

The Great Mr. Ord

He Turns Amateur Detective

By CLARISSA MACKIE

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Henry Ord lighted another cigar and waited impatiently for the reappearance of his chief clerk. Every three minutes he consulted his watch and compared it with the electric time-piece on the wall between the windows. He had an important engagement at 11 o'clock, and it was now 10:30. Smithers was getting more stupid every day.

He brought his feet down from the desk with a thump as the secretary returned with a worried expression on his long, pale face. Mr. Ord reached for his hat and held out his hand.

"Give me the securities, Smithers," he said.

"I can't find them, Mr. Ord," said the clerk diffidently. "I thought perhaps you might have them in here."

"Here!" snorted Mr. Ord impatiently. "If I had them in here why did I send you to the vaults after them?"

"I have looked everywhere, sir. They are not in the vaults nor any other place in the office. I will question—"

"No need to question anybody," cut in Mr. Ord, sinking back in his chair and tossing his hat into the ticker basket. "I gave you those securities day before yesterday, with instructions to lock them in my private box in the vaults. You returned the key to me then, and I have just handed it to you now. I haven't had occasion to go to the box since Thursday. Now, where are those securities?"

"I don't know, sir," returned Smithers respectfully.

"Give me the key to the box. Now come with me and show me where you placed them."

Drawers snapped open, papers rustled, and Mr. Ord's boot heels rapped out on the metal flooring as he went from shelf to shelf, from box to drawer and from drawer to cupboard.

Once more he opened his own private box and ran over the papers contained therein.

"Where the dickens are they?" he demanded savagely when his last efforts proved in vain.

"I really don't know, sir," replied Smithers. "As I said before, I thought it possible that you might have taken them out, and it slipped your mind that you had done so."

"Huh! Perhaps you took them out yourself and it slipped your mind, eh? Ever forgot anything, Smithers?"

"Not very often, sir."

Smithers faithfully followed his employer back to the private office and folded his long thin arms behind his back preparatory to listening to the lecture that he knew Mr. Ord had in store. And this time—well, those L. D. bonds were worth \$10,000 today, and it was known that tomorrow they might not be worth the paper they were written on because—that has nothing to do with this story.

"Please call up Hughes & Carraway, and tell Mr. Hughes I shall be unable to keep that engagement with him. I will talk with him later on the phone. Now, Smithers, this is the third time this has happened—securities have disappeared in this same way during several days until the market interest in them has abated. It's an old gag and won't work again. Now, who do you think is at the bottom of this?"

Smithers adged nervously and looked out of the window at the blank wall of another building. "Really, Mr. Ord, I haven't formed an opinion," he said, rather meekly.

"Haven't, eh? Well, I have," thundered his employer, fixing the chief clerk with a hard stare.

Smithers jumped nervously. "Indeed, sir?" he said.

"Yes, indeed, Mr. Smithers. I'm going to ferret this mystery out before 2 o'clock. See! This office is the worst managed affair in the city of New York, and you are the most inefficient chief clerk I ever employed. Got that?"

"Yes, sir."

"See that row of books on the shelf?" Mr. Ord pointed his ruler at a narrow shelf laden with cloth bound copies of Conan Doyle's books.

Smithers bowed respectfully.

"Detective stories, every one of 'em. I've read 'em all," said Mr. Ord. "I shall solve the mystery of the disappearance of those securities by the same methods as those employed by that noted detective," went on Mr. Ord, forgetting in his excitement to compare his watch with the timepiece on the wall. His searching glance fell on an advertising blotter that lay on his desk. It had become mixed in his personal mail, and he had not tossed it in the waste paper basket until now. He threw it in and crossed his hands on his plump waistcoat.

"Do you wear plasters, Mr. Smithers?" he asked coolly.

The chief clerk stared at this personal question, fired so abruptly from the lips of the great Mr. Ord—great in the financial district.

"Sometimes," he said guardedly.

"Have you one on now?" snapped Mr. Ord.

"Yes, sir," blushed Smithers.

Mr. Ord smiled with satisfaction. "Mr. Smithers, sir, you have been with me for three years, and up to this time I have never detected you in a grave error. I have trusted you implicitly,

and I have always found you faithful and honest. In fact, I have no fault to find save that the office has no system whatever, and I can never find anything when I want it. Got that?"

"Yes, sir," Smithers replied dazedly.

