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**Burglary at
Heron Court**

The best-looking business I was ever
mixed up in (the burglar said slowly)
was down at Heron Court, near Guild-
ford. I may be a bit old-fashioned in
my tastes, but I've always been rather
partial to dishesses. (He said this
with a relish, as though they were
something sold in this). And when I
saw in Lloyd's that the young Duke
had gone and married Miss Deborah
Clancy, daughter of the well-known
rubber merchant, of New Haven, Conn.,
and when I saw the wedding presents
were both numerous and costly, and
the happy pair had left town for the
Duke's seat, near Guildford, amid a
shower of rice and old slippers, then I
said to myself, "Go in and win,
my boy, and play the game off your
own bat. Don't have no partners," I
says to myself; "don't have no confeder-
ates, but jest go in and have a good



IT WAS ONLY MY GIRL.

old try." So I dressed myself up very
tastily, and I went down to Milford
Station.
I had a Gladstone bag with me, and
in that bag I had a few necessary ar-
ticles that no one can do without. I
don't care how clever you are, you can't
do without their help. And I had a
little money with me, too. That's an-
other thing you always want to have
about you. Many's the little business
I've known spoil just for the want of
a sovereign or two.

I was walking out one afternoon,
and I was going down a lane pretty
close to the grounds of the mansion. In
front of me was a neat girl in gray,
with a bonnet-box in her hand. She
was one of the slim-waisted sort, and
she carried herself very upright. As
I passed her I caught sight of the ad-
dress. It was for the Duchess. I lifts
my hat like this, "Look!"

"Pardon me, miss," I says, "but
might you be one of the maids at He-
ron Court?"
"Well," she says, "I might."
Then I says: "Pleasant weather
we're having, aren't we?"
She said yes, it was very pleasant
weather, indeed. She said (this in a
particularly affable way) she was
afraid we should have wet before night.
"Been here long?" I inquires.
No, she hadn't been there long, she
said. Only three weeks.

"Come down with the Duke's party,
I suppose?"
Yes, she said, she came down with
the Duke's party.
"Like the place?"
She said she didn't mind it. I asked
her a few questions about the people.
She said she could get on all right with
the Duke, but she was on awful good
terms with the Duchess, but she
wouldn't give half a crown for the
servants. For one thing, she didn't
believe they kept a proper outlook over
the place. While they were wasting
their time in smoking and drinking and

filting, a burglar could get in at al-
most any moment.
"Oh, well, miss, after all," I says,
"we're none of us perfect, you know,
We all have our little 'obbies'."

I put on my best smile and made up
my mind to make a dash for it. I asked
her if there was any chance of hav-
ing a look in and a bit of supper in the
evening. She looked at me very
straight. Then she said a thing that
knocked me silly.

"Say, mister," she says, "where do
I come in? How much am I going to
make out of this little game?"
I was so astonished that I quite
blushed, I did really.

"Well," I says, "if you're going to
put it that way, I suppose I'd better
speak out straight. I'll give you twenty
quid now, and I'll give you another
twenty after it's over."
"Make it thirty sovereigns now, and
thirty after it's over," she said, "and
it's done."

I started to argue a bit and she turned
on her heel.
"Here, stiddy on, my dear," she says,
"Don't lose your temper. You've got a
good-hearted face. You're not going to
be hard on a poor chap, are you, now?
Give me a kiss and I'll give you twenty-
five."

She fired up.
"You don't have no kiss, mister," she
says, "and if you want me to help you
you must hand over the coin. You ken't
do better, any way."
I tell you she fairly surprised me. I
assure you to look at her you'd think
she was as quiet a girl as ever wore
shoes. She kept her eyes—bright black
eyes she had—fixed on my face, and
seemed almost to enjoy the corner she'd
got me in.

I turned the matter quickly over in
my mind. After all, I knew I needn't
trouble about the second payment. I
should be clear away before she had a
chance to ask me for the other thirty
quid.

"All right, miss," I said; "don't ag-
gle, and don't bite a feller's 'ead half
off. Here's the thirty pound. What
time shall I come up?"
She told me that at half past 8 the
Duke would be having dinner, and that
she would leave the Duchess's dress-
ing-room open. I might find a ladder in
such a place, and when I got in I
should find the jewels in such a place,
and some loose notes and gold in, such
a place, and I was to leave the thirty
pound for her on a ledge in the chim-
ney. And if any of the other servants
caught me, why, so much the worse for
me; and if they did, so much the better
for them. She shook hands pleasantly,
and went off toward the court. I felt
inclined to shake hands with myself,
too. I knew that there was a good
£20,000 worth of stuff for me if I could
only get a quiet quarter of an hour to
work undisturbed.

You may believe me when I say I
was there that evening to the minute.
Just as I neared the mansion I had a
nasty feeling that the maid might have
given me away. You can never be sure
of women. But when I saw the win-
dow of the Duchess's dressing-room
open, and found the ladder and every-
thing ready, I knew it was all right.

