

A Lady's Glove

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Officer Hale is a well-known man in the great city of New York. In all the detective force of that city, whose exploits have made them so famous, none bears a higher reputation for skill, sagacity and bravery, than he. But among all his many triumphs, there is one which is known to very few, and which I propose relating on these pages.

Late In October, 1865, Fifth Avenuedom was thrown into a buzz of excitement by the announcement of a marriage between Miss Golding the belle, and daughter of the great banker of that name, and a real, live French marquis—De Villiere by name. It was the first marriage of the season, and consequently everyone was on tiptoe to receive an invitation to it, as everyone felt sure that it would be a most brilliant affair. The happy pair were to leave for Europe on the first steamer after the wedding, and the marquis was to take his bride at once to his old chateau where his parents awaited them, and then she was to have the honor of being presented at court. At last, however, the momentous day arrived, and plain Miss Golding changed her name, and got a “handle” to her new one besides.

But, to the great annoyance of the bride and groom, the pleasant programme which they had laid down for themselves, was not to be carried out entire. Some decided changes were to be made in it by an adverse fate, and upon this hinges the story I am about to relate.

Such a brilliant marriage could not fail to call forth an unusually brilliant array of bridal gifts. The long table appointed for their reception utterly groaned beneath the costly articles that were heaped upon it. Among the presents, was a set of magnificent diamonds—ear-rings and a necklace—which had been sent out from France by the parents of the marquis. They were admitted by all to be the most exquisite articles of jewelry ever seen in New York, and not a few of the fair ladies who admired them so enthusiastically, in their hearts violated the tenth commandment by coveting their neighbor's goods.

When the guests who had been invited the evening before the marriage, to witness the good fortune of the bride, had departed, the room containing the presents was closed. Later in the evening the diamonds were wanted for some purpose, and Mamma Golding went after them, not being willing to trust a servant. To her astonishment and dismay, they were not in their accustomed place. The shriek with which she greeted this discovery brought the family into the room, and to their terrified questions she could only answer:

“The diamonds! the diamonds!”

A glance at the table at once revealed her meaning, and the house was immediately in an uproar. Search was made everywhere, but the missing jewels could not be discovered. Mamma Golding insisted that [the marriage] should be postponed on account of the loss, but neither of the lovers would listen to that. All they would agree to was that they should remain awhile in New York

after that event, until an effort could be made to find the jewels. Mamma Golding was in favor of immediately arresting all the servants on the place, but the old banker, with his cool head and long experience of the world, knew better than this.

“No, no,” he said, emphatically, “say nothing about the matter. Keep as quiet as possible. I’ll send for Hale, the detective, and place the matter in his hands. He’ll find the thief, if it can be done. Now leave the room all of you, and keep out of it till Hale comes.”

The determined old man immediately enforced his orders, and then sent for Officer Hale, with a request to come to the house immediately, and by nine o’clock the official was seated in the banker’s library, listening to all that could be told him.

“Do you suspect anyone?” he asked, when Mr. Golding had concluded.

“No one,” was the reply.

“But I do,” broke in Mamma Golding, with energy. “I have learned that the last person seen in the room was Helen Brady, the house-girl—I suspect her.”

“Very good,” said Hale, quietly. “Now let me see the room, if you please. I wish to have no one with me but Mr. Golding.”

The two men left the library and entered the room where the presents had been on exhibition. Every burner in the large chandelier was lit, so that the detective might see into the remotest parts of the apartment. Hale approached the table, and examined it closely. Suddenly an exclamation escaped his lips, and at the same time he took from the table a small and but little worn kid glove.

“Does this glove belong to any of your family?” he asked, turning to the banker.

“No,” replied Mr. Golding, “I am sure it does not. It is too small for either my wife or daughter. Some visitor probably left it there.”

“Very likely,” muttered Hale. “Might not some of your fashionable friends have been the thief in this case?” he asked, suddenly.

“My dear sir, you are dreaming,” said Mr. Golding, blandly.

“Maybe so. Do me the favor to call your girl, Helen Brady, without telling her why she is wanted?”

Mr. Golding left the room, and in a few minutes returned, accompanied by Helen. She evinced no surprise or alarm as she entered.

“My girl,” said Hale, as she came in, “are you aware that a robbery has been committed in this house?” He watched her closely as he spoke.

“Sure sir,” she replied, in genuine astonishment, “an’ I didn’t hear of it.”

“That will do,” said Hale, “you can go out now.”

Helen left the room, and Hale turned to Mr. Golding, who stood looking at him in blank amazement.

“You wrong that girl by suspecting her,” he said. “I will stake my life on her innocence. I’ve had too much experience in the profession not to know a guilty face from an innocent one.”

“Then who could have taken the jewels?”

“The owner of this glove,” replied Hale. “I am sure of it. Depend upon it, Mr. Golding, if the thief is found, it will be among your fashionable friends.”

