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"SAME TO YOU SIR."

Dr Macnamara, M.P., who was in former days one of the leading lights of the teaching profession, paid a visit to one of the elementary schools in Kennington, and on taking his departure remarked to a class of boys that he was quite sure every boy in the school was not only a credit to himself, but also the school.

"Well, good-bye, boys," said the doctor at last, cheerily, "and I hope, he added with a smile, 'that none of you will get into any trouble or mischief either at school or at home between now and Christmas!'"

"Same to you, sir!" was the scholars' lusty response.

In Japan spiders spin their webs on the telegraph wires so thickly that the current is sometimes seriously affected. Sweeping the wires is frequently a waste of time, as the spiders immediately begin spinning as fast as before.

## PINGLE ON THE PROWL

One Great Laugh from  
Start to Finish.

COMPLETE STORY.

"It's a terrible thing, but it will have to be done! I must get rid of her. She has been a good pal to me during the years we have spent together, but there's nothing left for it but to do her in. She's much too old to be any use now."

The speaker paused a moment, and then went on:

"It seems hard on the old girl, but I mustn't let sentiment interfere with my plans for the future. Of course, I know I shall be filled with remorse the moment it is over, but I must steel my heart until the end. If I choose a swift and certain method, she will know no suffering. Somewhere about here would do nicely, to put her afterwards—"

The words, muttered in a hoarse whisper, reached the ears of Joshua Pingle as he emerged from his greenhouse, which happened to be a cucumber frame, into which he had accidentally stepped a few moments before.

The voice sounded from the other side of the garden fence, and it belonged to Robert Marsh, his next-door neighbour.

Pingle stood transfixed with horror as the words died away. Whom was Bob Marsh speaking of? There could only be one explanation to the mystery. Marsh was talking of his wife, the timid little woman who lived with him in the house next door.

The thought caused Pingle to go hot and cold at once, until the mixture made him tepid all over.

He was an extremely inquisitive individual, and was famed in the neighbourhood for the interest he took in everyone's business but his own. Nothing escaped his eyes or his ears; and if there was any mischief afoot Joshua Pingle was certain to be the first one to scent it out. At the same time his capabilities for making scandal and strife out of the most harmless trifles were colossal, and all the sensible people in the small town were wary of him for their own peace of mind.

Only a few months before old Bob Marsh and his wife arrived in Cranley, and had taken the house next door to Pingle, together with a general shop in the town.

Unfortunately for Pingle, the pair proved to be very reserved. They made no actual friends, and this fact caused the nosy old man to decide that everything was not quite as it should be at the house next door. Having come to this conclusion, Joshua proceeded to spend all his time interesting himself in his neighbour's affairs.

But nothing had happened, however, to reward his unceasing efforts until he had heard the strange words that morning.

Now at last his chance had come, and he made up his mind to make the very most of it.

"I wonder what I ought to do!" he muttered, as he heard the retreating footsteps of Bob Marsh as he returned to the house. "I suppose my best plan would be to go round and see the chief constable, and tell him about it."

During the whole of the day he roamed about the house trying to make up what there was of his mind, until at last he came to the conclusion that he could do nothing better than watch and wait.

Immediately he awoke the following morning he sprang out of bed and crossed to the window. The bedroom window looked down on to the garden, and usually about this time the couple next door were in the garden trimming up the mustard-and-cress plot. At the far end of the garden he espied old Bob Marsh digging vigorously. Without shifting his eyes from the figure Joshua Pingle commenced to dress.

"You seem very interested in Mr Marsh," observed Mrs Pingle sourly. "It's a pity you don't take a lesson from him. He's always busy doing something or other to save his wife trouble, and I have the greatest admiration for the courteous way he treats her in public."

Joshua only grunted. He was not anxious to enter into a lengthy argument with his better seven-eighths, for he had far more serious work to attend to.

Fumbling with his collar he continued to stare out of the window. So engrossed was he in his task that he was unaware of his wife's impatient fidgeting as she

waited for him to move out of the way of the mirror.

