



THE CAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY

JOEL (MADONNE) HARRIS

Copyright, 1896, by Bachelier, Johnson and Bachelier.

SYNOPSIS.

Tooq Parmalee has killed the girl whom he has been courting successfully. Both are residents of Hatch's clearing, in Georgia. The author remarks the kind of an explanation, you go to Hatch's clearing and inquire for Mrs. Pruet.

PART III.

As may be supposed, John Wesley Millrons wasn't feeling very well when he rode off leaving Loorany sitting close to Hildreth of Hall, under the big umbrella. And yet, he wasn't feeling very much out of sorts, either.

The weather comes up and shakes with the mountain. "You are still here," it says. "Oh, yes," replies the mountain. "Well, I'm going off and warm up," the weather says. "I'll get warm here," the mountain replies.

So John Wesley Millrons, as he rode home, laughed to himself at the thought that he was the mountain and Loorany the weather. It was an uncouth thought that couldn't be worked out logically, but it pleased John Wesley to hug the idea to his bosom, logic or no logic.

After the camp-meeting Hildreth of Hall became a familiar figure on Tray mountain, especially in the neighborhood of Hatch's Clearing. As the year

1863 was a period of war, you will wonder how such a strapping young fellow as Hildreth of Hall kept out of the confederate army, since there was such a strenuous demand for food for the guns, big and little. The truth is, it was a puzzle to a good many people about that time, but there was no secret at all about it. The Hildreths, both of Hall and Habersham, had a good deal of political influence. John Wesley, too, continued to take things easy. He made no show of elation over the absence of Hildreth of Hall, and never inquired about it. He had never ceased to visit Hildreth of Hall, but he went no other, now that his rival had disappeared from the field, than he had gone before. As Mrs. Pruet remarked, he was the same old John Wesley in fair weather as he was in foul. Patient and willing, and good-humored, for all his seriousness, he went along attending to his own business and helping everybody else who needed help. Thus in a way he was very popular, but somehow those who liked him least had a pity for him that was almost contemptuous. John Wesley paid no attention to such things. He just rode along as Mrs. Pruet said, "as if he were a horse."

It was the same when, one day in the spring of 1864, Hildreth of Hall came riding up the mountain driving a pair of handsome horses to a top buggy.

no fancy for the young man. She positively rejected his overtures, and so he made arrangements to put up at old man Millrons'—of all places in the world. It was such a queer story that John Wesley used to go behind the corn crib and chuckle over it by the hour, especially on Sundays when he had nothing to do.

It was plain to everybody except John Wesley Millrons that Loorany was perfectly crazy about Hildreth of Hall, but a good many, impressed by Mrs. Pruet's prejudice against the young man, had their doubts as to whether he was crazy about Loorany. On the other hand, there were just as many, including the majority of the young people, who were certain, as they said, that Hildreth of Hall loved Loorany Parmalee every bit and grain as hard as Loorany loved him. Between the two friendly factions you could hear all the facts in regard to the case and still never get at the rights of it.

Once Mrs. Pruet took John Wesley to task in a kindly fashion for not knowing you was so queer, John Wesley told I send you the road to Hildreth of Hall—an Loorany a standin' right spang in the middle walth to see which an' ad git to 'er fast. Oh, yes, John Wesley, you er 'eben about the cleverest feller in the world."

"How come, Mrs. Pruet?" he inquired blandly. "Why, because you was so quick to give way to that chap from below."

"Shuske! that feller hain't a botherin' me," exclaimed John Wesley. "Oh, I hope not," said Mrs. Pruet; "the Lord knows I'd. Fer of he ain't a botherin' you, I know mighty well he ain't a botherin' Loorany. Ef you could a-see 'em a swingin' in the bull's-eye, as I hope you do, before she wouldn't a thought Loorany was bothered much. Well, not much!" Mrs. Pruet added sarcastically.

