

## HOW I WAS SWINDLED.

## A Diamond Story.

"ONLY once, gentlemen," said Mr. William Henry Baker, "have I been deceived. I generally keep my eyes open and use them too. Still, I admit I was once taken in, by as dead a swindle as could be; I am not ashamed to own it. I made money by it, after all, but I was swindled.

"It was about a diamond ring. I knew the fellow who had it for many years in the way of business. He was a commercial traveller, and used always to flash this ring about when he came round on his journeys. A jeweler friend of mine, who happened to be in my office once when Mr. Blook called, asked, I remember to be allowed to examine it; and had pronounced the stones to be diamonds of the purest water, telling me afterwards the ring was worth about seventy pounds. Mr. Blook's initials were engraved inside the hoop of the ring: 'R. B. B.'; and besides that, it was a ring of peculiar and rather old-fashioned make. Indeed having once seen the ring, no one would be likely to mistake it for another. Well, Mr. Blook got into difficulties, and went so entirely to the bad, that I never saw or heard anything more of him. But about two years afterwards, whilst walking down a back street, my eye was taken by a ring exhibited in a pawnbroker's window. 'Mr. Blook's ring,' I exclaimed directly; 'I'll swear to it.' It was in a tray with a number of very seedy-looking rings, and was as discolored and dirty as they were. I went into the shop and asked to look at it. The pawnbroker, an old Jew, said yesh; I might see his rings, but he didn't know mosh about ringsh himself. They wosh unredeemed pledges,—thush what they wash—and they wosh all marked at the advanshed upon them with a very small overplus for interesh—thush all he knew.

"There was no mistake about it. It was Mr. Blook's ring, and had his initials inside. But how did the Jew get it! He would soon tell me. Referring to his book, he found that it had been pawned two years ago in the name of Smith.—Thush all he knew. Would I buy? It wosh dirt sheap—three pounds twelve; and cosht him all the monish!"

"Three pounds twelve!" I repeated, thinking he had made a mistake; for the was worth twenty times that amount!

"Well, if it was too dear he had some sheaper ones,—beautiful ringsh, he dare shay,—but he knew so little about ringsh, you shee, exshept that he always advanshed too mosh monish on them.—One couldn't understand everything in his bishness, you shee, from flat-fionsh to diamondsh."

"I bought the ring, after beating the Jew down half a crown, partly to prevent his suspecting its value, and partly—well knowing the disposition of the people—to oblige him.

"I wore the new purchase about, with no little inward satisfaction at having bettered a Jew at a bargain. In my own mind, I accounted for its coming into his possession somewhat in this way: Mr. Blook must have sold the ring when in difficulties to some one else. It was quite certain that Mr. Blook had not pawned it at the Jew's or Jew would have known its value. The ring must, then, have either been lost by, or stolen from, a subsequent possessor; and the finder, or thief (whatever it happened to be), being ignorant of its value, had taken it to the Jew, who knew no better.

"There is a certain commercial club in our town, which I occasionally visit.—The members are of a somewhat lively disposition; generally given to indulge in that playful style of banter popularly known as 'chaff.' My diamond ring came in for a good share of it. I can stand chaff as well as most men; but I put it to you, if, when you know very well your brilliants are real, it isn't a little annoying for the chaff of a whole body of people to assume the character of a persistent disbelief in the value of your jewelry? For instance, the waiter answers the bell.

"Did any gentleman ring?"

"O, yes," one of the members would retort; "it was the gentleman with the paste diamonds."

"Again, there are kinds of sham brilliants known as Irish diamonds and Isle of Wight Diamonds. The club (not one or two members, but the whole body) refused to recognize such distinctions, and insisted on designating the whole class of shams as 'Baker's Diamonds.' 'Baker's Paste,' my gems were also denominated. They actually sent me by post a circular of 'Some body's Baking Powder,' adding to it at the end, where it says the public

is respectfully cautioned against spurious imitations, 'but more particularly against a spurious preparation to deceive the unwary, known as "Baker's Paste." Now, after two or three weeks, this became tiresome. Still, I took no notice, and effected not to think the remarks intended for me.

"I hardly know what made me go and call on my friend, the jeweler. It was not that I had any doubt of the genuineness of the diamonds, especially as he was the very man who had before valued Mr. Blook's ring at seventy pounds.—But it had been so dinned into my head they were false that I wanted just a formal confirmation of the estimate he had previously formed of their worth.