At last a tremendous clap descended upon his back, and a second later Joshua spluttered, gasped, and then tore at his throat as though about to have a bad fit.

"You've—you've made me swallow my stud!" he gasped, turning alternately pink, green, and yellow with fright.

Amelia Pingle remained quite unmoved by this revelation.

"Then for the first time in your life you know where it is!" she observed acidly, and a moment later swept from the room.

Pingle remained watching at the window for some seconds, and at length Mrs Marsh emerged from the house, and made her way towards where her husband was digging.

Bob Marsh looked up suddenly as she approached, and the sight of her caused him to stagger back with an expression of alarm upon his face. For a moment he stood motionless, then, flinging the pick he was holding behind the greenhouse, he hurried towards her. Mrs Marsh made a movement to pass her husband, but, as she endeavoured to do so, Bob passed his arm around her, and led her back to the house.

"The inhuman monster!" gasped the watching man, spluttering with suppressed rage. "Even to the last he pretends to be fond of the poor little soul. No wonder he tried to prevent her going to the end of the garden, for that's undoubtedly where he intends to bury her after the crime. Oh, the callous old Cripple!"

Pingle waited for no more, but made his way from the house direct to Chief-Constable Davies, to whom he intended to report his tragic discovery.

On his way he met several friends, most of whom wanted to touch him for a trifle, and a considerable time elapsed in chin-wagging. So it was that, when he arrived outside Bob Marsh's shop, business had already commenced for the day.

Joshua Pingle halted, and then, on the pretext of buying some tobacco, he strolled into the stores.

"Good morning, Marsh!" he exclaimed cheerily. "An ounce of Montgomery Mixture!"

Marsh, who had been sitting behind the counter, engrossed in something which he held, sprang to his feet with a startled exclamation. And as he did so the article he had been examining fell to the floor.

Without waiting to pick it up, Bob Marsh took a small roll of tobacco from a shelf, and, with trembling fingers, handed it to Pingle.

"It's a beautiful morning," went on Pingle, placing the money on the counter, and drawing his pipe from his pocket.

"Er—really? Yes, I suppose so!" agreed Marsh absentmindedly.

At that moment a woman entered the shop, and Marsh was forced to go to the further end of the counter in order to serve her with some cheese.

This was the opportunity for which Joshua Pingle was waiting. Leaning the floor.

The article which lay there caused spots over the counter, he peered down on to to appear before his eyes, and he drew back in alarm, while a violent fit of ague seemed to seize him in every joint.

For, behind the counter, on the floor, lay a brightly polished steel article.

A revolver!

All Pingle's wildest suspicions were confirmed. Not only had Marsh decided upon killing his wife, but everything was being prepared even to the purchasing of a revolver and the digging of the grave.

"Now I know why he spent the last three Saturday evenings practising shooting down at Joyland," muttered the would-be detective. "I thought, in my unsuspecting way, that he was anxious to secure the nuts and cigars offered as prizes. Which only goes to show how easily we can be deceived."

He staggered from the shop, and a short time later reached the police-station. To Ebenezer Davies he told all he knew.

The chief-constable, a heavy individual with an expansive, illuminated dial, took down every small detail connected with the affair.

"It is plain to me, Pingle," he said,

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"that we are on the point of unmasking a thorough scoundrel. In the first place, as far as I know, he has no licence entitling him to be in possession of a gun, and if a man were arrested for shooting his wife with a revolver for which he had no licence, it would add considerably to the seriousness of the crime."

"Do you think we can do anything to prevent the crime?" asked Pingle anxiously.

"No," returned Davies, "if we prevent the crime we shall have no case, and I've got my living to consider. We can only wait and—er—watch. My plan is this. To-night when it is dark, I shall post some of my men in your garden in order to watch. It is highly probable that Marsh will carry out his crime immediately, and we'll capture him red-handed. Anything you can do to help us will be highly appreciated, and your share in the business will be reported to the proper quarter."

Bristling with pride and self-satisfaction, Joshua Pingle made his way home to await, with what patience he could, the time when the police would arrive.

