

STOLEN JEWELS

CHAPTER II.

After a storm comes a calm; so next morning the sun was shining brightly in the blue sky, and the earth had that clean, wholesome appearance always to be seen after heavy rains. The high wind had dried the streets, the drenched foliage of the trees in the Fitzroy Gardens looked fresh and green, and there was a slight chilliness in the atmosphere, which was highly invigorating. Indeed, it was like a spring morning, mildly inspiring; whilst all around there seemed to be a pleasant sense of new-born gladness quickening both animal and vegetable life.

After breakfast, Ezra, who was going to the office of The Penny Whistle, the paper for which he worked, asked Keith to walk into town with him, and as the young man had nothing particular to do, he gladly assented. They strolled slowly through the gardens, admiring the glistening green of the trees, the white statues sharply contrasted against their emerald background, and the vivid dashes of bright color given by the few flowers then in bloom.

Stewart appeared to have quite recovered from his megrims of the previous night, and strolled gaily along, every now and then inhaling a long breath of the keen air. Ezra, who was watching him closely, saw from his actions his intense appreciation of his surroundings, and was satisfied that the young man possessed in a high degree that poetical instinct which has such an affinity with the joyousness or gloom of Nature.

"Ah! this is a morning when it is good to live," said Keith brightly. "I always envied the satyre and dryades of heathendom, with their intense animal enjoyment of Nature—not sensuality, but exuberant capability of enjoying a simple life."

"Like that with which Hawthorne chided Donatello," suggested Ezra. "Poor Donatello!" said Stewart, with a sigh; "he is a delightful illustration of the proverb, 'where ignorance is bliss—he was happy till he loved—so was Undine till she obtained a soul.'"

"You seem to have read a great deal," observed Lazarus, looking at him.

"Oh, faith; my reading has been somewhat desultory," replied Stewart, carelessly. "All is fish that comes to my net, and the result is a queer jumble of information; but let us jump this pleasant gossiping and come down to this matter-of-fact world. How do you think I can better my position?"

"I hardly know as yet," replied the Jew, thoughtfully caressing his beard; "but if you want immediate work, I can put you in the way of obtaining employment."

"Literary work?"

"Not a very aristocratic one,—a well-known office."

"I hate the idea of being cribbed and confined in an office; it's

such an artificial existence. However, beggars can't be choosers, so tell me all about it."

"My father wants a clerk," said Ezra deliberately, "and if I recommend you I think you could get the position."

"Humph! And what is your father's occupation?"

"Not a very aristocratic one,—a pawnbroker."

Keith stopped short, and looked at his companion in surprise.

"I can imagine you being the son of a pawnbroker," he said in a puzzled tone.

"Why not?" asked Ezra serenely. "I must be the son of some one."

"Yes; but a pawnbroker; it's so horribly unpoetical. Your father ought to have been a man of letters—of vague speculations and abstract theories—a modern Rabbi Judah holding disputations about the Talmud."

Lazarus shrugged his shoulders, and walked slowly onward, followed by his companion.

"My dear lad, the days of Maimonides are past, and we are essentially a money-making race. The curse which Jehovah pronounced on the Jews was the same as that of Midas—they turn everything they touch into gold."

"A pleasant enough punishment," I told you I couldn't explain. Like Pope, I slipped in numbers, and the numbers came. I've no doubt they were sufficiently bad, I'm sure I don't know why all authors begin with verse; perhaps it's because rhymes are so easy—fountain suggests mountain, and dove is invariably followed by—"

"Have you had any articles accepted since your arrival in Melbourne?"

"One or two, but generally speaking, no one acknowledges that a possible Shakespeare or Dickens is embodied in me. I've sent plays to managers, which have been declined on the plea that all plays come from London. I have seen editors, and have been told there was no room on the press—publishers have seen me, and pointed out that a colonial novel means ruination—encouraging for the future brain-workers of Australia, isn't it?"

"We must all serve our apprenticeship," answered Lazarus, quietly. "The longest lane has a turning."

"No doubt; but my particular lane seems devilish long."

Ezra laughed, and they walked down Collins street, watching the

crowd of people hurrying along to business, the cabs darting here and there, and the cable tramcars sliding smoothly along. Pausing a moment near the Scotch Church they heard a street organ playing a bright melody.

"What tune is that?" asked Keith, as they resumed their walk. "Sounds awful pretty."

"Song from 'Prince Carnival,'" replied Ezra, referring to an opera then running at the Bon-Bon Theatre.

"Caprice sings it."

"Oh, Caprice. I'd like to see that opera," said Keith. "You might take me to the theatre to-morrow night to see it."

