

## *The Gramercy Park Mystery*

TOWARD THE END OF LAST AUTUMN, Gramercy Park — which, as everybody knows, is one of the most charming localities in the city — has been oppressed with a mystery which no one could fathom. The most daring and inexplicable robberies were constantly taking place. Consternation reigned in the servant's hall. Rings, spoons, brooches, shawl-pins, in short, every species of valuables, were being daily missed from a number of the houses in the Park. No one could tell how they went. Married ladies mourned over their diamonds. Demoiselles wept for lost pledges of affection. The services of a distinguished detective were called in. He watched, examined, catechized the servants, and put on spectacles and false whiskers, but all to no purpose. Intelligence-officers reaped a harvest, for everybody was discharging their servants and getting new ones.— One wealthy family had suffered such severe losses that they had almost come to the resolution of doing their own chores. Gramercy Park — usually so tranquil — was in a high state of fever. The very sidewalks would have baked Connecticut pies.

One of the servant sufferers among the many victims was Mrs. Y—, a lady who inhabited one of the handsomest houses in the Park, and who was rather distinguished in society from the fact of her being always accompanied in her carriage by a very beautiful and intelligent monkey. Other people carried lap dogs — she carried a monkey; and, as to be uncommon is, in nine cases out of ten, to be famous, she had an unblemished reputation for eccentricity. Her distinction did not, however, preserve her from the general calamity. She related, with tears in her eyes, the story of the loss of some family jewels of inestimable value which were stolen from her bedroom. She had the police on the track, but no clue could be obtained to the criminal. The mystery increased in intensity. Barrington and Jack Sheppard faded into insignificance before the ingenuity of this unknown burglar.

Among the residents of Gramercy Park is a Mr. B—, a middle-aged gentleman, who having had a long career of success in business, committed some time since the unpardonable folly of marrying a young and pretty wife. As a matter of course, he was jealous. When a man who has gathered all his experience up to the age when experience ceases to be gathered, as a bachelor, he usually lays it, as a sort of holocaust, on the altar when he marries, and Hymen with his torch soon renders it a complete burnt offering. Mr. B—, therefore, being no longer a sensible man, suspected Mrs. B—; and, as Dimes very justly observed the other day, “the man who suspects his wife, converts the sacred gold of the wedding-ring into Mosaic metal.” Dimes, you will perceive, is sometimes metaphorical.

Well, Mr. B— enters, one fine evening when the windows are open to catch the last sigh of the dying autumn, the apartment sacred to Mrs. B—. Horror! he beholds the dimly-seen figure of a man leap through the open window, and descend by some means unknown to him into the street. He rushes to the casement, but the fiend in human shape has fled. Fortunately, however, he finds that his wife is not there. The next morning, Mrs. B— complains of having missed a diamond ring from her room. The servants' hall is in a turmoil and investigations are instituted. But Mr. B— grinds his teeth, and smiles

sardonically, for *he* well knows that this is all a blind, to cover the fact of his wife having given said ring to her lover. He lays his plans. The next night, revolver in hand, he watches in his bedroom. The — comes not. But B— is patient. He watches the next night with the same result. On the third night, as the chamber is wrapped in the dusk of twilight, a form appears climbing through the window. B—'s heart almost ceases to beat. He waits. The shape enters; it is that of a very small man, almost a boy. B— raises his revolver, and taking deliberate aim, fires. The intruder staggers, gives one dull moan, and leaping to the window, escapes by the same mysterious means as before. —But B— is not to be baffled. Quick as lightning he rushes downstairs into the street, and is just in time to see a dwarfish form flittering along the railings next [to] the Park. He follows. The shape reels along as if mortally wounded, and after a brief chase enters a window on the ground floor of Mrs. Y—'s house. B—, whose curiosity by this time has almost stifled his jealousy, follows. Still led by the dwarfish form, he finds himself on the second story, and beholds his involuntary guide enter a room illuminated by subdued light. He peeps through the half-open door, and beholds a spectacle that transfixes him. Mrs. Y— is bending over the form of her pet monkey, who presses one hand on his breast, from which thick drops of blood ooze through his fingers. He moans dolefully, and his mistress seems in the greatest distress. At last, by a supreme effort, the wounded animal drags himself across the carpet to a Japanese casket, opens the lid, and drops into it something that flashes in the lamp-light, and then with its great eyes fixed on its mistress with one long look of affection, expires. B— can no longer contain himself. He bursts into the room, and at his appearance, Mrs. Y— turns pale as death. By an irresistible impulse, B— approaches the Japanese casket, and there, almost on the top of a heap of every species of bijouterie, he beholds his wife's lost ring!

An explanation is scarcely needed. Mrs. Y—, it seems, had, by continually placing valuable articles in this casket, in the presence of her monkey, so far cultivated his imitative faculty as to induce him to appropriate every thing of a similar nature that he saw, and conceal it in the same place. —Accordingly, the lady was accustomed to turn her pet loose in the summer evenings when the windows of neighboring houses were open, and after a short absence he invariably returned laden with precious things which were always deposited in the Japanese casket.

So the mystery was solved. Jocko lost his life. B— was cured of his jealousy. Mrs. Y— returned the spoil which she had accumulated under an attack of moral insanity. The detective officer took off his false whiskers, and the servant's-hall resumed its tranquility. Could any comedy that was not true end more satisfactorily than this anecdote, which is?

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