My Diamond

By LAWRENCE E. DENTON

Helen Wallace and I played together as children. When we grew to man's and woman's estate our companionship assumed a different phase. But I could not remain in the place where I was born and raised, for there was no career for me there. I must go forth to seek my fortune. And what troubled both Helen and me was that the only opening that presented itself was in South Africa. A man who was intending to take a stock of goods out to the cape and open a store there offered to take me along with him as assistant.

My parting with Helen was harrowing—so harrowing that I was tempted to back out before sailing. But Helen had the stuff in her to prevent my doing so, and in due time I found myself in my new home. But the attempt of my employer was a failure, and I found myself stranded in a foreign country without means to get home.

I was obliged to go to work with pick and shovel in the diamond mines. I gave up all hope of possessing Helen, for to marry a man must have some means, or at least decent employment, and I had neither, besides having an ocean between us. The only thing I learned that was of any value was to tell a diamond in the rough when I saw it. But almost any knowledge is useful if one has luck to go with it. One evening when going from work to the house where I boarded, being tired and seeing a shady spot beside the road, I went there and lay down and fell asleep.

When I awoke I lay on my side and was looking straight before me at the ground. I was very near a stone about as big as a hickory nut, and my vision at opening my eyes after they had been for some time closed was very keen. The stone was so near like a diamond uncut that I reached for it and examined it more closely. Then the realization that it was a gem came over me, and I knew that I was rich.

"What you got there?"

I thrust my find in my pocket as one of my fellow workmen named Saunders came and stood looking down upon me. I said nothing, and he knew that I had something to conceal. The look that came over his face frightened me. I saw in his eye that he suspected I had stolen a diamond from the mines and had succeeded in getting it past the examiners. He would either accuse me or try to dispossess me.

Presently we walked on together and parted at my abiding place. That evening he left his own boarding house and took a room at mine. The same night I slept with my diamond in my mouth and before morning heard some one in the room rifling my pockets. I knew that it was Saunders looking for the diamond.

My problem was to cross the Atlantic ocean with my treasure. I had no money to pay my passage and must find an opportunity to work my way. A ship was leaving for New York, and I asked for a berth as cabin boy, but was told that the ship's company in every department was full. Not daring to remain behind, I went aboard just as the ship was casting off and hid below in the cargo. I remained there till the vessel was well at sea, when, being hungry, I went on deck, confessed myself to be a stowaway and offered to do any work which I might be assigned.

"The meanest job we have," said the officer to whom I made the confession, "is scullion. Go down to the galley and tell the cook to make use of you."

As I was proceeding on my way to the galley whom should I see but Saunders. I caught at a rail for support. He did not speak to me but the look he gave me told me that he was resolved to possess himself of my diamond before we left the ship.

The cook, when I entered the galley, was kneading dough for bread and turned the work over to me. When I had finished I put the dough into the baking pans, and before thus depositing the last batch I worked my diamond into it and made an indentation by which I should know the loaf after it was baked.

I was then put to scouring knives, and while doing so who should come to the galley but the captain, accompanied by Saunders. I was told that Saunders had represented himself as a detective of the diamond mining company and had been sent abroad to secure a diamond I had purloined and was trying to get away with. They took me to Saunders' stateroom and searched me thoroughly, even giving me an emetic in order to force it out of my stomach in case I had swallowed it.

Since I had no baggage and the captain did not believe that I could have got rid of the stone in so short a time, he declined to turn me over to Saunders. I went back to my work in the galley in time to take the loaves from the oven, and when the cook went out for a moment I thrust the marked loaf into a pantry drawer, where it was not noticed. There I left it safely till just before we reached port. I knew Saunders would try to get my treasure when I went ashore, so the night we sailed up New York bay on passing near the land I jumped into the water with the diamond and swam ashore.

I never saw Saunders again. My stone I sold for $60,000 and, having dressed myself like a gentleman took a train for Helen's home.

I shall never get over the delight of that meeting. When I told her that I possessed a fortune she fairly bubbled over with joy. We were soon married and have lived in clover ever since.

Tying Up the Dog.

Having bought a dog that he admired, a man of obstinacy will undertook to buy a dog collar. The dog had a neck nearly as big as his head, and the dealer advised the man to buy two collars.

