

Nothing loath, the good man hoisted himself laboriously onto the broad back of his interlocutor's steed, and, after a brisk canter, was set down where the road branched off to Dulwich.

'I thank thee, friend! And, as even to the elect, a word of warning comes not amiss, I pray thee accept these tokens of my good-will.'

He held up a packet of vigorously-entitled tracts: 'Snares of Behal,' 'Pitfalls for the Unwary,' 'Unrighteous and Unready.'

The horseman rapped out a string of profane remarks and, wheeling his animal to the rightabout, left the worthy divine with hands uplifted in pious horror.

'Stand, or I fire!'

The ominous words broke like a thunderbolt on the occupants of the travelling coach. The coachman, paralysed with terror, hastily drew up; and the black horseman, his face now concealed by a velvet mask, flung open the carriage door.

'Your jewels, madam! Your purse, sir!'

Great-uncle Pennington, rudely aroused from slumber, was fain to make an outcry; but the sight of a pistol levelled straight at his head made him promptly produce the desired article.

'Now, madam.'

But Dorothy scorned the notion of an easy surrender.

'Think you, sir, that a lady of quality carries her jewels about her at risk of meeting such company?'

'It matters little what I think, madam. Hand over the gewgaws without further bandying of words.'

'That I will not. I defy you!'

'I give you while I count ten, madam.'

Dorothy's courage was of the finest; but it was not easy to maintain it at the required pitch, looking into the barrel of a highwayman's revolver. With a little sob, she slowly drew up the pomander box that depended from her girdle, and opened it. Instead of the usual powder puff and other vanities, there lay coiled a string of emeralds. Reluctantly she handed them over to the coach driver. The horseman took them, glanced at them, and broke into a contemptuous laugh.

'And you think to cozen Black Dick, young madam! I tell you I will have the stones I saw you wearing at the assembly rout.'

'You saw me wearing?' echoed Dorothy, haughtily.

'Ay, and that I warned you Black Dick would risk his neck to possess himself of!'

There flashed across Dorothy's memory the picture of a fop, costumed in plum-colored attire, who had uttered these very words. And she had danced with him! Danced with a highwayman!

'So 'tis of no avail to throw dust in my eyes. Out with them at once!'

'I pledge you my word I have not them about me.'

'I take your word for that. But, by your leave, madam—'

And Dorothy found herself unceremoniously deposited on the roadside; while the highwayman, stepping into the coach, ransacked and probed every corner of it. Another moment, and he lifted the judge bodily in his muscular arms. Dorothy cried aloud:

'O sir, you would not disturb an old man! I entreat you not to eject him. He has but recently recovered from an attack of gout.'

'You are vastly concerned about your relative's health, madam. For the ailments you mention there is nought so efficacious as a brief sojourn in the open air.'

And the invalid's vacant seat underwent the same rigid scrutiny, Dorothy watching, breathless.

'Ha!' ejaculated the highwayman.

He had torn off the leather that covered the floor of the coach, and a chink in the boards became visible, just where the Judge's feet had reposed.

Quick as thought, the masked rider pried open the planks, and from a cunningly devised aperture extracted a case. Leaping from the coach, he held up to view its contents, a complete parure of large emeralds.

'Ay, these are, in truth, the gems that graced Mistress Pennington when she honored me with a dance!'

Great-uncle Pennington, true son of Adam, hastened to exculpate himself.

'I protest, sir, I knew nothing—'

But it was too much for Dorothy. Dignity and prudence alike momentarily deserted her. She raised her little hand, and a ringing rufflet, of no uncertain aim, descended on the velvet mask.

The highwayman treated the affront as a jest. Sweeping his three-cornered hat in salute to his victims, he rode off, bearing for some minutes the Judge's doleful lamentations, and Dorothy's reproachful rejoinder.

'Alackaday, Uncle, I vow you are more discomposed at the loss of your scantily replenished purse than at that of my jewels!'

Late the following day the gentleman of the mask might have been seen making his way cautiously through a certain quarter of London. Arrived at his destination—the abode of a Jew dealer, who asked no inconvenient questions, he produced his precious spoils. He had already determined on the goodly amount of coin of the realm he would exact as their value.

