You do not drink the wine?"

"No, I never drink wine."

"That is strange, seeing you are a German. Probably you prefer beer?"

"No, thank you. Yes, I am a German, but I never drink beer."

"You amaze me."

"Possibly so, but I have the best of reasons for not using any sort of liquors."

The baron spoke good English, but there was just enough of the German dialect to indicate that he was not an American.

"Your countrymen, as a rule, are free drinkers."

"Yes, unfortunately, yes; but I am not; I repeat, I never do drink liquor of any sort."

"To tell the truth," said Jack, "I am not a drinking man myself. I rarely use liquors; I really ordered the wine thinking it would be agreeable to you."

"You were very kind."

"You made a remark," said our hero, "that I did not understand."

"Indeed?"

"Yes."

"What did I say, please?"

"You said you always had hard luck."

"It is true."

"Then why do you gamble?"

"I do not desire to air my misfortunes."

The baron spoke as a reserved gentleman would speak under the circumstances.

"Excuse me," said Jack, "I did not put the question in a specific manner, but only in a general way."

"You appear to be a good fellow. I will answer you frankly. I gamble because I want the money."

"It's a poor way to get money."

"Yes, I know it, but I am very poor. I have a small remittance, not sufficient to support me. I was not reared to labor—indeed, I do not know what to do. I am half-inclined to put a pistol to my head and end it all."

Jack was more and more amazed. The young man talked less like a rogue than any individual he had met in a long time. He meditated a moment and then said:

"I have plenty of money; possibly I can be of some service to you."

"A stranger?"

"Yes, a stranger; why not? We are both young men and have the world before us. I will admit that I have taken a great fancy to you."

"I am very much obliged for your kind interest in me, but you cannot be of any service."

The detective was perplexed beyond measure.

## CHAPTER IV.

PLAYING A DEEP GAME—AN AMENDED NARRATIVE—IN THE  
OPERA HOUSE—A RECOGNITION—GETTING DOWN TO FACTS  
BY ACCIDENT—THE STORY OF AN EXPECTANT HEIR—GAINING  
A CLEARER LIGHT.

Jack remained nearly two hours with the young baron, and as will be learned, made a very favorable impression upon him—indeed, it was agreed that they were to meet the following evening and go to the opera together. The detective was approaching his point by easy stages.

When the detective finally bade the young baron good-night he walked off toward his own lodgings lost in deep thought. He had started out with one theory, but following his meeting with the young baron other suspicions penetrated his mind, and he muttered:

"There is something here I cannot explain, but I will get at the bottom of it before I get through; and I will here say that the present aspect of the affair presents a more hopeful view of the probabilities."

On the day following our hero called upon Mrs. Speir, and that lady demanded in eager tones:

"Do you bring me news of my daughter?"

"No direct news, madam, but I desire to question you very particularly. You gave me to understand that August Wagner was a pseudo baron?"

"Yes."

"Did you ever impart this fact to your daughter?"

"I hinted it to her."

"She discussed the baron with you?"

"Yes."

"And she displayed the utmost aversion to him?"

Mrs. Speir did not answer immediately, and Jack said:

"That is right, Mrs. Speir, think well. Answer me slowly and truthfully, for this is a very important matter we have on hand."

"I cannot answer you positively."

"Aha! this is a different view from your original statement."

"I may have used too strong a word when I said aversion."

"How will you put it now?"

"My daughter laughed every time I mentioned the baron's name, as I thought, or possibly as I wanted to believe, derisively."

"She did not say right out that she despised the baron?"

"Frankly, no."

"You admit you overstated the matter?"

"In my bewilderment and anxiety I may have done so; but, sir, what do these questions mean?"

"They are general and intended to serve as side lights only. Now tell me, how did you learn that the young man, August Wagner, was a pseudo baron?"

"I have no positive evidence; I so believe, however."

"But suppose he is a real baron?"

"Then my daughter's peril is greater, and I have the saddest prospect ahead of me."

"You told me the baron betrayed no sorrow at the disappearance of your daughter."

"I so interpreted his tone and manner. Now tell me, sir, what you have learned."

"I have not learned anything positively, but let me ask you, is there any one else who would have a motive in abducting your daughter?"

"I know of no one else."

The detective had learned facts which threw a new light on the affair, and he went to meet August Wagner under different impressions than had governed him when he first started upon the young man's trail.

Jack met young Wagner and went to the opera with him, and during the course of the evening he saw the young man acknowledge a recognition from a party in one of the boxes. The detective did not immediately inquire who the parties were, but he observed that Wagner sought to avoid any further recognition, and just before the close of the last act he said:

"I will go out if you will excuse me."

"I have had enough of it; I will go with you," said Jack, adding: "We will go and have some supper."

The young men left the theater, and once outside, young Wagner said:

"I cannot go and have supper with you."

"Why not?"

"You treated last night."

"Nonsense, don't mention that to me."

We will here announce that our hero was under a disguise, and he persuaded Wagner to go with him, and he observed that his companion ate very heartily. He observed another fact. Near the table where he sat with Wagner another party, a shrewd-faced man, had taken a seat, and Jack soon fell to the fact that this shrewd-faced man had young Wagner under surveillance, and when the two young men had nearly completed their repast this party boldly walked over and took a seat at their table with the remark:

"Excuse me, but, young man, I desire to ask *you* a few questions."

The words were addressed to the young baron, and special emphasis was laid on the word *you*.

The baron was singularly cool under the circumstances, proving him to be a man of nerve. Really our hero was more disturbed than his companion. The latter made no answer to the man's declaration, but quietly waited for a further



explanation, and the stranger said:

"Your name is Wagner, or at least, you are known as August Wagner?"

"That is true."

"You claim to be a German baron?"

"That is not true."

"It is not true?"

"It is not true," repeated the young man.

"Then I have been misinformed?"

"Probably not."

"What do you mean?"

"I do not claim to be a baron, but I am next heir to a barony; at present an elder brother is the baron."

"Then you are not a fraud?"

"It would be dangerous for any one to intimate that I have at any time made a *false* claim."

Jack was delighted at the turn the affair had taken. Another was eliciting facts that our hero most desired to have made clear.

"You were at the opera this evening?"

"I was."

"There was a party in Box C?"

"Yes, sir."

Jack observed that there came a glitter to the young man's eyes, and a slight color to his cheeks as he answered:

"I was."

"The parties in that box were the Richards family?"

"Yes, but I do not know how the fact concerns either you or me."

"It may concern you, my young friend. What do you know about the Richards family?"

"Nothing save in a social way, sir."

"That is all?"

"It is."

"Then permit me to advise you to drop all social intercourse with them if you wish to avoid future trouble; that is all, sir."

The stranger, having spoken in the strange manner related, rose and without another word departed, and there followed a few moments' silence, broken at length by our hero, who said:

"So that was the Richards family who occupied the box in the theater this evening?"

"Yes."

"They are friends of yours?"

Wagner made no answer, but asked:

"Do you know them?"

"I have heard about them."

"I met them in Paris; I know nothing about their social standing. I have found them very pleasant people and I do not understand the hints of that man, nor why he should address me. He appeared to know my name, and was otherwise well posted, as it appears, concerning my acquaintance with those people. Who can the man be?"

"He is probably a detective."

"A detective?"

"Yes."

Young Wagner became thoughtful for quite an interval, and then in a musing tone said:

"I do not understand it."

"Let me see," said Jack; "it strikes me that this Richards family is the same family from whose home a young lady disappeared a week or so ago. Possibly this detective has his suspicions concerning that young lady's disappearance. I've heard about it. I remember now that some young baron's name was associated with her disappearance."

Wagner's face became very pale. He fixed his fine eyes on the detective, and after a moment said:

"From whom did you hear this?"

"The girl's mother; she is an acquaintance—yes, she told me all about it. She is very much distressed; and now, come to think, are you the young German baron alluded to in the case?"