"What for?" said the man. "He's got only one neck, so I guess he can get along with only one collar, can't he?"

"Maybe so," said the dealer. So the man went away leading the dog by his new collar and chain.

In less than a week he brought the dog back.

"I'm afraid I can't keep him," he said. "He's too obstropulous. I can't keep him tied up. His neck is the biggest part of him, and he is as strong as an ox. Therefore it is a cinch for him to slip his collar off."

"That was why I wanted you to take two collars," said the dealer. "Put both on and fasten the chain to the back collar, and he can tug all night without getting loose. He may commit suicide, but he won't get loose."—New York Times.

Where the Fish Bite.

A traveling salesman while in Chicago was invited to a party given by a friend. During supper stories were called for, and he told the following: Two Irishmen were fishing one day in a lake. After nearly all day one of them threw his line far out and, pulling in, he got a strike. After fishing awhile he finally landed a fine fish.

"Oh," said he, "Mike, this is the only place in the lake to fish; we will just mark it." And he cut a notch in the side of the boat.

They all laughed, and the story telling was resumed.

There was one Englishman who kept laughing all the time during the rest of the evening until time to go home, when he came up to the traveling salesman and said: "I was just thinking of the story you told. It was such a funny story. I don't believe I ever heard such a funny story before. Just think, if they had got the wrong boat they would have never known where to fish."—Machinists' Monthly.

Resigned to Take Effect Yesterday.

A Kansas City man said he always preferred red headed office boys to any other kind, as he had found them to be unusually sagacious and alert, but he discovered recently that some of them are too much so. One day, returning from a short out of town trip he went to his office and mentioned interrogatively that Ulysses, his promising assistant, was nowhere in sight and the stenographer replied that he had not shown up.

Lifting up the last mail on his desk he found a note addressed to him in a very familiar, broad, vertical handwriting.

"Dear Mr Cross," he read, "please accept my resignation to take effect yesterday. I got a better place with less work and more pay. Respectively, Ulysses S. G. Parker."—Kansas City Star.

Two Jokes From Italy.

A lady testifying in court, when asked her age, replied, "Oh, between thirty-five and fifty."

"There's some difference," said the president ironically. "Don't you know your own age?"

"Excellency," replied the witness, "I count exactly my money, my wash list and my clothes because some one might rob me of them. But as no one can steal from me a year or even a day I do not bother to reckon them."

A doctor, amazed to find a patient in a cold bath, began to scold him.

"What's this?" he said. "Did I order you to take a bath?"

"Sure. You told me to take these pills in water."—Condensed From Milan Domenica del Corriere.

Artificial Halos or "Sun Dogs."

An experiment which illustrates in a very curious manner the actual philosophy of the formation of halos or "sun dogs" is performed as follows: Take a solution of alum and spread a few drops of it over a pane of glass. It will readily crystallize in small flat octohedrons, scarcely visible to the eye. When this pane of prepared glass is held between the observer and the sun or even a candle (with eyes very close to the smooth side of the glass) there will be seen three different but distinct and beautiful halos, each at a different distance from the luminous body.

Chesapeake Bay.

Few people fully appreciate the great size of the Chesapeake bay. It is the largest indentation on the Atlantic coast, and it has often been called the Mediterranean of America. On its bosom the navies of the world could easily float. It is 200 miles long, and in some places it is forty miles broad. It has an area of over 2,000 square miles, and it shoots off into great rivers with an aggregate length of thousands of miles.—Baltimore American.

Just Like Chess.

Hubby—It becomes very trying, my dear. You're always saying check, check, check! I feel as if life were a long game of chess. Wifey—Well, Edward, if you don't give me something I shall have to pawn, pawn, pawn, and it would still seem like a game of chess, wouldn't it?

A Telephone Tip.

Operator—Number, please. Subscriber—I vas talking mit my husband und now I don't hear him any more. You must of pushed him off de vire.—Milwaukee News.

The Flirt.

A flirt is like a dipper attached to a hydrant—every one is at liberty to drink from it, but no one desires to carry it away.—N. P. Willis.

A DERELICT

By LETITIA EDWARDS

"Captain," said the first mate of the Swallow, having come aft to the quarterdeck with a marine glass in his hand, "that vessel off on the port bow is either disabled or a derelict. I don't see any signal of distress, so I suppose she is a derelict."

