

Finger Marks on Ale Glass Restore Lady Hart's Gems

Master of Scotland Yard Solves Intricate Jewel Mystery

By GEORGE BARTON

Marvelous Insight of Sherlock Holmes' Prototype Reveals a Professional Bandit in Man Servant of Sir Archibald Hunter—Tell-Tale Impress of Thirsty Thief's Digits on Receptacle and on Cab Door Furnishes Connecting Links in Queer Robbery Solution. *d d d*

John Sweeney, for many years an inspector-detective at Scotland Yard, long ago won a reputation on both sides of the Atlantic. He became connected with the English police when quite young and soon earned a transfer to the Bureau of Criminal Investigation which is better known to the American public as "Scotland Yard." The case of the Hart gems to which he was assigned is given here with more as an example of the methods pursued by English detectives than as a specimen of Inspector Sweeney's individual skill. The name of the nobleman has been disguised and some permissible license taken with the construction of the story, but the main facts, though presented in composite form, are true, and demonstrate that Sherlock Holmes has his prototypes in real life among the professional police of Great Britain.

Sir William and Lady Hart had the reputation of being the most hospitable pair in all of Great Britain—and that is saying a good deal. They had a beautiful country seat just outside of London where they entertained on a palatial scale.

On the occasion to which the present story refers Sir William and Lady Hart gave a particularly elaborate affair. It was a seven-day house party concluding with a brilliant ball. There were some 40 guests in all, and four of them at least were related to the royal family.

On the evening of the final day—it must have been a Friday—there was a great ado over the preparations for the ball. No one was more excited than Lady Hart herself. And well might she be, for on that occasion she was to wear for the first time a magnificent creation from Paris. Besides, she was to deck herself out in the Hart gems. Anyone who has ever had the pleasure of seeing these rare old family heirlooms need not be told that they are both unique and costly. My lady had been busily engaged in her boudoir with her maid for over an hour. She was all ready for the ball. Everything was in place except the gems—they lay on the dressing table ready to be fastened in Lady Hart's corsage. The clock on the mantel pealed out seven silvery strokes. Lady Hart looked at her maid. She was a compassionate woman. She said:

"My child, you look thoroughly exhausted. I'm through with you for the present. I can attach the jewels to my dress without your aid. Go to your room and rest and report to me again at midnight."

The girl thanked her mistress and left the room. Lady Hart gave a final survey of herself in the long pier mirror. It was satisfactory. But the feminine desire to get the judgment of some one else took possession of her mind. She picked up the jewels and was about to put them on. The large one was magnificently beautiful. It was a great ruby surmounted with a glittering framework of the purest diamonds. Two others, in the forms of crescents, were pure pearls. Altogether they represented a modest fortune. Lady Hart hesitated for a moment. She wanted to know what another woman would think of her Parisian gown by itself—minus the prestige which would be given it by the famous gems. Lady Sutherland, her special friend, was near by in a room on the other side of the corridor. She laid the jewels on the dressing-table and tripped out of the room. She was gone less than five minutes.

The Hart gems were gone! As the result of that, John Sweeney, detective-inspector of Scotland Yard, appeared on the scene.

Sir William joined him in the library and the two men went over all of the facts in the case. The first order of the detective was that no one should leave the house that night—it was then about ten o'clock—without the permission of the host.

Detective Sweeney then inquired about Lady Hart's maid. She seemed a natural object of suspicion. But it soon appeared that the young woman had a complete alibi. It was proven that she had gone to her room immediately after being dismissed by her mistress and being very tired had thrown herself on her couch and had slept soundly amid all the excitement over the stolen jewels.

Finally the servants were brought in and cross-questioned. They ex-

hibited all sorts of queer mental traits from gross stupidity to imbecile indignation. The only testimony that had the slightest value was given by a pert maid who said John Martin had been seen in the corridor leading to Lady Hart's room about the time of the robbery.

"Who is John Martin?" quickly queried the detective.

"He is the valet and attendant of Sir Archibald Hunter," replied the host.

"He must be the man!"

Sir William smiled sarcastically.

"There's only one flaw in that theory."

"What is it?"

"Sir Archibald and his attendant left yesterday. I forgot to mention that when we were going over the list of the guests."

"How can we prove that?"

"It don't have to be proven. It's a fact. I accompanied Sir Archibald to his carriage and saw him drive off, and his man was with him."

"That's too bad."

The host smiled.

"I think it's good—for Sir Archibald's man."