Wagner sat for a moment with a solemn and perplexed look upon his handsome face, when suddenly he demanded:

"Who are you?"

"I told you my name was Jack Pitts."

"And you know the mother of this missing girl?"

"Yes."

"What did she tell you?"

"Merely that her daughter was missing, and that it was very strange. She appeared to feel, however, that her daughter was only temporarily absent, and would return all right in a little while."

"Did you ever see this daughter?" asked Wagner.

"I never did."

"She is a very beautiful girl."

"Then you are acquainted with her?"

"I saw her at the Richards' home."

"What sort of folks are these Richards people?"

Wagner made no immediate answer, but after a moment he said:

"I am only slightly acquainted with you. Remember, we first met last night; I do not feel at liberty to give you my confidence. I wish I could, for at this moment I need a friend. I have been sadly villified, I know, and there is a false impression concerning me in some quarters. I do not deserve to be misunderstood in this way, for I never did a dishonorable act in my life."

"Although we only met last night, August, you can trust me—yes, trust me as freely as though I were your own brother. Tell me about yourself."

The young German meditated a few moments and then said:

"I am really the brother of a baron. The baron is unmarried and has been, so I have been informed, stricken with a fatal disease. My brother has lived a very reckless life; he has mortgaged our family estates beyond their market value. To-day should he die I would become the baron, but alas! only an empty title would come to me. I came to America intending to win and woo some wealthy heiress. In Paris I met the Richards family. To me they have always appeared honorable enough, but I will admit that I have heard stories to the contrary. Mr. Richards has a daughter living in Paris—" and here the young man suddenly stopped.

"Go on," said our hero.

"Do not think me egotistical if I tell the truth."

"Certainly not; I see you are not an egotistical man."

"I am not, although the second son of a baron who was descended from a long line of barons. I have known poverty all my life. My brother, the present baron, is twice my age, and he had involved the estates as prospective heir before I was born, and when he came into possession he finished them up. No, I am not proud in one way, and I will tell the truth. I know that the Richards family, who appear to have a great deal of money, desired to have me marry their daughter. I could not do so."

"Why not?"

"I did not love her, and she is not a true type of the American girl. I crossed in the same steamer with the Richards family, and they are about the only people with whom I have been intimate since my arrival here, and—" Again the young man stopped shortly, and the detective urged:

"Proceed, tell me the whole story; you will not regret it."

"I have reason to believe that while the Richards family have been very kind to me, for reasons of their own they have circulated the stories about me. They have recognized me at their social gatherings, but I have evidence that they have given out that I am a pretense."

"Have you suspected their motive?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"They do not wish me to meet with recognition outside of themselves. They are determined that I shall marry their daughter; I never will."

It was the detective's turn to meditate, and we will here state that he believed the young man had told him the truth. He had brought his logical mind to bear upon the circumstances and had arrived at a conclusion. After a moment he said:

"I am very much obliged to you for trusting me, but there is something you have held back."

"I believe I have told you all."

"No, I am a sort of mind-reader, and I have discerned something that you have not told me."

"Then you have a suspicion?"

"Yes."

"What do you suspect?"

"I suspect that you know something concerning the disappearance of the young lady who was acting as governess in the Richards family."

## CHAPTER V.

A STARTLING BETRAYAL—THE CUTENESS OF THE DETECTIVE  
—SUGGESTIONS THROUGH A WORD—THE BODY IN THE  
BRUSH-WOOD—JACK LAYS A SCHEME—SADDEST OF ALL  
CONCLUSIONS.

Young Wagner smiled sadly and answered:

"I cannot go into that matter."

"But you do not understand me."

"I do not?"

"No."

"How so?"

"That man who interrupted us is a detective."

"Well?"

"He suspects that you are an abductor."

The young man started, and after a moment said:

"If that is true it is the Richards family who have thrown the suspicion around me."

"Then they must have had a purpose?"

"Certainly."

"And you know their purpose?"

"It is in line with what I have told you."

"Since you are the baron, so-called, I will make an admission to you. You must *not think* that I knew you were the baron when we accidentally became

acquainted, but now that I know you are I can tell you a great deal. Amalie Speir's mother suspects that you had something to do with the girl's disappearance."

Wagner was thoughtful for a long time before he answered, and then he said:

"It's not strange that the girl's mother should suspect me."

"It is not strange?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"You appear to be an honorable man; let me ask you one question: Did you ever meet Miss Amalie Speir?"

"I never saw her in my life," came the truthful answer.

"You know her mother?"

"I do."

"You can tell her mother that I say on my honor I do not know anything about the present whereabouts of her daughter."

"Oh, I see, you do not trust me."

"No, I distrust you."

"You distrust me?"

"I do."

"Why?"

"Because you have not been frank with me."

Our hero smiled. He had determined to declare himself, being satisfied that Wagner was an honorable young man.

"Do you want me to be frank?"

"Yes."

"What shall I do?"

"Tell me plainly why you made my acquaintance?"

"You suspect?"

"Yes, I suspect."

"What do you suspect?"

"That you are a detective employed to shadow me, and I suspect that the man who spoke to me a little while ago is your confederate."

"All right; what you suspect is true."

"And you are a detective?"

"I am."

"And you made my acquaintance with design?"

"I did."

"What is your conclusion?"

"My conclusion is that you are an honorable young man."

"Thank you, and now let me tell you I know nothing about Amalie. I do not know *whom to suspect*; I so told her mother."

There came a strange glitter in our hero's eyes, and a suspicion that almost caused his heart to stand still. He had reckoned himself a very shrewd, sharp man, but suddenly, and on evidence that would not have aroused a passing comment on the part of most men, he became convinced that he had been magnificently played. He was equal to the occasion, however; he had always been. He was indeed a wonderful man, and he said:

"I am very glad to hear you say so. Now that I have confessed so much I will confess more. I did believe you were guilty; I did believe that you were the abductor."

"No, I loved her too well."

"You loved her?"

"I did."



"And did she know that you loved her?"

"She did."

"And did she love you?"

"I have reason to believe that Amalie loved me; I know that I loved her."

"But she is a poor girl; she could not aid you to remove the mortgages from your estates in case you should become the baron."

"It makes no difference. She is a beautiful girl, one of the loveliest creatures I ever met in all my life. I am a sad man; I shall always be sad."

"You shall always be sad?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because I have lost her."

"Lost her?"

"Yes."

"She may reappear?"

"Never."

"Why do you say she will never reappear?"

"She has carried out her threat."

"Her threat?"

"Yes."

"What did she threaten?"

"To drown herself."

"What led her to make this threat?"

"She was despondent—very despondent. Shall I tell you all?"

"Yes, tell me all."

"She loved me; I am poor. I offered her my love and asked that she wait until I became the baron and then I would make her my wife. She said she could not wait."

We will leave our readers to judge of the feelings of the detective as he listened to this singular statement. All he said was:

"Then you believe she is dead?"

"Yes."

"I do not."

"You believe she lives?"

"I do not believe, August, that she was fooling you. She is indeed a very beautiful woman if all reports are true, for I never saw her. I am glad, however, that you are not implicated in any way in her strange disappearance. This shall not interfere with our friendship. I honor and respect you, in case you have properly represented everything to me. Shall we meet to-morrow and lunch together?"

"No, I cannot accept more bounty; you have been very kind."

"All right; we will meet again and I may have a pleasant surprise for you."

The detective parted from the prospective young baron and returned to his own lodgings, and once in his own room he became a very thoughtful man. The detective muttered aloud, and there was much of suggestion in his mutterings. He said:

"There is a mystery here within a mystery. There is something I have not gotten on to yet. Why should this man secrete the girl Amalie Speir? Every move of this Richards family means something. Why should they become so deeply interested in this penniless girl? It is not within the bounds of possibility that they could have in any way discovered that she is an—" Here the detective stopped short and gave utterance to an expletive more expressive than elegant, and after a little he resumed his musings, saying:

"Let me see; yes, yes, it is possible. I see I have a little exploring to do in another direction, and in the meantime I must have an eye on this dignified young baron

and these Richards people. Yes, yes, there is an underlying possibility that may explain the whole matter if I can ever strike to its bottom fact, and by ginger! I will."

