

PIECES OF EIGHT

BEING THE AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE OF A TREASURE DISCOVERED IN THE BAHAMA ISLANDS IN THE YEAR 1903. NOW FIRST GIVEN TO THE PUBLIC.

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"READING THE FUTURE."

Synopsis.—The man who tells this story—call him the hero, for short—is visiting his friend, John Saunders, British official in Nassau, Bahama Islands. Charles Webster, a local merchant, completes the trio of friends. Conversation turning upon buried treasure, Saunders produces a written document purporting to be the death-bed statement of Henry P. Tobias, a successful pirate, made by him in 1853. It gives two spots where two millions and a half of treasure were buried by him and his companions. The conversation of the three friends is overheard by a pock-marked stranger. The document disappears. Saunders, however, has a copy. The hero, determined to seek the buried treasure, charters the auxiliary schooner Maggie Darling. The pock-marked man is taken on as a passenger for Spanish Wells. Negro Tom catches and cures a "sucking fish" as a mascot for the hero; it has the virtue of keeping off the ghost of the pirate who always guards pirate treasure. On the voyage somebody empties the gasoline tank and the hero starts things. He and the passenger clash. He lands the passenger, who leaves a manifesto bearing the signature, "Henry P. Tobias, Jr." With a new crew, the Maggie Darling sails and is passed by another schooner, the Susan B. The hero lands on Dead Men's Shoes. The "sucking fish" proves a mascot indeed and carries the hero through a fight, which is followed by several funerals. He searches for buried treasure and Old Tom falls into a pirate's cave.

CHAPTER VIII—Continued.

"Mind yourself, sar," he called cheerily, and indeed it was a problem to get down to him without precipitating the loose earth and rock that were ready to make a landslide down the hole, and perhaps bury him forever.

But, looking about, I found another natural tunnel in the side of the hill. Into this I was able to worm myself, and in the dim light found the old man and put my flask to his lips.

"Anything broken, do you think?" Tom didn't think so. He had evidently been stunned by his fall, and another pull at my flask set him on his feet. But as I helped him up, and, striking a light, we began to look around the hole he had tumbled into, he gave a piercing shriek and fell on his knees, jabbering with fear.

"The ghosts! the ghosts!" he screamed.

And the sight that met our eyes was certainly one to try the nerves. Two figures sat at a table—one with his hat tilted slightly and one leaning sideways in his chair in a careless sort of attitude. They seemed to be playing cards, and they were strangely white—for they were skeletons.

I stood hushed, while Tom's teeth rattled at my side. The fantastic awe of the thing was beyond telling. And then, not without a qualm or two, which I would be a liar to deny, I went and stood nearer to them. Nearly all



I Waited a Minute to Replace the Hat on the Rakish One's Head.

their clothes had fallen away, hanging but in shreds here and there. That the hat had so jauntily kept its place was one of those grim touches Death, that terrible humorist, loves to add to his jests. The cards which had apparently just been dealt, had suffered scarcely from decay—only a little dirt had sifted down upon them, as it had into the rum glasses that stood, too, at each man's side. And as I looked at the skeleton bullet facing me, I noticed that a bullet hole had been made as clean as if by a drill in his forehead of bone—while, turning to examine more closely his silent partner, I noticed a rusty sailor's knife hanging from the ribs where the lungs had been. Then I looked on the floor and found the key to the whole story.

For there, within a few yards, stood a heavy sailor's chest, strongly bound around with iron. Its lid was thrown back and a few coins lay scattered at the bottom, while a few lay about on the floor. I picked them up.

They were pieces of eight! Meanwhile Tom had stopped jabbering and had come nearer, looking on in awed silence. I showed him the pieces of eight.

"I guess these are all we'll see of one John P. Tobias' treasure, Tom," I said. And it looks as if these poor fellows saw as little of it as ourselves. Can't you imagine them with it there at their feet—perhaps playing to divide it on a gamble, and meanwhile the other fellows stealing in through some of these rabbit runs—one with a knife, the other with a gun—and then: off with the loot and up with the shells. Poor devils! It strikes me as a very pretty tragedy—doesn't it you?"

Suddenly—perhaps with the vibration of our voices—the hat toppled off the head of the fellow facing us in the most weird and comical fashion—and that was too much for Tom, and he screamed and made for the exit hole. But I waited a minute to replace the hat on the rakish one's head. As I was likely often to think of him in the future I preferred to remember him at the moment of our first strange acquaintance.