After some further talk Sir William and the detective took a walk about the premises and made an examination of locks and bolts. They strolled into the grounds and interviewed the two gate-keepers. The gate-keeper at the south entrance said one of the servants had brought him a message that no one was to be permitted to leave the house that night. The servant, whom he did not recognize, then volunteered to stay on guard until he—the south gate-keeper—should go and give similar instructions to the gate-keeper at the north entrance. He was gone but a few minutes, but on his return the servant was nowhere to be seen.

Detective Sweeney let out an exclamation of impatience.

"What's the matter?" asked the host.

"This man had no right to leave his post. Don't you see that a regiment of thieves could escape while he was away?"

"But my dear sir," replied Sir William, "don't you understand that the servant remained here while the man went to warn the other gate-keeper?"

"And was gone when he returned."

"Oh," said the baronet, easily, "I don't attach any significance to that. Simply the dereliction of a careless servant. I doubt whether anyone has left the premises to-night."

"Then one of your guests must be guilty," retorted the detective quickly. "Stop—stop at that," was the angry retort; "if you find it necessary to suspect my guests your work shall stop at once."

"I propose that the credentials of every one of your servants be carefully investigated—and that the antecedents of every servant belonging to your guests be probed."

The suggestion met with so much opposition that it was abandoned. The detective remained in the library until nearly midnight. He seemed to have run up against a dead wall. But he had been doing a lot of thinking. As he started to leave one of the servants tapped on the door.

"What is it?" cried Sir William impatiently.

"A telegram for Lord Mortimer," was the response.

Lord Mortimer was the impecunious earl. The host was instantly all attention. He took the telegram and excused himself to the detective.

"Pardon me a moment until I give this to Mortimer."

He left the room and was gone 10 or 15 minutes. He returned with a perplexed look.

"What is it?" asked the detective.

"Mortimer's not in his room, and I can't locate him anywhere."

"Of course," he said almost rudely, "there's no significance in his absence from his room. He's about somewhere."

"Of course," assented Sweeney, tactfully.

The detective remained at the house all night. When he departed for Scotland Yard in the morning he carried



THE HART GEMS WERE GONE!

with him an ordinary drinking glass—a dirty glass that looked as if it might have contained stale ale the night before. He had picked it up in one of the rooms of the house and the care he bestowed upon it almost bordered on the ludicrous. He seemed particularly anxious not to permit the glass to rub against anything.

An hour later a chance visitor at Scotland Yard might have witnessed a curious experiment being made with an ordinary drinking glass. The experiment was a success. The operative discovered on the glass the imprints of four fingers and a thumb. The marks were perfectly distinct and the finger and thumb prints had been reproduced perfectly on sensitized paper.

A visit to the office of the railroad company resulted in finding the conductor who had charge of that particular train. He remembered that one passenger had boarded the train at the station.

"Did he go on to London?" he was asked.

"No," was the response, "he alighted at the first station this side of London."

The trail was becoming interesting. It was followed until it led to the station this side of London. The only cabman at that station was awakened from his slumbers to answer the questions of the detective. He was a typical "night hawk." Yes, he had answered, he had one customer that night. Could he let the representative from Scotland Yard look at his cab? Most assuredly he felt complimented at such attention. The ramshackle old vehicle was found in the stable. A careful examination was made. The result was remarkable.

There were five distinct spots on the dirty cab door and they were the imprints of four fingers and a thick thumb.

Most startling of all, the prints on the cab door and those on the unwashed glass were identical.

"Cabby," said the detective, "you know where you took your customer last night?"

The cabman harnessed up his vehicle and drove off with the detective as his passenger. In about ten minutes he halted before a mean-looking frame house in the suburbs. Sweeney alighted and rapped at the door vigorously. After a long wait, a smooth-shaven man in his shirt sleeves responded. The detective was keyed up to his responsibility. He did not give the man time to speak, but said sharply:

"Good morning, Mr. Martin."

The man drew back.

"How did you know—" he began, then changing his manner to one of defiance, he cried: "My name's not Martin."

"Oh, yes, it is," was the cheerful response, "you're John Martin."

"Well," was the dogged response, "what do you want?"

"I want Lady Hart's gems," snapped the detective.

That night John Martin was behind prison bars and Lady Hart's precious gems had been restored to her.

John Martin proved to be a professional thief. On numerous occasions he had acted as an extra servant at house parties. Forged references and a month of faithful service enabled him to get a position with Sir Archibald Hunter, who was the respected younger son of an aristocratic but not particularly wealthy family. In due course of time he formed one of the inhabitants of Sir William Hart's house in the name and capacity of John Martin, valet and attendant to his master, Sir Archibald.

