

Tricked and Tracked.

PART I.—TRICKED.

It is now some years ago since an incident occurred in my life which may possibly prove interesting to those who, like myself, are too easily imposed upon; and although by the recital, I hold myself open to the ridicule of the mind masculine, which, by its own showing, is never duped or deceived by imposters, yet, in order to warn those of my own sex who are more readily wrought upon, I will narrate as nearly as I can a strange adventure which befell me during the winter of 1869.

I am the wife of an English officer, and at the time of which I write was residing in Paris. Late in June my husband had received orders to be in readiness to sail with his regiment for C. the following month, but as his absence was not likely to be of long duration I had decided not to accompany him, and had decided to make Paris my headquarters during the time of our enforced separation.

My husband's body servant fell suddenly ill, and sent in his resignation the very week they were expecting to start. We at once made inquiries on all sides for a man competent to fill the vacant post. In this instance fortune favored us. Just as we were beginning to despair of success a Frenchman spoke very tolerable English applied for the situation, and his references being satisfactory we hastily engaged him, heartily glad to have brought an unpleasant affair to so fortunate a conclusion.

Although I had many friends residing in Paris, I had no near relations I could ask to reside with me during my temporary exile; my husband's people all lived in Ireland, and, with the exception of a few scattered cousins, my only existing relative was one brother (some years younger than myself), to whom I was greatly attached, but who for years past had been a source of constant anxiety to me by reason of his wild and reckless manner of living. My husband had assisted him in numerous difficulties, but his patience had at last become exhausted; and he had to tell me plainly and decisively that only in case of extremity, such as an illness which would really incapacitate him from work or from such urgent cause, would he supply him with pecuniary help. Several letters passed between them at this period; and then followed an interval of silence, which remained unbroken up to the time of which I write. This naturally caused me much uneasiness at times; but I could only hope he had at length felt the necessity of putting his shoulder to the wheel, and was striving to regain the good name he had lost by his own foolish conduct.

Time passed slowly away. One evening (I remember it was the 22d of January) a note was brought me by one of the servants of the hotel, who said the bearer was waiting my reply. The letter was neatly folded and addressed in a woman's handwriting to "The Lady of Captain Ralph Branscombe," and was marked "Private." I read the following:—

"MADAME—I write this to you on behalf of your brother, Monsieur Richard Willoughby, who lies at this house dying. Would you be so good as you must come at once—without hesitation. Madame, the poor gentleman is very sick—like to death in mind and body—for he lies in fear of arrest, and worse than arrest, even in his dying state. He prays you ask your husband to assist him, as he promised in his last sore strait. No one but Captain Branscombe may accompany you, or know of your errand; you must bring with you fifty pounds in gold, if possible. English money will do, but not notes. Your escort will only be a little child, but he knows every turn of the way you will have to traverse. Come on foot—to drive might excite suspicion. Monsieur repeats, no one but 'Ralph' may come with you; he is too ill to write anything more than his name, which I enclose."

Here followed a few directions about the way we were to take and an injunction to bring the letter to guide myself. Then the name "Marie Tison" was enclosed. I was a scrap of paper bearing my brother's signature, which I at once saw was genuine.

I turned cold as I finished the perusal of this letter, but, commanding my voice as well as I was able, I bade the servant send the bearer to me at once. I was not long in suspense; the door of the salon soon reopened and a little figure appeared on the threshold. A fragile looking boy, about eleven years of age, dressed in a dark blue blouse which hung loosely about him, and wearing on his head a red knitted fisherman's cap, which was pulled down over his forehead—a boy whose pale face was lighted up with large dark eyes, their long drooping lashes sweeping his delicate cheeks. He shut the door softly behind him and gave a swift searching glance around the room; then, as though abashed by my presence, he stood with downcast eyes and his hands loosely folded before him awaiting my questioning.

"My boy," I said addressing him in French, "can you conduct me to this gentleman who is so ill?"

Again his dark eyes wandered round the room, as though to reassure himself that we were alone, and then he replied softly in English, though with a foreign accent:—

"Surely, madame, I will; but you must be with all speed, or it will be a lost journey."

Telling him to wait for me where he was, I left the room and hastened to prepare for my expedition. Had thirty sovereigns in my possession, as it happened, and, making up the sun required as nearly as I could in French money, I placed it carefully in a small bag, which I hung on my arm. Dressing myself in a dark bonnet and travelling cloak, I descended quietly to my apartment, without giving intimation of my departure to any one. The child stood precisely as I had left him, with the light falling on his pale face, and his hands loosely locked in one another. I told him I was ready to start, and walked to the table by which I had been sitting to get the letter the woman had written, and which had caused me so much anxiety.