"Now, sir, you admit you are wearing a plaster. How do I know that those securities are not concealed within your plaster, huh?" Mr. Ord looked from his astonished clerk to the red bound volumes of Sherlock Holmes' adventures and patted his chest knowingly. "How do I know, sir?" he repeated.

"Really, I couldn't say, Mr. Ord," began Smithers, and then, as if the real meaning of his employer's insinuation had pierced some sensitive spot, at last he added forcibly, "But I wouldn't do such a thing, you know, Mr. Ord, begging your pardon."

"You wouldn't, eh? How do you know you wouldn't?"

"I couldn't, sir," protested Smithers warmly. "You see the plaster I'm wearing is a bunion plaster, and I couldn't get the securities."

Mr. Ord raised a fat forefinger. "I didn't ask you for details regarding your personal ailments, Mr. Smithers," he said icily. There was silence for a few moments while his little eyes roamed from his three foot shelf of wisdom to Smithers' now agitated countenance. He pulled the ticker tape toward him and studied the figures as they slipped through his fingers. He had made rather a fool of himself and the L. D. bonds were as far from discovery as ever. Once more he turned to his clerk.

"Did you mention to anybody that those bonds were in the vault?"

"Not a soul knew of their presence there except yourself and me, sir."

"Did you check over all the other securities in my box?"

"Yes, sir, and every other security in the vault," returned Smithers earnestly. "Begging your pardon, Mr. Ord, you might recollect that in every other instance of loss of papers, they were afterward found to have been mislaid either by Mr. Carson or yourself."

"Enough!" said Ord sternly. "I have no such recollection, young man! Now," pointing an accusing finger in the face of his uncomfortable clerk, he continued with measured accents, "those bonds bore a date stamp impressed with purple ink. How did purple ink come to be on your hands and face, Mr. Smithers?" Mr. Ord shot a glance at his bookshelf and then his eyes came back to the face of his clerk.

For the first time Smithers' face wrinkled into a faint smile. "I was assisting Miss Fenn to adjust a new ribbon in her type machine," he said primly. "Before I had time to remove these stains you called me."

"Is it one of the duties of my chief clerk to assist the stenographers with such duties?" thundered Mr. Ord fiercely. "What do I hire office boys for, eh?"

In Mr. Smithers' opinion office boys were hired to loaf around the corridors and discuss baseball topics. He merely cracked another deprecating smile and did not answer the question.

"Huh! I don't approve of courting in the office, Mr. Smithers," remarked Mr. Ord, his critical eye still on his employee's pink face. He pressed a button beside his desk, and the door opened promptly, admitting a tall, slender girl whose black hair was twisted in the latest fashion and whose bright brown eyes seemed to take in every detail of the situation in one swift penetrating glance. Her gaze swept her employer's desk and then came to attention at Mr. Ord's curt accents.

"Sit down, Miss Fenn."

She did so, flapping open a notebook and poised her pencil.

"I don't wish to dictate. Have you seen or heard anything of the L. D. bonds since they were put in the vaults day before yesterday?"

Miss Fenn nodded. "Why, yes, Mr. Ord. Don't you remember you sent me to the vault for them this morning after you talked with Mr. Hughes over the telephone? You were reading when I came back, and you used the bonds as a bookmark as you closed the book to resume dictating. Why, there they are!" She picked up a red covered book from under his nose and removed several beautifully engraved certificates from between the pages of "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes."

There was a sickly smile of enlightenment on Mr. Ord's face.

"Thank you, Miss Fenn; you may go now," he said, with an effort. When the door had closed behind her trim figure Mr. Ord recovered his self-possession. He picked his hat out of the basket, placed it on his head, compared his watch with the clock, nodded approval at the hour of 12 and drew the telephone receiver across the desk.

"By the way, Smithers," he said generally without turning his head, "I suppose if you're going to get married you'll need a little more money, eh?"

"I really couldn't say that I'd thought about it, Mr. Ord," said the clerk meekly.

"Well, just tell the cashier to add another hundred to your salary. I'll O. K. it. Don't mention it! Hey! Central! Give me 3369 Livingston. Hello! Hughes & Carraway? Ah, Hughes; about that L. D. Now!"

Smithers closed the door softly behind him and paused in the tiny outer office where Bessie Fenn sat before her machine staring dreamily at a blank sheet of paper on the roller. The young man leaned over until his breath fanned her cheek. "Bessie," he whispered, "he's raised me another hundred. I'm sure I can take care of your mother as well as you. Will you marry me soon?"

