

up or departs from the city. When he leaves, the car is not out of the station-house before the telegraph announces to some detective far away the departure and the destination. His haunts are known, his associates, the men who receive stolen goods, and his partners in crime.

#### WHY ROGUES GO CLEAR.

The detectives often recover goods and money while the criminals escape. People wonder why the criminals are not brought to punishment. The first duty of the officer is to bring the offender to trial. But this cannot always be done. The evidence is often insufficient. The next best thing is to secure the money or property. Many robberies are committed in places of ill-repute. Parties are compromised. Victims from the country, who are respectable at home, do not like to read their names in the newspaper. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are annually returned to their owners through the detectives, which would have been lost without their vigilance.

## XVI.

### A NIGHT AMONG THE DETECTIVES.

HEADQUARTERS. — THE ARREST OF A PICKPOCKET. — AN OLD MAN IN TROUBLE. — A MINISTER IN TROUBLE. — A SEA CAPTAIN IN DIFFICULTY. — BURGLAR DETECTED BY A BUTTON. — A SHADOW ON THE PATH. — PRIVATE DETECTIVES. — HUMANITY OF DETECTIVES. — THE OTERO MURDER.

#### HEADQUARTERS.

In the elegant marble building on Mulberry Street, where the Metropolitan Police force centre, there will be found the headquarters of the detectives. Though it is under the charge of the general superintendent, the detectives are an independent body within the police force. The chief, Captain John S. Young, has been many years at the head of this department. He is a heavy-built, stocky person, with an immense head and face, sandy hair, somewhat curly, a stolid and heavy look, and nothing but his eye indicates that he is the sharpest, coolest, bravest, and most adroit detective in the civilized world to-day. His room is homely, ill-furnished, and unsightly. He never seems to be doing anything, or to have anything on hand, or to be interested in anything. His associates in the room — a dozen men, more or less, dressed in quite ordinary citizens' clothes — lie round on the benches, straddle the

chairs, lean up against the wall, talking, smoking, and doing nothing, looking like a band of idle loafers without a purpose. In this group the uninitiated would fail to recognize the company of the most talented, persevering, sharp-sighted, keen-scented, and most successful criminal detectives; men who have been in the criminal business from their boyhood; men who have been selected from hundreds, and who have been in the force for a quarter of a century. They are silent, suspicious, secretive. They never talk of what they have on hand. Of the past they will speak, of the future they have nothing to say. They have incidents and adventures in their possession more thrilling than any criminal novel ever written. In their room I passed a night not long since, and learned from them the romantic incidents that I am about to state.

#### THE ARREST OF A PICKPOCKET.

Said one of the detectives, "The chief called for me one day, and put a case in my hands, which I was required to work up. A gentleman of the city, who was supposed to be worth a fortune, suddenly failed. His failure was a bad one, but his honor was without a stain. He was guardian for two orphan children, and took the cars one morning for the purpose of investing some three thousand dollars that he held in the name of the children. When he reached the office up town, where the investment was to be made, he found his money was gone. He had been robbed in the cars. In great distress he came to the office, and communicated his loss to the chief. He said, when he was rich his tale of robbery would have been believed; now

he was poor, it would be said that he had robbed himself. I examined the man closely, and had no doubt that his story was a true one. He had but little light to throw on the robbery. The car was crowded, and he stood on the platform. He remembered that during the passage, as a person got out of the car, a young man was thrown against him. He had a dim recollection of the person, thinking no wrong at the time. Car-robbing is very common, but it is very delicate business, and few can do it well. I had my suspicions as to who committed the robbery. I took a car to go down town. In it was the very person I was in search of. His new clothes, new hat, and boots, and watch, indicated that he was flush. I stopped the car, touched the young man on the shoulder, and told him to follow me. His face crimsoned in an instant, and I knew that I had got my man. I took him to the station-house, and accused him of the crime. I told him that the man who had lost the money would, in the language of pickpockets, 'buff him to death' if he did not restore the money; but if he would 'turn up the money' he might clear out. These robbers, all of them, have accomplices. They never can tell when they 'peach.' I had no evidence that would convict this person. No judge would hold him a minute on my suspicion, but the thief did not know that. He pulled off his boots, and the money came back, all but one hundred dollars which he had spent. The grateful merchant received it with tears of joy."