"I seed 'em," remarked John Wesley, chuckling. "You did?" said Mrs. Pruet. She was both surprised and indignant. "Lor, yassum! I jest sot up an' laid my eyes on 'em, and I think he kaze he's got his arm 'round Loorany that she's done his'n! I laughed so I was afeared they'd hear me."

Mrs. Pruet said afterwards that her heart jumped into her throat when she heard John Wesley talking in such a strain, for the idea flashed in her mind that he was distracted—and it so impressed her that for one brief moment she was overcome by fear.

"Well," she said, trying to turn the matter off lightly, "when you see a fellow w' his arm 'round a gal an' she's not dotin' on 'im, it's no mighty long tell the weddin'."

"Yassum," responded John Wesley, still chuckling. "It may be so w' some folks, but not when the gal is Loorany Parmalee. No, ma'am! You jest wait."

"Oh, it hain't no trouble to me to wait," said Mrs. Pruet; "but what'd I who's standin' in your shoes?"

"You'd make yourself comfortable, these like I'm doin'," remarked John Wesley. Mrs. Pruet was so much disturbed that she told her husband about it, and suggested that he look into the matter to the extent of making such inquiries as a man can make. But Jerd shook his head and snapped his big fingers.

Matters went on in this way until late in 1865, and then there came a time when Hildreth of Hall, ceased to visit Hatch's Clearing. Some said she had been "conscripted into the war," as Hatch's Clearing was said he had been appointed to another office that took up his time and attention. But whatever the cause of his absence was, Loorany seemed to be satisfied. She went about as gay as a lark, and as spry as a ground squirrel. John Wesley, too, continued to take things easy. He made no show of elation over the absence of Hildreth of Hall, and never inquired about it. He had never ceased to visit Hildreth of Hall, but he went no other, now that his rival had disappeared from the field, than he had gone before. As Mrs. Pruet remarked, he was the same old John Wesley in fair weather as he was in foul. Patient and willing, and good-humored, for all his seriousness, he went along attending to his own business and helping everybody else who needed help. Thus in a way he was very popular, but somehow those who liked him least had a pity for him that was almost contemptuous. John Wesley paid no attention to such things. He just rode along as Mrs. Pruet said, "as if he were a horse."

It was the same when, one day in the spring of 1864, Hildreth of Hall came riding up the mountain driving a pair of handsome horses to a top buggy.

He wore a gray uniform, and the coat had a long tail to it—a sure sign he was an officer of some kind. For Jerd Pruet had seen just such coats worn by the officers in the village below. To be sure, there ought to have been some kind of a mark on the sleeves or shoulders; but no matter about that; nobody but officers could wear long-tailed coats. That point was settled with much argument.

And the buggy was new or had been newly varnished, for the spokes show in the sun, and the sides of the body glistened like glass. What of that? Well, a good deal, you may be sure; for some people can put two and two together as well as other people, and the folks on the mountain hadn't been living for nothing. What of that, indeed! Two fine horses and a shiny top-buggy meant only one thing, and that was a wedding.

Everybody was certain of that except John Wesley Millrons. When Mrs. Pruet twitted him with this overwhelming evidence he had the same old answer ready: "You all these wait."

"Well, you hain't got long to wait," said Mrs. Pruet. "You reckon?" exclaimed John Wesley, with pretended astonishment. Then he chuckled and went on his way, apparently happy and unconcerned.

Hildreth of Hall, remained in the neighborhood about a week, and was with Loorany Parmalee pretty much all the time, except when he was asleep. They took long buggy rides together, and everything seemed to be getting along swimmingly. But one morning early Hildreth of Hall, harnessed up his horses with his own hands and went off down the road leading to Clarksville.

It was noticed after that that Loorany was not as gay and as spry as she had been. In fact, the women folk could see that she was not the same girl at all. She used to go and sit in Mrs. Pruet's porch and watch the road, and sometimes her mind would be so far away that she would have to be asked the same question twice before she'd make any answer. And she had a way of sighing that Mrs. Pruet didn't like at all. You know how peculiar some people are when they are fond of anybody. Well, that was the way with Mrs. Pruet.