"O yes," said my friend, the jeweler; "I recognize the ring again directly.—Want to know what it's worth?"—he put it in the scales.—"Well,—h'm—about seven-and-twenty shillings for old gold."

"Eh," said I, as pale as a turnip.—"Why, didn't you tell me it was worth seventy pounds?"

"Yes," he answered; "when it had diamonds in it—not when it was paste."

"Talking the matter over, the jeweler suggested, that on Mr. Blook getting into difficulties, the first thing he did was to sell the diamonds out of his ring, and get their places supplied with paste, whilst finally, he had pawned it himself with the Jew, as a paste ring.

"Well, William Henry," said I to myself, "the Jew has jewed you, and the club has chaffed you, and you may consider yourself trod upon, after the manner of speaking."

"But the worm will turn.

"Did the jeweler let out diamonds on trial?" I asked.

"He did.

"Would he have a certain alteration, which I suggested made in my ring in a fortnight's time?"

"He would.

"And keep it secret?"

"Certainly,—business was business."

"For the whole of that fortnight I never went near the club; that was probably the reason why my appearance at the club-dinner was greeted with such lively sallies about Baker's Paste. One would be wag recommended me, whilst helping a tart, 'to keep my fingers out of the pastry.' Believing him to intend some obscure allusion to the gems on my little finger, I thought it time to open fire.

"Gentlemen," said I, "for some weeks I have listened to casual observations in which the name of Baker has been unworthily associated with paste and pastry, but have refrained from making any remark, having been firmly persuaded they could only apply to the industrious tradesmen employed in the manufacture of home-baked bread. (Oh, oh!) It now occurs to me that such remarks were intended in allusion to the ring I wear,—a ring,—I take this opportunity of informing you,—which, unlike the wits who have amused themselves at its expense, is indebted for its brilliancy to nature."

"They hooted me; they heaped opprobrious epithets on the name of Baker; they laughed and talked me down.

"I'll bet him five pounds it's paste."

"So I will," said another. "And I!"

"And I."

"So said eleven of them.

"Really, gentlemen," said I, "I am sorry you should take the matter so much in earnest. All I can tell you is, I believe my ring to be a diamond ring, and this, notwithstanding I will freely admit I only paid a very small sum for it."

"They laughed and hooted me still more at this admission. They said that settled the question, and that it was paste.

"I told them I didn't think it was.

"Well, would I bet?"

"I would rather not.

"More hooting.

"At length, very reluctantly, I overcame my scruples. The name of Baker is a name too closely allied to the gentle bred (arms, four loaves, ppr—sejant, quartered—crest, the doe, *levant*) to allow it to be wantonly sullied. I bet.

"We adjourned to the jeweler's.

abroad: it even reached the little back street where the pawn-broker lived. You should have seen him.

"Real shtones! O my heart? Sheventyfive poundish—dead robbery—clean gone. O my bootshe and bones! not to know that folkshe do shometimes come and pawn real diamondsh for pashte, sho as to have less interesh to pay for taking care of their ringsh." O my blessed heart, only think of it!"

"He came to me. He grovelled, and wriggled, and twisted himself before me. He prayed me to sell him his ring again.

"O my tere Mishter Baker, you musht shell it to me, or I shall be a ruined old manshe. The time wash not out, and Mishter Smith has come to redeem it, and he shays that it wosh a legacy, and if he doesh nor get it by Shaturday next he will ruin me—ch-help him, he will.—O Mishter Baker, think of it; twenty poundish—all in gold—sholid money.—Now, my tere what do you shay? therssh a good mansh!"

"What did I say? Could I turn a deaf ear to the distress of the old man? There are people who might do it, gentlemen, but not people of the name of Baker, not W. H. Baker. I certainly did ask him for more money. We compromised it at last at twenty-two ten, which he paid, part in sixpences and coppers, and owes me four-pence-halfpenny to this day.

"Twenty-two, nine and sevenpence-halfpenny, and fifty-five pounds, is seventy-seven, nine, seven and a half. It just paid for the real diamonds; for I bought the ones I had previously hired of the jeweler, and had them set in a ring the *fac-simile* of Mr. Blook's except that the initials inside are W. H. B.

"That was the *only* time I was ever swindled gentlemen," Mr. Baker concluded.

## Ivory—Where it Comes From.

THE greater share of the ivory of commerce is made from the tusks of elephants; but the hippopotamus, the walrus, the narwhal, and one or two other large animals, contribute the supply.—The quality of the ivory procured from other animals is not equal to that of the elephant. There is, however, a great difference in the fineness and value of the tusks of the latter. Those of the large elephants, on the West coast of Africa, are of superior texture, and very transparent.

