

The Phantom Diver

By GEORGE W. LEWIS

Big Harkinson stepped off the raft and disappeared downward. The gray-green water lapped above his head, a few blister-like bubbles danced and exploded in the tiny swirl that marked his exit. That was all. The sepulchral Helena was about to receive a second visitor from the land of the living. The slender conduit that linked the diver with life paid out rapidly, then suddenly stopped, and we knew that Harkinson was aboard the wreck.

"Seventy-one feet," drawled Garrick. "A little pale, wasn't he?" queried Wrenny, keeping a watchful eye on the line.

Garrick looked over to the speaker as though he had expected the question.

"What d'you s'pose is wrong?" he said. The faintest trace of anxiety was in his great, slow voice.

"It's Connors—I mean the mysterious way Connors' air-tube parted," returned Wrenny. "I don't believe in spooks, specially submarine ones; but there ain't no more cause for the Atlantic cable coming in two—at this minute than there was for poor Connors' hose—a brand new one, too, mind you—separatin' as it did. It's queer."

Garrick, listening, spat reflectively at the last remaining bubble. Watching from my seat in the dingy, I knew that the two men, whatever details they might make, were at last impressed with the gruesomeness of their chosen profession—dallying with dead things under the sea. Mayhap it was because Connors had been their tutor, their companion, indeed, the old diver had been pretty nearly everything to them; but he had been even more to his employers. In his unaccountable death the world had lost a master-diver, and the company had lost money. But because John Connors had been a faithful servant, the company had paid hard money that the diver's harness-weighted remains might be the first brought up.

Harkinson's signal "up" was of that nervous, hurry-up sort that tells of sudden distress. He had been down but three minutes. At a similar depth he usually remained thirty or more, for he was a Hercules, and for him water-pressure had no terrors. I knew that Wrenny, at least—though for no good reason—fully expected to see the big diver come up limp and dead. I read his white face like print. But when big Harkinson's helmet bobbed out of water a moment later, both his big red hands were clutching at the raft as frantically as if some pursuing monster were about to drag him down to death.

When his helmet was off, his face showed mottled and chalky. The spluttered-out, meaningless fragments of speech, and his eyes were fixed in a terrified stare. Garrick forced half a pint of whisky down his throat before anything like coherency could be restored.

"He's down there—boys—Connors!" The diver clapped his hands over his eyes as if to shut out some hideous recurring vision. "Oh, Lord!" he wailed. "think—think of the harness—Connors, dead sixty—sixty hours—walking and beckoning!"

Harkinson's great strength snapped like a reed under the strain, and he dropped forward upon his face, unconscious.

When Garrick consented to go down to the Helena, I knew that it was because he needed money—needed it badly. Garrick, unavailably, had long been idle; besides, he was engaged, and the girl was pretty and worthy; and the big, slow-spoken diver knew that, he must prepare a suitable home for her. He was of a good, honest sort, was Garrick, and courageous, too. But I had watched his face as Harkinson, his nerves shattered, related from a sick bed his unanny experience aboard the sunken Helena; and thus I had come to know that, badly as Garrick needed money, he needed courage more, if he would succeed where Harkinson had failed. The thing was on his nerves, right enough; but I saw the grip of his big jaw, and I knew that he was indeed going down, even though he might not come up.

"There was a lot of wreckage piled up about the cabin-door," Harkinson had told us, "and I had to squat as low as I could to pass under it. As I raised up, inside the cabin—Connors—dead sixty hours—got up off a bench fixed to the opposite wall of the cabin, and came to meet me. Seventy-one feet under the sea with a ghost! Connors—yes, it was him, all right—suddenly stopped and threw up his hands as though recognition of me startled him. He wore his same diver's outfit—the kind we all use. After a moment his arms fell limply by his sides; but immediately he made a hand and passed it over his brow perceptibly. Then he seemed to gesture to me; and I found that I was also beckoning to him, signaling to him to follow me up. But he backed away in a manner almost of despair, I thought, and resumed his bench at the farther side of the cabin as I bent low under the wreckage at the door and backed out on deck, signaling to be pulled up."

Wrenny's face was chalk-white, as

big Garrick went over the side and dropped out of sight in the green swell that rocked our raft and dingy. As for me, I confess my nerves were strangely shaken. But I was scarcely more than a green diver as yet, whereas Wrenny thrilled his listeners—and himself—with well-told tales of raised treasures and strange submarine encounters in which, be it known, he spared himself little of the commendation due to achievements.