Nearly two months after Hildreth of Hall, went away with his two fine horses and his shiny top-buggy, Tray mountain got into a queer state of news. The word was that conscript officers were coming up after some of the men, both old and young, who were of the lawful age. The news was brought by a son of Widow Parvis Jerd Pruet's sister, who lived within a mile of Clarksville. She had gone to town with butter and eggs to exchange for some factory thread—"I truck," Mrs. Pruet called it—and she heard it from old man Hathaway, who was a particular friend of Jerd Pruet's.

Word reached the mountain just in time, too, for within thirty-six hours four horsemen came riding along the road and stopped at Mrs. Pruet's. And who should be leading them, but Hildreth of Hall! Mrs. Pruet saw this much when she peeped through a crack in the door, and she was so taken aback that she might have knocked her down with a feather. But in an instant she was as mad as fire.

"Hello, Mrs. Pruet!" says Hildreth of Hall. "Where's Jerd?" "And who may Jerd be?" inquired Mrs. Pruet, placidly. The young man's face fell at this, but he said with a bold voice: "Why, don't you know me, Mrs. Pruet?"

"I might 'a' seed you before, but folks is constant a-comin' an' a-truckin' they pass up the road an' down the road an' then they pass out'n my mind."

"Well you haven't forgotten me, I know," in Hildreth of Hall. "Is that so, now?" remarked Mrs. Pruet, with just the faintest show of interest. "It pears to me we hearn you was dead. What's your will and pleasure w' me, Mister Hall?"

The unaccountable air with which Mrs. Pruet mislaid the young man's name was as effectual as a blow. He lost his composure, and turned almost helplessly to his companions. If he expected sympathy he missed it. One of them laughed loudly and cried out to the others: "Well, we have to call him Bowhead. Why, he declared by everything I rood and bad that he was just as chummy with those folks as their own

kin. And now, right at the beginnin', they don't even know his name."

"Where's your husband?" inquired Hildreth of Hall. "If he don't know me he'll be before the day's over."

"He may know you better'n I do," said Mrs. Pruet, "but I hardly reckon he does, because I'd mos' likely 'a' byern on it."

"Where is he?" insisted the young man. "Who? of my man? Oh, him an' a whole bunch of the boys took their guns an' went off to 'ards Hillman's spur bright an' early this mornin'."

"Well, you are so brass about it, we'll go and see the young lady. Come on, boys."

"Come on," said Hildreth of Hall in a low voice. "The horses are all right. These chaps don't steal. Come on; that house is full of men."

They turned away from Mrs. Pruet's porch and went on their way, apparently happy and unconcerned.

Hildreth of Hall had been telling his companions what a lively place (considering all the circumstances) Hatch's Clearing was, and this added to his embarrassment and increased his irritation. So that you may well believe he was neither gay nor good humored when, after passing several miles, he came to the Millrons', where he had been in the habit of making himself free and familiar.

Everything was as grim and silent as the grave, and John Wesley sat on the fence as grim and as silent as any of the surroundings.

"There's one man, anyway," remarked one of Hildreth's companions. "Be blanked if I don't feel like going up and shaking hands with him—that is, if he's alive." For John Wesley neither turned his head nor stirred.

"Hi, you!" called John Wesley, without moving. "I'm going to put our horses under the shed yonder and give them a handful of fodder," Hildreth of Hall declared. John Wesley made no reply to this. "Did you hear what I said?" asked the young man, somewhat petulantly.

"I hearn you," answered John Wesley. Whereupon Hildreth of Hall spat his horse through the open top gate, followed by his companions. They took off saddles and bridles, made some halters out of plow lines, and gave their horses a heavy feed of fodder. Then they returned to the house, and found John Wesley sitting where they had left him, and in precisely the same position.