'Here, Isaac—here's a prize that doesn't often come your way. No haggling now.'

The Jew stretched out an eager hand, and, clutching the case, proceeded to test its contents.

'Well, how much are you thinking you can cheat me of?' demanded the customer. 'You've taken long enough to make up your mind.'

The old dealer peered at his questioner with a curious expression.

'Are you aware, honest sir,' he said, in his own rendering of the King's English, 'that these things are glass,—so much colored glass?'

The face of 'honest sir' went livid with rage.

'Have a care what you say, old man! It were ill risking your rogneries.'

The Jew pushed the jewel case back toward him.

'There are plenty of jewellers in London, my friend. Ask their opinion. I traffic not in these fooleries.'

With his mind in a whirl, the highwayman turned on his heel, and was flinging himself out when the Jew called:

'Stay! I have something for you I had gone near forgetting.' He opened a receptacle and drew from it a letter. This was brought to me yesterday evening by a man—he seemed to be of the Irish nation—who besought me to deliver it to you, as he judged you would have business here. And a son of the Chosen People does not refuse to hearken to a request.' (The 'son of the Chosen People' omitted to state that the request had been accompanied by a handsome gratuity, as a refresher of his memory.) 'The man seemed well acquainted with your movements,' he added, with a sly smile, 'and with the fact that you have occasional dealing with me.'

Black Dick snatched at the letter and tore it open. In a delicate, yet firm, hand the missive ran:

'Before leaving London I desire to thank you, kind sir, for your obliging act in relieving me of a case of some bits of green glass, which would of a truth have been in my way had you not fancied them. These trumperies I had caused to be fashioned on the exact model of my jewels. I thank you likewise for conveying my trusty servant, Myles O'Hara, for a portion of his route, which was not to Dulwich. He it was who bore about him my emeralds, secreted in a pack of tracts, some of which, more particularly that one entitled 'Pitfalls for the Unwary,' he fain would press on your acceptance. You must allow that Myles, in the guise of a worthy Methodist, did fair credit to the schooling of

'Your obliged,

'DOROTHY PENNINGTON.'

Do not attempt to imagine Master Harford's language in his first outburst of fury on reading the letter. What! Foiled, duped, by a slip of a girl! And, O misery, he himself had carried his coveted booty, an easy prey, behind his back! That villainous O'Hara!

Then, by degrees, the humor of the thing began to appeal to him, as it had undoubtedly appealed to Dorothy herself in the carrying out of her skillfully-planned little comedy. A ripple of laughter ran through her letter, underlying the stilted phraseology of the day. He could see again the merry mockery in the dark blue Irish eyes at his clumsily-turned compliments during the rout, to which, for his own nefarious purposes, he had contrived to gain access.

'Zounds!' he cried to the Jew, who, uncertain what turn the frantic outbreak might take, had entrenched himself behind a hastily improvised barricade—'zounds, man! I can almost laugh to think that I, Dick Harford, whom no man ever yet worsted, have been outwitted and befooled by a little Irish lassie, who never set foot in London till a month ago!'

In an old Irish castle, at this present date of the twentieth century, Mistress Dorothy's emeralds, in the safe-keeping of one of her descendants, gleam as brightly as when their fair owner of a bygone day made and won her wager.—Ave Maria.

THE CHARITY WORKER

'Wasn't she great, Kitty?'

'Perfectly splendid, Nora. It was awfully nice of you to invite me to hear her. And the gown she wore. Really it made me envious, that lovely rose chiffon, and then satin and real lace trimming, and the diamond sunburst. Her hat just set off the dress. Black velvet is so rich and the plumes in it just matched the shade of the chiffon. Mrs. Brandon certainly has taste.'

'Oh, dear,' I thought, turning another page of the newspaper, 'I wonder if I will get this all the way into Park street.' There was really no way to avoid it, for I was sitting on the side seat at the end of a semi-convertible car, and the two ladies chatted away, entirely oblivious of my presence. I had to hear them whether I wanted to or not.

'But her lecture, Kitty dear; what did you think of that?'

A. J. FERNANDEZ

For the Latest in American and English Footwear Specialist in Gents' Footwear. A trial solicited.
Note Address 155 UP. RYMONDS STREET, AUCKLAND