Bessie's nimble fingers rapped out three letters and an exclamation point, and then on the fat blank sheet there appeared a word written in purple letters:

"Yes!"

Humor and Philosophy

By DUNCAN M. SMITH

PERT PARAGRAPHS.

IF the average person worked only when he felt like it the world would starve before Christmas.

The man who is miserable because a black cat crossed his path Friday always did hate cats anyway, so he excuses himself for his superstition.

Marrying seems to be a religion with some people.

The spider which tried seven times in succession isn't in it with the exploiter who scents a rich graft.

Getting away with a lie would be a much simpler matter if it were not for the numerous persons who are always around keeping tabs.

There is no more ridiculous spectacle than to see a slow, stupid man trying to be a sport.

The Book of Nature.

At times of books I weary,
For reading makes me full
Of twisted, warped ideas
Not ripe enough to pull.
And then I turn to nature,
Its pages bright to scan,
Or in the crowded city
I read the book of man.

The sprightly printed pages

Present in full to me
A very fine idea
Of life as it should be,
But in the other volume
That men before me act
I get life stripped and naked
And as it is in fact

The very fine romances.

The tale of love's young dream,
May start off with some trouble,
But end with pie and cream.
In life the paint and powder
Are very apt to rub.
The dainty little maiden
May finish at a tub.

Between the frames and covers

In fiction and in art
You get a race of people
Who live a life apart,
But in the book of nature,
Where truth on facts must wait
For all of its adornments,
They give it to you straight.

The Reward of Perseverance.

"Where is little Willie?"

"Ains, he has gone from us!"

"For two reasons."

"What are they?"

"One is because he wants all the compliments that come to the family."

"And the other?"

"Because he wants to even things up."

Striking an Average.

"Why does a handsome man always marry a homely woman?"

"For two reasons."

"What are they?"

"One is because he wants all the compliments that come to the family."

"And the other?"

"Because he wants to even things up."

Neutral.

"Who goes there, friend or foe?"

"Neither."

"You must be one or the other."

"Not necessarily. Why should I be your friend? I can't borrow any money from you. And why should I be your foe? I don't owe you any money."

Always Follows.

"He is a very promising young man."

"Promising, is he?"

"Yes."

"How much has he promised?"

"What?"

"I merely was asking how much he owes."

Misunderstood.

"Boys aren't what they used to be when I was a lad."

"Aren't they?"

"No."

"Great improvement. How do you like it?"

Unappreciated.

"She is trying to be a poetess."

"Have any luck?"

"Oh, yes."

"What was it?"

"No one would print her poems."

But He Does It All the Time.

"What do you think about the high cost of living?"

"Me?"

"You."

"Mighty little, I tell you."

Unwilling Miss.

"We kissed and made up last night."

"Different with Mame and me."

"How was that?"

"We kissed and fell out."

Lowly.

"What have you on your mind?"

"My corns."

"Where are you carrying your mind now?"

Good Reason.

"Why worry over trifles?"

"They are not so expensive as some thing larger."

Spills the Flavor.

She said as he about his pipe
In cheerful manner joked,
"A husband is not like a ham;
He should not be well smoked."

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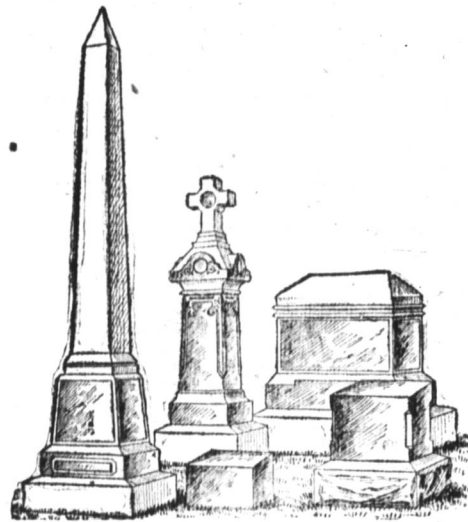
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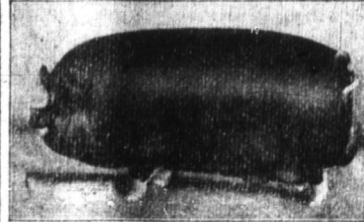
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