“But, my dear sir,” began the banker, in surprise.

“Excuse me for interrupting you,” said Hale, “but I am sure of it. Now if you wish me to undertake this case, you must let me manage it in my own way. It bids fair to be very difficult, for this glove is the only thing I have to work upon, I shall not arrest Helen Brady, and I do not wish her to be molested. I will begin my search tomorrow. In a few days I will declare it a hopeless undertaking, and appear to abandon it, but I will continue to work secretly. You must not tell this to anyone. I would not take you into my confidence but for the fact that I shall have to draw on you for money. Upon these conditions I will go to work.”

“I will be guided by you,” said the banker; “but I cannot help thinking you are mistaken in the outset.”

The next day the marriage took place. Hale stationed himself at the church door, and closely scanned the faces of all who passed in or out. He also made their hands objects of scrutiny. He discovered nothing, however, and went away feeling impatient and uncomfortable. That afternoon he set about finding out the history of the glove. It was a light kid, size number 5, and was scarcely soiled at all, except on the outer side of the middle finger, where it was plainly marked by the set of a ring which the owner had worn. The glove being the property of a fashionable lady, it occurred to Hale that it had been procured at Taylor’s, and he decided to ascertain whether this was true or not.

Upon reaching the store he sought one of the proprietors, and showing him the glove, asked if he thought it came from there.

“I am confident of it,” was the reply. “The glove is one of a new style which we imported about a month ago.”

“Could you tell me to whom it was sold?”

“Impossible,” said the merchant, laughing. “We had quite a large lot, and could not tell to whom we sold them.”

Hale turned off with an exclamation of annoyance, and left the store. This was a bad beginning, and he had very little hope of making a better ending. Two days passed away, and the case was still as hopeless. On the third day he received, through the post office, a note in a woman’s handwriting. It was as follows:

“If officer Hale will meet the writer of this note at —’s saloon, room number 4, at eight o’clock tomorrow evening, he will learn something to his advantage.”

What could this mean? For a moment he was inclined to believe it was some plot to injure him. Many things suggested themselves to him, which it is not necessary to mention here; and at last he determined to be at the rendezvous at the appointed time, prepared for any emergency, and to leave the result to be determined there.

Accordingly the next evening at eight o’clock he presented himself at —’s saloon, a second-class house on Broadway, and asked to be shown to room number 4. The apartment was dimly lighted as he entered it, as the gas was now burning low. He immediately turned on more light, and saw sitting by a small table, a woman of medium height, closely veiled, and dressed with great plainness. It was impossible to see her face.

“I suppose, madam,” said the detective, seating himself opposite her,” that you are the person who sent me a note requesting me to meet you here?”

“No,” she replied, in a low, but singularly rich voice, “I am not the writer of that note, but am here in the place of that person.”

“Then be pleased to state your business with me, for my time is precious.”

“You are on the search for the person who took the diamonds of the Marquise de Villiere?” Hale bowed. “Well, then, Mr. Hale, I am authorized by parties that I may not name, to offer you five thousand dollars if you will abandon your efforts, and to declare to your employers that you find the task a hopeless one. You will simply sign a paper which I have brought with me, pledging yourself to do this, and I will pay the money to you on the spot.”

She held out a paper, which he took, and while pretending to read it he gazed searchingly at her left hand, which lay on the table. It was a very small white hand, evidently that of a lady, and on the fourth finger was a handsome diamond ring. Hale was satisfied that he was talking to the owner of the glove he had in his possession, and the person who had stolen the diamonds.

“I cannot accept your offer,” he said, after a pause. “I must do my duty. If I were to be influenced by money, your offer would not be large enough. The stolen diamonds are worth one hundred thousand dollars, and Mr. Golding has promised me ten thousand for them if I recover them uninjured.”

“I will make it twelve thousand,” said the woman, eagerly.

“*You* will,” said the detective, quietly. “I thought you were only acting for other parties.”

The woman struck the table impatiently with her hand.

“They will fulfill any promise I may make,” she said, “although I am only a servant.”

“I must still refuse your offer,” Hale said coldly. “I am obliged to you for this interview, however, as it has put me on the right track at last.”

“That is said for effect,” exclaimed the woman, sharply. “You know you think the case hopeless.”

“I did until I came here tonight,” replied Hale; “but I am convinced that you are the person that stole the jewels.”

The woman burst into a laugh.

“I told you I was only a servant,” she said.

“True,” remarked the detective. “You contradict yourself, though. Look at your hand. It is too delicate and refined for a servant, and servants cannot wear such splendid diamonds as you have in that ring. You have placed yourself in my power, and I shall arrest you. I must see your face, madam.”

He made a movement to tear away her veil, but she sprang towards him, and before he was aware of her intention, threw a handful of ground pepper in his eyes, completely blinding him for the time. In another instant she was gone, and he was suffering the most excruciating pain.