The captain of the Swallow gave orders to the quartermaster to put the vessel off her course in order to visit the disabled ship, and when the latter was reached a boat was lowered and the mate was pulled to her. He found her in very good condition, except that she was half full of water. She would have sunk had not air got confined in the cabin under the main deck, which buoyed her up. What the cargo was could not be learned on account of the water. Having inspected her, the mate was pulled back to the Swallow and reported to his captain as follows:

"She's the brig Susan Crane of New Bedford, half full of water and no signs of having been disabled by stress of weather. My opinion is that she was scuttled to beat the underwriters and the sinking of her was a failure, she having been held between decks."

At this Captain Dutcher, of the Swallow, looked grave. He was a young man scarcely thirty, lived when at home at New Bedford and knew all about the Susan Crane and her captain.

"Has she been abandoned a long while?" he asked.

"I think," replied the mate, "that she has."

"Then she must have drifted. Is she worth saving?"

"Yes, sir; the vessel would be all right if pumped out."

"Well," said the captain, evidently with reluctance, "I suppose we'll have to take her in."

The Susan Crane was taken in tow, and the Swallow continued on her course to New Bedford. But the next day the mercury began to fall rapidly.

"Do you think, sir," said the mate, "that we will be able to hold our tow through a storm?"

"I fear not."

"If we part company with her she'll be a danger to navigation."

"Perhaps we had better sink her," said the captain, drawing a sigh of relief. "Go aboard of her and let the air out of her."

A boat with a couple of axes in her bottom was sent to the Susan Crane, holes were chopped in her upper deck, and the men had scarcely regained the Swallow before the derelict sank. Captain Dutcher stood leaning over the taffrail looking at her till he saw her go down, then turned his attention to his own ship. Having weathered a three days' storm, he was nearing port when he called his crew together on deck and said to them:

"It is evident that we overhauled a case of rascality in the derelict, and when we make port we'll find that whoever directed her has got there before us and told a story of shipwreck. I wish each and all of you to promise me to keep the matter in your knowledge lockers till I give you the word to speak. If you tell you'll make nothing, for since we didn't bring her in there's no salvage for us. If you keep mum those who scuttled her might pay you something to keep quiet. Of course we can't permit the insurance companies to be swindled in any event."

"Anything you orders, sir, goes," said an old salt who took it upon himself to reply for his mates as well as himself and the men returned to the forecastle.

When the Swallow was docked Captain Dutcher went uptown and stopped at a dwelling house and rang the bell. The door was opened by a young woman twenty-two or twenty-three years old. At seeing Dutcher her face lit up with pleasure. They went inside together and Dutcher asked:

"Has the Susan Crane got in?"

"No. She was wrecked, but the crew were all saved."

"Has the insurance been collected?"

"Not yet. I believe there's some trouble in proving the loss of the ship."

"Tell Ben I wish to see him at once."

"Why so?" asked the girl, turning pale.

"Keep what I tell you a secret. His ship was not lost. I overhauled her and was towing her in when a storm came up and I was obliged to sink her."

"Why should I keep this a secret?"

He hesitated, then said: "Margaret, I would wrong you by refusing you a reply. You may not have made a mistake in refusing me, but you erred in accepting Ben." And he told her of his discovery of the fact that Ben Hawkins, captain of the Susan Crane, was a criminal.

The shock stunned her. Dutcher left her to recover from it and sought the man who had supplanted him.

"On Margaret's account," he said, "I have arranged this matter so that you can get out of it without being prosecuted. Withdraw your claim for insurance and make each one of my crew a present and they will not trouble themselves to inform against you. As for me, you know you have nothing to fear."

Hawkins acted on Dutcher's advice, making no claim and paying each member of the crew $100, presumably for their attempt to save his ship. Margaret Earle dismissed her betrothed and married Dutcher. Hawkins left New Bedford and was never seen there again.

The Retreat From Moscow.

Napoleon's army for the invasion of Russia numbered over 400,000. Only 20,000 returned. During the retreat thousands of horses lay groaning on the route, while thousands of naked wretches were wandering like specters who seemed to have no sight or sense and who only kept reeling on till frost, famine or the Cossack lance put an end to their power of motion. In that wretched state no nourishment could have saved them. Innumerable dogs crouched by the bodies of their former masters, looking at their faces and howling their hunger and their loss. Besides their suffering from the cold and for the want of food, they were assailed on all sides, not only by Russian soldiers, but by peasants through whose country they passed. Altogether, Napoleon's retreat from Moscow was a complication of misery, of cruelty, of desolation and of disorder that can never have been exceeded in the history of mankind.