Within twelve minutes after Garrick went down, the body of Connors had been recovered in a fair state of preservation. Harkinson, an old-timer, too, had after all allowed himself to be frightened off the job by some fool, subaqueous phenomenon whose phases he had been studying all his precious life.

Wrenny's superstitious mind was infinitely relieved. A semblance of color came back into his face, and I had begun to feel less of the anxiety experienced by one at work with a near-maniac for a companion, when all at once Garrick started us with a fiercely tugged "up" signal. He was mumbling strange sounds before we got his helmet off, and when the light fell on his face it revealed a mask of terror unspokeable. His features were drawn and seemed unbelievably, and speech had deserted him altogether. Some awful emotion shook his great body like an aspen.

It was two long hours before we knew his story. All that Harkinson had seen in the Helena's cabin, Garrick, too, had beheld—the same in all its blood-chilling details.

The affair began to nag my nerves with a vengeance. I would have staked my very existence on the grip of Garrick's big jaw. I almost wished that I had done so; for Wrenny and I were the only available now, and I knew beforehand that Wrenny, if detailed, would refuse to go down. It was a time, when one must be a man or a mouse; when a white feather becomes a white flag, and a white flag means the surrendering of a career. I am a natural coward, but possess underlying qualities of resolution. I could live without this job, I thought; and, too, I, unlike Garrick, was blessed with no woman's love save a mother's; but her comforts were my pleasures, her self-denials my heartaches. I went down!

I went down—down, down, down until my cumbrous feet met the slimy, slanting deck of the ill-fated Helena. The water was as clear as might be at a like depth. Everywhere was a confusion of wreckage. It had been a smashing gale that wrought all this demolition. I made out the cabin, half-hidden under a tangled mass of wreckage, and worked my way to the debris-barred door. I avoided the keen edge of a long knife which some whim of the storm's fury had fixed firmly in a piece of broken mast. The edge turned outward, menacing my lines, and I gasped. The mystery of Connors' death was laid bare. His hose had doubtless caught on the knife blade; he had tried to haul it after him, and—

I had to crouch low to pass under the barrier at the door. The cabin windows were clear, and in the ceiling was a huge spar-hole which admitted light. I stood erect inside the cabin, and—! At the opposite side of the room a second diver in full dress had risen before me, motionless, but erect with the confident poise of life. A nervous, insane curiosity seized me; a yearning to know if the diver that faced me were of flesh and blood, or—something else. I advanced toward the apparition; and then my nerve all but broke, for it followed my example and came forward to meet me! I hesitated only for the space of a heart-beat; then I threw myself forward wildly, hands clutching, but on the greasy, slime-coated floor my feet flew from under me with the effort, and I crashed down.

The fall dazed me. I only knew that my hands, in the instant of my falling, had slipped over a smooth, hard surface exactly where the apparition had stood. From the floor I strained my eyes upward. The strange diver had disappeared. I tottered to my feet; and then the desperation of fright sent my hand to my sheath-knife. As I gained my feet the vanished figure again confronted me. I drove the knife with all my strength, for I knew that the mysterious diver was not Connors. The knife-point deflected and grazed an impenetrable, even surface, and the force of the blow carried me with a momentary shock against something that felt peculiarly like a sleek, enameled panel. My tense nerves went slack, and my knees averted weakly from the sudden relaxation as the light of understanding broke upon my groping senses.

"The deuce!" I ejaculated in the close confinement of my helmet, "a mirrör!"

Early English Coffee Houses.
In an age when newspapers were unknown, or consisted only of official or strictly licensed prints containing only what the court desired to have known, the coffee house became the great exchange of news and politics, and so marked did its influence become that the government attempted at one time to suppress it. The attempt merely served to bring out the importance of the function this unique institution had attained to, for so widespread was the protest of all classes of business affected, and of opinion formed, that Charles II was forced to abandon it.

Foundation Must Be There.
A man can never be a true gentleman in manner until he is a true gentleman at heart.—Dickens.

NATION OWES MORRIS MUCH

Financier's Services to the Cause of American Independence Should Never Be Forgotten.

