

He Was Really A Great Detective

Mrs. Parmenter had telephoned to her husband at noon, to tell him that the diamonds had not been found. Parmenter left his office and went over to see Sweazey about it, and came.

The investigator, who had been very sympathetic, had recommended Sweazey's agency. He did not know Sweazey himself, but a young woman friend of his was Sweazey's cousin, and she knew that he was just grand.

Parmenter expected to see a gentleman with a high, intellectual brow, a grave, inscrutable face—the face of a student and an eye that had a habit of suddenly leaping from sleepy lids into a penetrating luminosity, and he was a little disappointed when the great detective proved to be dumpy in figure, popy-eyed and fat faced. His heavy mustache, which was of a jetty blackness, except near the roots, where it had a rather rusty tinge, was also in the nature of a disillusionment to Parmenter; so was the flat, black, semi-circular curl that decorated Sweazey's forehead.

Still, if Sweazey was a disappointment in other respects, his inscrutable, witty left nothing to be desired. A wooden Indian standing in front of a cigar store is not more inscrutable than Sweazey was.

He waved Parmenter to a rickety chair in his den and invited him to state the case. Then he relit the stump of an evil-smelling cigar and composed himself in a listening attitude, with his feet on his desk.

There was not much to tell Mrs. Parmenter had worn the diamonds to the theatre. She remembered perfectly that she took them off when she retired that night, but the following afternoon she had been unable to find them.

It had happened that in the morning a young man applied for assistance at the front door. The poor fellow had just been discharged from the hospital and he asked for some cast-off garments. The maid had incautiously left the door open while she went to tell the mistress, and had then returned to the kitchen, still leaving the door open, while Mrs. Parmenter rummaged for some old clothes in the closet.

There had been ample time for the young man to ransack the house, as Mrs. Parmenter recalled when she missed her jewels.

Sweazey showed his cigar reflectively and frowned at the almanac on the wall.

Presently he turned suddenly on Parmenter and the pop eyes bored into that gentleman's innocent soul.

"Have you told me everything you know?" he asked.

"I think that is everything," replied Parmenter.

"You think that is everything?" demanded the great detective.

"Everything that is material," said Parmenter.

"See here, Cap," said Sweazey, "a guy that ain't in the business don't know what's material and what ain't. You tell me all there is to tell. See? Or I tell you what I'll do. There ain't none of my men around just now so I guess I'll take this case myself. I'll go to lunch and you can get busy telling me the rest of it while we wait."

They went to lunch. Sweazey was an expensive feeder. As he explained to Parmenter, the best was none too good for him and he liked lots of it, especially when another fellow is footing the bill. He added humorously:

"Meanwhile be put a number of questions to Parmenter eliciting the fact that Mrs. Parmenter occasionally played bridge whist.

"Not that I can see how Mrs. Parmenter's amusements can be any concern of yours," said Parmenter with considerable heat.

"Certainly not, certainly not," said Sweazey, soothingly. "I was just asking. There's nothing in that Mr. wife plays bridge herself. She can put it all over me at seven-up. Now as to the hired girl of yours—"

"There's another thing I want to speak to you about," said Parmenter. "We haven't the slightest suspicion of the maid. We think everything of her and we wouldn't have her feelings hurt for the world. If you have to question her, I should like you to be very tactful."

"You leave that to me, Cap," said Sweazey, reassuringly. "I don't suppose your good lady noticed whether that guy that come to the door for a handout had a mole on the back of his neck—a brown mole?"

"She didn't mention it," replied Parmenter.

"Why?"

"It looks to me like Rat-Tail Reddy's work," said Sweazey. "If he had that mole, it was Rat-Tail—and you see that finger?"

He held up a stubby and rather dirty forefinger for Parmenter's distinguished inspection.

"I can put that finger—right on—Reddy," said the detective impressively. "Any time I want him, I can put that finger—right on—him."

They went down to Bibberley Heights together. Mr. Sweazey enlivening the journey with anecdotes illustrative of his professional sagacity. At the station Mr. Sweazey interviewed the agent regarding "Rat-Tail" with great effect, so that the agent, the baggage man and two casual passengers stood on the platform to watch his departure and three small boys followed him to the very door of the Parmenter residence, where they were driven away with difficulty.