The next day Hale, who had recovered from the suffering caused by the pepper, determined to change his tactics. He was not slow in deciding upon a plan which he immediately proceeded to execute. That afternoon Mr. Golding received a call from a stranger, who was shown into the parlor. The banker took the card that was handed to him by his servant, and read aloud:

“Lord Anglesea, of England.”

“I know him well,” exclaimed the Marquis de Villiere, who chanced to be present at the time. “If you do not object, I will go down with you.”

Together they entered the parlor. A gentleman, with black hair and a slight moustache, and elegantly dressed, rose to receive them.

“Anglesea, my dear fellow,” exclaimed the marquis, advancing to him.

“Charmed to see you, my dear marquis,” drawled the stranger, holding out his hand.

The marquis stopped abruptly, and looked at him in astonishment.

“Who are you, sir?” he exclaimed, sternly, “and by what right do you presume to present yourself here as Lord Anglesea?”

“Mr. Golding knows me very well,” was the cool reply, “and can doubtless tell you the object of my visit.”

“Never saw you before in my life,” said the banker, in astonishment.

The stranger burst into a hearty laugh.

“So you don’t know me? Well, If you don’t, I’m safe from others,” he said. “I have the honor to inform you that I am Edward Hale, of the detective police.”

Mr. Golding stared at him in astonishment.

“Hale has light hair, and wears no beard or moustache,” he said, incredulously.

The detective quietly removed the wig, and showed his own hair clipped close to make room for the disguise.

“The moustache works in the same way,” he said, laughing.

“It is well done,” exclaimed the marquis, admiringly. “But why should you adopt such an aristocratic disguise?”

“The reason is this, my lord,” replied Hale. “It has become necessary for me to carry on my work among the fashionable circles of this city, and I must gain access to the very highest, without being suspected. I will stake my reputation that in two months time I shall have found both the thief and the diamonds. I want your assistance. You must bring me out as your friend, Lord Anglesea, a name I selected at random, and gain me admission to Mrs. Varick’s party tonight. After that I will work my own way.”

“It’s sheer folly, Hale,” exclaimed Mr. Golding. “I can’t conceive why you should cling to the idea that some person in good society has stolen the jewels. It’s preposterous.”

“Nevertheless, sir,” replied Hale, “I have in the last two days discovered enough to convince me that I am right. All I ask is two months’ time, and I promise to return the diamonds, and prove the correctness of my views.”

“I think you are quite right,” said the marquis; “and I will do my best to help you. But,” he added, looking at Hale curiously, “do you think you are equal to the task of counterfeiting an English nobleman?”

“Perfectly competent, if you will give me a few hints as to Lord Anglesea’s history, and such other things as may enable me to answer any questions that are asked me.”

“That I will do with pleasure,” said the marquis; “and if you are to make your *debut* tonight, we had better commence at once. *Ma foi*,” he added, laughing. “I shall tell Anglesea of it when I see him in Paris next winter. It will be an excellent joke.”

Mrs. Varick’s party that night was a brilliant gathering of all the *elite* of the city, and there was a buzz of excitement through parlor when the last distinguished arrival was announced, and the Marquis de Villiere introduced to the hostess his very particular friend, Lord Anglesea. His lordship was received with marked cordiality, and was at once the lion of the evening.

Towards midnight the marquis felt someone touch him on the shoulder, and looking around, saw Lord Anglesea standing back of him.

“Well,” he asked, eagerly, “what is it?”

“Nothing particular,” was the reply. “I did not think to trouble you again, but I have taken a fancy to know a lady here, and want you to introduce me.”

“Where is she?” asked the marquis. “You know I am at your service for this evening.”

“There she stands, just by that window. Who is she?”

“She is a Mrs. Dakin, the wife of one of the millionaires of this city, as I am told. Her husband is too old for gayety, and rarely goes out; but she, being young and handsome, is a great ornament to society. If your lordship has no conscientious scruples,” he added, with a mock bow, “you may have a fine field for a flirtation in that quarter. But, come! I will present you.”

The lady in question was not over the medium height, but by far one of the most beautiful women in New York. There was nevertheless a strange and restless expression on her face, and she seemed nervous and uneasy. Her reception of Lord Anglesea was most gracious, and during the evening his lordship devoted himself to her with a persistency that created no little remark. During the next three weeks he was constantly at her house, and was her escort in numerous drives, at the opera, and at several parties. It was evident that he was getting on famously with Mrs. Dakin. Indeed the lady herself was conscious of a stronger feeling for the titled stranger than was consistent with her position as another man’s wife; and his lordship found it very pleasant employment.

