

was, I didn't see it at first, and I had to break it off and fish out the remaining piece from the keyhole before I could open the door."

"Let me see the 'instrument,' as you call it," said the Duke, and instantly the man laid in his extended hands two slender, broken bits of metal. Taking them near the light, Guy examined them carefully. He had never seen a skeleton or "master" key, such as hotel thieves often use to effect an entrance into other people's rooms, which are inconveniently locked, but he imagined this "instrument" to be something of the kind, and his thoughts flew back to the mysterious disappearance of the torn letter and handkerchief this morning. He had left his bedroom to take his bath, Nick Vanderlane had gone to the sitting-room to entertain Cissy Dalzell, and Haskins had not been far away, yet the things had vanished, as if by a miracle.

Could it be possible that this man, whom he had found at Old Kensington Mansions and brought back with him almost by force, had come to the flat in the morning and, opening the door by means of his master key, spirited away the clues which, by carelessness, he had left in the pocket of the returned overcoat?

It looked more than probable, in the light of later developments, that this was so; far more probable than that a prowling detective had slipped in on an exploring expedition and made off with them. "By Jove!" the Duke said to himself, excitedly, "I'd rather think the things were back in that brute's hands even than that they'd been nabbed by the police; for then, in spite of any sacrifices I may make, Magda's name would be

in danger of being dragged into the case. I almost hope he's got the handkerchief and scraps of paper, wretch as he is, for at least, while I'm silent, he has an incentive to be silent too. But to think that tonight may not have been his first visit to the flat here, after all! What a clever scoundrel! I wish Nick would turn up. I want to tell him everything, for after what I have heard, he can't think my suspicions against Magda unpardonable," as he said. No more scolding from him, but perhaps some very shrewd advice. Anyhow, it will be a relief to speak, as he already knows so much, and he's the only human being to whom I can only open my lips."

The effect of the twisted key in the lock had accomplished its object, making it too late for the Duke to attempt a chase, open or secret. He determined, therefore, to drive back immediately to Old Kensington Mansions, see Major Cayley-Gwynne, if possible, and make inquiries of that respectable elderly gentleman concerning his visitor of tonight.

Again the motor was sent for by telephone, and was brought over promptly by the long-suffering chauffeur, who had been taught by his experience in the Duke's service always to expect the unexpected. There was little traffic in the streets now, and the car made good speed to Addison-road. Looking up at the front of the Mansion as he jumped out, Guy noticed that there were lights in all the windows of Cissy's flat; and it was only at sight of them that he remembered the engagement he had made to dine. "Poor little child!" he said to himself, "What a beast I've been to her. But I couldn't help