

TWO SLICK MEN.

BY DAVID FLEMING.

Hundreds of people know Charlie Davids as a clubman having bachelor rooms and living in fair style. Not one man, however, could more than guess the source from whence his income was derived. He had been a captain in her majesty's service, but had been obliged to resign for lack of funds to go the pace. There were hints about a rich aunt at home, a richer uncle in Australia, some sort of an investment in the United States, but no one had any certain information.

Davids was a gentleman, and no doubt that he stood well with most mothers who had marriageable daughters. The men who hinted that there was anything crooked about the ex-captain would have been taken to task at once, and yet there was one man in London who firmly believed it and meant to prove it. That man was McNulty, an old Scotland Yard detective. On a certain occasion while he was piping off a receiver of stolen goods he got sight of Charlie Davids in confidential confab with the man. He did not know him then, but he at once set out to learn who he was. In the course of a few weeks he sat down and summed up his case as follows:

"Davids is crooked because he has business with 'fences.' His income is a liberal one, but cannot be traced to any honest source. At three different country houses, to which he has been invited there have been robberies. He has got on to the fact that I am piping him off. I got his valet drunk and pumped him, and the man was promptly discharged. He will give me a long fight, but I will trap him."

Davids also sat down and reasoned. "McNulty saw me talking with old Bones," he mused, "and that was reason enough for him to spot me. He has followed me on the street and pumped my man. He is evidently suspicious. He knows of the robberies and while he cannot connect me with them he will set traps for me in future. Look out for McNulty."

From that day on for the next six months it was McNulty versus Davids—Davids versus McNulty. The fact that suspicion rested upon him even in the mind of one man served to make the ex-captain bolder than before. Four or five robberies occurred during the six months that left no doubt in McNulty's mind as to who was the perpetrator, and yet he could get no hold on the man he was shadowing. For instance, Davids accompanied Lord Rothsay home in a cab after the theater and a dinner. My lord was drowsy and couldn't tell who his friend was next morning. He had been robbed of a watch, pium, rings and purse, but he would have knocked McNulty down had the detective suggested that Davids reaped the benefit of the plunder.

What the detective looked for was a straight case, and being backed in it by the Yard, he was given all necessary assistance. It thus came to his notice that Charlie Davids was invited down to Squire Huntington's for two weeks' shooting, and he had a list of all other guests. Among them was Lady Isabel Gray, who never moved out of her own house without carrying a peck or so of jewelry with her. When it was suggested to Squire Huntington that some of the "fancy" from London might trouble him during the party he willingly permitted McNulty to establish himself in the house as a footman. A second man from the Yard was given a temporary berth in the stables and the new assistant parlor maid was one of the sharpest female detectives on the staff. They were after a slick man.

McNulty was so well disguised that his own wife didn't know him, and Charlie Davids walked smilingly into the trap prepared for him. Care was taken not to arouse the slightest suspicion on his part, and it was arranged without the squire's wife being any the wiser that his room should be the one directly across that of Lady Gray. He was athletic and nifty, and a sheet dropped from his window would enable him to enter hers. Temptation was to be thrown at his head, so to speak, while McNulty watched outside and the assistant parlor maid kept vigil in the hall. Lady Gray's rubies and diamonds were worth a fortune, and as McNulty thought of them he chuckled to himself:

"There isn't a man on top of this earth who wouldn't make a try for them under the circumstances. I am as sure to lay hands on Davids as I am to see the sun rise."

It didn't turn out so, however. Every night for seven days the double watch was stationed and nothing came of it. On the afternoon of the eighth day, while the men were all in the covers shooting and the women scattered about the house, and while Lady Gray was lying down in her room for a brief nap, her whole outfit of jewelry was taken as if by invisible hands. Every male guest was in the field gun in hand; every servant could account for his or her time to a second. Lady Gray's door was locked, and the jewels had been taken by some one finding entrance at the open window. A gardener had been engaged all the afternoon trimming a rosebush that grew under that window and

a part of the time he had used a ladder. He declared that he had not left his work for a moment. He was searched and questioned, but even the chagrined and indignant McNulty believed in his innocence. Inquiries cautiously made in regard to Charlie Davids brought out the fact that he was a mile away at the moment the robbery occurred. The haul amounted to about £60,000, and Scotland Yard got the worst black eye it ever received.

Six months later the ex-captain, for good and sufficient reasons, took up his permanent abode in Paris. He had been there a year or more when he and McNulty met on the street one day. The detective was invited to have a smoke and a drink, and as they sat in Davids' luxurious quarters the baffled officer musingly observed:

"Davids, that robbery at Henderson's was a very queer thing. The slick one has got clear off with the goods and can never be meddled with, but I should like to hear what you think about it."

"I have often thought of the matter," quietly replied the ex-captain, "and it is quite clear to me. In the first place, the thief, whoever he was, spotted you in spite of your disguise. Then he got on to the other two. Then he saw that things had been made too easy. He waited till all the men were in the field, and then, although he was not missed, he slipped aside, donned the dress of a gardener and made for the house. He reached it as the man at work on the rosebush went to the barn for a moment to drink with the coachman. The man was not absent for five minutes, but he lied about it. In that five minutes the thief ascended to the room, got the box of jewels and descended and made off, and he was lucky enough to don his own dress, secure the box and rejoin the hunt without having been missed. Luck does attend some folks you know."