Book II.

CHAPTER I.

Once More in John Saunders' Snuggery.

Need I say that it was a great occasion when I was once more back safe in John Saunders' snuggery, telling my story to my two friends, John and Charlie Webster, all just as if I had never stirred from my easy chair, instead of having spent an exciting month or so among sharks, dead men, blood-lapping ghosts, card-playing skeletons and such like?

My friends listened to my yarn in characteristic fashion, John Saunders' eyes like mice peeping out of a cupboard, and Charlie Webster's huge bulk poised almost threatening, as it were, with the keenness of his attention. His deep-set kind brown eyes glowed like a boy's as I went on, but by their dangerous kindling at certain points of the story, those dealing with our pockmarked friend, Henry P. Tobias, Jr., I soon realized where, for him, the chief interest of the story lay.

"The — rebel!" he roared out once or twice, using an adjective peculiarly English.

For him my story had but one moral—the treason of Henry P. Tobias, Jr. The treasure might as well have had no existence, so far as he was concerned, and the grim climax in the cave drew nothing from him but a pre-occupied nod. And John Saunders was little more satisfactory. Both of them allowed me to end in silence. They both seemed to be thinking deeply.

"I must say you two are a great audience," I said presently, perhaps rather childishly nettled.

"It's a very serious matter," said John Saunders, and I realized that it was not my story but the secretary to the treasury of his Britannic majesty's government at Nassau that was talking. As he spoke he looked across at Charlie Webster, almost as if forgetting me. "Something should be done about it, eh, Charlie?" he continued.

"— traitor!" roared Charlie, once more employing that British adjective. And then he turned to me:

"Look here, old pal, I'll make a bargain with you, if you like. I suppose you're keen for that other treasure now, eh?"

"I am," said I, rather stiffly.

"Well, then, I'll go after it with you—on one condition. You can keep the treasure, if you'll give me Tobias. It would do my heart good to get him, as you had the chance of doing that afternoon. Whatever were you doing to miss him?"

"I proposed to myself the satisfaction of making good that mistake," I said, "on our next meeting. I feel I owe it to the poor old captain."

"Never mind; hand the captain's rights over to me—and I'll help you all I know with your treasure. Besides, Tobias is a job for an Englishman—eh, John? It's a matter of 'king and country' with me. With you it would be mere private vengeance. With me it will be an execution; with you it would be a murder. Isn't that so, John?"

"Exactly," John nodded.

"Since you were away," Charlie began again, "I've bought the prettiest yawl you ever set eyes on—the Flamingo—forty-five over all, and this time the very fastest boat in the harbor. Yes! she's faster even than the Susan B. Now I've a holiday due me in about a fortnight. Say the word, and the Flamingo's yours for a couple of months, and her captain too. I make only that one condition."

"All right, Charlie," I agreed; "he's yours."

Whereat Charlie shot out a huge paw like a shoulder of mutton and grabbed my hand with as much fervor as though I had saved his life or done him some other unimaginable kindness. And as he did so his broad, sweet smile came back again. He was thinking of Tobias.

While Charlie Webster was arranging his affairs so that he might be able to take his holiday with a free mind I busied myself with provisioning the Flamingo, and in casual chatting with one and another along the water front, in the hope of gathering some hint that might guide us on our coming expedition. I thought it possible, too, that chance might thus bring me some information as to the recent movements of Tobias.

In this way I made the acquaintance of several old salts, both white and black, one or two of whom time and their neighbors had invested with a legendary savor of the old "wrecking days," which, if rumor speaks true, are not entirely vanished from the remotest corners of the islands. But either their romantic halos were entirely due to imaginative gossip, or they themselves were too shrewd to be drawn, for I got nothing out of them to my purpose.

One afternoon in the course of these rather fruitless if interesting investigations among the picturesque shippers of Bay street I had wandered farther along that historic water front than is customary with sightseeing pedestrians, and had come to where the road begins to be left alone with the sea, except for a few country houses here and there among the surrounding scrub—when my eye was caught by a little store that seemed to have strayed away from the others—a small timber erection painted in blue and white with a sort of sea-wildness and loneliness about it, and with large, naive lettering across its lintel announcing itself as an "Emporium" (I think that was the word) "of Marine Curiosities."

I pushed open the door. There was no one there. The little store was evidently left to take care of itself. Inside it was like an old curiosity shop of the sea, every available inch of space, rough tables and walls littered and hung with the queer and lovely bric-a-brac of the sea. Presently a tiny girl came in, as it seemed, from nowhere and said she would fetch her father. In a moment or two he came, a tall, weathered Englishman of the sailor type, brown and lean, with lonely blue eyes.