He left Sir William's house with his master on the night before the conclusion of the house party so that his alibi in that connection was secure enough, but he made it a point to return on the following night. Being well known to all of the servants he met with no obstacle and actually found his way to the corridor of the second story leading to Lady Hart's room. He had not thought of robbery at that particular moment, but the sight of Lady Hart leaving her room and the jewels lying exposed on the dressing-table proved too strong a temptation for his avaricious nature. He quickly slipped in, put the jewels in his pockets, and then calmly mingled with the other servants. Later on he was the man who went out to the gate-keeper and instructed him not to permit anyone to leave the house that night, and after sending the man on a fool's errand, he coolly marched out of the grounds. He took the first train to the London suburb and hoped by the next day to be able to dispose of his loot. His one mistake was in pausing in the servants' hall long enough to drink the ale out of a dirty glass. The impress of his fingers on the glass and on the cab door at the suburban station proved to be his undoing and furnished food for contemplation in the long term of penal servitude to which he was sentenced.

EXAMPLE.

Sad it is for me to see
What I am and ought to be.

To the dreams of eager youth
Beauty secured at one with truth,
All the world methought was fair,
All was good that dwelled there,
And I sought to make my soul
Worthy of its lofty goal;
Worthy as a mate to stand
With the noble; with the grand,
With the dwellers in the land.

But, alas! I woke to find
Sin and error in my kind,
Woke to find the squalid real
Choke and crush my high ideal,
Felt I had not strength to move it,
Felt I could not rise above it—
And I fell—from sky to slime;
Reached the level of my time.

Yet it sometimes seems to me
As I ponder, musingly,
Had I one man chance to see
Such as I had hoped to be,
(Such as I had surely been
(Had I but that vision seen)
At the shining of that ray
All my night had turned to day;
I had never lost my way.

Sad it is for me to see
What I am and ought to be.

Yet the bitterest gall I drink
Is the thought I sometimes think—
When my neighbor's step I mark
Stumbling blindly in the dark—
Had I reached the higher plane,
Had I been the noble man,
Had I made his high ideal
Once incarnate in the real,
At the shining of that ray
All his night had turned to day;
He had never lost his way.
—New York Herald.

A Slave of Habit.

"Mr. Butcher," said the patron with the infant in her arms, "will you please weigh my baby?"

"Sure!" responded the busy butcher, depositing the little human bundle on his scales. "Just 16 pounds and a quarter, Mrs. Riley."

"But," commented the watching parent, "your scales registered but 16 pounds."

"You're right, madam," said the butcher, reddening as he took another look. Then, turning to the bookkeeper behind the desk, he called out: "Annie, take off that quarter of a pound!"—Judge.

During the Ordeal.

"Beaker is the most absent-minded chap I ever met."

"What did he do?"

"The last time he got into a barber's chair he pinned the newspaper round his neck and began to read the towel."—Judge.

BIFF.



Mr. Fresher—Ah, don't you remember my face, Miss Greenwad?

Miss Greenwad—Well, now, I do faintly recall it. You know one sees so many odd faces when on slumming expeditions.—Chicago Daily News.

The Passing Touch.

A kind word overheard by chance,
A blossom blown across the way,
A pleasant nod or kindly glance,
And courage gladdens all the day.

A lightly spoken word of doubt,
A look that indicates mistrust,
And all the joys that gleamed about
Are mellowed or besmirched with dust.
—S. E. Kiser, in Chicago Record-Herald.

One George Missed.

George Washington may have been first in war and first in peace, but he never knew the meaning of a real reception because he was never the first man to arrive at a summer resort.—Detroit Free Press.

The Wrong One.

Lady—I'm looking for a governess for my children.

Manager of Employment Bureau—Well, madam, according to her report, you don't need a governess. You need a lion tamer.—Houston Post.

Falling.

Mrs. Bacon—What made your face fall when we got to Mrs. Swell's musicale, to-night?

Mr. Bacon—I felt one of my suspender buttons giving way!—Yonkers Statesman.

The Only Thing.

"So your wife is an authoress, Binks. Does she write for money?"

"I never had a letter from her yet that she wrote for anything else."—Baltimore American.

In the Crowd.

Old Lady (despairingly)—This is a sweet fix!

Another (sighing)—Yes, indeed; a perfect jam!—Baltimore American.

His Objection.

"Doesn't taste good? Wait till you're hungry—hunger is a great sauce."

"My papa whips me for being saucy."—Houston Post.

Naturally.

"They say your wife lectures you every time you stay out late?"

"Aw, that's all talk."
"Of course."—Houston Post.