Jack had arrived at a conclusion that necessitated the very finest sort of detective work—indeed, his task was one of the hardest because it consisted in discovering a motive.

On the morning following the incidents related, the detective sat down to his rolls and coffee and had his paper, when a paragraph met his eyes which caused his blood to run cold. The paragraph was a brief statement under showy headlines that the body of a young woman had been found in the bushes near the Orange Mountains. There was nothing in the paragraph really to arouse so great interest on his part were it not that he was thrilled by one of those wonderful premonitions which oftentimes came to him.

Jack believed that later in the day there would come further details, and in the meantime he visited Mrs. Speir and showed her the paragraph. Mrs. Speir became greatly agitated at first, but after a moment said:

"You observe that it is a woman; my daughter is less than twenty."

"Yes, I observe that; but do you notice that the face is mutilated so the body will only be identified by the clothing? And now, Mrs. Speir, I have a few words to say. I fear you are going to be called upon to undergo a very trying ordeal, but mark my words: no matter what the later evidences may be, it is not the body of your daughter."

The woman glared but remained silent, and the detective continued:

"I believe I can discern the whole business, and more than that, I believe there is a most thrilling, startling and wonderful revelation under all this business. But again I say, mark well my words: it is not the body of your daughter, and I tell you now I believe all the evidence will go to prove that is your daughter's body."

"You talk in enigmas."

"And I believe I know just what I am talking about. There is a great game being played; the game is an old one. The motive is something we are not 'on to' yet, but we will uncover the whole business. But let me impress upon you with the greatest earnestness that I know your daughter lives."

"Then what does it mean?"

"You can accept my word that it is an attempt to prove that your daughter is dead."

"Why should any one wish to prove that she is dead?"

"I think I can discern; I may be mistaken, but one fact is certain: some very thrilling denouement is to follow in the end, but your daughter is not dead, and you can judge how reliable is my statement when I say now that I have only seen that newspaper paragraph, but in the end the most startling evidence will be produced to make it appear that it is your daughter, and it may be necessary that you should seem to accept the evidence and hold a funeral over the body of a stranger. I repeat, a great game is being played—has been played—but we will beat it. We will catch these people in their own trap."

"But what can be their motive?"

The detective hesitated a moment and then said:

"We cannot now tell how these folks found out that your daughter is a great heiress, your heir, for you are a very rich woman; and it is possible that there may be people who are ready to step forward and claim the estate which I hold as trustee."

We will again state that the detective held no such suspicion. He was leading the mother astray for reasons that will be disclosed later on. All he desired to do at the moment was to make it appear to Mrs. Speir that his idea explained the true motive, but he knew better.

Two days later the predictions of the detective in a certain direction were all singularly verified. The clothing and other incidents indicated that the body found in the woods was that of Amalie Speir, and that the lovely girl had committed suicide. There were proofs that she was young and beautiful, and acting under the detective's advice Mrs. Speir permitted it to be assumed that she recognized the dead girl. The remains were brought to New York, taken to an undertaker's, and after the usual preparation and ceremony, were buried from there, and our hero was the only attendant who accompanied the unfortunate girl to the grave, and that same night he held a long talk with Mrs. Speir. He said:

"They have played their last card now, but I cannot discern what their motive could have been in making it appear that your daughter is dead."

Tears were running down Mrs. Speir's cheeks as she said:

"I can."

"You can?" queried the detective.

"I can."

"Well?"

"They are seeking to cover up a more horrible crime than her murder."

This same suspicion had run through our hero's mind.

We will here state that the evidences attending the discovery of the dead girl apparently indicated beyond all possibility of doubt that she had taken her own life. The mutilations which prevented a positive identification were attributed to some animal that had discovered the remains before they were discovered by the lads who reported the find; and as apparently there was no mystery in the case, the affair dropped away from immediate public attention; the circumstances did not appear to call for an investigation, but here were the facts. Mrs. Speir was positive that it was not the body of her child, and against this was the tragic testimony that her daughter's clothing and trinkets had been found on the body, and these served for identification—an identification which was apparently complete and absolute. It not being Amalie Speir, and the fact that testimonies were present to indicate that it was, seemed to make it appear almost positive that there was some deep design in the presence of those articles, and we can add that our hero sadly feared that the motive suggested by the mother was the truth, that the girl had been the victim of some heartless villain, and he concluded that if such were indeed the fact the smooth, cunning, adroit and skillful baron was the despoiler.

## CHAPTER VI.

JACK'S DEEP INTEREST IN THE AFFAIR—A NEW GAME—BETTER  
PLAY—SHOTS THAT TOLD—A SCHEME UNMASKED—A  
HURRIED MESSAGE—THE DETECTIVE PLAYS SPANISH.

It is not necessary to state that our hero was aroused and stirred to the very lowest depths of his nature. There did remain one remote chance that the motive was different from the one indicated, but such a possibility was very remote. Our hero had the deepest possible interest in the missing girl, and he did feel that if the mother's premonitions were correct that it would have been far better if indeed the dead had been veritably Amalie Speir; but as long as there was a possibility our hero was determined not to give up, and he said cheerily to the almost distracted mother:

"I think I can assign another motive for the passing off of the dead for the living, and I will solve the mystery. If Amalie, your child, is the victim of villains she still lives and we can find and rescue her, and mark my words: if any harm has come to her the perpetrators will have reason to wish that they had never been born; but on my honor, I assure you I can discern where there could have been another motive, and up to this time, if I am correct, your daughter lives scatheless of any real harm save the sorrow and anxiety she must feel in considering your sufferings because of her strange absence."

"Can you bid me hope?"

"I can."

"And you will find my child?"

"I will; remember you are a rich woman; no one can dispute your right to the great fortune I hold in trust for you, and I have a suggestion to make. I desire that you follow my suggestion."

"I will."

"It may startle you, but it is for the best."

"You are my best and only friend in these present trying conditions. I will do whatever you suggest."

"I intend with the full approbation of Mr. Townsend to turn over your fortune to you. Among your properties is a very fine house handsomely furnished. I desire that you occupy this house, take possession at once."

"My doing so will excite comment."

"No, your life has been so comparatively obscure no one will pay any attention to it. I only desire that the Richards family and this baron become aware of the fact that you have fallen heir to a great fortune. All inquiries as to the source of your wealth will remain a secret—yes, a secret forever. No one can dispute your ownership. Should there be any comment Mr. Townsend can offer the explanation, and his high reputation as a former banker and citizen will silence all comment. I have a special reason for the carrying out of this scheme, and should any one so far interest themselves as to inquire whence your fortune comes refer them to Mr. Townsend, who has acted as trustee."

Our hero proceeded to carry out the business of the transfer. He had settled the matter as to the heirship, and in the meantime Mrs. Speir very reluctantly took possession of an elegant residence, and when Mr. Townsend and our hero called upon her the latter said:

"You will have a grand home to welcome your daughter to when she returns, and this home is your own."

When everything was arranged Jack went under a disguise and through Mr. Townsend he had himself introduced as a young Spanish millionaire of excellent family.

To those of our readers who have not read the previous exploits of our hero, we will say that Jack Alvarez had lived many years in Madrid and spoke the language like a native. His boyhood years had been passed in Spain—indeed, his mother, an American woman, was in Spain when her two sons, Jack and Gil, were born.