Robert Morris was the financier of the American revolution, a whole "Liberty loan" in himself. He carried the colonists through their struggle for independence by handling such funds as the country possessed at the time, but for the most part through his own private credit, which was greater than that of his country. Yet after this unprecedented service to his country he was thrown into the debtors' prison for three years (from 1798 to 1801). He was born on January 20, say some authorities—others on January 31, 1734, at Liverpool, and died in Philadelphia May 7, 1806. He arrived in America when thirteen years old, entered a mercantile house and developed a genius for finance. In 1764 he became a member of a prosperous firm known as Willing, Morris & Co. During the conflict with the mother country he gave all his time and money to help the colonists. Out of his own means he transferred Washington's army from Dobbs Ferry to Yorktown in 1781. That same year he established the Bank of North America—the first bank in the United States with a national character. He was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and was a member of the Continental congress until 1778, after which he went into the legislature, serving during several terms, when he became the superintendent of finance from 1781 to 1784. He was also head of the navy department from 1781 to 1784. At one time he owned half of the state of New York and millions of acres in other states, but the slow development in values and the failure of the Bank of London, in which he had funds, caused his bankruptcy. At the time of his failure he was building a palatial home in Philadelphia, which was never finished, and many of the workmen were paid off by giving them portions of the architecture, which they sold later or built into less pretentious homes. Some of these fine specimens of carving in stone have been bought up and made the motive for planning artistic homes in old Germantown in Philadelphia.

GUARD FORESTS FROM FIRE

Women Do Efficient Work in Lonesome Positions on Lofly Peaks of Western Mountains.

To the creditable list of occupations in which women have proved efficient and faithful, may be added that of serving as observers in lookout posts on the peaks of western mountains and hills, says Popular Mechanics Magazine. From these lonely points of vantage watch is constantly kept for forest fires in the region round about. Because of the scarcity of available men during the war, this work was performed largely by women and girls, many of the latter being of high-school age who were glad of an opportunity to spend a summer vacation in the open. Usually the girls "manned" the posts in pairs, but in one instance a lone girl and her faithful dog were on duty. Whenever smoke was seen rising among the trees it was the task of the watcher to calculate the location of the fire by means of special apparatus provided for the purpose, and then communicate at once by telephone to the forest rangers, who would hurry out prepared to fight the flames.

China and the Bean.

The bean plays an important part in Chinese domestic economy, and one of the specially desired qualifications of the Chinese nation, throughout the northern provinces, is her ability to export from beans—green, black and yellow—several staple dishes.

The bean seldom appears on the Chinese table whole; it is not considered as fit for food until it has been reduced to its essences and put up in the form of bean curd or bean jelly, which are for sale in every roadside food shop of northern China.

The art of producing these nourishing foods, which are the meat of the poor, is to the rural Chinese woman what the making of butter, cheese and jam is to the occidental housewife. In the large cities bean manipulation of that sort is a craft and a commercial activity, just as the making of jam and butter is in the large cities of the west, but it can scarcely be called an industry, since it is still quite without organization. The beans must be crushed, soaked, baked, boiled and strained before the essences appear.

Approaching "Perpetual"

Of course, there is still unsolved the old riddle of perpetual motion, which thousands of cranks have spent their lives upon in the past. Scientists tell us that there is no perpetual motion known even to astronomy, so that it will never be discovered on earth! The world, they say, is slowly checking its speed round the sun, and its diurnal revolution, but so slowly as to be imperceptible within historic times, and the sun they say is a dying fire which will be extinct in a few hundred billion years. Yet the discovery of radium, with its apparently inexhaustible energy, rather shook the scorn with which the ideal of perpetual motion used to be regarded, and if a machine could be constructed to go for twenty years, on its own as it were, it would be "perpetual" enough for all ordinary purposes!

WHY Writings of Great Poets Live in Memory

Hamlet's soliloquy beginning, "To be or not to be," is probably as familiar as it is possible for any words not in the Bible to be, and has certainly been declaimed and recited oftener than any others, from the boy at school to the great actor on the stage. Has its power, its philosophy, its fitness of thought and diction, its soaring imagination been thereby in any degree impaired? asks Henry Cabot Lodge in Scribner's. Where could one turn more surely at the chosen moment for a noble quotation? Again, no lines in Shakespeare are probably more universally familiar than Portia's speech, beginning "The quality of mercy is not strained." Has use at all lessened its exquisite beauty? Descend in the scale of genius. Like Wolfe upon the eve of battle upon the plains of Abraham, boys and girls, men and women, have been repeating for more than a century the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard." It might be described in the words of the young man overheard by Mrs. Kemble at the theater, who remarked of "Hamlet" that "it seemed to be made up of quotations." Does all this familiarity in any way affect its beauties, the charm of the verse, the perfection in the choice of words, the soft twilight of the picture and the thoughts? There is but one possible answer to such a question.

DO AWAY WITH IDLE HOURS

Why a "Hobby," or Something to Take Its Place, is Necessary for Women.

There is that everlasting appeal to people to get a hobby. It is all very well for the writer or speaker to prepare his hobby sermons, but, like Portia, it is easier to tell twenty what is good to be done than to be one of the twenty to follow their own teachings.