Broken China Roused Him.

When Canon Rawnsley was collecting information in the lake district about Wordsworth, he came upon an old man who had been a servant at Rydal Mount. This whilom retainer told many interesting stories.

Wordsworth, it seemed, was very absentminded. He always forgot the dinner hour.

"I'd goa," the old man remarked, "to study door and hear him a-mumbilin' away to 'aself.

"'Dinner's ready, sir,' I'd ca' out, but he'd go a-mumbling on like a deaf man, ya see. And sometimes Mrs. Wudsworth 'ud say: 'Goa and brek a bottle, or let a dish fall, just outside his door in passage.' Eh, dear, that maistly wad bring him out, wad that. It was nobbut that as wad, howivver. For, ye kna, he was a very careful man and he couldn't do with brekking t' china."—Pearsons.

A Telepathic Clock.

Here is a strange yet absolutely true story, in which a clock plays a mysterious part. It was a small American timepiece which stood on a mantelpiece in a sitting room in a Liverpool builder's home. At 11:30 one morning the timepiece fell from the mantelpiece to the floor. When picked up it was found to be quite uninjured and still going, as if nothing unusual had happened. There seemed to be absolutely no reason why it should have fallen, but an hour later when the builder came home to his midday meal he remarked that at 11:30 he fell from the top of a building, but happily without sustaining any injury. His wife then described how the clock had fallen at the same time and the couple ponder in vain over the curious and utterly inexplicable coincidence.—Liverpool Post.

The Explosion of a Flower.

Sometimes the floral spathe of a great palm tree will fly open with a sound like a detonation in a mine. Such an event occurred in a botanical garden in Algiers recently. The spathe, nearly three feet long, was projected to a great distance and for some moments the head of the palm tree was wreathed with golden dust formed of the debris of the flower. The sun's heat had roasted the flower to the color of rust. The director of the garden explained the explosion as being due to a fermentation in the flower caused by the extraordinary dryness of the air. A violent sirocco had just passed. In Algiers ostrich eggs explode in the same way and from a like cause.—Harper's.

Avoiding the Doctor.

Dr Sanderson, an old Scotch physician was a queer character, but a clever doctor.

So roughly did he handle his patients that the ignorant were chiefly anxious to escape him. The story goes that as he was passing along the street one day a sweep rolled from the top to the bottom of a staircase outside one of the houses.

"Are you hurt?" called the doctor, running forward.

"Not a bit, doctor—not a bit," replied the man in haste. "Indeed, I feel a' the better."

Pronunciation.

Here is a curious couplet which illustrates in one sentence the various values of the combination "ough" and shows how strikingly inconsistent are the spelling and pronunciation of some English words. The lines may be supposed to be the words of an invalid who had a strong will and was determined to live in spite of his ailment:

Though the tough cough and hiccough plagued me through,
Yet o'er life's lough my course I will pursue.

The Great Difficulty.

"One half the world's happiness is solved when a person learns to mind his own business."

"Yes, but it's the other half that causes the most trouble."

"What's that?"

"Getting other people to mind theirs."—Home Notes.

The Difference.

Tell a woman her face is her fortune and she is complimented. Hint to a man that his cheek is his most valuable asset and he is likely to get mad.—Chicago Record-Herald.

No Guessing.

Amateur Palmist—I think you are going to be married twice. Young Lady—You think! Well, I'd rather you were sure I was going to be married once.—Boston Transcript.

Adversity borrows its sharpest sting from our impatience.—Home.

A Dutch New Guinea Dainty.

A strange food forms one of the articles of diet among the natives of Dutch New Guinea, of whom A. F. R. Wollaston writes in Cornhill as "The Most Primitive People:"

"The search for food furnishes occasionally some very curious scenes. One of the most remarkable occurs when the river in flood brings down a tree trunk in a suitable stage of decay. A canoe is sent out with men to secure it and tow it to the bank. When it has been left stranded by the falling water the people—men, women and children—come out and swarm around it like bees about a honey pot, and you wonder what they can be doing. When you go close you find that some are splitting up the log with their stone axes, and others are cutting up the fragments with sharpened shells in the same way that their ancestors—and perhaps ours, too—did centuries ago. The objects of their search are the large white larvae of a beetle, about the size of a man's thumb. I have seen natives eat them just as they cut them out of the wood, but usually they roast them in the fire and consider them a great delicacy."