"You don't seem afraid of thieves," I remarked.

"It ain't a jewelry store," he said, with the curious soft sing-song intonation of the Nassau "conch."

"That's just what I was thinking it was," I said.

"I know what you mean," he replied, his lonely face lighting up as faces do at unexpected understanding in a stranger. "Of course there are some that feel that way, but they're few and far between."

"Not enough to make a fortune out of?"

"Oh! I do pretty well," he said; "I musn't complain. Money's not everything, you see, in a business like this. There's going after the things, you know. One's got to count that in, too."

I looked at him in some surprise. I had met something even rarer than the things he traded in. I had met a merchant of dreams, to whom the mere handling of his merchandise seemed sufficient profit: "There's going after the things, you know. One's got to count that in, too."

Naturally we were neck-deep in talk in a moment. I wanted to hear all he cared to tell me about "going after the things"—such "things!"—and he was nothing loth, as he took up one strange or beautiful object after another, his face aglow, and he quite evidently without a thought of doing business, and told me all about them—how and where he got them, and so forth.

"But," he said presently, encouraged by my unfeigned interest, "I should like to show you a few rarer things I have in the house, and which I wouldn't sell, or even show to everyone. If you'd honor me by taking a cup of tea we might look them over."

So we left the little store, with its door unlocked as I had found it, and a few steps brought us to a little house I had not before noticed, with a neat garden in front of it, all the garden beds symmetrically bordered with conch shells. Shells were evidently the simple-hearted fellow's mania, his revelation of the beauty of the world. Here in a neat parlor, also much decorated with shells, tea was served to us by the little girl I had first seen and an elder sister, who, I gathered, made all the lonely dreamer's family. Then, shyly pressing on me a cigar, he turned to show me the promised treasures. He also told me more of his manner of finding them, and of the long trips which he had to take in seeking them, to out-of-the-way cays and in dangerous waters.

He was showing me the last and rarest of his specimens. He had kept,

he said, the best to the last. To me, as a layman, it was not nearly so attractive as other things he had shown me—little more to my eye than a rather commonplace though pretty shell; but he explained that it was found, or had so far been found, only in one spot in the islands, a lovely, seldom-visited cay several miles to the north-east of Andros Island.

"What is it called?" I asked, for it was part of our plan for Charlie to do a little duck shooting on Andros, before we tackled the business of Tobias and the treasure.

"It's called — Cay nowadays," he answered, "but it used to be called Short Shift Island."

"Short Shift Island!" I cried in spite of myself, immediately annoyed at my lack of presence of mind.

"Certainly," he rejoined, looking a little surprised but evidently without suspicion. He was too simple and too taken up with his shell.

"It is such an odd name," I said, trying to recover myself.

"Yes! those old pirate chaps certainly did think up some of the rummest names."

"One of the pirate haunts, was it?" I queried with assumed indifference.

"Supposed to be. But one hears that of every other cay in the Bahamas. I take no stock in such yarns. My shells are all the treasure I expect to find."

"What did you call that shell?" I asked.

He told me the name, but I forgot it immediately. Of course I had asked it only for the sake of learning more precisely about Short Shift Island. He told me innocently enough just where it lay.

"Are you going after it?" he laughed.

"Oh! well," I replied, "I am going on a duck-shooting trip to Andros before it is too late."



"You Don't Seem Afraid of Thieves," I remarked.

fore long, and I thought I might drop around to your cay and pick a few of them up for you."

"It would be mighty kind of you, but they're not easy to find. I'll tell you exactly—" He went off, dear fellow, into the minutest description of the habits of —, while all the time I was eager to rush off to Charlie Webster and John Saunders and shout into their ears—as later I did at the first possible moment that evening: "I've found our missing cay! Short Shift Island is —." (I mentioned the name of a cay, which, as in the case of "Dead Man's Shoes," I am unable to divulge.)

"Maybe!" said Charlie, "maybe! We can try it. But," he added, "did you find out anything about Tobias?"

CHAPTER II.

In Which I Am Afforded Glimpses Into Futurity—Possibly Useful.

Two or three evenings before we were due to sail, at one of our snuggery conclaves, I put the question whether anyone had ever tried the diving rod for treasure in the islands. Old John nodded and said he knew the man I wanted, a half-crazy old negro back there in Grant's Town—the negro quarter spreading out into the brush behind the ridge on which the town of Nassau proper is built.