As the young Spanish millionaire Jack went under a most radical change. He was an adept at disguises, and no one would ever have suspected in the young Spaniard who could not speak English the real Jack Alvarez, the acute detective. Our hero arranged to play a dual rôle, and it was as Jack Alvarez he met the

baron. There had come a complete change over the demeanor of the baron. He appeared to have money, and he actually invited our hero to dine with him and Jack accepted the invitation, and during the meal the baron said:

"I may appear gay, but I am very sad."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, you are my only confidant; I loved Amalie Speir, the young governess, and I have been heartbroken since the discovery that the poor girl committed suicide."

"It was sad. What do you suppose could have been her motive?"

"Despondency, of course."

"What could have caused the despondency?"

"Without egotism I can say that she loved me, and my inability to marry at present caused the despondency."

"You are wrong."

"I am wrong?"

"Yes."

"Then you know what caused her despondency?"

"I do not, but I know it was not love for you, nor her inability to marry for lack of money. Were you aware that Miss Amalie Speir was an heiress?"

The baron's face assumed the hue of death, while a feeling of exultation agitated our hero's heart. That sudden pallor to a man like Jack spoke volumes.

"She was an heiress?" repeated the man, and actually in husky tones.

"Yes, she was an heiress. Do you not know that her mother has come into her share of the property, and is at present living in a magnificent mansion of her own?"

"It is all news to me. Did Amalie know that she was an heiress?"

"Certainly she did, but she was a girl who would not boast of her prospects. She was to arrive at a certain age before she came into possession. In a year or two, if



she had lived, she would have been a very rich woman; but you must excuse me; I have enjoyed your treat very much; next time it will be my treat."

"But hold, I desire to ask you a few questions."

"I cannot answer any questions now; I am very busy; in fact, I will tell you that evidence has been furnished that leads the friends of Amalie Speir to believe that she did not commit suicide, but was murdered. *I am investigating the facts.* If it is proved that she was murdered it will go hard with her murderers, that's all."

The changing expressions upon the face of the baron were many, and every change of expression was a telltale look to our hero, and as he was doing so well he proceeded and said:

"In fact, the incidents of that death are very conflicting and complicated. Mrs. Speir is beginning to believe that her daughter is not dead, that it is all a conspiracy to make it appear that her daughter is dead in order to rob her of her fortune. So you see, my dear baron, it may be that after all you may win a rich and handsome bride. I have the case in hand and am gaining ground every day. I believe I will soon be able to establish that Amalie Speir still lives."

The baron fell back in his chair like one suddenly stricken, and as the detective gazed upon the man the thought ran through his mind: "You played me nicely there for awhile, but my turn has come. We are playing another game now."

We will say that our hero did admire the man's talents, although mystified by the incidents attending the fine play, but he was getting even in a most thrilling manner. If ever a criminal by his agitation betrayed guilt, August Wagner did so. Under the fire of the detective, so skillfully directed, the schemer lost all his equipoise, for Jack had become, as indicated, fully convinced that Wagner was at the bottom of the whole scheme, or the instrument of the party who was putting up what our detective denominated "a game." Jack kept pretending all the time that he desired to get away, but Wagner urged him in almost pitiful tones to stay.

"I haven't time."

"But tell me what are the testimonies you have secured."

"It is not in my line of business to betray our movements. I am a regular detective and I have been assigned to this case. I am determined to push through to some startling denouement."

The detective had already pushed through to a startling denouement. He had purposely lingered a long time at the dinner. The two young men had entered the place very late in the afternoon, and darkness was beginning to fall.

Jack only took a few moments to work a complete change in his appearance. He was down to active work and determined to move very fast. While working his change our hero did not lose sight of the entrance to the hotel where he and Wagner had dined, and he had prepared for what is called a "lightning change." A few moments passed and he saw Wagner leave the dining-room. He fell to the man's trail under his new guise. He saw Wagner go to a district telegraph station, saw him write a note and dispatch a messenger with it, and he muttered:

"Aha! young man, I will watch you. Never mind the messenger, I reckon it is a case where the mountain will come to Mahomet."

Having dispatched his note Wagner issued forth and walked slowly along the street, but in a short time he returned to the restaurant where he had just dined, and Jack followed him in. The detective called a waiter and addressed him in Spanish. The waiter did not comprehend, and Jack made quite a scene in his efforts to make himself understood, and finally the head waiter approached the table. Wagner was interested in the scene, as the Spaniard was only a few feet distant, and he heard the waiter say to his chief:

"This gentleman is a Spaniard; he cannot speak English. I cannot make out what he says."

The head waiter knew a few words of Spanish and managed at length to take the supposed Spaniard's order, and the latter ordered quite an elaborate dinner. He had a purpose; he desired to make time. He did so; he sat there over an hour eating very slowly and reading a Spanish paper which he had drawn from his pocket, and soon a lady entered and approached the table where Wagner sat. She said as she joined the baron:

"I received your hurried message; what has occurred?"

As the woman spoke she turned and glanced at the supposed Spaniard, and Wagner said:

"You need not fear him; he is Spanish; cannot speak a word of English. It is lucky he is there, as unconsciously he will protect us from other neighbors, and I have a great deal to say."

"Order some wine. I am greatly disconcerted and alarmed. Your note was so urgent."

"Necessarily urgent; I have the most startling information."

The man spoke in a low tone, but there were acute ears near by, and our hero distinctly overheard every word that was spoken.

"You have received startling information?"

"I have."

"In what direction?"

"As concerns Amalie."

"Well?"

"A detective is employed to work on the case."

"A detective is employed?"

"Yes."

"I thought the affair had dropped from public notice."

"On the contrary, I know personally the detective who is employed. He is *not a very smart man*, but he is energetic and persistent. He told me that evidence had been procured that Amalie had been murdered."

The woman laughed in a disdainful manner and replied:

"We know better."

"Certainly we do, but an investigation in that direction has already stirred up other suspicions."

"What other suspicions?"

"Suspicions that may lead to the most perilous consequences to us."

"Consequences to us?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"In the first place it is known that Amalie is an heiress."

"Impossible!"

"It is true, and more."

"What more?"

"There are those who suspect that she still lives."

## CHAPTER VII.

A MEETING WITH THE BARON—STARTLING DISCLOSURES—  
AGAIN THE SPANISH MILLIONAIRE—SHADOWING DOWN FOR A  
CHAIN OF STEEL—THE DRAFT—A TRIUMPHANT TRICK—A  
DENOUEMENT TO COME.

The woman gave a start and also uttered an exclamation that was very significant under all the circumstances, and after an interval she added:

"This is all very strange."

"Yes, it is all very strange."

"How on earth any one could have *learned about that fortune* is a mystery to me."

Here was an admission that made our hero almost start and utter an exclamation himself, and if the woman's remark meant what he had reason to believe it did, once again had he given proof of his wonderful acuteness.

"It is not more wonderful, *mother*, than the way we found it out."

Here was a second surprise for our hero. The baron had called the woman mother, and the woman, as our hero knew, was Mrs. Richards.

"Something must be done at once, Mrs. Richards."

"What can we do but wait? The girl is buried; they can never secure any evidence, and in case they do finally *it will be too late*."

"You know this detective?"

"I do."

"Very well, I must have time to think; I wish he were a gentleman."

"Why?"

"Then we could dispose of him."

The detective was getting a heap of information, but the information only complicated the affair; but he had learned enough to make him feel that he could carry the most pleasant assurances to Mrs. Speir.

The baron and the woman talked for some little time longer, but their words conveyed no further positive information, and finally they separated; and when once alone our hero had several problems to meditate over. In the first place Mrs. Richards was not a German woman and yet the baron had called her mother. Here was a mystery to solve. Jack did visit Mrs. Speir and told her to be hopeful—ay, more than hopeful—but he did not state the evidence on which his cheering words were founded, but he set to work to investigate the Richards family. He learned in good time that Mr. Richards was a well-known business man and a very good man as far as was known. Our hero's informant, however, shook his head when he came to speak of Mrs. Richards, and Jack asked:

"Was the lady ever married before she became the wife of Mr. Richards?"