Why He Balked.

A young and husky college man who was traveling on a steamer across the Atlantic was asked to box five rounds with an equally husky chap, who was a fellow passenger, as part of a series of athletic games which were to be held for the amusement of the passengers. Next day the young man came to the chairman of the sports committee and asked that his name be withdrawn. "What's the matter? Are you afraid?" said the chairman, somewhat piqued. "You bet your life I'm afraid," said the collegian. "That fellow you picked for my opponent sits at my table, and at dinner last night he leaned over to me and said, 'What's this thing "demitasse" I see on the menu?' I knew right away that he was a 'rough guy' who had lived all his life in the open. If you want me to fight you've got to find a man that knows a demitasse when he sees it."—New York Tribune.

Neapolitan Dishes.

In the matter of curious dishes that Neapolitan favorite, the polyp, should be mentioned. The beautiful bay abounds with them, and the fishermen who make the little harbor of Santa Lucia their headquarters spend most of the day and night catching them. They are served whole and are not so repulsive as might be supposed, turning up in the "mixed fish fry" a nice golden brown. The Neapolitans have strong teeth and digestion. Polyps are tough, and I have always limited myself to the tentacles, which are crisp and tasty. They are usually accompanied by rings cut from the cuttlefish. These are tougher still, but what, with butterfly fish, garnets, mullets and other unknown varieties, a frittio misto pesche at Naples is not to be despised.—London Standard.

An Oasis With a History.

In the mountain range of El Guettern, writes Captain A. H. Haywood in the Wide World, I came across that precious and rare thing in the desert—a clear spring. Of course these springs are very few and far between, and there is a tragic little story attached to this particular one. A man and his wife were making their way across the desert not long ago, and their water supply ran short. They struggled on, weak and parched with thirst. One by one their camels died, and at last, overcome with suffering, the woman died too. The man dragged himself painfully onward in the weary search for water. It was all in vain, however, and at last he, too, gave up the struggle, and, tortured with a burning thirst, death came upon him and mercifully relieved his suffering. Some one, passing that way soon after, found his body, lying barely 100 yards from the little mountain spring of El Guettern. Little he knew how close he was to his goal, poor fellow!

Alligator Hunting.

Alligator hunting in Colombia is an industry which furnishes the natives with considerable sport. It is carried on along the Magdalena river from December to April and in July and August. During these rainless months the streams subside, draining the great alluvial plains which border the main stream. The alligators, which rushed out on to the inundated flats during the previous swelling of the river, crowd back through the connecting branches and channels, where the Indian hunters slaughter them in large numbers, spearing them and hauling them out on the banks, where they are stunned and then beheaded with long handled axes. Rifles are not used, owing to the prohibition of the use of firearms, except shotguns. Hundreds of alligators are also left stuck in the deep slime left by the receding waters, over which their short legs will not drag their heavy bodies.—Argonaut.

Our Swamp Lands.

Ten acres of swamp or marshy land in a county can breed enough mosquitoes, malaria and typhoid to seriously affect the health of the entire county and greatly lessen the industrial efficiency of the community. In the United States are swamp and marshy lands that aggregate an area almost as large as all England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales combined. There are more than 75,000,000 acres, approximately 118,000 square miles. The area of Great Britain is 121,390 square miles, including the Isle of Man and the Channel islands. The swamp area of the United States is almost as large as the states of Illinois, Indiana and Ohio combined. It is as large as New York, Illinois, Massachusetts and New Jersey. The crops of these 75,000,000 acres are snakes, frogs, mosquitoes, fevers and alligators. Only the frogs and alligators are of any value of any kind.—Technical World.

Our Motto—"Service Satisfying."

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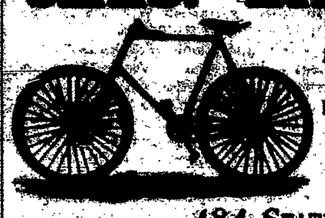

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