

BURGLARS IN PARADISE

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649314584

Burglars in Paradise by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS

**BURGLARS
IN PARADISE**

BURGLARS IN PARADISE

BY

ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge

1887

3142
391

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. THE RUMOR	5
II. THE SCARE	22
III. GOOD FAMILY HORSES	40
IV. THE LADY OF SHALOTT	62
V. FEE-FI-FUM AND I. O. U.	81
VI. THE BURGLARY	99
VII. MR. PUSHETT	117
VIII. THE STATE WILL PROTECT	137
IX. MESSRS. HIDE AND SEEK	155
X. JUDAS JOHNS	172
XI. WHAT IS CALLED FRIENDSHIP	190
XII. RECEIPTED BILLS	205

Gift of Mrs G. C. Anderson

342097

BURGLARS IN PARADISE.

I.

THE RUMOR.

If it had not been for that horse —

But this requires explanation.

Some time ago, I had the pleasure of recording the experience of a single and singular lady, who built a house and lived in it. To any reader by chance acquainted with those records no introductory words will now be needed. To such as are unfamiliar with the annals of "The Old Maid's Paradise" it may be necessary to say that they concerned the fortunes of a family of two, — mistress and maid. I mistake; it was a family of three, — mistress, maid, and dog. They were known to the public respectively as Corona,

Puella Virginia (short, Puelvir), and Matthew Launcelot.

Corona's house was a matched-board cottage, situated, in summer, in the town of Fairharbor, on the sea-coast. As Corona spent the winters with her brother's family, she carried away the impression that her house was not situated anywhere from October to June. The poor, desolate, shuttered thing, shivering down there on the cliffs in the winter nor'westers, seemed to her to be blotted off the map by the first snow-storm, along with the wild roses and the golden-rod and the dandelion ghosts, and the sense of having one's own way, and paying the grocer for the privilege. Corona did not like to think about her house when she was out of it; it seemed like the corpse of a house, like an unburied friend: it made her sentimental. Her house was the only thing that she was known to be sentimental about.

She hurried back to it for that second season whose history it will be the effort of these columns to portray, with a bounding heart.

She had passed the bounding years. Life had begun to take steady paces. She had some time since ceased to expect things, and when they came they met her like friends in a crowd: a quick hand on the arm, a kindling eye, a sensitive cry, — “Why, *you!*” — and thus she had her surprise for her pains, the twofold pleasure of not hoping, the ardent comfort that comes from asking nothing of life and finding something when you don't look for it. Corona was a person of “ways.” This was one of her ways; and she found it a very good one.

So, when she felt that old, patiently put-by pull at the arterial circulation, which comes of deeply wishing for a thing that is really going to happen, Corona experienced some curiosity over the psychological phenomenon.

“I did not expect to care so much,” she said to Puelvir, as they jounced democratically over the Fairharbor streets in the yellow omnibus. Fairharbor economizes her streets as a public gymnasium. The great ledges, worn by the great fish teams, and innocent of

Mr. McAdam's ministrative palliations, exercise the passengers obviously. Matthew Launcelot, in particular, being of so much less weight than either of his natural protectors, performed the flying trapeze and double bar from one end of the narrow, dingy red velvet cushions to the other, at irregular intervals, with an air of wounded dignity which lent pathos to the occasion.

"Here, I'll hold ye, if I've got to," said Puelvir.

"Did you speak to me?" asked Corona, dreamily.

Puelvir had not noticed the psychological problem. Whether it were above her or beneath her, who could say? Mistress and maid were fond of each other; and Corona was used to these little lapses in the line of human sympathy which come of solitary living with some one who is "different." She had a high regard for Puelvir, and watched her affectionately as she gathered Matthew Launcelot into her generous bosom.

"There, there!" said Puelvir. "Do set awhile, if there's any set in you!"

"He never kisses you," observed Corona. "And he's so fond of you, too! I wonder at it."

"*Kisses me!*" cried Puelvir. "*Kisses me!* Why, I'd as lief be kissed by live men-folks (for aught I know) as by dogs. I knew a girl once set in a man's lap while they was keepin' company. I says to her, 'I don't see what you want to do it FOR. I should as soon think of goin' an' settin' on the mantel-piece!' I've trained him, you better believe," added Puelvir. "I used to snap his nose every time he tried it. If that don't work, I sprinkle him with a little vinegar. It's excellent. They soon get over it."

"Who get over it?" asked Corona, still in her dream. Pronouns were never Puelvir's strong point. It took a while to get used to them.

"How natural it dooz look down here!" observed Puelvir, as the omnibus bobbed and cannonaded through the crooked streets, past the dreary wharves, by the pungent fish-flakes, where the salt cod dried in the sun