The party questioned did not immediately answer. Jack pressed his question, and the party asked:

"Why do you wish to know?"

"I have vital reasons."

The gentleman whom our hero was questioning was a lawyer, a very shrewd man, who had the reputation of not being overscrupulous, but there were reasons why he desired to oblige our hero, and after a moment he said:

"You will not use my information?"

"Not in any way to involve you."

"My communication," said the lawyer, "is confidential?"

"Certainly."

"She was married to a German who claimed to be a baron. He was a worthless fellow; he may be living yet, but her husband, Mr. Richards, does not know of her previous marriage. The younger children are his children."

"There is a young man who is on very intimate terms with Mrs. Richards," said

our hero, "known as August Wagner."

The lawyer made no remark and the detective asked:

"What do you know about him?"

"See here, I am getting into deep water."

"How?"

"You are up to something."

"I am, and if you do not give me the information I seek I shall look for it elsewhere. I think, however, *you* are bound to aid me."

"That young man, August Wagner, is her son by a former marriage. She pretends he is only a friend; her husband does not suspect the relationship."

Here was a bit of news that was very important and explained certain seeming perplexities. In the first place the woman had at times shown excellent feeling toward the baron, and then again she had apparently maligned him. Jack could see now the occasion—it was done to blind Mr. Richards. The woman was playing a double game.

"What have you to say concerning Mrs. Richards? Come, be open and frank with me."

"She is a very ambitious woman; her husband is a man of comparatively moderate means. She has spent a great deal of time in Europe. She was living too fast for her husband, and he made her return to New York, and she is now leading him beyond his means. Yes, she is socially very ambitious, not here in America, but abroad. To tell the truth, I do not believe her first husband is dead. She is leading a double life. She may not be so much to blame, for I have heard that her first husband was, or is, a contemptible fellow. She once had money in her own right, but the baron squandered it all. Her son has lived most of his time in Germany, and fortunately there is no family resemblance to betray the relationship. The son resembles the father; is essentially German in appearance, but he inherits from his mother a pretty bright intellect. He is a shrewd fellow; his mother supports him clandestinely, and I reckon he costs her a good round sum." The lawyer here lowered his voice and said: "In fact, the woman has put herself in jeopardy by several criminal transactions in connection with her son. They are carrying forged notes, and at any time there may come an explosion

and disclosure."

"Do you think she would commit actual crime?"

"I do not think that she is a criminal by nature, but extravagance leads to criminal acts, and when one commits one crime they are often driven to commit others."

"You are right; but this family have come into considerable prominence lately owing to the tragedy connected with the young lady who was governess in their family."

"Ah! I see that is the part of it you are investigating?"

"Well, yes."

"I reckon that is all straight enough in one way."

"In one way?"

"Yes."

"What way do you mean?"

"The girl committed suicide."

"You think so?"

"Yes, and the evidence proves it."

"Yes, I know, but why should she be driven to suicide?"

The lawyer remained silent.

"Come, you have an idea," said our hero.

"I may have an idea, yes, but that's all."

"What is your idea?"

"I am perfectly willing to give you facts; I have no right to advance my suspicions. I may be wrong."

"I can tell you what you suspect."

"No doubt."



"You think the young baron had something to do with the girl's death."

"I understand she was young and handsome. He is young and handsome; it is probable that he may have had indirectly something to do with her death. I know one thing—his mother would never permit him to marry the girl. She is playing him off for a baron and seeks to marry him to a rich wife. I believe she will succeed. It will be fortunate for her and her son also if they succeed—indeed, certain matters are being held back in that contingency, that I know."

The detective had made great advances and he determined to work a great game, and within a few days he made the acquaintance of August Wagner under the disguise of the rich Spaniard, and as they both spoke French there was little trouble in their intercourse. Jack played his cards well, made a great display of money, and one day he advanced matters to a crisis. He had forced the lawyer to furnish him further details concerning the money transactions of the baron and his mother, and set matters in motion so that it became necessary for the baron to have some ready cash. Well, very well and skillfully had Jack played his game, and one day he and the baron were at dinner. The baron was being fooled and he had not worked the same game on the Spaniard that he had worked on the detective. On the contrary, he pretended to be very rich and possessed of great sums of money; he even assumed to be richer than the baron. As stated, the crisis arrived; the baron and our hero were at dinner. The baron appeared to be greatly depressed, and the Spaniard observed it and said, speaking in French:

"My good friend, you do not appear to be in good spirits to-day?"

"I am not."

"I am sorry; I wish I could do something to cheer you up."

"My remittance failed to come."

"Aha! that is nothing."

"Not materially, and yet I am very much inconvenienced."

"Indeed; possibly I can come to your rescue."

"I would not dream of letting you do so."

"Why not?"

"Oh, no."

"But it would be a pleasure."

"Really?"

"Why, certainly."

"I cannot borrow from you, but if you would accept a draft on Berlin——"

"Why not?"

"For quite a sum?"

"Why not, if the draft is good?"

"I have a friend, a very rich gentleman, who has dealings with my banker in Berlin; he will make a draft for me. His name is Richards, a well-known business man here in New York."

"My friend, you will offend me if you go into details. No, no, it is not necessary. Have you the draft?"

"Not with me; I can get it."

"Ah, yes; but, my dear baron, you will indorse it?"

"I will, certainly."

"That is fine. I care not who makes the draft, your indorsement is sufficient for me."

"Have you such confidence in me?"

"Why not?"

"Then we may do better."

"Any way."

"I will get a draft accepted by my friend here in New York; I will indorse it and I will take care of it."

"Any way, my dear friend; I am only too glad to be of service to you."

"You are very kind."

"Why not—are we not good friends. And I have not many friends in New York."

How much will you need?"

"Two thousand dollars."

"You shall have it at once—indeed, I feel ashamed to accept your note, but you see I must do so merely as a matter of business, that is all. If the amount were less I'd not permit you to give me the draft on your good friend. Let me see, what is the name—did you say Richards?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I see; he will accept the draft payable in sixty days. Ah, that is it; and you will make the draft?"

"Yes."

"Good, very good; the money is ready for you any time. I am so glad to oblige you—why not?"

The baron was an actor, but the detective was a better one, and it was agreed that they were to meet the following morning, when our hero would have the money ready. Meantime, the detective as known to the baron had most singularly been in evidence even within three minutes after parting from the Spaniard. The baron met the detective, or rather he thought he did, but alas! it was just that part of the game where the twin brother of Jack, Gil, the excellent aid, came in. Of course Gil had his instructions well rehearsed, and he played his part with splendid address and cuteness. The baron was being outmaneuvered in every direction, while thinking that he was playing a winning hand.

On the morning following the incidents recorded the baron met the Spaniard, and strange to say, only a minute previously he had met the detective. Jack had the money all right, "why not?" and the baron had the draft, and in the presence of the detective he indorsed it. We may add in the presence of Gil also, for our hero had so arranged his plans that his brother was a witness, and after the money had been paid over and Jack had the draft in his possession, he invited the baron to breakfast with him. The baron was in high glee, excused himself, but said he would meet Jack and have lunch with him.

Our hero sauntered over to the elegant home of Mrs. Speir. The latter had suffered the most intense agony during all this time, and it had preyed upon her health. Our hero had learned that Mrs. Speir was a very lovely woman, and well fitted to adorn a mansion. On the occasion when Jack appeared he found Mrs.

Speir seated in her library. There were tears in her eyes, and as the detective entered a photograph slid off her lap and fell to the floor. The detective leaped forward to restore it, and as he raised it from the floor he caught a glimpse of the face, and he stood gazing in rapt and intense admiration.

"I did not mean that you should see that," said Mrs. Speir.

"You did not mean me to see it?"

"Not at present."

"But I have seen it."

"I cannot help it."

"One question: Whose portrait is that?"

"It is a portrait of Amalie."

"Your child?"

"Yes."

"She is indeed a beautiful girl," came the declaration.

