THE EVENING NEWS.

Tuesday, - - - November 28, 1871.

THE STEWARDESS'S STORY.

[CONCLUDED.]

"No, no. It might lead to suspicion, if you went off in a hurry. If they think you are a confederate, you will be watched, and it would not do for me, either, to go and meddle with your trunk."

The three felt almost as if they were conspirators and forgers themselves as they deliberated over what could be done to secure the parcel they believed so dangerous. Mrs. Lock and the steward, influenced by a not unnatural curiosity, were extremely anxious to inspect the mysterious package; but Mrs. Ford, who, in the event of discovery, was the one to fear the result, cared for nothing as much as being assured it was for ever concealed from sight. Let it be what it would, all she desired was that it should be removed from the top of her trunk, and lodged safely at the bottom of the dock.

While they were considering ways and means, a messenger arrived from the City of ——, the assistant stewardess sent their cabin boy to inquire for Mrs. Ford and ask some questions in the way of duty. This was a favorable opportunity. Mrs. Ford sent off her keys, by the boy Albert, and requested Mr. Green, the cabin steward, privately, to open her trunk, take the parcel lying on the top, and pitch it into the river. In due time Albert brought back a message to say her orders had been complied with, and all was safe.

The evening after Mrs. Ford's return to her usual employment Mr. Green, the steward, came to her, and having ascertained that there was no one else present, produced the identical parcel which she had believed was safely stowed away in the bed of the river.

"Oh, Mr. Green!" cried she, in perturbation, "why did you deceive me, and keep that dreadful thing?"

"How do you know it is a dreadful thing?" replied he. "I'm sure I don't; and I thought, before we threw it away, we would just see what it was all about. I will call Park, now, and we will just take a look before we make it leap over. We can throw it away at any time."

To own the truth, Mrs. Ford herself, although perfectly convinced that the contents were equally dangerous and wicked, and very much afraid of being involved in some dreadful scrape, had yet so great a curiosity that she was not altogether unwilling to proceed to an investigation. So when Mr. Park joined them they fastened the cord and opened the package.

"Hum, I thought so," said Mr. Green, as, they unwrapped the copper plate for printing forged ten-dollar notes.

"I don't understand what it is," said Mrs. Ford as she contemplated it.

Mr. Green explained, and added, that he had understood that Seaton belonged to a regular gang, who were awaiting for his arrival, with this plate, to proceed over the boundary to Canada, where they intended to establish their headquarters, whence they could conveniently circulate those false notes.

"And so that is the spool he intended to make, the villain!" said Mrs. Ford. "He was nearly making a tangled skein of me, I am sure. Let's toss it overboard."

"Don't be in a hurry," said Mr. Green.

"Look here; this man is in prison now, and they want to find evidence. If you produce these, you will convict him at once; if you destroy it, you will allow him, perhaps to go at large."

"But if I produce it, they will take me for an accomplice, and I may be lynched, or hanged, or imprisoned for life," exclaimed Mrs. Ford. "No, no. I will run no risks of the sort. Who knows what trouble I might have!"

"She would certainly be detained here after we sail," said Mr. Park, "and so lose her situation, perhaps, or at any rate, have a peck of trouble; and, being English I think she might, likely enough, have some difficulty in establishing her perfect innocence. I would throw it away, if I were she." So the dangerous article was tossed out of the window, and fell with a splash into the waters of the dock, where it no doubt reposes in the mud to this day.

Had Mr. Green's advice been followed, Mr. Seaton who, it had appeared, had a few other aliases for suitable occasions, would not have been discharged in one week as he actually was, in default of evidence, and set at liberty to begin some other fraudulent action.

It was not till after his discharge that Mrs. Ford ventured to put her foot ashore, so terribly was she alarmed, lest she should be in some way involved in his guilt. But one evening, a few days before the City of——was to start, she did venture into the city under the escort of Mrs. Lock. To her great surprise, as they were walking up Broadway they met Mrs. Seaton herself, who instead of trying to avoid her, stopped and spoke to her! There was not much cordiality on the part of the English woman; but Mrs. Seaton was perfectly composed and very friendly, and assured her that it had all come about just as she had expected. Her husband had been set at liberty, and was now quite well, and so was Freddy; and she would be glad if the stewardess would come and see them, and would she bring that little parcel she left aboard the steamer? Mrs. Ford looked her full in the face, equally amazed at her audacity, and enraged at the injury so nearly done to herself.

"If you wish for that parcel," she replied as soon as she could speak, "you must look for it at the bottom of the dock, you will find it in no box of mine."

A dark expression passed over Mrs. Seaton's face, as she answered: "Do you mean you threw itaway, woman? How dared you do so with my property?"

"And how dared you to give me your forgeries and cheats to take care of, Mrs. Seaton? How dared you to try to bring me into your scrapes? I am not at all obliged to you, I can tell you, and don't ever wish to sail in the same boat with you again."

"Hush, hush!" said Mr. Seaton, frightened at her language, and glancing at her companion. "Don't talk about forgeries, pray; there's no occasion to be angry; you have been in no danger; you are quite mistaken."

"I have been in danger, and I am not mistaken; and Mrs. Lock knows as well as I, what that parcel was. And we threw it out into the dock, having no mind at all to be concerned in your business. So you will never see it again."

And if you knew what it was, were you really such a fool as to throw it away? Why, you might have made your fortune by it. We would have given you any share of the profits you liked to name, to get it back, and you have really lost such a chance!"

"I don't want any shares, either in your profits or your prisons, Mrs. Seaton," exclaimed the stewardess, strong in indignant, outraged honesty. "I should have been far more likely to have one than the other, and I should have deserved it, besides, as much as you."

"Well, you are a fool, with your honesty," said Mrs. Seaton, with an impatient laugh. "You have thrown away a chance you will not have again in a hurry. I can tell you." And so saying, she walked away. Nor have they ever met since.

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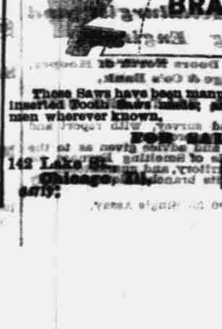

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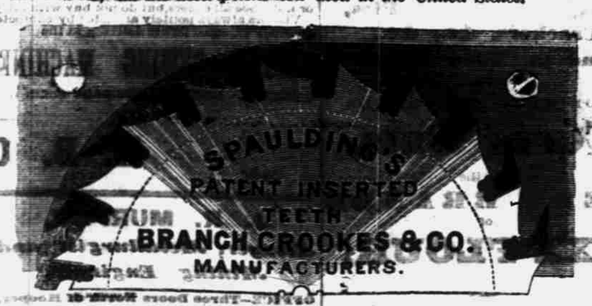

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