One morning he called on her, in accordance with an arrangement they had made, and found her seated on a luxurious sofa in the parlor. She gave him her hand languidly as he approached her, but without rising. He took it, and seated himself on the sofa by her, still retaining it. The color in her cheeks deepened as he did so, but she made no effort to withdraw her hand. For awhile neither spoke. At last his lordship, glancing at the hand which he held, and which was very small and delicate, uttered an exclamation of delight. The lady glanced at him in wonder.

“That is a very beautiful ring you wear,” he said, immediately. “I never saw it before, I think.”

“No,” she replied, “I have not worn it for some time. It was a present from my husband on my last birthday.”

His lordship was silent for sometime, and seemed to be plunged in thought. It would have required extraordinary courage in any other man to take the step which he was then contemplating. His companion was very beautiful, and he was well aware of the state of her feelings. At last, however, drawing a small and partially worn kid glove from his coat pocket, he held it up to her.

“Did you ever see this before?” he asked, smiling.

She turned ghastly pale, and bending forward, asked, hastily:

“Where did you get it?”

“I picked it up where you dropped it,” said, laughing. “But why do you seem so much surprised? Is it strange that I should treasure the glove of a beautiful woman?”

“No,” she replied, more calmly. “But tell me where you found it.”

He made no reply, but sat smiling, and gazing at her hand which he still held.

“Those are beautiful diamonds,” he said, quietly. “Do you know I think they almost as fine as those you stole from the Marquise de Villiere.”

She would have sprung to her feet, but he held her down, and could feel her trembling violently.

“What do you mean by such insulting language?” she gasped.

“I mean that you stole the diamonds from the table in Mr. Golding’s house,” he said, sternly. “I found this glove there, where in your haste you had dropped it. More than this, you sought to throw me off the search by attempting to bribe me. You met me at —’s saloon, a few weeks ago, and succeeded in escaping me there, when I thought you in my power. When I met you at Mrs. Varick’s party I recognized you by your voice, and today your acknowledgment of the glove, and this ring which you wore at our first interview, makes the identification complete.”

“Who are you?” she faltered.

“Just now I was Lord Anglesea,” he replied. “Now I am Edward Hale, of the detective police.”

He felt her lean heavily against him, and upon looking at her found that she had fainted. She soon revived, however, and sat with her face buried in her hands.

“What do you mean to do with me?” she asked, in a low voice.

“I scarcely know,” he replied. “One thing is certain, you must restore the diamonds.”

“I will do so,” she said, “and if you consent to let the matter drop here, and not to mention me as the guilty party, either to the Goldings or anyone else, I will pay you the five thousand dollars I offered you to abandon the search.”

“I have no disposition to be harsh with you, Mrs. Dakin,” said Hale. “I do not want your money, and will readily give you my word of honor that your secret shall be preserved.”

“I prefer that you should take the money,” she said, coldly, raising her head with some of her former hauteur. “I do not wish to be under any obligations to you. Let it be a regular bargain between us.”

“Be it so, then,” replied the detective. “I owe you, perhaps, some amends for leading you into the intimate relations which have existed between us.”

Her cheeks blazed, but she said nothing, and rose and left the room. In a few minutes she returned, and placed in his hands the diamonds and a package of money.

“You will keep your word?” she said, without looking at him.

“You may trust me,” he answered. “Perhaps I am not doing my duty, but God forbid that I should be hard with you.”

She hesitated a moment, then held out her hand to him, and Hale felt it tremble as he took it. In an instant, she withdrew it, and passed out of the room.

Hale hastened to the office of Mr. Golding, and upon sending in his card, was at once admitted to the banker’s private room.

“I have called to ask you a question,” he said, as he returned the old gentleman’s greeting. “If I can restore the jewels your daughter has lost, will you be content to receive them without asking me how I found them? and will you consent to refrain from prosecuting the guilty party? You will do a real kindness to one whom you little suspect, if you will.”

“All I have desired throughout the whole affair,” replied the banker, “has been to recover the jewels. Let me have them, and I promise you the matter shall drop.”

“Then here they are,” said the detective, quietly, laying them on the desk before the astonished banker. “And now,” he continued, “I must resume my own character. Before I do so, however, I will say, Mr. Golding, that in my suspicions I was right. The owner of the glove that I found on your table was the thief.”

Mr. Golding paid the ten thousand dollars promised the detective, and the latter left the office. Since then the banker has had serious doubts of the honesty of every one of those who were present at his house on the day when the diamonds were stolen.

Mrs. Dakin and her husband left New York for Europe a few weeks later, and are still there. The Marquise de Villiere met her at the house of the American minister, and was delighted to find an old friend there. She failed, however, to notice the deathly pallor that overspread the features of her friend, as that lady's eyes rested upon the diamonds which sparkled so gloriously in the light of the chandelier.

McCabe also wrote the 4 Laromie Stories (tell-tale eye, seventy miles an hour, the official blunder, and the little affair)

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