"She's a girl after my own heart," I
said to myself, when I got into the
room. "And I'll be after her when it's
all over."
It's risky work, you know. No matter
how easy things are, you always
have a queer sort of nervousness un-
less you're dr. and then, of course,
you're liable to make mistakes. Some
of the servants were about; they might
have been dead for all the trouble they
gave me.

I don't think I ever had quite such
an easy job in all my life. This I said
to myself: "This is better than your
hard work any day. Honesty may be
the best policy, but what do you make
out of it? Eh? Do you make hauls of
sackfuls of jewelry and money by hon-
esty? Do you make enough in ten min-
utes to keep you for years, and drunk
every night of your life, by honesty?"

No," I said to myself (I had got the
sack nearly full); "if you want to get
on in life, if you really want to have a
nice little income and a life of happi-
ness, have a turn at—"

There was a swish of skirts near
the bed. I turned my lantern on the
place, by heart in my mouth, my re-
volver in my hand. I can tell you I
was pleased to see that it was only my
girl. I dropped my Colt back into my
pocket. She was smartly dressed and
looked quite the lady.

"Got everything, mister?" she in-
quired. "Got everything?"
"Well, not absolutely everything," I
whispered; "but as much as I can car-
ry. I'm just off."

"Have you put my thirty sovereigns
in the chimney?" she asked. Lord! she
had a head for business, that girl.
"Reckon I'll take them now," she said
said calmly, holding out her hand. "I
guess you'd go and forget."
I counted out the money and handed
it over, and shouldered my bag.

"Good-by, miss," I whispers; "see
each other again soon, I hope."
"Awful good of you to say that," she
said. "Feel as though I ken't let you
go now." Her hand went on the side
of the wall. "We're gettin' on so so-
ciable and pleasant and friendly like."

I can't tell you how it made me feel
when I heard her talk like that. I
would have proposed to that girl on
the spot if I hadn't been so busy. Only
there's a time and place for every-
thing, I always say, and just then
wasn't the time to go canoodling about
with girls.

Only, of course, this is the worst of
them—once they get nashed on you,
there's no getting rid of them without a
row.

I went to her to give her a kiss and
a good-by. She gave a little scream.
"Stop right there," she cried. "Stop
right there, mister, or you're a dead
man!"

She leveled a shining little pocket
pistol at my head, the other hand still
pressing against the wall. There was
a sound of hurried footsteps on the
landing, the door opened, and a mus-
cular young fellow in evening dress
rushed in. He was followed by several
servants.

"My dearest Deborah!" he cried.
Then he sprang upon me and nearly
choked me.
"Here, let me go!" I screamed.
"Where's the Duchess? Lemme go,
can't ye? I want to tell her something.
I want to tell all about that beauty of
a lady's maid there. She's got my six-
ty pound."
"And she jest about means to keep
it," she answered, laughing. "It'll
make a good start for my village blan-
ket club." I had bribed the Duchess!
She turned to the Duke: "Now you
see, Tunbridge, how Heron Court is
protected."

"My dearest," said the Duke, "you're
quite right. You shall make your own
arrangements as soon as you please."
—Philadelphia Telegraph.

MYSTERY OF TAILLESS CATS.

Considerable Doubt Still Exists as to
How They Originated.
Gustave Loisel, a naturalist charged
with a mission to the Isle of Man, has
just published a long report of a visit
to that island, where he was able to
observe the existence of tailless cats,
about which there is a lack of precise
data, and which Darwin studied for
some time, says L'Etandard Egyptian.

It is rather surprising that there is a
divergence of views on the character-
istics of the animal at present. It is,
nevertheless, recognized that it is rare.
Gustave Loisel had difficulty in procur-
ing a Manx cat, the seller asking from
375 francs to 625 francs each.

There is much discussion about the
causes of these cats. Some people say
they are black, others sandy, others
again variegated. As for the tail, some-
say they have tails without having
them; others say that though there is
no tail, yet there is some. Mr Loisel
says the tail is lacking, is reduced to a
sinewy, knotted, twisted fillet under the
skin. The posterior part of the animal
is very developed, as if that part had
been nourished by the tail and had ab-
sorbed it. This gives the animal a dis-
tinctive form.

Did the species originate locally?
This is possible. On the other hand,
in a Dorsetshire village there are a
number of tailless cats, progeny of a
female cat which lost her tail through
accident.

Did the species come from a distant
quarter? This again is possible. The
common cat is mentioned in a text dat-
ing from the ninth century ("Laws of
the Welsh Prince Hoeldd") as a rare
animal of recent date. The tailless cat
is only mentioned at the beginning of
the nineteenth century. Or did the
tailless species come from a wrecked
vessel coming from Prussia, where cats
of this species do not seem to have
been abundant, or Japan, Malaysia, or
the Crimea, where the existence of cats
without tails is on record?

As a matter of fact, nothing is
known for certain. G. Loisel records
that cats without tails have a profound
antipathy toward the ordinary cat. He
has, moreover, come across another in-
teresting variety in the Isle of Man, a
species of chickens without rumps. Pos-
sibly the climate is unfavorable for the
development of posterior appendices.

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