

LITERATURE, &c.

The British Magazines.

From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A POLICE OFFICER.

MARY KINGSFORD.

On reaching the spot where she had disappeared, I could not at first see her in consequence of the dark mourning dress she had on. Presently I caught sight of her, still upborne by her spread clothes, but already carried by the swift current beyond my reach. The only chance was to crawl along a piece of round timber which projected further into the river, and by the end of which she must pass. This I effected with some difficulty; and laying myself out at full length, vainly endeavored, with outstretched, straining arms, to grasp her dress. There was nothing left for it but to plunge in after her. I will confess that I hesitated to do so. I was encumbered with a heavy dress, and there was no time to put it off; and moreover, like most inland men, I was but an indifferent swimmer. My indecision quickly vanished. The wretched girl, though gradually sinking, had not yet uttered a cry, or appeared to struggle; but when the chilly waters reached her lips, she seemed suddenly to revive to a consciousness of the horror of her fate: she fought wildly with the engulfing tide, and shrieked piteously for help. Before one could count ten I had seized her by the arm, and lifted her head above the surface of the river. As I did so I felt as if suddenly encased and weighed down by leaden garments, so quickly had my thick clothing and high boots sucked in the water. Vainly, thus burdened and impeded, did I endeavor to regain the raft; the strong tide bore us outwards, and I glared round, in inexpressible dismay, for some means of extrication from the frightful peril in which I found myself involved. Happily right in the direction the tide was drifting us, a large barge lay moored by a chain cable. Eagerly I seized and twined one arm firmly round it, and thus partially secure, hallooed with renewed power for assistance. It soon came: a passer-by had witnessed the flight of the girl and my pursuit, and was already hastening with others to our assistance. A wherry was unmoored: guided by my voice they soon reached us; and but a brief interval elapsed before we were safely housed in an adjoining tavern.

A change of dress, with which the landlord kindly supplied me, and a couple of glasses of hot brandy and water, soon restored warmth and vigor to my chilled and partially-numbed limbs; but more than two hours elapsed before Mary, who had swallowed a good deal of water, was in a condition to be removed. I had just sent for a cab, when two police-officers well known to me, entered the room with official briskness. Mary screamed, staggered towards me, and clinging to my arm, besought me with frantic earnestness to save her.

'What is the meaning of all this?' I exclaimed, addressing one of the police officers.

'Merely,' said he, 'that the young woman that is clinging so closely to you has just been committing a most audacious robbery.'

'Oh, no—no—no!' broke in the terrified girl.

'Oh, of course you'll say so,' continued the officer. 'All I know is, that the diamond brooch was found snugly hid away in your own box. But come, we have been after you for the last three hours; so you had better come along at once.'

'Save me! save me!' sobbed poor Mary, as she tightened her grasp upon my arm, and looked up with beseeching agony into my face.

'Be comforted,' I whispered; 'you shall go home with me. Calm yourself, Miss Kingsford,' I added in a louder tone; 'I no more believe you have stolen a diamond brooch than that I have.'

'Bless you, Mr Waters,—bless you!' she gasped during the intervals of her convulsive sobs.

'There is some wretched misapprehension in this business, I am quite sure,' I continued; 'but at all events I shall bail her—for this night at least.'

'Bail her!' that is hardly regular,' replied the officer.

'No; but you will tell the superintendent that Mary Kingsford is now in my custody, and that I answer for her appearance to-morrow.'

The men hesitated; but I stood too well at head quarters for them to do more than hesitate; and the cab I had ordered being just then announced, I passed with Mary out of the room as quickly as I could, for I feared her senses were again leaving her. The air revived her somewhat, and I lifted her into the cab, placing myself beside her. She appeared to listen in fearful doubt whether I should be allowed to take her with me; and it was not until the wheels had made a score of revolutions that her fears vanished; then throwing herself upon my neck in an ecstasy of gratitude, she burst into a flood of tears, and continued till we reached home sobbing on my bosom like a broken-hearted child. She had, I found, been there about ten o'clock to seek me, and on being told that I was gone to Astley's, had started off to find me there.