"Can we get dinner?" asked Hildreth of Hall. "I reckon not," replied John Wesley. "Nobody at home but me an' the tom cat, an' we're locked out. Maybe you can git dinner at Parmalee's when the time comes. They're all at home. But it hain't high dinner time yet."

John Wesley straightened himself out and came off the fence with an apologetic smile on his face. "Ef these gentlemen here don't mind, I'd like to have a word w' you, sorter private like." He looked at Hildreth of Hall, still smiling.

For answer, Hildreth of Hall walked to a mountain oak a hundred feet away, followed by John Wesley. "What do you want?" "I s'pose you've come up to marry the gal?" suggested John Wesley. "I have not," replied Hildreth of Hall.

"I mean Loorany Parmalee," said John Wesley, pulling a small piece of bark from the tree. "It matters not to me who you mean," remarked Hildreth. "I just wanted to find out," John Wesley went on, fitting the piece of

without turning his head. "The fact of the business is, gentlemen, they won't marry one on you shoot. A bulldog'll fight, but he let him foller sheep-killin' houn' to the pasture, an' a bench-legged fice can run 'im. You all mayn't believe it, but it's the fact-truth."

But John Wesley would have been shot all the same if the thought hadn't flashed on Hildreth's mind that the house was full of armed mountaineers. This stayed his hand—not only stayed his hand but, apparently, put him in a good-humor. He followed John Wesley and saw the young lady. Come on, boys.

"What about the horses?" asked one of the men. "Come on," said Hildreth of Hall in a low voice. "The horses are all right. These chaps don't steal. Come on; that house is full of men."

"When we were out of sight, John Wesley went into the lot and looked at the horses. He was so much interested in their comfort that he loosed their halters. Then he cast a glance upwards and chuckled. A wasp nest as big as a man's hat was hanging beneath the rafters, teeming with these irritable insects. John Wesley went outside, climbed up to the top of the shed, counted the clapboards both ways, planted his feet above the wasps' nest, and with one quick stamp of the foot knocked a hole in the rotten plank. The noise startled the horses, the wasps swarmed down on them, and the next instant they were going down the road like mad. They were hurrying, squealing, whickering, kicking and running like mad.

When they were out of hearing John Wesley went into the house by a back door, got his rifle and went off through the woods.

Hildreth of Hall and his companions must have had a cool reception at Parmalee's for in about an hour they were back in the city and were alarmed, that feeling was increased ten-fold at finding their horses gone. Their saddles and bridles were where they had left them, but the horses were gone. Hildreth of Hall, climbed the fence instead of coming out near the house, skirted through the woods, and entered the road near Mrs. Pruet's, moving as rapidly as men who are not running. A half mile farther the road turned to the left and led through a ravine.

On one bank, hid by the bushes, John Wesley sat with his rifle across his lap, lost in meditation. Occasionally he plucked a rotten twig and crumbled it in his fingers. After awhile he heard voices. He raised himself on his right knee and placed his rifle against an additional support. Then he raised his gun, struck the stock lightly with the palm of his hand to make the powder burn, and held himself in sight Hildreth of Hall was slightly in advance of the others.

John Wesley slowly raised his rifle and it was about to be fired, only a level with his eyes when he saw a flash of fire on the opposite bank, and heard the sharp crack of a rifle. He was so taken by surprise that he raised himself in the bushes and looked about him. Hildreth of Hall had tumbled forward in a heap at the flash, and the other men jumped over his body and ran like rabbits. They held a hurried consultation, and Hildreth of Hall, who was not lifted to the level of the tree top they were out of hearing.

John Wesley crossed the road and went to the other side. There he saw Hildreth of Hall leaning against a tree, breathing hard. At her feet lay a rifle. "You s'plid my game," he remarked. "E'en about," he replied. She threw her head back and breathed hard. John Wesley picked up the rifle and examined it. "Was you gwine to kill him?" Loorany asked. "Well, sorter that away, I reckon."