A hobby is a most commendable thing. But most hobbies are expensive. The best thing to do is to plan out a daily routine for yourself where you know every hour where you will be and what you are going to do. There should be no idle or haphazard hours at all. These are the hours which make you nervous, allow you to think of yourself, and which the preachers of the hobbies would therefore have you fill with your "hobby."

Vacant, restless hours, if you have no hobby, can be filled with reading good books, calls on the sick, calls on the places of interest in your city, and with all such things which cost little or nothing. In this day of great needs, when letters and packages are enjoyed so much by the soldiers, there should be no woman who is idle, who can't do anything to take up her mind and is so hard pressed that she "must have a hobby."—Exchange.

How Some of Our Ancestors Lived.

According to James Curle, who has discovered some old caves and houses in Scotland, life in a two-by-four flat, with the jauntier on a strike, is bliss compared to what people used to put up with. He has found several large caves in Scotland which were used as houses, a couple of thousand years ago, before modern conveniences were invented. In other places the houses were built underground. Many relics have been left in these dwellings. There are weaving combs, whorls, and spindles used by the women, enameled brooches, pins, and colored glass armlets, with which they decked themselves. Women's and children's shoes were also found. Besides these are household utensils, wooden dishes and spoons, stone lamps and platters, and pottery of various kinds. The men have left tools and weapons, plows, picks, and rakes, made of deer antlers, wheels of carts, harness mountings, and large decorated swords. Prof. Curle declares that the Romans who were once in possession of the country taught the people to make all these things.

How Snow is Colored.

A study has been made by Messrs. A. N. Wicheil and E. R. Miller of the University of Wisconsin of a shower of dust which discolored falling snow at Madison and elsewhere. According to somewhat scanty reports, this colored snow covered an area of at least 100,000 square miles and probably 200,000. The total quantity of dust is estimated to have been at least 1,000,000 tons, and may have greatly exceeded this, perhaps, even amounting to hundreds of millions of tons. A study of the character of the dust and of the attendant meteorological conditions leads to the belief that the dust was blown all the way from the arid regions in the far southwestern United States, and was therefore transported 1,000 miles or more.

How Prejudices Affects Living.

Prejudice plays a large part in our food purchases. Take the case of butter versus oleomargarine. Experts in the former have been known to fall in ability to distinguish the two, yet we are willing to pay 20 per cent more for butter than for the substitute. The prejudice against goods from storage helps bolster the cost of living. Were it not for storage facilities butter and eggs today would be luxuries for the very rich only. The public was recently informed that storage eggs had proved fresher than fresh eggs. The rabbit would furnish food as well as fur if our "don't like" did not stand in the way. Our "can't eat" and "don't like" are mainly psychological states fixed in habit and prejudice.—Detroit Free Press.

HOW RECORD OF WAR'S HAPPENINGS WILL BE SHOWN TO POSTERITY.

In order to keep a true and authentic record of the great world war, Austria a year ago requested the burgomaster of every town and city, both in Germany and Austria, to record events and occurrences during the conflict in their various communities.

According to a German newspaper, this will constitute a tremendous amount of authentic material from which a comprehensive history of the war can be written in the future. The idea is to learn how each town and city suffered during the war, the food the population had, what they ate, drank and wore, how many from each community went to the front, how many were wounded, and how many died, and anything of interest relating immediately to the struggle.

The material is to be sent to the public libraries at Vienna, who will compile it and file it so as to make it readily available. It is estimated that this matter alone will require over a hundred volumes to adequately tell the story of the struggle and privations of the people. This will not include the history of the military operations, descriptions of battles, etc., which will be written by military experts who actually took part in them. In addition several eminent painters and artists who went to the front will contribute illustrations giving a pictorial conception of the struggle. This entire history will require years of preparation, but when completed it is asserted that it will be the most interesting and comprehensive history of a great struggle that ever has been compiled or published.

PART OF FRANCE IN AMERICA

How Soil Sufficient to Cover Fifty Acres Was Brought Over by United States Transports.

It is not necessary to go to France to put your foot on French soil.

There are fifty acres of new-made land almost in the heart of Norfolk, Va., composed entirely of soil brought from France within the last year. It was brought over by naval transports.

When American transports sailed for France from America shores during the war they carried troops and supplies. When they started back to America there were no cargoes for them in French ports, so it was necessary for some of them to carry something for ballast. There being nothing else handy, tons upon tons of French soil was loaded into the holds of returning ships just to balance them in case they encountered rough weather on the voyage.