Mary still slept, or at least had not risen when I left home on the following morning to endeavor to get at the bottom of the

strange accusation preferred against her. I first saw the superintendent, who, after hearing what I had to say, quite approved of all that I had done, and entrusted the case entirely to my care. I next saw Mr and Mrs Morris and Sophia Clark, and then waited upon the prosecutor, a youngish gentleman of the name of Saville, lodging in Essex Street, Strand. One or two things I heard necessitated a visit to other officers of police, incidentally, as I found, mixed up with the affair. By the time all this was done, and an effectual watch had been placed upon Mr Augustus Saville's movements, evening had fallen, and I wended my way towards home, both to obtain a little rest, and hear Mary Kingsford's version of the strange story.

The result of my enquiries may be thus briefly summed up. Ten days before, Sophia Clark told her cousin that she had orders for Covent Garden Theatre; and as it was not one of their busy nights, she thought they might obtain leave to go. Mary expressed her doubts of this, as both Mr. and Mrs. Morris, who were strict, and somewhat fanatical Dissenters, disapproving of playgoing, especially for young women. Nevertheless Sophia asked, informed Mary that the required information had been readily accorded, and off they went in high spirits, Mary especially, who had never been in a theatre in her life before. When there they were joined by Hartley and Simpson, much to Mary's annoyance and vexation, especially as she saw that her cousin expected them. She had, in fact, accepted the orders from them. At the conclusion of the entertainments they all four came out together, when suddenly there arose a hustling and confusion, accompanied with loud outcries, and a violent swaying of the crowd. The disturbance was, however, soon quelled; and Mary and her cousin had reached the outer door, when two police officers seized Hartley and his friend, and insisted on their going with them. A scuffle ensued; but other officers being at hand, the two men were secured, and carried off. The cousins, terribly frightened, called a coach, and were very glad to find themselves at home again. And now it came out that Mr Morris had been told that they were going to spend the evening at my house, and had no idea they were going to the play. Vexed as Mary was at the deception, she was too kindly tempered to refuse to keep her cousin's secret; especially knowing as she did that the discovery of the deceit Sophia had practised would in all probability be followed by her immediate discharge. Hartley and his friend swaggered on the following afternoon into the shop, and whispered to Sophia that their arrest by the police had arisen from a strange mistake, for which the most ample apologies had been offered and accepted. After this matters went on as usual, except that Mary perceived a growing insolence and familiarity in Hartley's manner towards her. His language was frequently quite unintelligible, and once he asked her plainly 'if she did not mean that he should go shares in the prize she had lately found?' Upon Mary replying that she did not comprehend him, his look became absolutely ferocious and he exclaimed:

'Oh, that's your game, is it? But you had better not try it with me, my good girl, I advise you.'

So violent did he become that Mr Morris was attracted by the noise, and ultimately bundled him, neck and heels, out of the shop. She had not seen either him or his companion since.

On the evening of the previous day, a gentleman whom she never remembered to have seen before, entered the shop, took a seat, and helped himself to a tart. She observed that after a while he looked at her very earnestly, and at length approaching quite close to her, said:

'You were at Covent-Garden theatre Tuesday evening week?'

Mary was struck, as she called it, all of a heap, for both Mr and Mrs Morris heard the question.

'Oh, no! you mistake,' she said hurriedly, and feeling at the same time her cheeks kindle into a flame.

'Nay, but you were, though,' rejoined the gentleman. And then lowering his voice to a whisper, said, 'And let me advise you, if you would avoid exposure and condign punishment, to restore me the diamond brooch you robbed me of.'

Mary screamed, and a regular scene ensued. She was obliged to confess she had told a falsehood in denying that she was at the theatre on the night in question, and Mr Morris after that seemed inclined to believe anything of her. The gentleman persisted in his charge; but at the same time iterating his assurance that all he wanted was his property; and it was ultimately decided that Mary's boxes, as well as her person should be searched. This was done; and to her utter consternation the brooch was found concealed, they said, in a black silk reticule. Denials, asseverations, were vain. Mr Saville identified the brooch, but once more offered to be content with its restoration. This Mr Morris a just, stern man would not consent to, and he went out to summon a police officer. Before he returned, Mary, by the advice of both her cousin and Mrs Morris, had fled the house, and hurried in a state of distraction to find me, with what result the reader already knows.

'It is a wretched business,' I said to my wife, as soon as Mary Kingsford had retired to rest about nine o'clock in the evening.

'Like you, I have no doubt of the poor girl's perfect innocence; but how to establish it by satisfactory evidence is another matter. I

must take her to Bow street the day after to-morrow.'

'Good God, how dreadful! Can nothing be done? What does the prosecutor say the brooch is worth?'