"Did you have the notion that I'd marry you afterwards?" "So I want a-gwine to ax you," said John Wesley. "Will you take me now, jest as I am?"

"Why, I reckon," he replied, in a matter-of-fact tone. "In course of time a boy was born to Loorany Millrons, and the event made her husband a widower, but the child was not known by any other name than that of Tooq Parmalee—and Tooq was the chap that shot his sweetheart.

All these things, as Mrs. Pruet said, were the cause of the difficulty you read about in the newspapers the other day. "Terrible the generations," she added, "an' sin's arm is long enough to reach through 'em all."

"YOU SPLID MY GAME, HE REMARKED."

In their comfort that he loosed their halters. Then he cast a glance upwards and chuckled. A wasp nest as big as a man's hat was hanging beneath the rafters, teeming with these irritable insects. John Wesley went outside, climbed up to the top of the shed, counted the clapboards both ways, planted his feet above the wasps' nest, and with one quick stamp of the foot knocked a hole in the rotten plank. The noise startled the horses, the wasps swarmed down on them, and the next instant they were going down the road like mad. They were hurrying, squealing, whickering, kicking and running like mad.

When they were out of hearing John Wesley went into the house by a back door, got his rifle and went off through the woods.

Hildreth of Hall and his companions must have had a cool reception at Parmalee's for in about an hour they were back in the city and were alarmed, that feeling was increased ten-fold at finding their horses gone. Their saddles and bridles were where they had left them, but the horses were gone. Hildreth of Hall, climbed the fence instead of coming out near the house, skirted through the woods, and entered the road near Mrs. Pruet's, moving as rapidly as men who are not running. A half mile farther the road turned to the left and led through a ravine.

On one bank, hid by the bushes, John Wesley sat with his rifle across his lap, lost in meditation. Occasionally he plucked a rotten twig and crumbled it in his fingers. After awhile he heard voices. He raised himself on his right knee and placed his rifle against an additional support. Then he raised his gun, struck the stock lightly with the palm of his hand to make the powder burn, and held himself in sight Hildreth of Hall was slightly in advance of the others.

John Wesley slowly raised his rifle and it was about to be fired, only a level with his eyes when he saw a flash of fire on the opposite bank, and heard the sharp crack of a rifle. He was so taken by surprise that he raised himself in the bushes and looked about him. Hildreth of Hall had tumbled forward in a heap at the flash, and the other men jumped over his body and ran like rabbits. They held a hurried consultation, and Hildreth of Hall, who was not lifted to the level of the tree top they were out of hearing.

John Wesley crossed the road and went to the other side. There he saw Hildreth of Hall leaning against a tree, breathing hard. At her feet lay a rifle. "You s'plid my game," he remarked. "E'en about," he replied. She threw her head back and breathed hard. John Wesley picked up the rifle and examined it. "Was you gwine to kill him?" Loorany asked. "Well, sorter that away, I reckon."

"Did you have the notion that I'd marry you afterwards?" "So I want a-gwine to ax you," said John Wesley. "Will you take me now, jest as I am?"

"Why, I reckon," he replied, in a matter-of-fact tone. "In course of time a boy was born to Loorany Millrons, and the event made her husband a widower, but the child was not known by any other name than that of Tooq Parmalee—and Tooq was the chap that shot his sweetheart.

All these things, as Mrs. Pruet said, were the cause of the difficulty you read about in the newspapers the other day. "Terrible the generations," she added, "an' sin's arm is long enough to reach through 'em all."

THE CELEBRATED DIAMOND TRAIL

Vain Efforts to Stop Smuggling from Canada.

UNCLE SAM'S AGENTS PUZZLED

Although the Smugglers Take Well-Known Routes, It Seems Almost Impossible for the Treasury Officials to Convict Them.

From the New York Sun.