The boy then approached me, and, taking my hand in his cold ones, said, in a whisper, as his piteous eyes filled with tears:—

"Madame, the gentleman bade me say to you, for the love of heaven, and

for the sake of your dead mother, bring the money."

I showed him the little sack I carried under my cloak, and he was satisfied; we then left the hotel silently, scarcely noticed by the servants busied about the entrance hall. Once out in the open air, I seemed to breathe more freely; but my heart was too heavy for speaking, and we pursued our way in silence.

After a time, we turned into an unfrequented part of the town and the lights became less brilliant and the streets more deserted. Suddenly the boy stopped and seemed uncertain as to which road he should take. He paused a moment; then turning to me, said:—

"Madame, I fear I have misused my little; but my mother told me that a little would give some directions in her letter; will madame give me that I may right myself?"

Without thinking I handed him his mother's letter; and, standing beneath a neighboring lamp, he read over slowly the directions contained in the note; then, holding it still open in his hand, he resumed his walk, referring to it every now and then, as though still in doubt as to our whereabouts. There was a certain mysterious quiet about the neighborhood we were in that preyed upon my spirits—a certain silence I could not fathom, and my courage began to flag strangely as we continued our lonely road. I experienced a sensation of intense relief, therefore, when my young guide stopped suddenly before a tall dark house in a quiet street, and I listened eagerly for an answer to his gentle tap at the closed door. A voice from within asked softly in French, "How fares it, my son?" and in English the boy answered, "Safely and fairly. Open the door." The door was then unbarred and opened without the least noise, just wide enough to admit us, and we entered a hall lighted by a small lamp held by a tall woman poorly clad. The flickering flame of the lamp gave forth so dim a light that I could not distinguish her features, and she spoke in a voice scarcely above a whisper. I inquired eagerly for my brother, and begged her to conduct me to him at once. She shook her head sadly, and then said:—

"Ah, Madame, your coming may do great things for him; you will be able to ease the poor mind that runs on nothing but money, money, day and night, without ceasing."

She barred the door by which we had entered, and then preceded me up a broken stair case, the boy following us with the feeble oil lamp. The house sounded hollow, and our footsteps echoed clearly as we went. Presently we stopped before the door of a room which I imagine to have been at the back of the house, and the woman, entering first, beckoned me to follow her.

In one corner of a large, almost empty apartment, was a bed, shrouded by thick dark curtains, in the grate a low charcoal fire was burning. I made at once for the corner where the bed was, and was about to undraw the curtains which concealed from my view the poor boy I had come so mysteriously to visit. Suddenly from behind me a cloth was tied tightly over the whole of my face, a strange burning sense of suffocation overspread my senses, and I remember nothing more; and as I awoke in my bedroom at the Hotel de L., with my head aching strangely and a benumbed sensation pervading my whole frame. My maid, an English doctor with whom I was slightly acquainted, and another doctor who was a stranger to me, were anxiously watching for my return to consciousness. It was quite late and the sun was shining into the room. As one by one the events of the preceding night rose before my mind, I was utterly at a loss to imagine how I had been rescued from that horrible house and brought back to the hotel in safety.

The story was soon told. The night porter, coming on duty at one o'clock, had found me lying on the steps leading to the side door of the hotel, which opened into an unfrequented passage or street. Finding I was unconscious, he had summoned the day porter, who was waiting for him, to render assistance; and this man knowing me by sight, identified me as a lady staying at the hotel. He at once reported me. My maid (who was waiting for me, wondering at my prolonged absence) speedily procured the services of two medical men from the adjoining neighborhood, and they had since been using every method to restore me to consciousness, when I might perchance unfold the mystery of my strange return.

There was no trace of any violence having been used, nor any proof by which they could discover where I had been. The only thing they had found upon me, which was not my own, was a handkerchief tightly clasped in my hand, on which were embrodered my brother Richard's initials, and which I at once recognized as having been worked by me some years previously for my unhappy brother. The money had, of course, all been taken; also the rings, brooch and locket I had worn. My wedding ring was left, and the bag in which I had put the money was still hanging from my arm.

As soon as I was able, I told the doctors all I could remember of that night's experiences, and, at the conclusion of the recital, they both advised me to put the matter into the hands of the police. I entreated that it might be done as privately as possible; my brother's name being so mixed up in the affair that outsiders would most probably be led to believe that he was an accomplice in the robbery, though in my own mind I felt certain that he was more innocent against than sinning.