## CHAPTER VIII.

JACK'S GREAT DETECTIVE WORK—"WALK INTO MY MESHES,"  
SAID THE DETECTIVE—A ROGUE WALKS IN—THE FORGED  
ACCEPTANCE—CLOSING DOWN FOR A CONFESSION.

There came a look of pride through the glittering tears as the mother responded:

"Yes, she was a beautiful girl, but alas! I fear her beauty has proved her ruin."

"Madam, you can dismiss that fear; I have set in motion a series of tricks which will enable me, I am assured, to restore your daughter to your love and arms unharmed."

"Alas! I wish I could share your hopefulnes; I cannot. You are a noble man, you have proved it, and more, you have proved that you are one of the most honorable of men. I am grateful, but I am hopeless. If my daughter were alive, as you say, she would come to me."

"There is no doubt, madam, that your daughter is restrained of her liberty or she would come, but mark my words: within one week I will bring her to you unharmed. I cannot tell you now all I have learned, but you can accept my word; I will make good my promise."

When our hero left the presence of Mrs. Speir, wild, strange hopes were surging in his heart. He had never given much thought to ladies, beautiful or otherwise, only as they were a part of his duties, but when he had once gazed upon the face of the beautiful Amalie Speir there came a great change over him. There was something in the expression of her face, so bright and intelligent, so different from any face he had ever gazed upon.

We have often said, and we declare again, that beautiful faces are no rarity in America. One cannot walk the streets or even enter a public conveyance without being able to pass the time watching a beautiful face, and the types of beauty to be met with are varied, but not as varied as the expressions. It is the expressiveness of a face after all that constitutes its beauty, and among our girls

who are compelled to earn their livelihood in factories and offices, one will behold faces delicate and features classically beautiful. The anxieties attending daily toil do not destroy their beauty, and some of these girls have features that light up with expressions wondrously charming, and here also the types are varied, and it is wonderful how an impression will sometimes be mutually made. This is what is commonly called "love at first sight," and it is not an uncommon experience. It does seem as though some souls were born as one.

We will not attempt to analyze the feelings of our hero, Jack, the detective. He was young, well educated, well-to-do, and talented, besides he possessed one of the grandest physical structures that every held a human heart, and again, strangely enough, under all the circumstances, he was not only an honorable man but a young man animated with the kindest feelings. His great physical strength did not make him an aggressor, but a protector.

All along he had had a strong motive in solving the mystery of Amalie's disappearance, but after having seen her portrait his previous interest become wildly enthused, and he clinched his fist and muttered:

"If any harm has come to that fair girl, woe to the man or woman who has harmed her, that is all I've got to say."

As intimated, Jack had carried out a very cunning scheme, and on the day following his securing of the note he met the young man August Wagner. He met him under the rôle of the detective, invited him to dine with him, and together the two young man entered a well-known café. They were seated at a table, when lo, the Spaniard entered. Here again our hero had utilized his double, his twin brother Gil, and so well was Gil gotten up as the Spaniard that the most intimate friend of the disguised men would have failed to discover the "transform."

These brothers had a way of destroying their resemblance for the time being, and at the moment there was no observable resemblance between them. Jack had appeared as Jack in one way when he assumed the rôle of the Spaniard. He traveled under the name of Tavares, and as his brother Gil entered the baron leaped up and made to go toward him, but Gil, having his cue, turned suddenly and walked out, giving the baron no opportunity to address him. As the latter resumed his seat Jack said:

"Do you know that man?"

"Yes, he is my intimate friend."

"Your intimate friend?"

"Yes."

"Don't let any one know it."

"Don't let any one know it?" repeated the baron, in a tone of surprise.

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"You know his character, don't you?"

"He is a young Spanish millionaire."

"A what?"

"A young Spanish millionaire."

"Hello, has he played you?"

"Played me?" repeated the baron.

"That is what I said."

"But I do not understand you."

"That man is the biggest fraud and pretense in New York—one of the most dangerous men to have any dealings with in the United States. If you have met him take my advice and do not keep up the acquaintance. When that man makes your acquaintance *he has a design every time.*"

The baron glared and turned pale—very pale—and finally asked:

"Are you sure?"

"I am sure. Why, has he worked you?"

"Oh, no, but I am surprised."

"He is a terrible man."

"He was introduced to me, as I said, as a Spanish millionaire."

"He is a Spanish Shylock; he loans money, and he usually gets about two hundred per cent before he gets through. Why, I know a case where he got a lady to forge her husband's name to a note, and as soon as he got the note he commenced to squeeze. He got all the woman's jewels, all her money, all the real estate she held in her own name, then exposed her, and she committed suicide."

The baron's face became ghastly, and the detective asked:

"What is the matter? You look deathly pale."

"The wine has turned against me."

"But you haven't drank any."

"No, no, I've a sort of dizziness; I do not know what is the matter with me. But I am amazed at what you tell me; there must be some mistake."

"No, there is no mistake."

"The Spaniard cannot speak a word of English."

"What?" ejaculated the detective.

"He cannot speak a word of English."

"Bah! he can speak English, French, and German. He is a splendid linguist; he plays ignorance, that is all; it is a part of his design."

The baron recalled the scene in the hotel café, and said:

"I know he can't speak English."

"How do you know?"

"It was through his inability to speak English that I became acquainted with him. He was in a café and could not make his wants known, and I went to his rescue."

The detective laughed outright.

"Why do you laugh?"

"At the idea that he could not speak English. Why, my friend, it is evident he had some design on you. Look out for him, or take my advice and do not have anything to do with him, or he will make you a heap of trouble. I tell you he is a dangerous man; the next time you meet him sound him on the question of his



knowledge of English. Suddenly say something comical to him, and then watch. You are shrewd; you will soon find out he can speak English, even better than yourself."

Jack had set his fuse alight, and he started to work in another direction. He left the baron after a few more words of warning, and enjoyed seeing the young man writhe in terror.

Once on the street the detective smiled grimly and said:

"The miserable little conniver, I reckon I am drawing the strings very tight on him now, and soon I will make him drop to his knees and confess all."

A little while following the scene we have described a gentleman appeared at the house of Mrs. Richards and sent in a card, intimating that his business was very urgent.

The lady sent back word she could not see any one until evening. The visitor would not accept this refusal to meet him, and sent such word as to cause the lady to have him invited inside, and after about half an hour's wait Mrs. Richards appeared.

"Good-afternoon, madam, I am sorry to have insisted upon seeing you, but my business is very urgent."

Jack spoke in broken English, and was gotten up as the Spaniard.

"Your name is Jones, I believe?"

"No, madam, my name is Tavares. I did not send you my own card for reasons which you will understand."

At the mention of the name Tavares Mrs. Richards winced, and there came a pallor to her face. She was a fine-looking woman, commanding in face and figure, but she was a woman of wonderful shrewdness and self-control, and she asked:

"What may be your business with me?"

"You are acquainted, madam, with a young man named August Wagner? I believe he claims to be a baron."

The woman spoke very slowly, as though measuring every word.

"I know the baron; I have befriended him."

"Yes, madam, no doubt, and I fear he has taken advantage of your kindness."

The woman trembled.

"Taken advantage of my kindness?"

"Yes, madam."

"You must be mistaken."

"I am not mistaken, and I thought I would come to you first—yes, come to you before I saw him, because I know you are deeply interested in him."

"Only in a general way."

"Don't say that, madam."

"Why not?"

"Simply because the statement does not agree with information I have received."

"What information have you received?"

"I have been informed that you are very deeply interested in the young man."

"It is not true; I have sought to aid him, that is all."

"Again, madam, I am sorry to hear you say that."

"And again why?"

"Because I have been informed that you take a *motherly* interest in young Wagner."

The woman's face became ghastly.

"Who was your officious informant?"

"I am not at liberty to tell at present."

"Will you tell me how young Wagner has taken advantage of my interest in him?"

