

AN UNPAID DEBT

By MANTON HENDERSON

The outing season was over, and the outers were returning to town. Expecting an aunt whom I was to meet and see through the city to her home, I went to the station to meet her. I didn't meet my aunt. She had delayed her coming, but I met with an adventure.

Those waiting for the train were topped off to inspect those who left it and to pounce on those we expected when they came along. Among the last was a young lady whose face the moment she saw me broke into a smile, and, advancing to the rope, she dropped a suit case she was carrying and, clasping my hand, put up her lips to be kissed. She was a stranger to me.

I defy any man, be his intentions the most scrupulous, to have a pretty girl put up her mouth to be kissed to draw back. Why, it would be an insult to the girl. At any rate, I kissed the young lady, fervently since I was about it, and awaited developments. I confess I wondered should my aunt come along what she would think of the proceeding. Then I was afraid she would come along and bring about an explanation before an explanation was called for.

"I'm so glad you've come," said the girl. "Did you get the telegram? I'm tired out carrying this suit case."

And, taking it up, she handed it to me. "Have you got a carriage? You have changed ever so much."

Now, if she had stopped for an answer to the first of these questions I would have been in honor bound to explain. But she didn't, and, taking the suit case from her, letting her do all the talking, upon which she seemed bent, I escorted her to the street, called a carriage and, my conscience prompting me to go no further, stood still. She looked at me with wonder in her big brown eyes and said:

"Why, what are you waiting for?"

This rattled me, and I got into the carriage and shut the door.

"Where to, sir?" called the driver. I hesitated a moment, got out the word "Number," hesitated again, and the girl supplied the information. Then we rattled away, I feeling as though I had been committing a forgery and expecting an arrest at any moment. Unfortunately the girl subsided from her loquacity, and I felt bound to say something. I thought it a good time to confess that is, if I could pump up the courage to do so.

"I feel it my duty to tell you"—I began.

"Oh, heavens! What is it? Any one dead?"

This rattled me again. I hadn't the sand to go on in the vein I had started. I switched off.

"Oh, no," I said, "not that at all. What I was going to say is that for a few days I shall be loaded down to the guards with work and shall not be able to show you the same attention as if."

"Dear me, how you frightened me! I know Uncle Ben is quite ill, and I feared you were going to tell me that the poor old man had gone."

"Not at all, not at all. I assure you I had no such intention." I mopped my face with my handkerchief.

All the while the carriage was bowling toward the address given the cabman, and I was thinking of that "day of wrath" when I should meet those who would uncover my unintended deception and make me an object of contempt.

"Do you know," said my companion, turning to look at me with her face, her lips dangerously near mine, "that had I not been looking for you I wouldn't have known you."

"You, too, are changed," I replied, and a method of saving myself flashed into my brain. Why shouldn't I pretend to have made a mistake as well as she?—Splendid idea! Now was the time. So I continued, this time with perfect confidence. "But, Lou, the change is for the better. You were pretty when I saw you last. Now you are beautiful."

"I'm glad you continue to call me by my first name," she replied. "I was afraid you would 'Miss' me."

Great heavens, rattled again! I had accidentally struck her name. Instead of wondering that I didn't call her Alice or Evelyn or some name other than her own, thus bringing out the double blunder, she was glad I did it.

The carriage swerved to the curb. I was lost. In a moment persons would be running out to meet the girl and give me away. Miserable me, what should I do? Oh, for a little more time!

"Before we alight," she said, "I wish to say something. You won't feel hurt will you?"

"Certainly not! Go on."

"Please don't see me to the door. They don't know anything about this meeting, and I don't care at present to have them know."

I gave mute thanks to heaven. "I think you are quite right," I said, "I will remain in the carriage."

The devil had been sick and would be a saint. He had suddenly recovered, and devil a saint was he. Conscience with safety vanished.

"Mayn't I have a parting kiss?" she whispered.

We drew back away from the window, and—it was very sweet if it was a rascally proceeding on my part.

I have often wondered who she was, and who was the fellow I owe reparation to for two kisses that belonged to him.