After going all over the ground again accompanied by Mrs. Parmenter.

A Husband's Mistake

"See here, little one," said the detective, "I'm Sweazey. I'm a detective, and I'm here after those diamonds. What's more, I'm who's to you—see? Now, all you've got to do is just tell me where you've put them. See? We won't have no trouble, and we'll own up and you'll be let off easy. You try any funny business with me and I'll be back here in a minute."

At this juncture Parmenter and his wife interfered, and Sweazey rather indignantly desisted.

"Is there anybody else in the house?" he asked.

"The furnace man," replied Parmenter, "but he—"

"Now, Cap," said the detective, "I want you to get your team diaconed, you've got to let me go about my own way. Is your furnace man down in the basement? This is the job, ain't it? I'll go down. Don't you trouble."

He went down and Mrs. Parmenter looked on helplessly on a few moments there was a bang, a clatter of broken glass below, and the detective reappeared, with a red face and breathing hard from a hurried ascent of the stairs.

He threw the ash after at me and brooked some bottles of a shelf, explained Sweazey, "I believe I've got the right clue, but that man must be allowed to get away."

Thereupon he began a systematic search, beginning at the garret. He got along the rafters, he examined the floors, he ransacked trunks that had not been opened in years, he crawled over Mrs. Parmenter's party frocks and hummaged among her other articles.

"Mrs. Parmenter's eminently natural protests he answered, not unreasonably, that when he had found out the places that the diamonds were in, it was a pipe that he'd know the place where they were.

By that time he had worked down to the parlor.

"I'm a bit ahead," said Parmenter, in a disgusted tone, and went out to the room.

"The furnace man," said Mrs. Parmenter, "Excuse me, but you've been losing money at bridge while they haven't you?" he said.

Mrs. Parmenter stared at him in amazement.

"I had a hunch that them diamonds wasn't lost right from the start," said Sweazey, with a confident smile. "I know you ladies get up against it once in a while and have to get money somewhere. Particularly when their husbands is a little on the tight wad under 'nstand. I ain't blaming you. Them diamonds was yours and—"

"Margie!" called Parmenter from upstairs. "I've got them."

The next moment he came running, most recklessly down the stairs with a chamol-skin bag in his hand. They'd get among the bedsprings," he said. "You must have put them under your pillow, when you went to bed, and they managed to slip down. You know, I told you that perhaps they might be under the springs, Mr. Sweazey."

"Sure," answered the detective, impatiently. "I was just going to tell you to help me take them springs. Let me have a look at them diamonds if you don't mind."

Parmenter handed him the bag and he led it into his palm and gasped. The jewels long and earnestly then he put them back into the bag and handed them to Mrs. Parmenter.

"There are your diamonds, ma'am," he said with an air. "I'll know them diamonds anywhere. If it's twenty years from now, if ever you lose them again you must send for me."

Sweazey's bill for his valued services was \$25. KENNETH HARRIS.

The Same Stock.

People who knew the Huntley family "root and branch," always said that there could be only one other person in the world as blunt and tactless as James Huntley—and that was his cousin William. James lived in New York and William in Boston. One day James appeared at William's home just at dinner-time.

"Well, this is a surprise!" said William. "You're the last person in the world I should have expected to see tonight! Got tired of home?"

"You wouldn't have seen me if I could have got through my business in time to catch the three o'clock train," said James. "I tried hard enough."

The cousins looked cheerfully at each other and were quite unaware of the rancid efforts made by Mrs. William to guide the conversation into a smooth channel. Seated at last at the dinner table, and attacking the roast beef, the host said:

"If I'd known you were going to drop in on us this way, without any warning, I'd have ordered a better dinner."

"Don't trouble about that," said James, heartily. "It does well enough next time I'll be sure to let you now beforehand."

The Same Dimensions.

The bride-to-be had the air of one who is unconquered to the existing state of affairs. "Can't we take a wedding trip, as we'd planned?" she asked, plaintively.

"Not just now," said the young man, on account of my partner's illness."

"I thought it would be such fun, taking that six days' journey in the cars!" he sighed.

"Well, now, see here," said the young man. "If we take the flat I looked at yesterday, it'll be just the same as living in the parlor-car state-room, except that the scenery won't change."