The sergeant of police who waited on me showed great interest in my adventure, but I could plainly see that, notwithstanding all his civility, his suspicions pointed at once to my brother as chief agent in the case. I could swear to the signature being genuine. The handkerchief, too, I recognized. Alas! it still seemed only too certain that my brother had at all events been the companion of these people, and must have discussed our affairs freely with them, even if he were not more criminally concerned in the dark transaction.

The Parisian police made every effort to trace the offenders, but in vain; house after house was searched in the quarter

to which I believed myself to have been taken, but no trace of the woman or child could be found. And so for a time the matter dropped.

PART II.—TRACKED.

Two years passed, and the night of my strange adventure was like a dream to me. We left France after my husband's return from abroad, and, on his quitting the army we took up our residence in London. I had meanwhile received several letters from my brother, written from the Cape, and, in answer to one I wrote him in reference to the robbery, he replied with the most solemn assertions of his entire ignorance of the transaction. I believed him. My husband was silent on the subject, and I felt thankful the Cape was so far off. We seldom referred to the circumstances before recorded, for I could not bear to recall the horrors of that evening in the dark, desolate house.

One morning, however, I was startled by my husband saying suddenly, as he looked up from a letter he was reading: "I say, Madge, they think they have found a clue at last to your Parisian exploit; read that."

He passed me over an official looking letter, and I read what followed:—

"BUREAU DE POLICE, PARIS.
"TO CAPTAIN BRANSCOMBE:
"MONSIEUR—We believe we have in custody the boy who acted so prominent a part in the robbery committed on madame your wife in January, 1869. He is concerned in an affair which bears a close resemblance to the one in which your lady was the victim. Will she come herself and, if she can identify him, thus help to clear up a matter which has long puzzled us all?"

(Signed) C. W.

The thought of proceeding in this case at first very distasteful to me; but so much might be brought to light by making the effort, that I resolved, by Ralph's advice, to face the disagreeable task; and accordingly we started for Paris that night.

I will not enter into the details of the case then under examination. Suffice to say it was a robbery committed on the wife of a Colonel Styles under circumstances closely resembling those of which I was made the dupe. In this instance, however, a boy had been seized on suspicion, and it was this same boy I was called on to identify. I had not much difficulty in the matter, although he had altered in the time that had elapsed since that memorable evening, there was still those remarkable eyes, with their long drooping lashes, and the pale delicate face, to bear witness to his identity; and without the least hesitation I declared him to be the same boy who had guided me to the house where I had been robbed on the evening of January 22, 1869.

The boy did not seem at all disconcerted at recognition, and even smiled in a slightly suspicious manner, as though he felt himself secure from any discovery resulting from my identification. The authorities had been unable, as yet to elicit any information from him, he baffled all their attempts at questioning him with a skill and cunning almost incredible in so young an offender. All at once I was surprised at an exclamation from my husband, who stood near me:—

"Good heavens!" he said half aloud, "I believe I see through the whole plan; what a blockhead I was not to have thought of it before! But it was neatly planned and carried out, by Jove it was!"

He crossed the hall to where Colonel Styles was sitting, and after speaking to him in a low, hurried manner, he asked leave to call a witness, who he believed might throw some light on the matter in hand. Permission having been granted, he said, in a loud voice:—

"The man calling himself Jules Feter, boy servant to Colonel Styles, and now present in this hall, is requested to stand forward."

For the first time since our entrance the boy's face fell, and he looked perplexed and rather dismayed. There was a movement in the crowd, as though some one was trying to effect a departure from the door, but the attempt being promptly frustrated, I saw them lead into the witness box the French servant who had accompanied my husband abroad, but who had left his service on his return to England. After some time passed in making inquiries, and eliciting very little from the cautious man before us, he was searched, and many letters of his present employer's were found upon him; also a pocket-book which contained memoranda, proving a great deal against himself and his two accomplices—his wife and the boy in the dock before us. No one else seemed concerned in his fraudulent transactions.

On further search the whole system of his roguery was unfolded piece by piece. He would take service with gentlemen about to travel, imposing on their credulity with false references and gaining their confidence by his well-trained demeanor and intelligent conversation. Once safely out of the country he would commence his nefarious work, and, with the aid of his clever wife and child, carry them out successfully. Nothing was ever forgotten that could lead to the desired end. No fraud was started until the details had been thoroughly mastered by his accomplices and the plan well matured. It was impossible to say how many people he had defrauded in different ways.