Too Much For the School.

Not long ago Samuel G. Blythe, the magazine writer, and Otto Carmichael, the late Washington newspaper correspondent, were driving about Muncie, Carmichael's home town, when the latter expressed a desire to see the schoolhouse where he received his first impressions along educational lines. So the nose of the automobile was pointed southward, and a few miles out of Muncie they arrived at the old schoolhouse, a one room brick structure, dilapidated and fast falling into decay, having been abandoned many years ago in favor of the modern "consolidated" schools. "That," said Carmichael, his voice trembling with emotion at sight of the old building, "is where my education began. How many memories of happy childhood days it recalls!"

"Yes, I see," remarked Blythe dryly, letting his eyes wander over the doors and windows that were completely boarded up; "they educated you and then shut up shop."

Electricians and Soft Hats.

Every trade exercises some effect on the dress of its votaries. The locomotive engineer wears a cap and overalls, the baker a white skull cap, the butcher a long white apron and straw sleeves, and the cook and the waiter each has his distinctive garb. Electricians wear soft hats, and the following account from the Electrical World gives the reason why: A substation foreman on an electric line in northern Indiana was explaining the details of some work to his men in a recently completed substation. In pointing out a joint in the high tension wiring, but in hand, the rim of the derby came into contact with live wires. A circuit was completed from the high tension line through the small steel wire in the rim of the hat and through the man's body to the ground, thereby causing a shock which proved fatal. Soft hats have no metal wire in them, and that is why they are so popular with electricians.

Making Steel Pens.

Briefly described, steel pens are made as follows: First the steel is rolled into big sheets and then cut into strips about three inches in width. The strips are heated to a bright red and are then allowed to cool gradually, which tempers them. They are next rolled to the necessary thickness and are cut into blank flat pens, and the pens while flat are usually stamped with the brand or the name of the manufacturer. To shape the pens is the next process. The rounding makes them hold the ink and distribute it more evenly than could be done if they were flat. To harden them they are heated to a cherry red and then suddenly cooled. This not only hardens them, but makes them elastic. The polishing, pointing and finishing come next, and then they are ready for use. The little holes in the pens at the end of the slits serve to make them more elastic and to facilitate the flow of the ink.

Washing While Traveling.

Sir Francis Galton held that washing when on a journey has its drawbacks. In the "Art of Travel" he remarks that "there is no denying the fact, though it be not agreeable to confess it, that dirt and grease are great protectors of the skin against inclement weather and that therefore the leader of an exploring party should not be too exacting about the appearance of his less warmly clad followers. Daily washing, if not accompanied by oiling, must be compensated by wearing clothes. A dog will sleep out under any bush and thrive there so long as he is not washed, groomed and kept clean. There must be a balance between the activity of the skin and the calls upon it, and, where the exposure is greater, then London the pores be more defended."—London Globe.

Exclaiming the Stolen Goods.

An orchestra leader who has a facility for detecting reminiscences made himself unpopular with the composer of an opera of serious pretension recently. It had been decided that the performance must be shortened, and the members of the orchestra had been assembled to make some cuts in the score.

"Now," said the leader, "we will begin by shortening the overture."

"What shall we leave out?" asked the concert master.

"Those thirty-two measures beginning with 'Carmen' and ending with 'Rigoletto'."—New York Post.

The Sensitive Jester.

"De Wooze seemed to get mad because I didn't laugh at that weakened joke of his."

"Humor him when you can. You see, De Wooze is the sort of humorist that expects somebody to smash the bass drum every time he chortles a pun."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Warranted to Work.

"Your hardwood floors are always so exquisitely polished," said Mrs. Jones. "How do you manage it?"

"Oh, I just put chamote rompers on the children and let them play in the house," responded Mrs. Brown.—Lippincott's.

Sponge Fishing.

Every boat engaged in the Jamaican sponge industry has a water glass or pane of glass inserted in the bottom of a box or bucket, through which the sponges are readily detected.

Sneaky.

Lawyer—Sneaky sort of man? What do you mean, sir? Witness—Well, sir, he's the sort of man that'll never look straight in the face until yer back's turned.