United States Commissioner Shields discharged from custody a few days ago Alvin S. Strassburger, a Malden Lane diamond dealer who was charged with attempting to bribe James H. Hefferman, a United States deputy collector of customs stationed at Montreal. The dismissal of the charge was made entirely upon the weakness of the testimony offered by the complaining witnesses and the failure of the case marks one more futile effort in the endeavor that United States Treasury agents have been making for over twelve years to prevent the flooding of the country with smuggled jewelry by way of what has become known to them as "the Great Diamond Trail."

The failure of Hefferman's case caused not little amusement among the older government agents, nearly all of whom have had experience with this line of frauds upon the customs revenue, and nearly all of whom have seen their best laid plans for the capture of smugglers go wrong. Hefferman who is stationed at Montreal for the special purpose of protecting the customs revenue on the northern frontier, has been convinced that a man named Baxter, who was making frequent trips between Montreal and this city, was engaged in diamond smuggling. He followed Baxter to his city and to the place of business of Louis Strassburger & Co., dealers in diamonds at 18 Malden Lane. There he saw Baxter twice from his post, at a waiting containing twenty-two small diamonds, the wallet the officer possessed himself of, but he did not arrest Baxter. It was at this point, Hefferman says, that Strassburger advised him to settle the matter. The official testimony was so unsatisfactory that Commissioner Shields discharged Strassburger, and doubts are expressed whether the stones seized by Hefferman can be held.

FEW CATCHES MADE.

An occasional brilliant seizure of smuggled jewels by Treasury officers always gets into the newspapers, but the records of the Treasury department are full of the history of months and even years spent by the agents of the government agents in effort to locate and convict diamond smugglers, and nearly every case has ended exactly as this latest endeavor of Hefferman's. For years thousands of dollars' worth of gems have come into the United States without paying duty, and by far the greatest number have come by way of the Plattsburgh route. The government devoted thousands of dollars and their best energies to trapping smugglers only to fail, and today the older agents fight shy in detail of this class of work, and look upon attempts to catch men thrown away. To the younger time in the service there is always a temptation to take up this work in addition to the story of making a brilliant capture the seizing officer gets 25 per cent. of the value of the goods seized, when they are forfeited and sold. Diamonds are staple, and when sold at auction, generally fetch some where near their value. Urged by these considerations, the officers new to the service enter upon their investigations with ardor and zeal, only to find themselves up against insurmountable obstacles at the end.

The key of the whole situation is found in the fact that diamonds are on the free list of the Canadian tariff schedule. Under the Canadian customs regulations the importer is presumed to make a declaration of his imports, whether free or otherwise, but this rule is not rigidly enforced as regards goods free of duty, and many importers of precious stones take advantage of his laxity. The diamond dealers in this city have brokers in London, Paris, Vienna, and Amsterdam who purchase from them regularly. By far the greatest number of the purchasing houses are located in Paris. Dealers in this city who make a business of evading the customs laws and the duty have a regular system of running their goods into the country. The jewels are sent to Montreal by parcel post, and held at the post office, generally for three days the agent or the purchaser or consignee in this city secures them, and takes what seems to him the best and safest method of running them across the border. In the long run the smugglers have found the shortest and most direct route the safest, although they must run the gauntlet of the customs house at Plattsburgh, once in ten years the customs force on the New York frontier has been greatly strengthened. In ten years there have been but a dozen notable seizures of gems smuggled through Canada into the United States.

THE HOWELL CASE.