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Mrs. de Givone was a reproduction of the famous type, a classic beauty, the Greek goddess, a sample of which are so rare now as to be almost unknown. A woman born to the Olympus goddess and the simple drapery draped upon the shoulders neither pretty, nor witty, nor marvellous in any way, but Greek, plain Greek from brow to foot—upon the work of her estimable husband, the always, forsighted, and successful banker, M. de Baron and banker Alonso de Givone.

The baron, moreover, was not wrong; madame his wife reflected the universal admiration as a polished reflector. She chose her to preside over those functions that required traditional statusque patronesses; men bowed before her as before an armed sentinel, and women never thought of such a thing as being jealous of her.

The age of this beautiful Greek however, announced by herself, was of a very vague character, like the age of a statue as given on the bill of sale, "somewhere between nine and twenty and also-and-forty-years."

As for the baron's age, it was that of all husbands when they are loyal spouses—fifty years. Very rich and childless, every evening saw them in the social swim, but leading there, elsewhere, the solemn, ceremonious well-regulated, dignified life of the old world in the quiet of their aristocratic mansion in the outskirts of the Bois de Boulogne.

But—alas, that it should be so!—transcendent virtues are always subject to thunder-clap relapses. On day, at the house of a diplomatic personage—a careless parvenu, who opened his doors to all sorts of art and artists through an affected democracy—Mme. de Givone made the fatal encounter. She trembled—the proud, distinguished Baronne de Givone, trampled before a comic singer, the vulgar star of a safe concert hall.

He had come there, poor devil, to earn a loxia and his supper, without thought of ransacking goddesses of the Parthenon, and was chiefly concerned, while chafing out his "inimitable imitations," by a suddenly discovered all that striped with white the sooty black of his coat under the lamp, and the necessity for keeping his hand clasped over his heart to hid the dry stroke of an unpaid laundress's iron, which spread itself out in brownish that upon an otherwise smoky shirtfront.

The physique of this singer of coal-dust perfectly corresponded with his employment—call-eyed, thick-lipped, nose like a quack's bill, awkward gait, and with only the knowledge of making a stage-bow fairly well—a ungodliness, all the same, that warranted little, Mme. de Givone, was caught by the epidemic that at time seizes all too-perfect women of vague ly defined years.

She believed that she loved Caesar Ibes, and fell upon him, like a bolt from a clear sky, with all the notions, invitations, at cotons, the women of the great world employ such cases as barometers, so to speak of the condition of their affection. Caesar did not, however, return the love, though touched a little, of course, like all amiable animals to whom, through an impulse of pity, one speaks carelessly as one passes. He did not love her; and when she called him the "ray of sunlight in the autumn of her life." Instead of telling him, as she might have done, of his "inimitable tones," a dull dislike rose up in his heart against her.

Caesar Ibes was not rich, either. He had bankrupted him in cabs or earned by the hour, and actually dare to offer him on his birthday a rigo case embroidered by her slim Greek fingers, when he would have infinitely preferred to the work of the needle, a diamond scarf-pin, or even a good imitation diamond, provided the mounting was not too sham.

Still one can taste a little of love and not become a drunkard. Caesar, not knowing what else to do, permitted himself to go on being loved—and being ruined by cab hire, in obedience to the will of the goddess, who made of this prosaic and useful vehicle their regular and not too compromising trying-places.

It went on thus—well, really, it does not matter how long—when one morning at the breakfast-table, M. de Givone, with frowning brow, saw a sudden departure, possibly a week's absence, and a call to Lyons on a serious banking errand.

Hermine saw him set out with the joy of an emancipated schoolgirl, and promptly dispatched a note to her "dear friend" to call upon her the coming evening, closing with directions as to finding the servants' stairway.

"My husband deceives me," she declared; "I am sure that he deceives me, because he has grown so cold to me of late. This voyage is but a pretext to join some—some creature. I scorn him, and I wish to see you—to see you here, in my own house. Good-bye!"

The evening came, and the clocks of the quarter were still striking ten as Hermine de Givone, the "dear friend," wife, all glittering with diamonds and rustling with lace, as she had come from the concert where Ibes, all the fashion at the moment, had been the lion of the occasion, stepped from her carriage, dismounted the waiting-carriage.

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How they kept up the pace
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