'His uncle,' he says, 'gave a hundred and twenty guineas for it. But that signifies little; for were its worth only a hundred and twenty farthings, compromise is, you know, out of the question.'

'I did not mean that. Can you show it me? I am a pretty good judge of the value of jewels.'

'Yes, you can see it.' I took it out of the desk in which I had it locked up, and placed it before her. It was a splendid emerald, encircled by large brilliants.

My wife twisted and turned it about, holding it in all sorts of lights and at last said—'I do not believe that either the emerald or the brilliants are real—that the brooch is, in fact worth twenty shillings intrinsically.'

'Do you say so?' I exclaimed as I jumped up from my chair, for my wife's words gave color and consistence to a dim and faint suspicion which had crossed my mind. 'Then this Saville is a manifest liar: and perhaps confederate with— But give me my hat: I will ascertain this point at once.'

I hurried to a jeweller's shop, and found that my wife's opinion was correct; apart from the workmanship, which was very fine, the brooch was valueless. Conjectures, suspicions, hopes, fears, chased each other with bewildering rapidity through my brain; and in order to collect and arrange my thoughts, I stepped out of the whirl of the streets into Dolly's Chop-house, and decided, over a quiet glass of negus, upon my plan of operations.

The next morning there appeared at the top of the second column of the 'Times' an earnest appeal worded with careful obscurity, so that the only person to whom it was addressed should easily understand it, to the individual who had lost or been robbed of a false stone and brilliants at the theatre, to communicate with a certain person—whose address I gave—without delay, in order to save the reputation, perhaps the life, of an innocent person.

I was at the address I had given by nine o'clock. Several hours passed without bringing any one, and I was beginning to despair, when a gentleman of the name of Bagshawe was announced: I fairly leaped for joy, for this was beyond my hopes.

A gentleman presently entered of about thirty years of age, of a distinguished, though somewhat dissipated aspect.

'This brooch is yours?' said I, exhibiting it without delay or preface.

'It is; and I am here to know what your singular advertisement means?'

I briefly explained the situation of affairs.

'The rascals!' he broke in almost before I had finished; 'I will briefly explain it all. A fellow of the name of Hartley at least that was the name he gave, robbed me, I was pretty sure, of this brooch. I pointed him out to the police, and he was taken into custody; but nothing being found upon him, he was discharged.'

'Not entirely, Mr Bagshawe, on that account. You refused, when arrived at the station house, to state what you had been robbed of; and you, moreover, said in the presence of the culprit, that you were to embark with your regiment for India the next day. That regiment, I have ascertained, did embark as you said it would.'

'True; but I had leave of absence, and shall take the overland route. The truth is, that during the walk to the station house, I had leisure to reflect that if I made a formal charge, it would lead to awkward disclosures. This brooch is an imitation of one presented me by a valued relative. Losses at play—since for this unfortunate young woman's sake, I must out with it—obliged me to part with the original; and I wore this, in order to conceal the fact from my relative's knowledge.'

'This will, sir,' I replied, 'prove, with a little management, quite sufficient for all purposes. You have no objection to accompany me to the superintendent?'

'Not in the least; only I wish the devil had the brooch as well as the fellow that stole it.'

About half-past five o'clock on the same evening, the street door was quietly opened by the landlord of the house in which Mr Saville lodged, and I walked into the front room on the first floor, where I found the gentleman I sought, languidly reclining on a sofa. He gathered himself smartly up at my appearance, and looked keenly in my face. He did not appear to like what he read there.

'I did not expect to see you to-day,' he said at last.

'No, perhaps not; but I have news for you. Mr Bagshawe, the owner of the hundred-and-twenty guinea brooch your deceased uncle gave you, did not sail for India, and'

'The wretched cur, before I could conclude was on his knees begging for mercy with disgusting abjectness. I could have spurned the scoundrel where he crawled.'

'Come, sir,' let us have no snivelling or humbug; mercy is not in my power, as you ought to know. Strive to deserve it. We want Hartley and Simpson, and cannot find them: you must aid us.'

'Oh yes; to be sure I will!' eagerly rejoined the rascal: 'I will go for them at once he added, with a kind of hesitating assurance.'

'Nonsense! Send for them you mean. Do so, and I will await their arrival.'

