

**MISS FRANCES BAIRD,
DETECTIVE: A PASSAGE FROM
HER MEMOIRS, AS NARRATED TO
AND NOW SET DOWN BY
REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN**

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Miss Frances Baird, Detective: A Passage from Her Memoirs, as Narrated to and Now Set
Down by Reginald Wright Kauffman by Reginald Wright Kauffman

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Miss Frances Baird has a Problem
to Face. — The Stolen Diamonds



To Frances Baird

MY DEAR FRANCES:—

You tell me that, as a detective, your professional ethics forbid me to call you by your real name in any printed record which I may make of your achievements. I have tried to prove to you how, in the present instance, I have so altered scenes, dates — and even a fact or two — that the result should exculpate you. I have tried to show you that no one should hold you responsible for the vagaries of "a writing chap." I have tried —. But it was all no use. You are firm. The least, then, that I can do must be the most, and so I have coined a name as like your own as may be, have given it to the real you — and have told this story *as nearly as possible in the words in which you told it to me* that summer evening on the yacht's deck off Cape Cod.

For did you think that you could escape entirely? Or that I, having written of you, should fail to dedicate to you the result of my labours?

v

vi To Frances Baird

I remember too well how much I owe you since first we met across the dead body of the murdered librarian Wilson, in the Philadelphia of 1897. I remember too well the cub reporter thrown unexpectedly into the midst of the Molineux case in New York four years ago, and how you helped him to its successful solution. I remember too well the Burdick mystery in Buffalo, out of which maze you led me, the first newspaper-man to publish the truth. It was you who solved for me the Phares case in Mt. Holly, the Moat House murder in England, the Bechtel affair in Allentown, the Kreuger killing at Narbeth, and it was you who discovered for me a dozen other secrets, the best of which the best of papers dared not print.

Ours has been a dear, but curious, friendship. Because of what was once for me, and is still for you, a necessary professional interest in life's darker shadows, its seeds were sown in the bitter Garden of Crime. But it has blossomed into so rare a flower, and it has been always so much a friendship in which you gave and I received, that, no matter how in these pages I should try to praise you, I must still remain

Always your affectionate debtor,

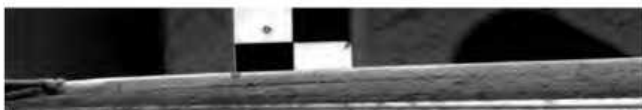
REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN.

*En route, Pueblo to New York,
6th May, 1906.*

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Miss Frances Baird, Detective

CHAPTER I.

DENNEEN'S DIAMONDS

THE office-boy thrust his brilliant red head in at the door.

"Miss Baird," he said.

I looked up from the morning paper as the schoolboy looks up from the book he has been pretending to study while expecting a summons from the master who, a moment before, has detected him in some gross violation of the academic law.

"Yes?" I interrogatively replied.

"Chief wants yer," snapped the boy, with his accustomed grin, and the crowning glory of his head disappeared.

It was as I had expected. Of course the Chief wanted me. I had now been associated with him for two years, and, after the considerable successes — as I believe it fair to call them — of my