A brilliant moon lighted up the scene when Joshua Pingle, accompanied by Chief Constable Davies emerged from the house, filled with courage and cocoa, and proceeded cautiously down the garden.

No sound broke the silence which reigned about them, when suddenly Davies halted and emitted a low whistle.

On the instant about half a dozen men revealed themselves in various parts of the garden, and advanced noiselessly towards their chief. A few whispered instructions were given, and then the men proceeded to range themselves in the shadow along the fence.

Half an hour passed uneventfully as they waited and watched. The lights still gleamed from the windows in the upper part of the house next door, but as the fence was high, and there appeared to be no openings along it, no other part of the house could be seen.

Another fifteen minutes passed, and by this time every one of the members of the party was in a state of cramp and general fed-up-ness.

Then suddenly a noise as of footsteps advancing along the path of the garden next door came to the listeners' ears. Right along the path they went, until they reached the spot outside the cucumber frame. Here they halted.

Pingle made a seat of one of the policemen's backs and, mounting it, peered cautiously over the fence.

For fully five minutes he remained there, then sprang to the ground again.

"It's Marsh himself!" he gasped hoarsely. "The hole's all ready—but I—I can't see the body!"

"Shh!" cautioned Davies. "Listen!"

As he spoke a series of strange noises proceeded from over the wall, the most predominant of which was the clink-clank as of heavy chains.

"Great heavens—he's chained her up, fast!" groaned Pingle.

For a few moments there was a hush, then the voice of Bob Marsh was heard distinctly.

"Good-bye, old girl—try and forgive me!"

The voice died away, and immediately a shot rang out—then another.

The next moment there came the sound of a cracking and splintering of wood, and immediately afterwards the fence

gave way, depositing the chief constable, Pingle, and their companions into the garden next door.

It took them some considerable time to sort themselves out, but at length Ebenezer Davies rose to his feet and looked around him.

Directly in front of him Bob Marsh, looking pale and dazed, stood in front of some object, which was lying on the ground behind him.

"What is the matter?" he asked. "Have you lost anything?"

"Don't try and fool us, my man!" retorted Davies sharply. "Let me inform you that your crime has been discovered, and we are here to effect your arrest for the murder of your wife!"

"You're crazy!" retorted the old man. "It—it was my old mare, Bessie, that I shot just now."

The chief constable fell back, and his face turned yellow with rage, as he bent over the inanimate form of the horse.

"You see, she was condemned last week for being too old to work," explained Bob Marsh. "She was always a dear friend to me, and when I knew that she would have to go, I decided to do the job myself. Of course, it's greatly upset the missus and me, but it had to be done."

Ebenezer Davies turned to the unhappy Pingle.

"You interfering pie-can!" he snapped savagely. "Why you weren't boiled when you were young beats me."

Shaking at the knees, and feeling as cheap as a second-hand sock at a jumble sale, Joshua Pingle turned to his neighbour.

"I—I very sorry," he began.

"So you ought to be!" retorted Bob Marsh. "A nice old hash you've made of things, haven't you? You deserve a thorough—"

"Leave him to me, Mr Marsh!" interrupted a voice from behind them.

Both men turned on the instant to see Mrs Pingle. Full of dignity and rage, she clutched her husband by the ear, and dragged him backwards towards their house.

Bob Marsh watched them disappear, and he gave vent to a chuckle.

"That's put paid to his bill!" chuckled Bob Marsh.

(The End.)

## PRINCIPLES OF LIFE.

"If by means of the 'Digger' the true principles of life, the spirit of helpfulness and comradeship and justice to the disabled and dependants of our dead comrades are kept constantly before its readers, success is assured."

Brigadier General  
G. S. RICHARDSON,  
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A portuguese, Alberto Castello Branco, is said to have planted the first coffee tree in Rio de Janeiro in 1750, and from this small beginning has been developed the industry which has made Brazil the greatest coffee-producer of the world.

A rather gruesome design was adopted for a special stamp issue commemorative of the deliverance of Riga. For this issue, the Letts used a picture of a beheaded woman at a graveside and in the background the skyline of the town of Riga.