"Very well," assented Ezra. "You will like Caprice—she is very charming."

"And if rumor speaks truly, very wicked."

"Added to which, she is the best-hearted woman in the world," finished the Jew, dryly.

"What a contradiction," laughed Stewart.

"Women are always contradictory—'tis a privilege of the sex."

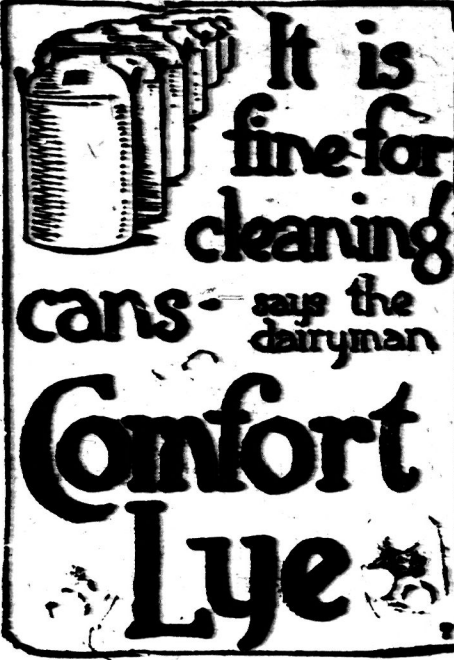
"And one they take full advantage of."

This airy badinage came to an end somewhat abruptly, for just as they arrived near the Victoria Coffee Palace they were started by the shriek of a woman.

On the other side of the street a gaudily-dressed girl was crying and wringing her hands, while a child of about seven years of age was standing paralyzed with fear directly in the way of a tram-car that came crashing down the incline. The two men stood horror-struck at what seemed to be the inevitable death of the child, for though the driver put on the brakes, the speed was too great, and destruction appeared inevitable. Suddenly Keith seemed to recover the use of his limbs, and with sudden spring, bounded forward and tore the child off the fatal track, himself falling to the ground.

He was not a moment too soon, for the child had fallen before the car, and a slower speed rolled past, and ultimately came to a standstill at the foot of the incline.

Stewart arose to his feet considerably shaken, his clothes torn and covered with mud, and a painful feeling in the arm, on which he had fallen. Ezra crossed over to him, and the rescued child was standing on the foot-path in the grasp of the gaudily-



It is fine for cleaning cans—save the dairyman

Comfort Lye

the least said the better, as it was merely a string of intrigues, concocted by peasant cunning and sparkling sarcasm, with occasional ballets intercalated.

As far as Keith could gather, it had something to do with the adventures of the quack Cagliostro in Rome, who was the comic man of the play, and figured in various disguises, the most successful being that of a prominent politician. Cagliostro tried to gull the affections of a young girl, betrothed to a mountebank called Prince Carnival, who thwarts him all through the play. The second act was the carnival at Rome, and a crowd of masquerade were singing a riotous chorus, and pelting one another with flowers. Suddenly, during a lull in this fantastic melody, a high, clear voice was heard exclaiming a brilliant exclamation, and immediately afterwards Caprice bounded gaily on to the stage, singing a melodious waltz song, to which the masquerade moved in measured time.

She was dressed in a baroque costume, a mask on her face, a foot's baton in her hand, and innumerable silver bells hanging from her cap and dress, which jingled incessantly as she danced. But what attracted Keith's attention were the diamonds she wore—several stars and a necklace. She seemed one splendid blaze of jewels, and his eyes ached watching the rapid gyrations of her restless figure.

"Are those paste jewels?" he asked Ezra, in a whisper.

(To be continued.)

New Growth Not Same

In many parts of the country second and third growth timber enters into the original trees. The Cascade Mountains, when first visited with the axe, were largely covered with spruces and hemlock. Such areas have been cut over have nearly away been taken possession of by beech, maple and birch, and of late years it has been noted that poplars and aspens show a strong disposition to grow up in abandoned clearings. Another case, and one in which the hand of man is formation, what generally has spread from the Eastern to the Western States.

THE BUSINESS WOMAN

To-day, more than ever before, is woman's opportunity. Many new occupations are now opened to her, which, before the war, she was deemed unfitted to fill. And truth to tell she has risen to the opportunity, and now shares many honors and respects in former times confined to men. But, as women are subject to more frequent fluctuations of health than men, many will be handicapped early, if they regard their health requirements too lightly.