Transporting a Fortune

By MELLARD MALTRE

How I found the celebrated Imperial diamond does not pertain essentially to this story, but where I found it is important, for my effort to get it away from the region where it had lain ever since a lump of pure carbon was crystallized and became a gem as big as a walnut is what I am going to tell you about. When I was a youngster I ran away from home and a few weeks later found myself in the province of Minas Geraes, in Brazil, where the diamond mines are. I worked in the mines for five years and couldn't very well do that without learning something about diamonds.

One Sunday I was out on a tramp and, stopping to rest, noticed near me a stone that it struck me looked like a diamond in the rough. I took it up to examine it and found it exactly like the uncut stones I had dug up for the diamond company, only I had never seen one half the size. I was a good deal upset, for if the thing was a diamond I was rich.

But, as I have said, it was the getting away with it that I'm going to tell about. It was a diamond, sure enough, and one of the big ones of the world. While I was looking at it Jim Stivers came up, and I was fool enough to let him see it. He knew right off that it was worth the biggest part of a million dollars, and a stone like that is a great temptation for any one. He congratulated me on my find and began at once to plot to get it from me. Jim had more sense than I in this. He didn't tell any one about my having it except three men whom he used to get it away from me. He knew I would go to Rio with it, and his plan was to have me waylaid and the stone captured.

Of course I didn't know just what he would do, but I did know that once I got out of the region of law and order—in other words, off by myself—somebody would try for my property. I concluded to endeavor to fool whoever suspected I had it with me by playing a part. The plan I adopted was this: I found a countryman who was going down with a load of wood and told him I would go with him. He said he was agreeable, and I slept the night before we started near his wagon, which was already loaded. During the night I took one of the logs—one that I would recognize easily—and, boring a big hole in it under a piece of loose bark, put my diamond in it. Then, plugging up the hole, I let down the bark, first putting a little glue between it and the wood to hold it in place. Then I threw the log back on to the load.

We started early in the morning, and I, not wishing to be identified with the woodman, at times kept in his rear and at times in advance of him. Although I hadn't told any one I was going on the trip, I found the road picketed. I passed a man who looked at me searchingly, and it wasn't long before, hearing footsteps behind me, I turned and saw him coming with two others. They caught up with me, and one of them, who knew me by sight, said, "That's the man," and, addressing me, added:

"Young fellow, the diamond company has missed a valuable uncut stone and, having been informed that it is in your possession, has sent us to demand it of you. Please hand it out."

"I haven't any diamond," I replied. "I'm as poor as poverty and don't know where I shall get a bite to eat."

They didn't waste any words, but two of them held me while the third went through my pockets, my hair, my beard—indeed, every part of me. Then he took off my clothes, leaving me stark naked, and examined every seam, every inch of cloth, even holding them up and looking through them to the light.

"I reckon he has either sent it on ahead or left it behind to come later," said the man who had done the searching. All would have gone well had not the woodcutter's wagon come lumbering down the road and he had to ask me in a familiar way what my appearing in my birthday clothes meant. The men picked up their ears at this and asked him if he knew me, and he told them that we were fellow travelers.

He got a thorough searching for his pains, the men thinking that he was carrying the gem for me. Then they examined the horses, the harness, the wagon, looking even into the hubs of the wheels. One of them suggested that what they were looking for might be between the logs of wood, and they threw every log off on to the road, carefully watching for the diamond between them.

But it was of no use. The stone was not to be found.

They didn't like to give it up; but, believing that I had conveyed the treasure by some other method, they finally concluded to do so. They had instructions from Stivers not to hurt me. If they could get the diamond they were to do so, but they were not to commit murder or make a case against those implicated in the attempted robbery. So I was allowed to proceed.

When we reached Rio I took the log in which I had hidden the diamond off the load, paid the woodman for it and, putting it on my shoulder, went away with it.

I sailed for Amsterdam, that I might get my stone cut, and when it was in proper condition sold it for \$350,000 to a Hanoverian prince.

