NELL

IN

EDITHA'S BURGLAR.

Thank heaven I am home at last. The reception was unusually dull without Herbert. Dear Herbert I suppose he is safe at his journey's end by this time. I wonder if Editha has returned from the children's party? I suppose so. I trust she is fast asleep by this time.
Ah Editha! Editha my darling! Can I ever reveal to her the history of her shameful parentage? Who in this great world of fashion, that pets and caresses my darling Editha, would dream that she is the daughter of Will Lewis, the notorious thief and burglar, who was shot and killed while attempting to escape from prison. After his death I again met my first sweetheart—Herbert Winslow—who loved me since childhood. Ah had I only known what a villain Lewis was—I would never have laughed at—
the love of the man who is now my noble hearted husband. Yet poor Will with all his villanous loved our dear little Editha. — Thank heaven all that shame and misery is left behind, and only the humiliation of sometime telling my Editha that Herbert is not her father, remains. — Editha!

Yes Mama.

Cover yourself up well my dear, the night is cold and stormy. May Angels keep thee from harm. — Ah, perhaps after all it will be best that the child should never know. (Bue.)

Mama!
What, Editha, my darling, not in bed yet?

I'm afraid these parties and late hours are too much for you. Come, sit down here by the fire while I cover you up warm and cozy, and then scold myself for neglect of duty. (hus.)

I know that my darling, but I'm afraid it is not good for your health. "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise." You know those are the cardinal virtues of the nursery rhymes. But your governess will soon be with you and take this great responsibility off my hands.
her very much.

I am really getting jealous of her, do you love her better than me?
in all the world.

My darling.

such nice stories.

What kind of stories?

and—-and burglars.

Burglars! that is rather a strange subject to choose from to tell such a little girl.

any good burglars?

Well my dear, my acquaintance with them is rather limited, but I don't think they are overburdened with any great amount of goodness.

would you do?
I would remain very quiet and do nothing that would disturb him. But you need never fear, for burglars never come where they see lights, or where there are watch dogs, and old Betsy is a very faithful animal, but come, let us dismiss this gloomy subject, and you run off to bed. I'm afraid.

Afraid of what my dear?

Of burglars.

Why my dear burglars don't have little girls. Besides, no respectable burglar would be caught out a night like this. And now my darling a good night kiss and my little girl must go to bed. (bns) Strange
this mood of mine tonight. I have been thinking of Will Lewis all day—strange that she, his child should speak of burglary and on this very night too, the anniversary of his death. Oh, what is there to fear? Should anything happen to me, Herbert loves the child so dearly, that she would be safe enough—safe enough. (bus & exit)

—— will not tell her.

(enter & call) Editha—(bus) Go to your room, Editha, go at once. (bus) Will Lewis — (he turns)

What! Will Lewis alive!

yes alive.
My God, what have I done to deserve this punishment? Do you mean? Is it no punishment to find all my hopes of happiness here and hereafter blasted. But God know, had I not thought you were dead, I would never have married again. Married? You could never believe, knowing me as you do, that I should be in this house, other than as the wife of Herbert Winslow? Winslow's wife! And now, not content with the past miseries you have made me endure, you come here to rob me of my darling Editha and take her from all she loves.
were friends once.

Yes we were friends. More—I loved you once, loved you with all the depth of a woman's heart. I gave you all a woman could give. Truth, love, and honor; and what did you give me in return? Deceit, abuse, and degradation. Deserted me and our child, left me to starve in the streets, penniless, alone and dying. It was thus Herbert Winslow found me, placed me with kind friends who nursed me back to life and hope. Is it any wonder that I learned to love the true and noble hand that had saved me, had saved my darling child from a pauper's grave? Is it any...
I wonder that, when we all believed you had been killed in trying to escape from prison, that I married him? — And now you come, not only bringing shame upon me and making me a criminal in the sight of man, though God knows I am innocent, but trying to steal away my darling baby!

Do that Nell — Then you will not take her from me?

Oh, are your father. Then you have not told her?

Be the wiser — OH Will, forgive me for having doubted you. Had you always been as noble as your heart dictated, how different all
might have been. If you would only reform.

a thief.

Oh Will! Will!

may I see her?

Yes you shall see her, but what proof have I against treachery?

(cue.)

You shall see her. (calle) Editha! Editha!

yes mama.

Editha this gentleman wishes to speak to you. He is an old friend of Mamas.

after all?

Only that he wished to steal a part of your heart Editha, which I am sure he is
welcome to darling

(bus till Curnan)