The nervous strain, long hours and prolonged mental or physical fatigue thin the blood and weaken the nerves. Such conditions as women are now called upon to undergo can only be endured by a full-blooded constitution. This is as true for men as for women, only weaker women suffer sooner. The woman worker, in any line, requires her blood replenished frequently. She needs new rich blood to keep her health under the trying conditions of business life, and to fortify her system against the effects of overwork. This applies also to the woman in the home, who perhaps, has more worries and anxieties than usual. So let all girls and women take heed and renew their blood promptly at the first approach of pallor, lack of appetite, headache or back-ache. This can be best and most effectively accomplished by taking Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, which make new, rich blood and thus help womanhood so perfectly. No woman need fear failure of health if they take these pills occasionally to keep them well, or give them a fair trial if they find themselves run down.

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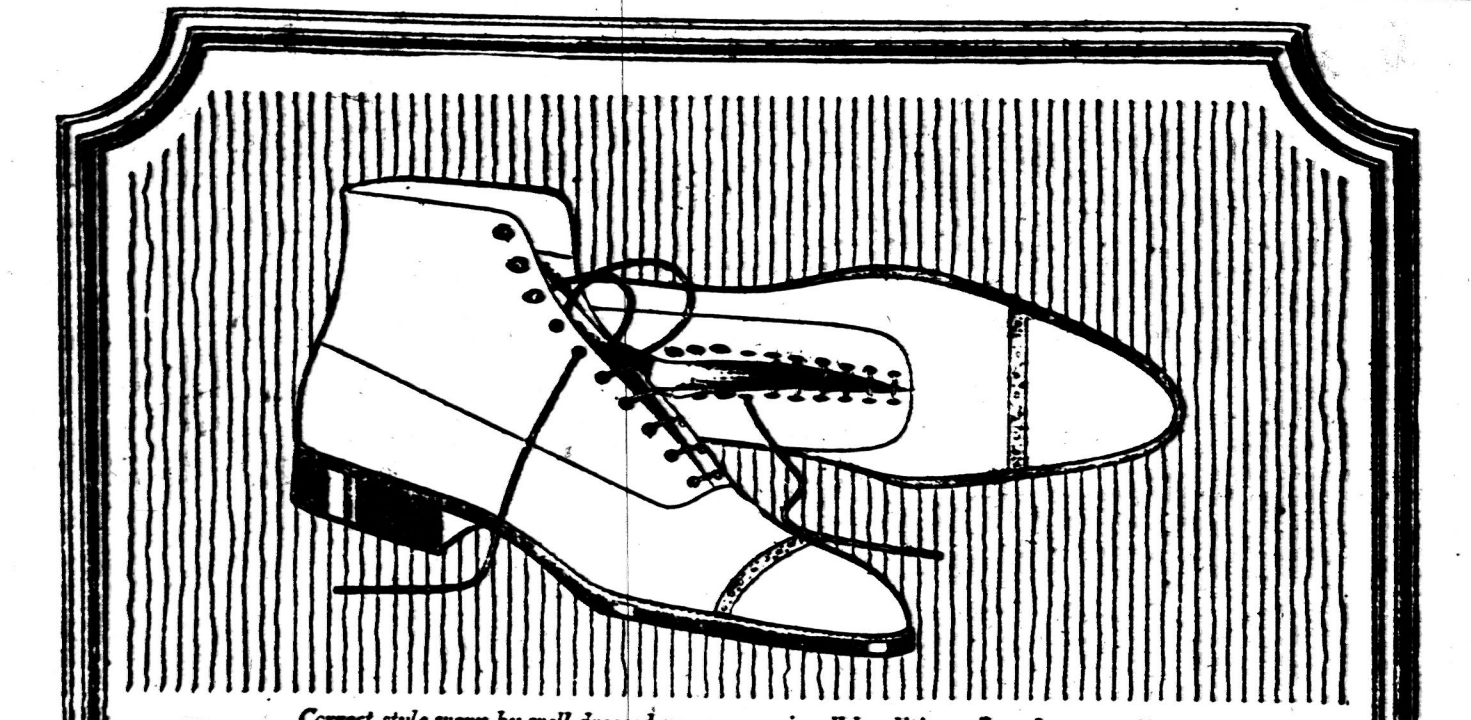
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The Sting Ray.

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Carnival" was over, and finding the salon tolerably full, Lazarus sat down near one of the small, marble-topped tables, and, lighting his cigarette, proceeded to point out to Keith all the notabilities present.

The first to whom he called Stewart's attention was a group of three. One, a tall, portly-looking man, with a red, clean-shaven face and black hair, dressed in a richly patterned evening dress, and chatted to a fair-haired youth with a supercilious smile, and a short, bald-headed old gentleman.

