

minimum of politeness) that I was invited to lunch tomorrow. I left.

That evening we had a meeting of the Young Mothers' Small Clothes Society. I was a member of the charity's Committee, as was my precious and most admirable friend, Mr Godfrey Ablewhite. To my disappointment he did not appear that night, and I was shocked to hear from my Christian sisters of the Committee that the previous Friday he and a gentleman called Mr Septimus Luker had been victims of a strange conspiracy.

According to the newspapers, early on June 30th our gifted Mr Ablewhite, after cashing a cheque at a bank in Lombard Street, passed Mr Luker – a perfect stranger – who happened to be leaving the bank at the same time. The stranger insisted on Mr Godfrey leaving first, and the two men went their separate ways. Mr Godfrey went back to his house in Lambeth, where a poorly dressed young boy was waiting for him. The boy handed him a letter, saying he had been asked to deliver it by an old lady he didn't know. It asked him to go, an hour later, to a house in Northumberland Street. The woman, who intended to give a large sum of money to charity, wanted information on the Young Mothers' Small Clothes Society. Our Christian Hero never hesitates when good can be done. He went instantly.

A very respectable-looking Englishman answered the door and led him to an apartment at the back of the house. Entering, Mr Godfrey noticed an ancient Oriental book on the table. As he was admiring it, a brown-skinned arm took him by the neck. He struggled but there was more than one person. His eyes were bandaged, he was tied to a chair, and was searched. Words were spoken in a foreign tongue, then the men left.

He was discovered later by the owners of the house. They had rented the apartment to the Englishman the day before. Seeing

that the door had been left open for a long time they went in to see if anything was wrong. Mr Godfrey's belongings were lying everywhere but nothing was missing. The Oriental book was gone. Had Mr Godfrey been the victim of a strange mistake?

Later that day the same thing happened again. Mr Luker, having left the bank, visited various parts of London on business. Returning home, he found a letter waiting for him. A customer from Manchester, a collector of Oriental antiques, announced that he was on a short visit to London and desired to see Mr Luker urgently about an important sale. He drove immediately to an address in Tottenham Court Road where exactly the same thing happened to him – with one slight difference. Mr Luker's gold watch, his wallet, nothing was missing except one thing: a receipt for an extremely valuable object which he had put in the bank. The receipt was useless to anyone else since it clearly stated that only Mr Luker himself could remove the object from the bank.

Mr Luker hurried to the bank. Nobody had been there with the receipt. He went to the police who told him about Mr Godfrey's similar experience. They believed that a robbery had been planned and that one of the thieves had seen Mr Godfrey accidentally speaking to Mr Luker.



On Tuesday, dear Aunt Verinder received me with her usual kindness. However, I soon noticed that something was wrong. Anxious looks kept escaping her in the direction of her daughter who, as usual, disappointed me – how could such a plain-looking person be the child of such fine parents? After lunch, she got up in her shamefully colourful dress and said, 'I'll go and read now, mamma, but tell me if Godfrey calls. I can't wait to hear all about his adventure in Northumberland Street.' She