"I will."

"Do so."

"He got me to cash a draft for him."

"Dear me, is that all?"

"Yes, madam, that is all."

"I know you will find the draft is good and will be paid."

"You know it will be paid?"

"Yes; but why did you come to me?"

"The draft purports to have been accepted by your husband."

The woman still maintained her coolness, and said:

"Then my husband will pay it on maturity."

"Oh, that would be all right, but I have received information which leads me to desire that your husband should acknowledge the acceptance as genuine."

The woman began to break up, and she demanded in eager tones:

"Has my husband repudiated the acceptance?"

"Not yet, madam, simply because I have not presented the draft. I thought I would come to you first."

"Do you believe the draft a forgery?"

"In fact, madam, I have the most positive evidence in that direction."

The woman meditated a moment, and then said:

"This rash young man, can it be possible that in anticipation of remittances he has dared do this?"

"It so appears, madam."

"I must save him. If it is a forged note my husband must not know it. Yes, poor young man, how I pity him! and I must save him, and I will save him."

"That is good and kind of you, madam."

"Yes, I will save him; I will accept the draft myself."

"You are very kind, madam."

"I cannot bear to see the young man humiliated."

"You do not desire to see him humiliated?"

"I do not, I will not."

"Then, madam, you must think of some other way of saving him, for your acceptance of the draft is not a sufficient security for me. Now if you will persuade your husband to acknowledge the acceptance that will save any humiliation."

## CHAPTER IX.

JACK AT HIS BEST—THE HEARTLESS MILLIONAIRE—A TRICK  
THAT BROUGHT RESULTS—A CONFERENCE—TERRIBLE  
INTIMATIONS—THE MYSTERY CLEARED UP—SAFE BUT GREAT  
WORK DEMANDED.

"Oh, no, no," exclaimed the woman.

"Then pay me the cash."

"It is not convenient at present, but I will give you my note in exchange for the one you hold."

"I cannot accept your note, madam."

"You cannot accept my note?"

"No, madam."

"I am surprised; do you fear non-payment?"

"I do."

"Will you explain?"

"Certainly; I have received information that the baron has quite a number of notes out with your name on them and the name of your husband."

The detective had struck the fatal blow; the woman wilted.

"You must have mercy on the young man," she exclaimed.

"It is not in my way, madam, to show mercy. What I need is money—my own money."

"I will give you a note in double the amount."

"But, madam, I could not accept your note, no, and now I would not accept your

husband's note, for I have information that you and the baron, your son, have so involved him that he will be a ruined man if he saves your honor and credit. I cannot stand to lose, but, madam, I will see you again. You will need time to think and time to confer with the baron. I will call again."

The detective rose; the woman was really overwhelmed.

The Spaniard evidently knew the truth—the whole truth—knew that the baron was really her son. She did not bid the Spaniard to stay; she did need time to think, and she walked the floor in the agony of her thoughts. Then she rang for a messenger boy and sent a hurried note, and in the meantime she had prepared to go forth to the street veiled, and the detective, having worked a change, was at hand, and he fell to her "shadow," and he muttered:

"This drama is approaching its end; the play is most over; the curtain will soon go down."

The woman went to the very same hotel where she had met the baron once before. She did not enter the dining-room, but proceeded to a room. Jack was on hand. He had learned that the baron had secured a room in the hotel and had been living there for some days, and with his usual foresightedness the detective under a "cover" had secured a room in the same hotel, thinking that the time might come when he would desire to watch the baron and his visitors. He waited for the woman to enter the baron's room and then quickly he entered the room he had secured.

Right here we desire to state that this securing of adjacent rooms when detectives are on a "lay" is a very common proceeding. It is done daily, it is being done to-day, and will be done in the future. It is indeed one of the most frequently adopted methods of the profession, and it is a common event also to place a detective as a pretended criminal in the same cell or the adjacent cell to a criminal, with a view to catch his mutterings awake or asleep, or to listen to conversations between the wretched man and his visitors.

Jack was all right; he wanted to learn facts and it was delightful to feel that he had run these schemers down to a point where he could listen to their mutual explanations.

The baron was in his room. This was a chance in the woman's favor, and upon her appearance he exclaimed:

"You here?"

"Yes, I am here."

The baron had gone to his room following his little chat with our hero. He had passed the time in a very uncomfortable manner, and of course the arrival of Mrs. Richards was a great surprise.

We wish to state one fact to our readers: Our hero could have "closed in" on the two schemers, but he was seeking certain facts which they could have withheld. He desired to know why they had taken such a sudden interest in Amalie Speir, why they had commenced to scheme and make it appear that the fair girl was dead. While seeking this information he was proceeding very slowly; he desired to gain it rather than attempt to force it, for in the latter attempt he might fail. He knew that neither Mrs. Speir nor her daughter knew the motive—that is, so he had decided—and his moves were intended, as stated, to gain information from the schemers themselves.

Mrs. Richards sat down; her face was pale and she was laboring under great excitement, as the baron observed the instant she entered the room. When she did gain sufficient composure she said:

"What have you been doing?"

"I do not understand."

"That last acceptance——"

"You knew all about it; you knew we needed the money to cover another transaction."

"But you have been trapped."

"Trapped?" ejaculated the young man.

"Yes, trapped."

"By whom?"

"This scoundrel Tavares."

The baron almost fainted as he fell back on a sofa and gazed with starting eyes, and the woman proceeded and said:

"This man called upon me within an hour, and he knows all. He knows you are my son, he knows the acceptance is forged. Were you drunk? did you make a confidant of that man?"

"Give me time to think," said the baron in a husky tone, and then after rising and drinking ice water from a goblet he asked:

"What does all this mean?"

"I tell you the Spaniard, Tavares, called upon me; he knows all."

"Did he call alone?"

"He did."

"How did he manage to convey his information to you?"

"He told me fact after fact with the utmost coolness and assurance."

"And he spoke English?"

"He did."

"Then I was rightly informed and we are in that man's power—yes, in his power absolutely."

"You say you were rightly informed?"

"Yes."

"What was your information?"

"I was informed that the man Tavares was a Shylock, a designing devil. You were right when you said I had been tricked."

"And who was your informant?"

The baron proceeded and told the whole story, all the facts known to our readers, together with his recent meal with the detective who was his informant.

The woman listened attentively with a glitter in her eyes, and when the narrative had been concluded, she said:

"All is lost unless you can force matters, then we can legitimately raise all the money we need. Your wife can get all the money she desires, and at once."



The detective's blood ran cold. The words "your wife" were terrible in their suggestion.

"I can do better."

"You can?"

"Yes."

"What can you do?"

"Recover that note with the forged acceptance."

"How?"

"I will invite that Spaniard to accompany me to some out-of-the-way place; I will overcome and force him to give up the note."

"You mean you would commit murder?"

"No."

"And you must not, my son. We have gone far enough in crime. I will never consent to the crime of murder."

"We need not murder him, we can abduct him and keep him out of the way until our plans are completed."

"Yes, we might do that if we could succeed, then we could force matters and let him loose later, even pay him an indemnity and return to Europe. My good husband would not object as long as it did not cost him anything."

"We must do something, and we must act at once."

"August, you are a brave and skillful man. Now you know the real danger you will be able to devise some plan, but no time must be lost; we must move rapidly. Let us get this immediate danger removed and we can bring the other matter about at once, but it is strange how obstinate and determined *that girl* is. There we must force matters, but I did hope that we would secure money enough to go to Europe. If we could carry her to Europe we would be all right. We could furnish proofs of her identity, secure the money, and all would be well, but she must first be your wife, and I repeat, if she does not consent, then I will assent *to the plan you proposed*. It is a terrible device, but she must be your wife, and that within forty-eight hours. If she does not yield we will force matters, and she will

be glad to become the baroness."

The mystery was indeed all clearing up, and the detective overheard every word of the conversation, and our readers can only imagine his emotions and excitement, as we will not attempt to describe either.

