

arms holding out its tiny hand for disused tram-tickets. It cries and screams under the impulse of the passion of acquisitiveness until every disused ticket is picked from the floor by good-natured but non-reflecting passengers, and the little fist can hold no more. There you have the book-collector, the Bookworm in embryo." (The audience looked at each other in admiring amazement as each recalled having noticed the phenomenon.) "Pursue that baby through the dawning years of childhood. See him when he is ten. You will notice his pockets bulging. They are full to repletion with every sort of knick-knack, marbels, tops, pieces of cord, knives, brass buttons, in fact his pockets resemble a magpie's nest. There you have the unmistakable brand of the future Bookworm. In years to come he gives full scope, if his means allow, to this grasping, grinding spirit of acquisitiveness. Nor is their hobby, as one speaker too indulgently described it, limited to books. I know for a fact that several private book-collectors in this city possess rare treasures of antique jewellery and the choicest objects of vertu and bijouterie. Their wealth allows of it. It is they who have run up the prices of books so immeasurably, especially Irish books. The second-hand booksellers are not to blame. Eliminate, ladies and gentlemen, from the auction rooms those Bookworms, rather those human sharks, and the price-lists from being unduly inflated will resume their normal state. But let it be remembered, we contemplate no drastic measures at present. We merely intend to requisition the Government, as a preliminary step, to have an inspection made of the private collections of certain collectors in this city, that we may gauge precisely the literary wealth of the community. That initial stage we enter on this evening. Tables are provided at the door, books for signatories are ready for those who will append their names to be forwarded in due course to the proper authorities, who will, we are convinced, deal with this important matter in a high-spirited and statesmanlike manner."

The meeting closed with great enthusiasm. The tables were besieged by crowds desirous of signing the memorial which when completed presented an array of names distinguished in every branch of literature, science, and art. Ex-Professor Notley, accompanied by his charming and beaming daughter, was vociferously cheered as he regained his motor.

That the sought-for inspection obtained Government sanction is matter of history. The occasion furnished the man, in the person of the accomplished Professor Brookland, who forwarded his credentials and a resumé of his academic distinctions and degrees, honorary and otherwise of Continental Universities. Ex-Professor Notley felt that a complete stranger would perform the delicate duties allotted to him with strict impartiality. Brookland's urbanity, his polished manners, his cultured diction betokened the savant and the gentleman, while his presence could not fail to impress. Professor Notley and his daughter enjoyed his company immensely for a few days before he settled down to work.

Professor Brookland immediately mastered the details and the niceties of his rather arduous and indeed, unique task, which postulated accurate information of the realm of bookland and a refined sensitiveness not to offend the susceptibilities of the private collectors, *alias* Bookworms, whose sanctums he was about to invade. He was furnished with a list of the most noteworthy of these in the city and in one day he visited their respective homes.

The following day Brookland and Professor Notley's daughter disappeared simultaneously and took steamer for South America.

The same evening Wiskyonticative, a distinguished Hebrew book-collector whose studio had been inspected,

reported the loss of a rare case of jewellery valued at several thousand. Other Bookworms or private collectors whose libraries had been inspected by the great expert, Professor Brookland, examined their premises and reported extensive losses of priceless objects of vertu. As the day wore on other members of the Bookworm fraternity missed valuables which they averred could not be replaced. They clamored round ex-Professor Notley's residence. Indeed, it looked as if all the water in the Liffey could not wash him from participation in the crime. Needless to say that poor gentleman was at home to no one, for he was stunned and fairly prostrate with grief. The detective from Scotland Yard, which had been notified, duly arrived, obtained an interview with the Mr. Notley and showed him a photograph. "It is he! it is he!" moaned the broken-hearted gentleman. "It is Professor Brookland."

The detective laughed derisively. "Professor Brookland!" said he. "Why that is the most notorious swell cracksman in England. He can play any part, or adopt any disguise."

Poor ex-Professor Notley collapsed. "My honored name is shamed for ever," groaned he as a trim maid fluttered in with restoratives.

When ex-Professor Notley was next seen he had aged dreadfully. His once proud, erect form was stooped. We was obsessed with the idea that it was thought that he was a party in the plot, and originated the scheme for the robbery of the Bookworms' treasures.

He now walks only at night, never reads current literature nor consorts with any of his kind. Otherwise these circumstantial details could not be chronicled in cold print. His lugubrious figure may be seen on dark nights lurching along unfrequented streets, and in the neighborhood of lonely squares. It was on one of these nightly rounds that our correspondent collided with him near a street lamp. Professor Notley's hat fell off and our correspondent hastened to pick it up and adjust it on his head, but while he did so he caught a glimpse of what will be to him for ever a haunting vision, Professor Notley's clouded brow.

Shane Leslie is the son of an Irish Tory Protestant squire, who married an American (Miss Jerome, of New York). He himself is a Home Ruler, a convert to Catholicism, and his wife is an American (Miss Ide). He is a first cousin of Winston Churchill, and his sister-in-law is Mrs. Burke Cockran.

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