The number of animals slaughtered for their ivory is incalculable, and it is estimated that over four thousand persons annually fall victims to this hazardous pursuit. England, alone, yearly consumes one million pounds of ivory, the greater part of which is used in the large cutlery establishment of Sheffield. This quantity, at the lowest estimate, requires the destruction of over twenty thousand elephants. Ivory must be properly seasoned before it is fit for use. The straightest tusks, and those freest from cracks, are considered the most profitable. An elephant's tusk varies in size from two to ten feet in length, and from twenty to one hundred and eighty pounds in weight.

The principal supply of ivory is obtained from Calcutta, Bombay, Singapore, Madras, and other East India ports.

Tusks are usually imported their full length, and are afterwards cut into smaller pieces by the workers in this material. In their natural state, the tusks of elephants are covered with a thin rind, and are generally hollow for a considerable portion of their length.

Immense deposits of ivory are found in Siberia, imbedded in the ice and sand. During severe tempests these selections are cast up by the waves of the sea, and the inhabitants who live on that inhospitable coast derive great benefit from gathering up the fossil remains thus thrown up by the elements. This fossil ivory is the tusks of an extinct species of mammoth, and is exported in large quantities to China and Europe. From this prolific source Russia has obtained her largest supply for many years. The ivory hunters gather their supplies in Summer, and in Winter travel on sleds, drawn by dogs, in quest of a market. Numerous caravans loaded with this precious merchandise take their way together along the same route. This harvesting of fossil ivory has been going on for five hundred years, but now appears to be as inexhaustible as ever.

The tusks of the mammoth weigh from fifty to two hundred pounds, and are used by manufacturers as a substitute for African ivory. It is said to be of a very superior quality

## OLD DUGOOD'S DOG.

OLD DUGOOD came into the bar-room the other day and took a seat among the idlers there assembled. The dog question was under discussion, and after listening to a few wonderful stories, Dugood chipped in as follows:

"Now boys, you may talk as you please about the smart things ye hev done, but I can just tell you somethin' that will lay over all yer stories.

"I don't 'spect you'll believe a man when he's tellin' ye's truth, but this is as true as the Gospel.

"You's all know that big yallar dog of mine? Well, that dog is the smartest dog in the drove. He's an intellectual dog, he is. Now, I know you won't believe me, but that ar' dog's been larnin' to sing."

"Learning to sing? Get out!" interrupted one of the listeners.

"Yes, sir, that's so, every word of it; and I'll jest tell you how it was. 'Tother night he had singin' at our house. You know our Sal's been goin' to the singin' schools lately, and she and other gals, and the young fellars what go hev got so they can squawk like the very blazes.—And so most every night they meet at somebody's house and practice.

"Well, the other night there was a whole crew on 'em at our house, and they had a big time. Such a screechin' and a squallin' and a bellerin' you never heard of in all your lives. You'd hev thought that a whole gang of toments had broken loose and tacklen 'Squire Jones' bull, and were jest hevin' it hot and heavy. Well, that ar' dog was in the room while they wor singin' and he was the most interested creature I ever saw. He watched 'em beatin' time and going through their manoeuvres, an' 'peared to understand 'em as well as they did. At first they sang lively tunes you know; and patty soon, when they got tired of these, they commenced on salms and hymns and other serious things. The dog 'peared to like these better than he did the lively tunes, and set as close up to 'em as he could while they sung.

"At last the gals coaxed Jim Blowhard to sing 'Old Hundred.' You know what an old tearin' bass voice Jim has. When he commenced, the dog began to get dreadfully interested. He pointed his nose right up at the ceilin', and every time Jim came to the low notes he'd sorter howl!"

"Who? Jim?"

"No, blast you, the dog. Blowhard he sang away for awhile, and jest then he turned round and kinder bit his hind legs."

"Gosh a mighty! What, Blowhard?"

"No, you all-fired fool you, the dog of course. Then says I to the old woman—'Nancy Jane, sez I, 'you jest bet your boots that dog's got somethin' in his head.' And Nancy Jane, sez she, 'You git out—I shan't do it.' Just then the dog picked up somethin' in his mouth and bolted out of the room quicker'n a streak. I didn't pay much attention to it and nobody else noticed.