He had soon found out how matters stood with his husband and brother, partly from his own researches, and partly from a conversation he overheard between his master and a brother officer—and considering the situation a capital one for practicing his system upon, he had at once communicated with his wife, and unfolding his plans to her, sending her the signature abstracted from one of Richard's letters to act as a decoy; and also the handkerchief which Ralph happened to take with him, to throw suspicion on my brother as being accessory to the robbery.

Before the examination concluded the sergeant, who had been so long on the look out for the perpetrators of the deed, asked my husband how he had recognized the boy as being the son of his former servant. Ralph laughed slightly as he replied:—

"I believe I should have made the best detective of you all had I been the spot. I thought I recalled the boy's features as being in some way familiar to me, but could not determine of whom he reminded me; how- ever he stooped to speak to the warder the mystery was revealed in a moment by a strange stroke of luck."

Turning to the boy who lost all his courage and was looking crest-fallen and frightened, my husband bade him hold down his head. For the moment he refused, but on the order being peremptorily given he obeyed reluctantly.

From one side of his head to the other, contrasted strangely with his dark curls, was a streak of white

hair, about half an inch wide, which shone like silver in the sun light; then bidding the elder man remove the cap he wore, he had him also to stoop forward, and the elder was at length forced to admit the proofs were too strong for him to battle against. He begged that his wife—to whom he seemed really attached—might be treated leniently from the fact that she was at length forced to admit the proofs were too strong for her to battle against. The statement was afterwards proved to be correct, and the woman was removed to a hospital, where she lingered but a short time. The father and son were fully committed for trial and daily found guilty. The sentences imposed upon them were of a severe nature, owing to the number of accusations brought against them.

I can only hope when their term of imprisonment has expired they may find better able to resist their machinations than was "the lady of Captain Ralph Branscombe," who fell so easy a prey to their duplicity and cunning on that memorable evening of January 22, 1869.

Traveler's Column.
D. T. JOHNSTONE.
Chatham Livery Stables.
Regular Coaches to trains leaving and arriving at CHATHAM RAILWAY STATION.
Office and Stables - - - Water Street, Chatham.

Notice.
I have appointed William O'Neil of Newcastle my Deputy for the County of Northumberland to whom I may apply for a Sheriff of Northumberland County.

Notice to Trespassers.
All persons are hereby forbidden to land on Bay du Vin Island, as has been the practice with some in the past, who have committed trespasses on my estate by cutting trees and doing other injuries. All such persons will hereafter be dealt with according to law.
J. & T. WILLISTON.

Medical.
JOHN M'CURDY, M. D.,
PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON,
CHATHAM, N. B.

DR. CHANNING'S
Sarsaparilla
FOR THE BLOOD.

CURES
SYPHILIS,
SCORFULA,
SALT-RHEUM,
ALL
SKIN-DISEASES,
TUMORS,
ENLARGEMENT
OF THE
LIVER AND
SPLEEN,
RHEUMATIC
AFFECTIONS,
DISEASES
OF THE
KIDNEYS,
BLADDER
AND
URINARY
ORGANS,
LEUCORRHEA,
CATARRH,
AND
ALL DISEASES
RESULTING
FROM A
DEPRAVED
AND
IMPURE
CONDITION
OF THE
BLOOD.

MANCHESTER HOUSE.
JUST OPENED.
Ladies' Camels Hair and
Felt Hats,
BONNET & HAT SHOPS,
FLOWERS, &c., &c.,
POINT LACE BRAID
& NEW LACE LINEN THREAD,
BERLIN WOOLS, &c.,
and a variety of
FANCY GOODS.
—AT THE—
GOLDEN BALL,
BOOT & SHOE STORE
—AND—
Furniture Emporium,
Chatham, N. B., May, 1880.

Improved, Adjustable, Dominion
WIRE MATTRESS.
Can be found all the newest styles of Beds and Shoes of the best quality procurable, and sold at the lowest possible rates.
The latest novelty in the Furniture line, is the
VELVET
Photograph Frames,
IN CHOICE VARIETY,
AT THE MIRAMICHI BOOKSTORE.
For Sale.
For sale by the subscribers, their valuable property situated in the centre of the town of Chatham, being the stand and premises where they formerly conducted their business, is a large and commodious, has a large frontage on the river, is a desirable site for a residence, or a yard, warehouse or erections of any description. There is a store and small warehouse on the premises also a small house connected with it, and altogether an excellent property for commercial or other purposes. For terms apply to
D. & J. RITCHIE, & Co.
Newcastle, March 25, '80.

