

UNEXPECTED HAPPINESS

In a room of a large hotel in Philadelphia, we find James Moran busily engaged in packing his valise. He had just received orders from the Bureau of the Treasury Department of New York to leave his present case, which would be taken up by an assistant, and to return home immediately. He became somewhat perturbed by this call, which aroused his curiosity, but nevertheless was ready to respond to it.

Having finally packed his valise, he carefully glanced around the room, for he had the idea that he was forgetting something; but his search proved fruitless. Thinking he had all his possessions, he proceeded to his car and was soon headed for New York.

Reaching the main highway, he sped along at a lively rate, lost in his own thoughts. Suddenly he saw a middle-aged man ahead of him on the road signalling him to stop. Instinctively and scarcely realizing what he was doing, he jammed on the brakes and brought his machine to a sudden stop.

He eyed the stranger cautiously, but before he had time to ask the reason of the hold-up, the stranger began: "I beg your pardon, Sir, would you mind giving me a drive to the nearest depot? My car stalled on a side road up there and I must get home to-night."

Jim rather suspected him, but nevertheless calmly replied, "Certainly, climb in."

He eyed the stranger curiously as they sped along the country road but the other remained calm, and chatted freely about things in general. Soon Jim lost all suspicion concerning this man, and regarded him more as a friend. He began to talk freely with him, but kept his eyes on the road, for they were entering a region, where there was a great deal of traffic.

"I wish you would drive more slowly, for I have a head-ache," ventured the stranger after a brief space of silence.

Jim did not answer but obligingly decreased the speed of the car.

After they had gone some distance in almost perfect silence, Jim became anxious about the time. He felt for his watch but found the pocket empty. Great was his surprise when he made this discovery, and his suspicions

fell upon the stranger. He took a sly look at the man beside him and noticed that he wore a watch chain precisely the same as his own. One glance was sufficient; sure enough the watch was his. The expression, which was displayed on the stranger's countenance, confirmed his suspicions. Jim was firmly convinced that he had a professional pick-pocket with him.

Turning off on a by-road where there was no traffic, he decreased the speed and began to drive with one hand. Then he whipped out his revolver and pointing it at the stranger, exclaimed in a stern voice: "Pass over that watch, Sir."

The other became so frightened by this sudden and unexpected move that he turned deathly pale. He nervously looked at the weapon pointed at him and stammered: "Sir, have you lost your senses?"

"I'll have no fooling," came the curt reply. "Pass me that watch and get out, for I haven't time to spend with you; and remember, delays are dangerous."

With a quickness of which he seemed hardly capable, the stranger drew from his pocket a watch, which in all appearances was Jim's, and deliberately passed it into the other's hand; and then opening the door, leaped from the car. Jim stepped on the gas, and the stranger was soon left far behind.

The whole thing was so sudden that it almost overcame Jack Sterns. The thought of such a trick instantly aroused his anger, and when he realized the predicament he was in, he had just time to take the number of Jim's car. Looking after the fast disappearing car, he hissed through his teeth: "I'll have you behind the bars, my slick friend, if it costs me a fortune."

Jim sped on towards his journey's end, and arrived in New York about sunset. Having dined, he went directly to the manager of the Secret Service Division, and awaited orders. When the manager arrived and the greetings were over, Jim received his directions concerning a recent case in the country. He was also strongly urged to set out the same night, if possible. Leaving the office he directed his steps towards his car and was soon on the road to perform his duty.

Meanwhile, Sterns returned to Philadelphia, and reported the case to the police, who telephoned the New York police, giving the number of the car. When it was

found out that the car belonged to a Secret Service man, the case was dropped and nothing more was done about it.

Jim accomplished his work in three weeks and brought the miscreants causing disturbance in this section to justice. He was then permitted to resume his former task in Philadelphia. He was glad of the opportunity of completing this case, which had proved a very interesting one. After arriving in Philadelphia, he made his headquarters in a hotel, but not the one in which he had formerly stayed. He also avoided the police, for he thought that any intercourse with them might arouse the suspicion of his enemies, and thus upset his plans.

With a few inquiries and much vigilance he found, after a few days, that the man he was hunting had gone to Paris. This violator of the law, against whom he had to get evidence, was a smuggler of jewelry from the old world and, although strongly suspected, was never convicted. Jim, then, had nothing to do but await this man's return to the city.

All this time Sterns was on a business trip up the country. Jim often thought of the rascal who had tried to rob him, and wondered if he were in the city. Stern's mind was also frequently occupied with a similar thought, but with a greater desire for vengeance.

Now Jim, since he was free, had ample time to enjoy himself. He took a walk through the city every day during the first part of his stay, so that he might become acquainted with every place to which his work might take him.