## CHAPTER X.

### CONCLUSION.

The mother and son remained together some time discussing their plans in detail, and when Mrs. Richards finally departed our hero was "on to the whole scheme," as detectives say, and he prepared like a lamb led to the slaughter to be entrapped by the bold baron, and there came a smile to his face as he anticipated the turning of the tables at the last moment.

Our hero was now absolutely assured that Amalie Speir lived, but that she was unharmed thus far, and he determined to take such steps as would insure her safety until such time as he "closed in" on her abductors and forced her release. He determined to meet the baron that same night, and he also resolved to be fully prepared to fall into the trap which he had assumed was to be set for him. In the meantime, he called at the home of Mrs. Speir; his face was radiant and his hopefulness inspired the lady, who asked:

"Do you bring me good news?"

"Mrs. Speir, I bring you the very best of news, and it is my present calculation that within twenty-four hours I will bring you your daughter, pure, loving and unharmed."

"Succeed, Mr. Alvarez, and I will be the happiest woman in the world, and what is more, I will surrender to you your half of the fortune."

Jack smiled, for we will here admit that away down in his heart he did permit a little flame of hope to smolder that in a roundabout way he might some day secure the whole of it practically, and something with the fortune more precious to him than the gold and the houses and lands.

It was early in the evening when seemingly by chance the Spaniard and the baron met, and the latter proved himself a great actor, and indeed a shrewd man, and the chances are he might have been a winner were he playing against a man less shrewd and adroit than our hero, but Jack was hard to beat, as our readers

will learn.

The baron proposed a luncheon, what he called "an early supper," and he appeared to have plenty of money and made a display of it, and at the proper moment he said:

"Mr. Tavares, I have good news for you."

"Indeed?"

"Yes."

"Good news is always more inspiring than bad news."

"Yes, and I am going to redeem my note."

"Is that so?"

"It is true; I have come into some money unexpectedly and I will pay you in full, and as you were kind enough to take chances I will pay interest to date; but you need not hold the note, I will redeem it."

"Good enough; I will be frank with you. I may have been misinformed, you may have an enemy, but I was told that the note was not all right. I got scared and I called upon Mrs. Richards. She demanded time to think the matter over, but as you are going to pay the note, why, that makes it all right. I will admit I am not as disinterested as I may have appeared; I've lots of money, but I make my money tell to make more. When will you redeem the note?"

"This very night, within the hour. I have a friend—a real friend—who will help me out of my difficulty. It makes no difference to you who pays the note as long as you get the money back."

"No difference whatever."

"Then the matter can be easily fixed. We will finish our supper and then go to my friend's house. I was to meet him between eleven and twelve. He will have the money all ready to settle up and redeem the note, and he will hold it for me without making inquiries or seeking information."

"'A friend in need is a friend indeed,' and I will admit that I shall be very glad to get my money back. I do not care about the character of the note as long as I take no chances. See, I am perfectly frank."

"Yes, very frank, and that is your best quality."

The latter remark was made with a laugh and was satirical.

The young men finished their meal, went to a vaudeville show for a little while, and then proceeded to the house where the pretended Spaniard was to receive his money. The baron appeared to congratulate himself at the ease with which he got the Spaniard into the trap, and led him to an out-of-the-way house in the suburbs of Long Island City. The Spaniard entered like a lamb led to the slaughter, and there was a big laugh hidden away down in his bosom.

The baron led our hero to a rear room, sat down and bade his companion be seated. Jack complied, and then there came a complete change over the demeanor of the baron. He said:

"Tavares, you have a note?"

"Yes."

"I promised you its equivalent?"

"You did."

"I do—it's your life."

"Aha!"

"Yes, your life; I will have that note or your life. You secured it by trick and device. I resolved to recover it by the same means, and let me tell you, I am prepared to carry out my resolve. I have men here to aid me."

"And this is your trick?"

"This is my trick."

"We will not waste words, August."

"No, we will not waste words."

"This is my trick."

As the detective spoke he cast aside his disguise and stood revealed.

The baron stared aghast and in a husky voice exclaimed:

"What! you are the detective?"

"I am the detective. Call for your aids and I will summon mine; the latter are at hand."

"What does this mean?"

"It means that I have 'closed in' on you. I can send you to State's prison on two or three charges, and your mother with you to look after you there. Meyer, you thought you were playing your game well, but you made a mistake from the beginning. I had you 'shadowed' on every move you have made; there is but one way of escape for you."

"One way of escape?"

"Yes."

The baron saw that he had been beaten in the most complete manner. He saw that indeed there was no hope for him but in the mercy of the detective. The young man was no fool.

"How can I escape?"

"Surrender to me unharmed and uninjured Miss Amalie Speir. Do this and I will surrender the note, and you can keep the two thousand dollars. I permit the latter to save scandal."

"I accept your terms."

"So far so good, and now tell me why you sought to force this girl to marry you. Tell me the whole truth and I will pay you an additional thousand dollars."

"There is no need for me to conceal the facts."

"You are right."

"The girl is an heiress and does not know it."

"Tell me the facts."

"Her grandmother was a Mrs. Harold Stevens. Mrs. Stevens quarreled with her husband and they separated. The husband returned to America, Mrs. Stevens remained in Europe. Mrs. Richards made her acquaintance, and during their intimacy Mrs. Stevens revealed the fact that she had a daughter living in

America, and that she had deposited fifty thousand dollars to her daughter's credit to be surrendered upon identification. She gave Mrs. Richards a picture of her child and employed her to find the heiress, and placed matters in such shape that the money could be paid over upon proof. Mrs. Richards failed in finding the heiress until Miss Amalie Speir came to live with her, and then she recognized in that girl the heiress, and determined that I should marry her, and we would secure the deposit, which now amounts to nearly a hundred thousand dollars."

"But Amalie is not the heiress."

"No, her mother is the heiress, but had she become my wife we were to furnish evidence that the mother was dead, secure the money on the girl's wonderful resemblance to the picture of her mother. The money was left in such a manner that no legal steps were necessary."

"Amalie would not marry you?"

"No; and now the game is up."

"One more question: How did you learn that I was interested in the case and start to deceive me when we first met?"

"We were watching the mother after the disappearance, and learned that she had employed you. I knew all the time you were a detective, but you have beaten me; I surrender."

That very night Jack and Gil accompanied the baron to the place where Amalie Speir had been held a prisoner, and Jack had met face to face the beautiful girl who had so long filled his thoughts. It was morning ere he had finished the long story he had to relate to the beautiful girl, and when morning came he led Amalie to her mother's home. Words will never describe the joy and delight of that mother.

The baron quietly stole off to Europe. Jack had no desire to detain him or punish any one. He had wrought a successful "shadow" to the end and was content.

And now comes the most pleasant part of our narrative.

Mrs. Speir's heart was filled with gratitude, and the daughter, the beautiful Amalie, learned to admit more than gratitude. She gave her heart to the brave, persistent and determined young man who had done her and her mother such

signal service, and it was a glorious occasion when Jack led to the altar the bride he had won in such a strange and weird manner. We could write more, but we believe we have told the whole tale as concerns *facts*, and comments we will leave to our readers.

THE END.





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[Transcriber's Note: The original edition did not contain a Table of Contents. A Table of Contents has been prepared for this electronic edition. In addition, the following typographical errors present in the original book have been corrected.

In Chapter IV, "No, direct news" was changed to "No direct news", "Did you ever seen" was changed to "Did you ever see", and a colon was added after "but after a moment he said".

In Chapter V, "one of the loveliest creaures" has been changed to "one of the loveliest creatures".

In Chapter VI, "the demanor of the baron" has been changed to "the demeanor of the baron".

In Chapter VII, a semicolon following "preyed upon her health" was changed to a period.

In the advertisement for Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup, the hyphen in the word "fac-simile" was present in the original text.]

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