In 1885-6 the Treasury authorities made a determined effort to stop this smuggling of diamonds by way of the Montreal postoffice, and the Canadian customs officials extended to this Government every aid in their power. The case was placed in the hands of Special Agent F. D. Howells, now dead, who was a big, broad-shouldered, energetic fellow of great courage and considerable detective skill. A special agent attached to the New York office with a wide acquaintance among Malden Lane diamonds was detailed to work up the case in this city. One diamond importing firm, with branches in London and Paris, was then doing an extensive business in precious stones and underbidding its competitors. Reputable importers who paid their duties suffered greatly from the competition of firms which smuggled half their stock and evaded the 10 per cent. duty, and they were always willing to aid the Government with any information obtainable. From these firms and from special agents stationed in Europe, information came that the diamond firm referred to was consigning large quantities of precious stones to Montreal. The agent of the firm was followed to the city by Howells, who visited the postoffice and saw him receive a package. It was consigned to the firm, was "declared," and was said to contain precious stones valued at \$20,000.

Certain that the agent would leave for New York, Howells watched the outgoing train, and entered the sleeping car for New York. Howells, who expressed to find his man the only other occupant. As the train left Plattsburgh, Howells stepped over to the agent and demanded a first-class ticket. The man, without any appearance of surprise, blandly denied having any contraband articles about him. He declined to be searched, however, and dared the special agent to search him at his peril. Howells, whose resemblance to Grover Cleveland, both in face and figure, was so marked, took the agent by the collar, laid him on his back in the aisle, and sat on him while he searched him thoroughly. The man had no sign of diamonds about him.

Horridly, Howells lifted the man to his feet with the most profuse apologies. A suit for damages against the agent was demanded, but Howells, who had been advised of Howells' movements by an employee of the Montreal postoffice, and the agent had passed the package of stones to the agent in charge, who carried them to Windsor, crossed the river and shipped them by express from Detroit to this city.

ONLY AN ANNOYANCE.

For eighteen months work on these cases was continued without diminishing the influx of smuggled diamonds. Two or three arrests and seizures were made, but the impossibility of identifying absolutely individuals and using them as evidence, and the fact that two or three times what was considered good cases were worked up, but while it could be ascertained easily that jewels consigned to a firm had been made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail. When pursuit on the Plattsburgh route becomes too hot, the trail changes to the Albany route, and the diamonds are made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail. When pursuit on the Plattsburgh route becomes too hot, the trail changes to the Albany route, and the diamonds are made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail. When pursuit on the Plattsburgh route becomes too hot, the trail changes to the Albany route, and the diamonds are made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail.

ONLY AN ANNOYANCE.

For eighteen months work on these cases was continued without diminishing the influx of smuggled diamonds. Two or three arrests and seizures were made, but the impossibility of identifying absolutely individuals and using them as evidence, and the fact that two or three times what was considered good cases were worked up, but while it could be ascertained easily that jewels consigned to a firm had been made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail. When pursuit on the Plattsburgh route becomes too hot, the trail changes to the Albany route, and the diamonds are made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail.

ONLY AN ANNOYANCE.

For eighteen months work on these cases was continued without diminishing the influx of smuggled diamonds. Two or three arrests and seizures were made, but the impossibility of identifying absolutely individuals and using them as evidence, and the fact that two or three times what was considered good cases were worked up, but while it could be ascertained easily that jewels consigned to a firm had been made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail. When pursuit on the Plattsburgh route becomes too hot, the trail changes to the Albany route, and the diamonds are made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail.

ONLY AN ANNOYANCE.

For eighteen months work on these cases was continued without diminishing the influx of smuggled diamonds. Two or three arrests and seizures were made, but the impossibility of identifying absolutely individuals and using them as evidence, and the fact that two or three times what was considered good cases were worked up, but while it could be ascertained easily that jewels consigned to a firm had been made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail. When pursuit on the Plattsburgh route becomes too hot, the trail changes to the Albany route, and the diamonds are made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail.

ment every aid in their power. The case was placed in the hands of Special Agent F. D. Howells, now dead, who was a big, broad-shouldered, energetic fellow of great courage and considerable detective skill. A special agent attached to the New York office with a wide acquaintance among Malden Lane diamonds was detailed to work up the case in this city. One diamond importing firm, with branches in London and Paris, was then doing an extensive business in precious stones and underbidding its competitors. Reputable importers who paid their duties suffered greatly from the competition of firms which smuggled half their stock and evaded the 10 per cent. duty, and they were always willing to aid the Government with any information obtainable. From these firms and from special agents stationed in Europe, information came that the diamond firm referred to was consigning large quantities of precious stones to Montreal. The agent of the firm was followed to the city by Howells, who visited the postoffice and saw him receive a package. It was consigned to the firm, was "declared," and was said to contain precious stones valued at \$20,000.