His note was despatched by a sure hand; and meanwhile I arranged the details of the expected meeting. I and a friend, whom I

momentarily expected, would ensconce ourselves behind a large screen in the room, whilst Mr Augustus Saville would run playfully over the charming plot with his two friends, so that we might be able to fully appreciate its merits. Mr Saville agreed. I rang the bell, an officer appeared, and we took our posts in readiness. We had scarcely done so, when the street bell rang, and Saville announced the arrival of his confederates. There was a twinkle in the fellow's green eyes which I thought I understood. 'Do not try that Mr Augustus Saville,' I quietly remarked; 'we are but two here certainly, but there are half a dozen in waiting below.'

No more was said, and in another minute the friends met. It was a boisterously jolly meeting, as far as shaking hands and mutual felicitations on each other's good looks and health went. Saville was, I thought, the most ostentatiously gay of all three.

'And yet now I look at you, Saville, closely,' said Hartley, 'you don't look quite the thing. Have you seen a ghost?'

'No; but this cursed brooch affair worries me.'

'Nonsense!—humbug!—it's all right; we are all embarked in the same boat. It's a regular three-handed game. I priggled it; Simpson here whipped it into pretty Mary's reticule which she, I suppose never looked into: then the row came; and you claimed it—a regular merry-go-round, aint it, eh? Ha! ha! ha!—Ha!'

'Quite so, Mr Hartley,' said I, suddenly facing him, and at the same time stamping on the floor; 'as you say, a delightful merry-go-round: and here, you perceive, I added, as the officers crowded into the room, 'are more gentlemen to join it.'

I must not stain the paper with the curses, imprecations, blasphemies, which for a brief space resounded through the apartment. The rascals were safely and separately locked up a quarter of an hour afterwards: and before a month had passed away, all three were transported. It is scarcely necessary to remark, that they believed the brooch to be genuine, and of great value.

Mary Kingsford did not need to return to her employ. Westlake the elder withdrew his veto upon his son's choice, and the wedding was celebrated in the following May with great rejoicing; Mary's old playmate officiating as bridemaid, and I as bride's father. The still young couple have now a rather numerous family, and a home blessed with affection peace and competence. It was some time however before Mary recovered from the shock of her London adventure; and I am pretty sure that the disagreeable reminiscences inseparably connected in her mind with the metropolis will prevent at least one person from being present at the World's Great Fair.

From Hogg's Instructor.

THE VELOCITY OF LIGHT PROVED BY ACTUAL EXPERIMENT.

It is well known that the proof of the enormous velocity of light, amounting one hundred and ninety two thousand miles per second, has hitherto been derived only from the observations and calculations of astronomers and geometers, and that this velocity has never been demonstrated by any experiment. In 1675, Roemer first announced the extraordinary velocity of light which he had derived from observations on the satellites of Jupiter, and, in 1728, Bradley was led to the same result by studying the phenomena known as "the aberration of light." Since the same result was thus arrived at in two totally different ways, there could be no doubt of the fact; but still scientific men have long desired to render it more evident by actual experiment. This has at last been accomplished by a French Savan, M. Hippolyte Fizeau, from whose communication to the French Academy, on July 23, 1850 we make the following extracts:—

'I have succeeded in demonstrating the velocity of light by a method which seems to me to furnish a new means of studying with precision this important phenomena; this method is founded on these principles. When a disk turns in its plane with great rapidity around its centre of figure, it is possible to estimate the time occupied by a point in the circumference in describing a very small angular space; a thousandth of the circumference for example. If the rapidity of rotation is great enough, this time is very short, being for ten or a hundred revolutions per second only one ten thousandth or one hundred-thousandth of a second. If the circumference of the disk is divided, like a toothed wheel, into equal intervals, alternately opened and closed, the time occupied by the passage of each of these intervals though the same point of space will be the same small fractions. During so short periods the light passes over quite limited spaces, being 31 kilometres (19.5 miles) for the first fraction, and 3 kilometres (two miles) for the second. If a ray of light which has passed through one of the divisions of the wheel is reflected from a mirror placed at a certain distance, and returns to the same point, the time occupied in the propagation of this ray must necessarily intervene, and the ray at its return will pass through an open space in the wheel, or will be stopped by a closed one, according to the rapidity of the motion of the wheel and the distance from which the light is reflected.'

'A system of two telescopes, directed towards each other so that the image of the object-glass of each is formed in the focus of the other, furnishes us, in a very simple manner, with the essential condition of a ray of light, which starting from a point, is reflected at a