"When Blowhard finished, all the gals crowded round him and commenced flatterin' him, when suddenly we all heard a noise. It was the orfullest mixed up noise ever anybody heard. Everybody was scared nearly to death. Six of the gals fainted away in Blowhard's arms all at once. They wor hangin' on to him from all sides, like string beans to a pole. Blowhard sot still for a moment or two; it was more huggin' than he could stand, and he wilted right off his seat onto the floor and tried to crawl under the sofa.—Before he got mor'n his head and shoulders under, the gals all came to and caught him by the feet and tried to pull him out. Blowhard held on to the sofa legs and bellowed murder; and the gals screeched, and some on 'em ran around the room nineteen times in a minnit before they could anything else to faint faint onto."

"I picked up a candle and rushed into the back yard with two or three of the spunkiest men, and what do you think that intellectual old dog was doin'? He'd got a music book spread out before him, and was beatin' time with his tail on a tin-pan and a howlin' 'Old Hundred' like all possessed!"

It chanced one gloomy day in the month of December, that a good-humored Irishman applied to a merchant to discount a bill of exchange for him at rather a long, though not an unusual date; and the merchant having casually remarked that the bill had a great many days to run. "That's true," replied the Irishman, "but then, my honey you don't consider how short the days are at this time of the year."

## A Bright Clown.

Henry IV., of France, was fond of playing practical jokes on his subjects, but he sometimes found bright peasants who were quite ready to take off the joke on their side. Here is a specimen:

Henry IV., of France, being out one day hunting, lost his party, and was riding alone. Observing a country fellow standing upon a gate, apparently on the watch, he asked him what he was looking for.

"I've come here," says he, "to see the king."

"Get up behind me," replied the search, "and I will soon conduct you to the place where you will be sure to see him."

Hodge, without any scruples, mounted, but as they were riding along he put the sagacious question:

"They tell me he's got a power of lords with him; how may a body know which is him?"

The king replied that he would be able to distinguish him by seeing all his attendants take off their hats, while he himself remained uncovered.

Soon after they joined the hunt, when all the circle, as may well be expected, were greatly surprised to see the king so oddly attended.

When they were arrived, his Majesty, turning to the clown, asked him if he thought he could tell which was the king.

"I don't know," said he; "but faith, it must be one of us two, for we've both got our hats on."

## His Dream.

THE EMPEROR CHARLES V. having one day lost himself in the heat of the chase, and wandering in the forest far from his train, after much fatigue in trying to find a route, came at last to a solitary ale-house, where he entered to refresh himself. On coming in he saw four men, whose mien presaged him no good; he, however, sat down and called for something. These men pretended to sleep, one of them rose, and, approaching the emperor, said he had dreamt that he took his hat, and accordingly took it off. The second saying he had dreamt he had taken his coat, took that also. The third, with a little prologue, took his waistcoat. And the fourth, with much politeness, said he hoped there would be no objection to his feeling his pockets; and, seeing a chain of gold about his neck, whence hung his hunting horn, was about to take that too, but the emperor said, "Stop, my friend, I dare say you cannot blow it; I will teach you." So, putting the horn to his mouth, he blew repeatedly and loud.—His people who searched for him, heard the sound, and entering the cottage, were surprised to see him in such a garb.—"Here are four fellows," said the emperor, "who have dreamt what they please: I must now dream in my turn." Sitting down and shutting his eyes for a little while, he then started up, saying, "I have dreamt that I saw four thieves hanged;" and immediately ordered his dream to be fulfilled, the master of the inn, being compelled to be their executioner.

## A Cool Thief.

A COOLER pickpocket than is spoken of in Stuttgart, was never seen. He was an obsequious little man, who offered his services to his victim, to show him the lions of the city, but the other refused the offer. The officious personage, however, was not offended, but politely asked him what o'clock it was.—The other answered that he did not know, as his watch had stopped, and continued his walk toward the Museum of Natural History, which he entered. He had not been there many minutes before the same person came up to him, with the air of an old acquaintance, and offered him a pinch of snuff. This Mr. W—— declined, saying he was no snuff-taker, and walked away; but some minutes after, having a presentiment of something being wrong, he felt for his snuff-box, but instead of it a piece of paper in his pocket, on which was written, "As you are no snuff-taker, you do not require a box." He thought the logic of his unknown acquaintance rather impertinent, and resolved to bear his loss like a philosopher; but what was his amazement when, a few moments after, he discovered that his watch had also disappeared, and in his other pocket was another note, in the following words:—"As your watch does not tell the hour, it would be better at the watchmaker's than in your pocket." It is unnecessary to say that he never heard any further tidings of the two articles.