NEW
Drug Store.
(Opposite Hon. Wm. Muirhead's.)
CHATHAM.
HAYING completed our arrangements, we now offer to the public, a well selected stock of
PURE DRUGS
PATENT MEDICINES,
TOILET ARTICLES, &c.
and respectfully invite inspection.
MACKENZIE, & CO.
June 1st, 1880.

CARD.
T. M. HARRINGTON.
THE PIANO AND ORGAN
would respectfully announce that he is prepared to give MUSIC LESSONS on very reasonable terms

Law, etc.
THEOPH. S. DUBRISAY,
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW,
CONVEYANCER, &c., &c.,
BATHURST, N. B.
E. P. Williston,
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW,
Notary Public, Conveyancer, &c.,
Office—Over Mr. John Branscombe's, Entrance
Side Door.
Newcastle, Miramichi, N. B.
JNO. J. HARRINGTON,
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW,
NOTARY PUBLIC, &c.
OFFICE, UP-STAIRS, McLAHLAN'S BUILDING
Water St. Chatham.

General Business.
WHY WILL YOU BE BALD?
WHEN YOU CAN BUY
CARBOLINE,
The Greatest Hair Restorer in the World,
as well as all varieties of Patent Medicine ever
offered in Miramichi, N.B.

General Business.
AT
H. WYSE'S,
NEWCASTLE.
Receiving this day, at H. Wyse's:
MAPLE SUGAR, PRUNES,
TAMARINDS, ORANGES, LEMONS,
GREEN & DRIED APPLES,
RAISINS, CITRUS,
CITRON PEEL, SUGAR,
BUTTER, PEAS, RICE,
BARLEY, SPLIT BEANS,
HOPS, PRESERVED GINGER,
PICKLED LAMBS TONGUES,
MARMALADE, PICKLES,
ALL KINDS SPICES,
FANCY BISCUIT & CAKE,
BREAD OF ALL KINDS.
Expected daily, Hams & Bacon,
STEAMER LORNE.
To be sold by private contract the Steamer
"Lorne" 4 tons burden and nine horse power.
Her dimensions are 4 ft. 10 in. beam and 12 ft. 6 in.
propeller. She is built of birch, pine and juniper,
and was launched at the best of the four in my
application to the subscribers.
WILLIAM CARUTHERS, Proprietor, N. B.

General Business.
Pungs & Sleighs.
New and second hand PUNGS and SLEIGHS are
for sale at the Shop of the Subscriber, St. John
Street, Chatham.
Repairing, Painting & Upholstering,
BLACKSMITH WORK
—AND—
GENERAL JOBBING.
In the CARRIAGE and SLEIGH business, promptly
attended to on reasonable terms.
Old Pungs or Sleighs, taken in part payment for
new ones.
ALEX. ROBINSON.

General Business.
Notice.
The subscriber will open up in a few days a very
excellent line of English Scotch and Canadian
Fur cloths, and many more of the same quality.
Also a beautiful and choice lot of English Clothing,
personally selected in Montreal.
W. S. MORRIS.
N. B.—These goods will admit of my making
suits 10 per cent less than elsewhere, and at
moderate prices.

General Business.
DRESSMAKING.
MRS. JAMES CORMACK,
begs to inform the ladies of Miramichi, that she is
prepared to attend to any orders in the above
line with which she may be favored.
She has associated with her her sister, Miss
Mayberry, who has had an experience of several
years at the business, and is confident
of being able to satisfy patrons in both styles and
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moderate prices.

General Business.
REPAIRING, PAINTING & UPHOLSTERING,
BLACKSMITH WORK
—AND—
GENERAL JOBBING.
In the CARRIAGE and SLEIGH business, promptly
attended to on reasonable terms.
Old Pungs or Sleighs, taken in part payment for
new ones.
ALEX. ROBINSON.

General Business.
DRESSMAKING.
MRS. JAMES CORMACK,
begs to inform the ladies of Miramichi, that she is
prepared to attend to any orders in the above
line with which she may be favored.
She has associated with her her sister, Miss
Mayberry, who has had an experience of several
years at the business, and is confident
of being able to satisfy patrons in both styles and
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General Business.
Notice.
The subscriber will open up in a few days a very
excellent line of English Scotch and Canadian
Fur cloths, and many more of the same quality.
Also a beautiful and choice lot of English Clothing,
personally selected in Montreal.
W. S. MORRIS.
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