"Y-e-s, I know it does," slowly replied McNulty as he nodded his head and drew at his cigar a little more vigorously.

"Anything else?" asked the ex-captain after a long pause.

"No, nothing else," was the reply. "I have accepted your view of the case, and I shan't let it worry me any longer, particularly as the thief is no longer living in England."

Surprise For Jackson.

Jackson was a shorthand clerk, a jovial and happy-go-lucky fellow. Punctuality was no characteristic of his, and he was frequently in hot water with his superiors on that account. It was only natural, therefore, that he should look out for more congenial surroundings. An advertisement appeared in the daily papers:

WANTED, Smart Young Man, good shorthand writer and correspondent. Good salary for suitable applicant.

Thereupon Jackson at once resolved to try his luck, and replied in the following terms:—
DEAR SIR,—Seeing your advertisement in the 'Witness,' I beg to tender you my services. I am a capital shorthand writer and of gentlemanly appearance. I should be pleased to call upon you if desired.

About four days afterwards the principal called Jackson into his private office. "Good morning, Jackson. I suppose you're going to leave us?"

"Well, sir, not that I am aware of," stammered Jackson, in reply.

"Well, at any rate, you are applying for another situation, which I suppose is pretty much the same thing. You remember saying what a gentlemanly appearance you'd got?"

Visions of the advertisement now fitted before Jackson, and he realized what an ass he had made of himself.

"Well, now," said the principal, "you've been applying for your own situation, and I'll let you have it if you'll promise to be more punctual in future."

And Jackson took the advice.

Overfurnishing.

Of late years there has been a sort of mild craze for filling rooms with all sorts of useless things under the notion that in this way artistic effects can be added to the home. In many cases, perhaps in most, the result has been that of overcrowding and meaningless gathering together of articles having no relation to one another, ornaments being used without any thought as to their harmony with any other furnishing, merely because they struck the fancy. Of course, pretty, dainty objects are placed in a parlor, or any room to adorn it; but there is no art in the meaningless and absurd articles, such as gilded rolling-pins, painted shovels, dangling ribbons stuck on everything, from chairs to coal-hod or wood-box. The men of the family will be delighted at their emancipation from "all things crazy," and will take new comfort in the air-space and floor-room that will be given them in consequence of the banishment of such useless matter. Indeed, the rooms should look more attractive and inviting than before. The one or two good engravings on the walls will be seen to better advantage since the attention is not distracted by so many small ornaments, and such a want of harmony. The two, three, half dozen good books on the table will give more pleasure to the waiting caller than any number of Japanese fans and parasols, beribboned bottles, or pieces of bad needlework. You

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We spend 14 days in making each bottle of Liquezone; but the result is liquid oxygen—a product which will cure diseases which no medical skill can cure without it. It is now employed in every great hospital, and endorsed by every medical authority, the world over.

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Not Up to Date.

Some people find it hard to keep their stock of information about men and things up to the present moment, and are consequently betrayed into asking questions about dead-and-gone people as if they were living. A startling instance of this was the following inquiry, received by a firm of well-known music publishers in London from the organist of a church at New London, Connecticut:

"Would you kindly inform me how a letter would reach Mr. Ben Jonson, author of the song-words, 'Drink to me only with thine eyes'?"

This, perhaps, is an even more flagrant failure to "keep posted" than that involved in an application received from a dealer in fishing-tackle by a firm of publishers, for the present address of "Mr. Isaac Walton, author of 'The Complete Angler.'"

Mr. W. S. Gilbert was once at the house of a wealthy but ignorant and pretentious woman. She asked Mr. Gilbert several questions about musical composers, to show that she knew all about them.

"And what about Bach?" she asked. "Is he composing nowadays?"
"No, ma'am," answered Gilbert; "he is decomposing!"

"Sir," said an irate little gentleman of about four foot eleven inches to a six-foot man, "I will have you know, sir, that I have been well brought up."

"Possibly," was the answer, "but you have not been brought up far."



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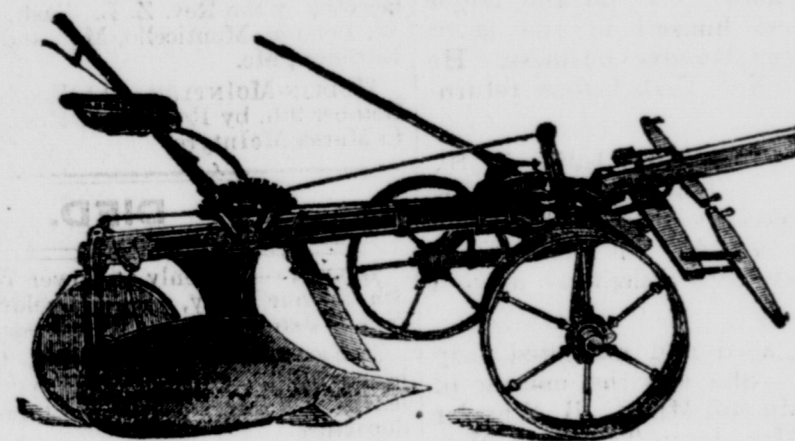
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