

Extraordinary Case of Robbery in England

A robbery, accompanied by some extraordinary novel features, has just been committed, and deserves to be recorded, as showing a clever scheme to avoid capture well carried out, and only failing to be successful by neglecting a precaution that would have struck anyone. It appears that a family residing at Vauxhall agreed to accompany some friends to the theatre lately, only leaving the master, a Mr. Baker, and the servant girl, Mary Newhall, at home. Sometime after their departure Mr. Baker went out, saying he should return soon.

On arriving home at about nine o'clock in the evening, he could get no attention paid to his repeated assaults on the door knocker, although there was a light in several of the rooms, which were apparently occupied — Thinking this strange, he applied to his neighbor, and, with the latter's assistance, succeeded in entering his own house by means of an open window. Once inside, a most extraordinary scene presented itself. In the passage a poker broken in two, with a quantity of blood and human hair adhering to the thick end, was found on the floor, and near it some more hair and a pail full of what appeared to be blood.

The whole house was in a most disordered state, property being strewn about in all directions. Mr. Baker, whose surprise at the tragic appearance of his house can be imagined, sought for his servant, but fruitlessly— she was not to be found. He then called in a policeman, and the search was resumed, with no other result than finding the girl's bonnets, which proved that she had either been taken or had departed out of the house without one. All over the house property was either packed up, ready for removal, or actually removed, and the servants' boxes were open and the clothes thrown about the floor, like the rest. Two trunks and a carpetbag were missing, and it was evident that the thief or thieves had taken the stolen property out of the house by these means. Among others, a box made up into the shape of a settee, belonging to a Mr. Heath, a gentleman residing in the house, was taken, and by the peculiarity of the form of this box was the thief eventually traced. Suspicion first alighted upon the servant, but on inquiry among the cabmen it appeared that one of them had driven a young gentleman from that street in which Mr. Baker's house is situated, to the Eastern Counties' Railway, who had luggage exactly corresponding to the trunks stolen.

Inquiry at the station elicited the further facts that, after walking about the platform for an hour, smoking cigars, this individual had taken the train for Brentwood. Here he slept all night in an apartment to himself, having declined to share a double bedded room with a person he had picked up an acquaintance with while *en route*. In the morning it was found that the curiously shaped box and its owner had departed for Great Yarmouth, where he was afterwards traced by a detective, living in furnished lodgings, under the name of Mr. Heath. He had made himself very agreeable, and had smoked continually, dressed himself out in handsome clothes, and got so much into the good graces of the landlady as to take her to the theatre on the night of his arrival.

The detective arrived on the following Sunday morning at Yarmouth, and soon discovered where this mysterious gentleman lodged. He found him out, having escorted his landlady to church— but quietly taking his quarters in the new lodger's apartments, he awaited his return—previously satisfying himself that he was on the right scent, by discovering the settee shaped box among the luggage.— On Mr. Heath's return he found himself arrested, and a very cursory examination

enabled the practiced eye of the detective to discover that his prisoner was not a *he* at all, but a member of the softer sex, and no less a person than Mary Newhall, the servant herself. She was brought to London and examined in her male attire. It was clearly proven that she alone had carried out the robbery, everything stolen being found in her possession. On the application of the detective she was remanded, when the chain of evidence will be complete.

How she learned to smoke cigars with impunity, and accustom herself to trousers and coats in so short a time is a mystery. But for taking that unfortunate box possibly she might have made good her escape. However, in these times such a well-devised and novel mode of robbery rarely occurs, and Mary Newhall deserves some credit for her ingenuity. The idea of breaking a poker, covering it with hair and blood to throw suspicion off herself and lead people to suppose she had been murdered, was something quite out of the common. Probably some poor cat had to provide these tragic accessories.

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