"He calls himself a 'king,'" he added, "and the natives do, I believe, regard him as the head of a certain tribe. The lads call him 'Old King Coffee'—a memory I suppose of the Ashantee war. Anyone will tell you where he lives. He has a name as a preacher—among the Holy Jumpers!—but he's getting too old to do much preaching nowadays. Go and see him for fun anyway."

So next morning I went. I had hardly been prepared for the plunge into "Darkest Africa" which I found myself taking, as leaving Government house behind, perched on the crest of its white ridge, I walked a few yards inland and entered a region where, for all its green palms, made a similar sudden impression of pervading blackness on the mind which one gets on suddenly entering a coal-mining district after traveling through fields and meadows.

"Old King Coffee" predicts an interesting future for the hero.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

MUCH NECKWEAR



Women seem to have become much addicted to wearing neckpieces of many kinds. A little journey through shops and departments that carry neckwear reveals such a world of it and such a variety of it that there must be a great demand for all kinds of neckwear. Many of the pieces are intended to replace summer furs. These include scarfs made of plushes, ostrich hons, ostrich capes and capes of marabout feathers or marabout finished with ostrich fringe. This ostrich fringe, which appears like marabout in black, white and natural color, is used in borders and bands in scarfs of gold and silver tissue.

Some of the new plushes used for scarfs do not attempt a close imitation of fur but suggest the most popular summer furs, as ermine and broad-tail and moleskin. Besides these there are some handsome satin scarfs and capes trimmed with narrow bands of real fur, shown with hats to match like the smart affair that is shown at the right of the two figures above. Rich silk tassels and silk embroidered motifs put this in a class with the handsomest furs.

Both ostrich and marabout make

beautiful capes in the style of that shown at the right of the picture. Nearly all of these are in the natural, taupe color of the feathers, but in ostrich capes and hons there is often a mixture of white and natural hues.

Ruffs made of malines in very full plaits and ruffs made of loops of wide satin ribbon are among acquaintances that find themselves returned to favor, now that everything in neckwear proves to be of interest. They are not at all difficult to make, the plaits or loops are simply stitched on to a band that lies about the neck, and they fasten with ties of narrow satin ribbon.

Small chokers and other small neckpieces in furs appear to have displaced larger neckpieces and capes for summer wear and narrow scarfs of satin, finished at the ends with fringe, prove themselves a chic novelty on women who know how to wear them well.

A Bodice of Ribbon.

The bodice made entirely of ribbon is a feature of midsummer dance frocks—combined with skirts of either net, both silk and cotton; organdie, voile, lace and georgette.

'ALL DAY' DRESSES



One-piece dresses, to be worn in place of suits in and out of doors, received a great boost during the war. When tailors became scarce and the work of making street clothes went into the hands of dressmakers in Paris, the one-piece "all-day" dress began to replace suits. With the approval of Paris upon it, this style of street dress made great headway in America and appears to have established itself. The all-day dress, as it is called, appears, together with new suits, in the early showings of fall styles, sometimes having much the appearance of a suit and sometimes wholly different from one. These two types are shown together in the picture above.

These dresses are made up in the same quiet colors and of the same materials as suits, although colors cover a wider range than are usually presented in suits, and there is more latitude in the matter of decorations.

The dress at the left of the picture simulates a suit so closely that it is misleading. It will interest the girl who must soon be outfitted for college, because it is a youthful model that will see her through the fall without a wrap and prove comfortable in cold weather with the aid of a coat.

It has the appearance of a suit with skirt and short box coat belted in. But the coat turns out to be only a bodice, with fronts lengthened below the narrow belt and disappearing at the sides under a seam in the skirt. It has a satin vest, prettily embroidered, and a few very large bone buttons emphasize its novel features. They are set along the side seams in which the jacket fronts lose themselves and on the odd lapels into which the collar lengthens. Wool velour is an ideal material for a dress of this kind.

The girl who aspires to look tall and slender should consider the long lines and simple composition of the dress at the right. The picture portrays it with so much fidelity that there is nothing that needs to be said about it. An underskirt of silk, with border of cloth, has the effect of a separate skirt, but the all-day dress is, above all things, convenient to put on, and this skirt is merely the lower part of a foundation that supports the dress. Any of the familiar and reliable wool suitings will serve to make these dresses.

Julia Stoddard