Frederick the Great and Music.

Frederick the Great was the most distinguished musical amateur of his age, and his position gave him the power to regulate the style of composition employed by the musicians of his period. For instance, he made the following rules to be followed by operatic composers: "All the principal singers must have big arias and different in character, as an adagio aria, which must be very cantabile to show off to good advantage the voice and delivery of the singer. In the capos the artist can then display her art in embellishing variations. Then there must be an allegro aria with brilliant passages, a gallant aria, a duet for the first male singer and the prima donna. In these pieces the big forms of measure must be used so as to give pathos to the tragedy. The smaller forms of time, such as two-four and three-eight, are for the secondary roles, and for these a tempo minuetto can be written. There must be the necessary changes of time, but minor keys must be avoided in the theater, because they are too mournful."—Argonaut.

Curious Pets.

During a visit to the outer Florida reef, away out on the very last and bank that can, by courtesy, be called an island, I made the acquaintance of an old Indian fisherman, who had some of the most interesting pets I was ever my good fortune to see.

One was a large, red clawed hermit crab, that had taken up its home in an old fashioned silver ornamented pipe, and at all hours of the day and night the clanking of the pipe could be heard, sometimes on the table, again on the wall, and often it would roll off and fall with a crash upon the floor, and then there would be a silence for awhile, until, perhaps, the hermit recovered from its surprise and astonishment.

The hermit was thoroughly a house pet, and no sooner did he venture beyond the door, than he was in danger of being snatched up by two other pets—one a man-of-war hawk and the other a gray pelican.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

The Story of Van Speyck.

In "Holland of the Dutch" Demetrius Boulger tells as one of Holland's heroic episodes the story of Van Speyck.

"It was during the Belgian revolution, when General Chasse held possession of the citadel of Antwerp and a Dutch squadron held the scheldt and secured his communications with Holland. In February, 1831, during a heavy gale a Dutch gunboat went adrift and grounded near the river bank. The Belgians determined to secure what seemed an easy prize and boarded the boat. The young commander, Lieutenant Van Speyck, had only thirty-one men under him. There were several hundred Belgians, and resistance was really out of the question, but he refused to haul down his flag. He opened the door of his magazine, and as the assailants rushed to seize him he fired his pistol into the powder, and the ship was blown to pieces with nearly every one on board."

The Smallest Golf Course.

What is probably the smallest golf course in existence is to be found on the May, the rocky islet which lies on the north side of the mouth of the Strath of Forth, some five miles south of Crail, on the coast of Fifehire. The island is about a mile in length and two and one-half furlongs in breadth and has a surface of rather more than 100 acres, but as a large part of it is unplayable for one reason or another the course consists of only three holes. To make the "round" it is necessary to play the course six times. The distance between the holes, however, is considerable, and the links are decidedly difficult of negotiation. The best score is said to be seventy.—Pearson's Weekly.

Not Used to Sleepers.

The nervous old lady approached the porter in a sleeping car and asked: "Oh, porter, where do I sleep?"

"What's the number ob youah berth, ma'am?" he asked.

She looked at him questioningly for a minute and then replied, "I don't see what that has to do with it, but if you must know, it is third; there was a brother and sister born before me."—Exchange.

Ought to Know.

Manager—The critics say that in the play "A Wronged Wife" you do not exhibit enough emotion when your husband leaves you, never to return. Popular Actress—Oh, I don't, don't I? Well, I've had two or three husbands leave me, never to return, and I guess I know as much about how to act in those circumstances as anybody.—London Tit-Bits.

Eyeglass Screws.

If the tiny screws that hold your eyeglass lenses in place will not stay tightened and you are far away from a jeweler, tighten them with a pen-knife and drop a bit of glue on them. When this hardens the screws will not loosen for many weeks.—Exchange.

A Misapprehension.

"I like to see Mr. de Style enter a room. She has such a fine carriage."

"Law, she don't drive it into people's houses, does she?"—Baltimore American.

Force of Habit.

"How is it you can so easily tell a married man in any assemblage?"

"By the way he listens."—Baltimore American.

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