

AN ORIENTAL TALE.

before an Eastern king one day, appeared a man both pure and wise. The king begged of the man to say what road to take to paradise.

ABOUT UNCUT DIAMONDS.

It is difficult to place a value on an uncut diamond. It is irregular in shape, and often so covered with unsightly facets that it is impossible to determine either its size, weight, or luster, upon which its price depends.

Uncut stones are frequently smuggled into the country by stokers and other common steamship hands. It is a comparatively easy thing to evade the inspectors with a handful of seeming pebbles, dumped, perhaps, into a coal-hod, and still more disguised with the grime, the whole lot, gems and coal, treated as if worthless, until chance occurs to carry them ashore.

A lapidary is one whose trade it is to take diamonds in the rough, and polish them to forms suitable for ornaments. The Dutch are lapidaries of the world, and since the discovery of the South African diamond fields in 1867, immigrants from Holland, skillful in their trade, have caused the custom officials of America no little trouble.

Meantime Von Twiller had silently disappeared below deck. At length, when night was falling, the fellows approached the cork, and lifting it into the skiff, drew up the unken bucket and detached the cork.

When it was quite dark and the lamps were lighted, I called one of my aids to watch them, while with two others I entered a yawl which we had in readiness near by, and pulled around to the vicinity of the skiff.

"Gott in Himmel! how you vos got sheated ven you buys fine tounsen for dot. See dot vlaw? No goot sthonen. Vert not fife hunder dollar. Vare you by dot sheat?"

"I told him that I bought it in Philadelphia, and appeared very much grieved at its defects, but declared my intention of venturing again, as I was resolved to own some rich diamonds.

"Why?" said I, "where do you find diamonds in Chicago? I thought they came across the ocean from South Africa, and landed at the seaports."

"I did not buy of the Dutchman, but I kept so far into his greed and confidence that we went out and drank together, and I learned that their agent was a deck hand on a certain steamship, and his name Von Twiller. When I departed, as he supposed for San Francisco, he was quite offensive.

"Goot-by, mine yrend. Ven you comes back by de next gema of mine life, von vos jiz paragrah. You see, I buys no government pounty. Uncle Sam no smart 'nough for me. So I sell you sheap."

My next wish was to set eyes on Von Twiller. The second mate of the steamer named was an acquaintance, and the very afternoon of her next arrival in port, divesting myself of every visible sign of official character, I called on him, finding him in charge of the vessel for the day.

Attached to the bucket was not only the usual rope for taking up water from the river, but a longer cord, like a fishing-line, loosely coiled, with a huge cork at the end of it, and Von Twiller seemed anxious to keep it out of sight.

Slowly the men in the skiff worked along the starboard of the great steamer and rounded her stern, coming into Von Twiller's view at last, and I thought a covert recognition passed between them.

The case was rapidly assuming shape and interest. It was evident that something decisive would not be long delayed.

Suddenly Von Twiller laid the cloth on the rail, and lifting the bucket poured its soiled contents in the river. I noticed that it held but little water for so large a pail.

For an hour the skiff drifted about in the most innocent manner, the men not seeming to notice the cork, which I regarded with special interest.

When it was quite dark and the lamps were lighted, I called one of my aids to watch them, while with two others I entered a yawl which we had in readiness near by, and pulled around to the vicinity of the skiff.

At length another long, low whistle from the dock overhead hastened my action. We were three or four boat lengths from the skiff, when, arousing from my apparent drowse of the last hour, I sung out to my aids at the oars:

"Here, you lubbers! what ye about under these docks? Pull away, and put me aboard the ship!"

With a fitful effort they manned the oars and sent the yawl here and there in the most drunken style, I meanwhile cursing them full blast. It was not very dark where we were, owing to the indirect light of numerous lamps, and in the course of the better-skelter rowing we ran stern first against the skiff.

Instantly I found out what sort of fellows we were dealing with. One of them whipped out a pistol and planted a bullet in the tiller post, directly opposite the small of my back, a fatal shot, but for the post; while another, as I wheeled to use my own revolver, struck me in the left breast, where it also would have vetoed my relating the incidents had it not met with my official badge pinned on my vest and doing guard duty over my heart. The

badge arrested the bullet. By this time my assistants got to work in the same line, and for a moment bullets flew thick and fast both ways.

When the fusillade stopped, we discovered that one rasnal had received more than his share, an ugly furrow across his cheek, a piece of lead in his right shoulder, and his left arm broken. He lay on the bottom of the skiff. The other fellow, though apparently unharmed, was completely demoralized and crying like a baby.

Not delaying for further examination, we took the skiff in tow, and pulled away to reach a doctor. But at the instant another man sprang from somewhere under the dock, and landed on the seat just vacated by the wounded chaps. At the same time a stern voice hailed over the edge of the pier:

"Hullo! What's going on down there? Paddle out here, you shooting soundrels, and explain."

I recognized the voice of a policeman of my acquaintance, and called out who we were, and that we wanted an ambulance at once. Pulling to a ladder, the injured fellow was lifted up on the dock, and passed from our care. Next day I found him in a hospital, doing finely and identified him as one of the worst of harbor desperadoes.

Relieved of the wounded man, we rowed away, still towing the skiff, and when fairly out in the light, I found that the newcomer was Von Twiller. Immediately I demanded his arms, when another fight ensued, ending in more work for the doctors.

When Von Twiller was hurt enough to keep the peace, and his revolver was taken from him, it seemed best to search the frightened man more thoroughly for weapons, lest he might find his courage and give us another skirmish. But as I turned him about to get at his pockets, he suddenly stood up, sprang head first into the river, and vanished. We rested on the oars, expecting him to come up in an instant, when we would pull him in again.

But here was the mystery of the night. He did not reappear. We rowed about the spot several minutes, watching for him in vain, and finally concluded that he must have swam under water to the shelter of the dock and crept out in the dark, a prodigious task, as the distance was doubtless 200 feet.

At length we passed on to the government pier, called another ambulance for Von Twiller, and then went to the custom office to examine the bucket.

The next day the body of the man who jumped overboard was found in the harbor, and the cause of his demoralization was explained: a bullet had entered one ear and lodged in his brain. But from his position it was clear that it was fired by his pal, who sat beyond him in the skiff, and designed it for me. I cannot say that I was sorry it missed me.

Thank Heaven! both of the fellows whom we had hit recovered.

Women in the World. According to the most reliable estimates the world to-day contains 280,000,000 grown women. Among civilized nations the United States have actually the largest share, their feminine population being 90,554,370. Russia comes next with an adult feminine population of 23,200,000.

The one great rule of business is that of honesty, absolute and unqualified honesty, writes Edward W. Bok in the Ladies' Home Journal. All the rules of business are worthless if they are not founded on that one and only foundation stone to true commercial success. Honesty is not alone the best policy in business; it is the one and only policy. Upon it, and upon it alone, can a good reputation be built and a man in business without a reputation for honesty might just as well stop. Any deviation from the rule of honesty in business may bring temporary gain, but it invariably means permanent loss.

For Thin Children.

Children are always thin and pale when they do not assimilate enough fat. This seems strange, perhaps, but it is literally true. Unless there is a healthy assimilation of fat food the blood becomes depleted, tissues waste away, vitality becomes low and the body languishes for the need of proper nourishment.

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