When the ships reached America the soil was unloaded and used to reclaim marshy lands. More than fifty acres of lowland was filled with this French soil at the St. Helena naval base. This land was never used before the French soil arrived. Now it is being made into attractive grounds, which may also include flower gardens.

Why Sell Eggs by the Pound.

For several years the plan of selling eggs by the pound instead of by the dozen has been agitated among the Canadian grocers, and in some towns the system has already been put in practice. A trade journal which called upon a large number of dealers for an expression of opinion on this point states that the weight of opinion was in favor of the movement. The only obstacle in the way of a unanimous endorsement of the plan is that the "public has not been educated to buy in this way." As refuting this objection, it is pointed out that in view of the wide variation in the size of eggs the consumer would quickly realize that the system offers a fairer and juster basis of charge than mere number.

Why Japan Has Few Autos.

A report just issued by the bureau of foreign and domestic commerce says that as a general rule there are no suitable roads to be found throughout the Chinese republic. Shanghai is the center for motorcars, as a result of its foreign population of approximately 200,000. Registered cars in the city number about 1,000, and some two or three hundred are in storage. There are only 2,700 cars in all of Japan, but the recent prosperity has greatly stimulated the demand. Americans have had most of the business since the war started. The abundance of money among the buying class and the desire to own cars is, however, offset by the lack of suitable roads and bridges.

Why Waterfall Is Nameless.

The largest and most beautiful waterfall in the Southwest is unnamed as far as the United States forest service can learn. It is supposed to have been forgotten. The nameless fall is that of the Little Colorado river in Arizona, between Winslow and Flagstaff on the Navajo Indian reservation.

The Little Colorado makes a sharp drop of 100 feet at this point. The width of the stream at the precipice is about 300 feet at a season when the stream is at its higher levels. The rock formations about the falls are brilliantly colored, some of the strata being red and yellow, which to a considerable degree, constitute the unusual beauty of the falls.

NOT LOOKING FOR VISITORS

European Countries Devastated by War Have No Use at All for the Sightseer.

We probably will hear one of these days of some desperate travel enthusiast trying to swim or row across the English channel. Great is the fever in these British isles, and the British passport office in London is thronged daily by hundreds of earnest men and women who insist they must get to southern France immediately for their lung's sake, or because they have a relative dying in Paris, or they are faced by bankruptcy unless they see their agent in Rouen instantly.

They cannot go. Much as they would like to be in Paris during the peace conference, and tour over the great battlefields, the governments are restricting travel to a minimum until after peace and demobilization.

A visit to a soldier's grave is not accepted as urgent. Business that can be transacted by mail must be transacted that way. The certificate of a committee of doctors might win a safe-conduct to a warmer climate, but it is doubtful if the tourist-invalid could choose France or Italy, which have their own food and housing problems without an extra burden of civilian foreigners.

So the tourist is pent up in his native land for another maddening period. Probably when shipping passes up a bit he might be able to get off to Egypt. France? Not so quicks a while yet.—London Mail.

WOMEN'S WAYS



She—George, dear, I bought you a pipe.
He—Yes, and I suppose soon you'll make me swear of smoking. Just like a woman!

GREAT WRITER'S VANITY

Here is an amusing picture of Swinburne, his first-act play being with manuscript, waiting to be read aloud his latest poem, given by Mr. Edmund Gosse in his "Portraits and Sketches."

"After looking about the room and greeting his host and hostess with many little bows of the head and affectionate smiles, and light wavings of the fingers, he would sit at last upright on a chair, or by preference, on a sofa, and sit there in a state of rigid immobility, the toe of one foot pressed against the heel of the other. Then he would say, as though speaking of some absent person:

"I have brought with me my 'Thalassius' or my 'Wanted Candidate'—or whatever it might happen to be—which I have just finished."
"Then he would be folded stiff in silence, looking at nothing. When then were to say:
"Oh, do, please, read it to me! Will you?"

MAN'S INHUMANITY.

"Laws," remarked Aunt Eunice, "they Taters, lookin' up from the Beantown Evening Bugle. 'We wonder to me folks wouldn't be these poor, dumb brutes about there they're after the blind tigers and now I see the Columbia club up in Indianapolis is organizing a wolf hunt.'—Indianapolis Star.

PLEASANT CHANGE.

Flatbush—The war has made plants and the war gardens did a lot for our women.

Bensonhurst—How so?
"Why, women used to be talking about hats; now you women 'em asking, 'Are my curls straight?'"

COSTS TO BE PAID.

"Aren't you glad to see these ships investigated?"
"I'm glad," answered the other.
"It's always interesting to see the results of an investigation."
"It's not anything more than the expense of conducting the investigation."