## AN OLD MAN IN TROUBLE.

"Very few men who come here for relief," said one of the officers, "tell the truth. They make up all sorts of stories to impose upon us, to save their reputation, and to keep themselves out of trouble. If a man tells us the truth; if he has been robbed at a bad house, and will say so; will give us the number of the house, and describe the parties by whom he has been robbed or wronged, we can relieve him. We can go on board of a train of cars filled with hundreds of people, and tap a pickpocket on his shoulder, and say, 'I want to see you, sir,' and never make a mistake. We can take a telegraphic description of a rogue, and with it walk up Broadway, where thousands are rushing along, pick out our man and march him to the Tombs, and never get the wrong person. One day a sedate-looking man from the rural districts called at our office. He was a merchant, he said. He came to the city to buy goods. He had been robbed of fifteen hundred dollars, which he was to pay that day. He was a ruined man unless he could recover his money. He named the hotel where he staid, and in which he had been robbed. His room-mate, a man unknown to him, was asleep when he went to bed, and asleep when he left the room in the morning. He had not been out of the hotel since tea, till he discovered his robbery. The man must have robbed him, and he wanted him arrested at once. Captain Young was satisfied that the man was not telling the truth. He put the case in my hand, and ordered me to work it up. I went to the hotel, and found everything right there. The room-

mate was a merchant from the west, of unquestioned integrity. I came to the conclusion that the man had not told us the truth. I knew that he had been out of the hotel, had been into disreputable company, and had been robbed. I sent for the victim, and he came, accompanied by a friend, who promised to vouch for his honesty. I said to him, 'Sir, you have lied to me. You lost your money in bad company by the panel game.' At first he denied it with great vehemence, then he evaded, and finally confessed. With a slight clew as to the locality, I found the panel thief, and brought back the money."

## A MINISTER IN TROUBLE.

"One day some very excellent people came to the headquarters to complain. The city was unsafe for respectable men; people could not walk about the streets without assault and robbery. It was a pretty state of things if gentlemen could not walk the streets of New York at seasonable hours, without being beaten, bullied, and robbed, and their life endangered. 'And what is the matter now?' said the officer. 'We are respectable citizens,' said the complainers, 'and officers of a church. Our minister was assaulted, and beaten, and robbed last night in one of the streets. He came over to New York yesterday afternoon on business. He was returning through Beekman Street about ten o'clock. When near Cliff Street a band of rowdies assailed him, knocked him down, beat him, muddled and tore his clothes, robbed him of his watch and money, and he reached his affrighted family almost dead.' The case was put into our hands. The night on which

the assault was said to have taken place was a beautiful, bright moonlight evening. The place of assault was so near the station-house, that the cry of distress would have been heard by the captain at his desk. At that time of night, a man would have been as safe on Beekman Street as on Broadway. It so happened that two of our officers were on that spot within five minutes of the time the assault was said to have taken place, conversing on matters that detained them ten or fifteen minutes. I was satisfied that no assault had taken place, that no robbery had been committed; that the whole story was trumped up to hide some disgraceful conduct in which the party said to have been wronged was engaged.

"With this impression, I sent to the minister. He was greatly annoyed that his people had taken any notice of the matter, or brought it to the attention of the authorities. I told him it had been brought to our attention; that we were censured for neglect of duty, and that the fame of the city suffered; that we intended to probe the matter to the bottom; that we intended to follow him every step that he had taken that afternoon, from the time he left home till he returned. We would know all his companions, and all the company he had kept that day. I told him his story was an improbable one; that it was impossible that the robbery could have occurred at that time or place; the night was too light, the hour was too early, it was too near the station-house, and more than that, two of our captains were on the spot at that time, and they knew the story was not true. If he had a mind to make a clean breast of it, and tell the facts as they

were, I would keep his name from the public; if not, I would make a thorough investigation, and publish his name to the world. He was greatly agitated, blamed his friends for meddling in the matter, began to cry, and at length made a clean breast of it. He had been drinking that afternoon, went where he ought not to go, and was robbed of his money and his watch. He must account for his situation, did not want to be disgraced, and so had trumped up the story he told to his elders. The affair was hushed up."

A SEA CAPTAIN IN DIFFICULTY.

"The harbor police notified us," said one of the detectives, "that a ship was lost off Sandy Hook by fire. As the case was reported, there were some things about the loss that did not look right. The next day the papers blazed with an account of a bold robbery. It was said that a sea captain lost a large sum of money at Barnum's. The captain was said to have been peculiarly unfortunate. He lost his ship by fire off Sandy Hook. He had just been paid his insurance, a very large sum, which he was to take to his owners in New England. He visited Barnum's with the money in his pocket, and on leaving the place it was gone. The audacious robbery flamed in every paper. The statements were so nearly verbatim, that it was evident the captain had written them himself or furnished the material. The captain issued handbills, offering a reward of five hundred dollars for the recovery of his money. The handbills were circulated only among the shipping and on the wharves. In a few days we received a visit from the captain at headquarters. I was put in charge