Certain that the agent would leave for New York, Howells watched the outgoing train, and entered the sleeping car for New York. Howells, who expressed to find his man the only other occupant. As the train left Plattsburgh, Howells stepped over to the agent and demanded a first-class ticket. The man, without any appearance of surprise, blandly denied having any contraband articles about him. He declined to be searched, however, and dared the special agent to search him at his peril. Howells, whose resemblance to Grover Cleveland, both in face and figure, was so marked, took the agent by the collar, laid him on his back in the aisle, and sat on him while he searched him thoroughly. The man had no sign of diamonds about him.

Horridly, Howells lifted the man to his feet with the most profuse apologies. A suit for damages against the agent was demanded, but Howells, who had been advised of Howells' movements by an employee of the Montreal postoffice, and the agent had passed the package of stones to the agent in charge, who carried them to Windsor, crossed the river and shipped them by express from Detroit to this city.

ONLY AN ANNOYANCE.

For eighteen months work on these cases was continued without diminishing the influx of smuggled diamonds. Two or three arrests and seizures were made, but the impossibility of identifying absolutely individuals and using them as evidence, and the fact that two or three times what was considered good cases were worked up, but while it could be ascertained easily that jewels consigned to a firm had been made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail. When pursuit on the Plattsburgh route becomes too hot, the trail changes to the Albany route, and the diamonds are made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail. When pursuit on the Plattsburgh route becomes too hot, the trail changes to the Albany route, and the diamonds are made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail.

ONLY AN ANNOYANCE.

For eighteen months work on these cases was continued without diminishing the influx of smuggled diamonds. Two or three arrests and seizures were made, but the impossibility of identifying absolutely individuals and using them as evidence, and the fact that two or three times what was considered good cases were worked up, but while it could be ascertained easily that jewels consigned to a firm had been made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail. When pursuit on the Plattsburgh route becomes too hot, the trail changes to the Albany route, and the diamonds are made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail.

ONLY AN ANNOYANCE.

For eighteen months work on these cases was continued without diminishing the influx of smuggled diamonds. Two or three arrests and seizures were made, but the impossibility of identifying absolutely individuals and using them as evidence, and the fact that two or three times what was considered good cases were worked up, but while it could be ascertained easily that jewels consigned to a firm had been made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail. When pursuit on the Plattsburgh route becomes too hot, the trail changes to the Albany route, and the diamonds are made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail.

ONLY AN ANNOYANCE.

For eighteen months work on these cases was continued without diminishing the influx of smuggled diamonds. Two or three arrests and seizures were made, but the impossibility of identifying absolutely individuals and using them as evidence, and the fact that two or three times what was considered good cases were worked up, but while it could be ascertained easily that jewels consigned to a firm had been made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail. When pursuit on the Plattsburgh route becomes too hot, the trail changes to the Albany route, and the diamonds are made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail.

ONLY AN ANNOYANCE.

For eighteen months work on these cases was continued without diminishing the influx of smuggled diamonds. Two or three arrests and seizures were made, but the impossibility of identifying absolutely individuals and using them as evidence, and the fact that two or three times what was considered good cases were worked up, but while it could be ascertained easily that jewels consigned to a firm had been made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail. When pursuit on the Plattsburgh route becomes too hot, the trail changes to the Albany route, and the diamonds are made to head off the inflow of diamonds by way of the Plattsburgh trail.