"You see those three?" said Ezra, indicating the group. "The dark man of the ponderous Samuel Johnson type is Ted Mortimer, the lessee of the theatre, the idiot with the eyeglass is Lord Santon, who has come out from London to see his baronies, and the adonestic party with the bald head is no less a personage than Mr. Columbus Wilks, the great globe-trotter, who is going to write a book about Australia and New Zealand."

"That will take him some time," observed Keith, with a smile.

"Not at all," said Lazarus, coolly. "He will run through the whole of Australia in a few weeks, be the guest of the governors of the different colonies, and then give his impressions of our government, politics, trade, amusements, and scenery in a series of brilliant articles, whose truth and accuracy will be quite in accordance with the time which he has taken to collect his materials."

"But he cannot judge of things so far away," said Keith, with a slight sneer. "He will see nothing of everything through the rose-colored spectacles of champagne and adulation, so his book will depict our land as a kind of nineteenth century Utopia."

"And Lord Santon?"

"An hereditary legislator, who is being feted for his title, and will go back to his ancestral walls with a kind of conviction that we are a kinder race of savages."

"You are severe," said Keith, in an amused tone; "you ought to give a lecture, entitled 'Men I Have Noticed'; it would certainly draw."

"Yes, all the women, not the men; they don't care for hearing remarks about themselves; but there is the bell for the rising of the curtain, so we had better go to our seats."

They left the now empty salon, and went into the dress circle, which holds the same rank in the colonies as the stalls do in the London theatres. Though the house was crowded, they succeeded in getting excellent seats, being, in fact, those always reserved for the critics of the Penny Whistle. The orchestra played a lively waltz, to which the gods in the gallery kept time, and then the curtain drew up on a charming scene, representing a square in Rome.

"Prince Carnival" was one of those frivolous French operas with a slightly naughty plot, witty dialogue, brilliant music, and plenty of opportunity for gay dresses and picturesque scenery. The principals and chorists consisted mostly of girls, with just a sprinkling of men, so that their deep voices might balance the shrillness of those of the women. Of the plot,

"What is the child's name?" asked Keith, as he went into the bar. "You seem to know her."

Ezra laughed softly, and ordered a glass of brandy for his friend.

"A curious way Fate has of working," he said, rather irreverently. "She has played into your hands to-day, for that child is Kitty Marchurst's, better known as 'Caprice.'"

"I didn't know she had a child," said Keith. "Who is the father? Is she married?"

"No, she is not married. As to the father, it's a long story; I'll tell you all about it some day. Meanwhile, you have done her a service she will never forget."

"Much good it will be to me," said Keith, disbelievingly.

"You've exactly hit it," said Ezra, composedly. "She can do you a great deal of good, seeing that she is the reigning favorite of the stage at present. I will introduce you to her to-night, and then—"

"Well?"

Ezra shrugged his shoulders, and replied slowly:

"The best friend an ambitious man can have is a clever woman; a wiser man than I made that remark."

CHAPTER III.

The Bon-Bon was the smallest, prettiest and most luxurious theatre in Melbourne, and was exclusively devoted to farcical comedy, burlesque and operette-bouffe, the latter class of entertainment being now the attraction. There was no pit, the circle and boxes being raised but little above the level of the stalls. The decorations were pink, white and gold, the seats being covered with pale, rose-colored plush, with curtains and hangings to match, while the electric lights, shining through pink globes, gave quite a warm glow to the theatre. The dome was decorated with allegorical figures representing Momus, the god of laughter, and Apollo, the god of music, while all around the walls were exquisitely-painted medallions of scenes from celebrated operas and burlesques. The proscenium was a broad frame of dully gold, the curtain of roseate plush, and on either side of the stage were life-like statues of Offenbach and Planche in white marble. Altogether, a charming theatre, more like a cosy drawing-room than a place of public entertainment.

At the entrance was a high flight of white marble stairs, leading to a wide corridor, the walls of which were hidden by enormous mirrors, and at intervals stood white marble statues of the Greek divinities, holding aloft electric lights. On the one side was the smoking-room—a luxurious lounge—and on the other a refreshment bar, all glass and glitter, which was crowded between the acts by the thrifty patrons of the play.

Ezra and Keith arrived about nine o'clock, just as the first act of "Prince

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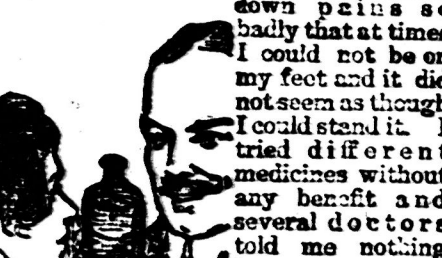
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