One afternoon he decided to take a stroll in Chapin Park. Here he accidentally met Ida Sterns, with whom he had formed a slight acquaintance in his younger years, and whose beauty at once attracted his attention. They spent the remainder of the afternoon together, and soon a mutual friendship developed between them. After having found out that he had no engagement for that night, Ida kindly asked, "Won't you spend the evening with us at my home?"

"I would be delighted," gladly answered Jim.

Shortly they left the grounds and soon arrived at their destination, which was only a few minutes walk. Here he spent a very pleasant evening, and the young couple's affection for each other grew as the time passed. Eventually Jim took his departure and promised that he would call around some day to take them for a drive.

"Oh! that will be grand," exclaimed Ida." "I'm so sorry," she continued bashfully, "that my father isn't home, I know he'd be glad to meet you. But, however, we expect him any time now."

On the following day as Jim was going down the street, he met the manager of the hotel where he had boarded during his former stay and with whom he had formed an intimate acquaintance. He recognized Jim at once.

"Hello, Jim," he greeted, "I'm glad to see you again; and, especially, because I have been trying to find you for a long time." Having produced a watch, he continued, "Here is your watch. After you left us, we found it under your pillow."

Jim became so dumbfounded that he almost betrayed the emotions that he was fighting to suppress; but, owing to his training and experience, he was soon master of himself again.

"Well, that's very kind of you," he calmly replied. "I thought I had lost it."

After conversing for a few minutes, they separated and Jim went directly to his room in deep thought. He carefully reviewed the situation, but could not decide what to do. It pained him to think that he was unconsciously a robber and, under the present circumstances, he could do nothing to remedy matters, so he decided to let fate take its course.

A few days later he proceeded to fulfil his promise to the Sterns' family, and soon had his newly made friends with him. They went to the country for a pleasure trip. The party enjoyed the drive immensely; especially Jim, because he was in the presence of Ida, who was the life of the party. They returned home from their refreshing trip, as the sun in the western sky was spreading its shadows over the landscape.

"Isn't it just lovely?" murmured Ida, as they sped along, her face glowing with happiness.

"Yes," replied Jim thoughtfully, "the world seems kind."

Jim was once more influenced by his love for Ida to accept her invitation to have supper and spend the evening with them.

While Jim was enjoying himself in Jack Sterns' house, Sterns was guiding his footsteps homeward from the depot.

When he arrived home, he noticed the car in front of his house and, as the street lights were shining upon it, the first thing that caught his eye was the registration number. Through the open window came the voice of the man who had so lately robbed him. This brought the past incident vividly to his mind, and filled him with anger. "I'll have the advantage this time," he uttered, half aloud. He went at once to the police station, and after having stated his discovery to the chief, he was accompanied to his home by two policemen in blue uniforms.

When the police, followed by Mr. Sterns, entered the house, all sat silently gazing in astonishment. Various thoughts flashed through Jim's mind, as he noticed the surprised looks, and he began to consider what the whole thing could mean. He was soon brought out of his reverie when the two officers approached him and said, "Young man, you are under arrest."

When Jim recognized Sterns, who had come under the light, he immediately understood the situation and submitted quietly without asking a question.

Ida, hearing these startling words, cried without even greeting her father: "Oh, father, what is the meaning of this, for what reason is this man arrested? He is innocent,"

"He is the criminal who robbed me," sternly replied her father and, handing her his note-book he continued, "Is that not the number of his car?"

"The number may be the same, but that doesn't prove much," argued Ida excitedly.

"My dear, don't be foolish," said her father, "Do you think I would forget the features of that fellow in such a short while?"

Ida, seeing the determination displayed on her father's countenance, knew that anything she could say would be of no avail. She then, with a sad look in her deep, dark eyes, which before sparkled with delight, turned towards Jim, who was now handcuffed, and consolingly said, "Jim, I don't believe it." Then concealing the tears which were welling in her eyes, left the room.

Jim felt very uncomfortable during this awful moment, but his mind was busily engaged in deciding what course he should pursue. He determined to reveal his identity. As the officers were about to lead him away, he mildly said, "Just a minute, gentlemen. Look in this pocket."

One of the officers curiously obeyed; and both became

astonished when the discovery, which proved Jim's identity, was made.

"I think—I'm afraid we are in the wrong," said the officer thoughtfully, releasing the handcuffs.

"No," replied Jim smiling, "the whole affair has been a strange occurrence." He then related his story, while Sterns and the officers listened attentively. He produced the watches which were precisely the same, and finished his story by adding: "I take this opportunity to beg Mr. Sterns' pardon for the insult offered him."

After the matter had been more fully discussed, Jim rose to take his leave, but was interrupted by Mr. Sterns, who said: "Now Jim, since our hasty actions have been satisfactorily explained and we can be friends, why not stay and spend the remainder of the evening with us?" Jim gladly accepted.

Shortly afterwards Sterns excused himself under pretence of having a business appointment and said to Jim, "I will call Ida and she will entertain you in my absence."

—M.H. '30

