

The Story of a Lost Fortune.

WE AND BOB was down on our luck just a bit, I can tell you. Everything we had planned went as crooked as a dog's hind leg just at the last minute. We had worked for a month on a daringly-planned scheme to relieve Lord Tallport of his plate, and just when all was ready I'm afraid that the sheriff didn't walk in and collar the whole blooming lot just as a few of his lordship's beastly debts.

"Well," says I, "we're broke."

"Just a bit, Bill Jack," says Bob. He always called me Bill Jack 'cos I was christened William John.

I hands him the paper, and for a few minutes the rest was silence. Then suddenly he says, "Listen to this!"

WANTED: A man to wait at table and assist butler. Only those with good references need apply. Sandilands Hall, Egham.

"The very thing," says he. "I used to know something of Sandilands Hall, when old John Errol was the boss of it, but the old chap died about six months ago, and I didn't know who lives there now. But if the Errol family still live there, the plate is worth a small fortune. What you've got to do is to go to Egham, get this job as waiter, learn all you can, and send the news to me."

"Good enough," I says. "And what about my references?"

"Leave 'em. I'll write you half-a-dozen, each more flattering than the other, and no two in the same handwriting."

Well, after a long talk I parted with Bob, and after drossing myself up I set out for Egham.

Acting on Bob's instructions I made my way to the side-entrance of Sandilands Hall and asked for the butler.

Twenty minutes later I was seated in the private sanctum of the head butler, whose name was Bloxam, and that worthy gentleman was busily perusing my beautiful testimonials.

"Your testimonials look all right," says he, "and I like the look of you. I'll just see Miss Curzon and get her opinion. She's the lady of the Hall until Mr. Rupert comes home. Adopted daughter of the late John Errol, esq. Help yourself out of this while I go and see her."

He pushed a decanter of port and a glass towards me, and left me to my own sweet thoughts.

Mr. Bloxam returned in a few minutes with the message that he was to take me to Miss Curzon at once.

"Pretty? I should think she was. A perfect peach, dainty as a fairy, with a voice like a silver bell."

"And so this is the man?" says she. "What did you say his name was?"

"Higgins, miss," I answers, "William John Higgins; very much at your service."

She put me through a rare rough-and-tumble of questions, but I was pretty well primed, and scraped through rather neatly.

"You may come a month on trial," she says at last.

"Thank you, miss," I answers, and I backs out with Bloxam.

As we went back to Bloxam's den and he, being a sociable old chap, produced a fresh bottle of port and cigars, just to celebrate, as he put it. Then I thought I would do a little pumping. "Much company here," I asks.

"Company? Bless you, the place is a structure. There's nobody but Miss Curzon. But things will change when Mr. Rupert comes home. Quite a romance it is. Let's see—it's about eight years ago since Mr. Rupert quarreled with his father, and strange to say, it was all about Miss Curzon. She was the daughter of the curate then, and Mr. Rupert wanted to marry her; but old Squire Errol would have none of it, and packed him off to foreign parts. Mr. Rupert swore that he would not return until his father gave his consent."

"For two years he had occasional news of him, and then came the silence which has lasted five years. When Squire Errol could learn no news of Mr. Rupert, he grew remorseful, and when Miss Curzon's father died he adopted her and brought her to live here until Rupert should turn up to claim her."

"But this Mr. Rupert may be dead," she is confident that he is alive, and that is why you are engaged. She keeps up the story of the servants, so as to have everything ready when he returns."

Soon after this interesting conversation I took my departure, ostensibly to get my traps, but really to report progress to Beautiful Bob.

He was hugely delighted with my success and listened attentively to all the news I had gathered.

"So now," I concluded, "just give me a week, and I will arrange that everyone shall mysteriously fall asleep and we can loot the place at our leisure."

"No, Bill Jack, I'm going to make this something special, so you must leave it to me."

"Why, what's the game if it ain't loot?"

"It is loot, Bill Jack, but not a jenny and dark-lantern job. We are going to pull off this journey to last a lifetime. Now, listen: First I want a photograph of Rupert Errol, if it is to be had."

"I'll see if I can manage that," I says.

"Then I must have a liver to pay my fare to Southampton and back. I suppose I must do a little sleight-of-hand in a crowd to get that."

"And then?"

"You go back to Sandilands Hall. To-day is Wednesday. On Saturday Miss Nelly Curzon will receive a wire from Southampton to say that Rupert Errol has arrived."

"Well?"

"A few hours later he will arrive. All the servants will assemble to greet the young master, William John Higgins among them. Your business is this: Don't attempt any private conversation with Rupert Errol until he asks you for information; and a week after Rupert Errol disappears from Sandilands Hall Beautiful Bob will be awaiting you here with your share of a fortune."

"You—you can never do it," I gasped.

"Pooh! there is not much risk. You know my skill in disguises, and Rupert Errol, just come from abroad, will be sure to have a beard, and I know we are pretty much of a height."

"But, Miss Curzon?"

"She will never suspect; she was only seventeen when Errol went away, and eight years makes some difference in a man; besides, I have got to know enough of her young days to convince her that I am her beloved Rupert."

"That night I went to my new situation at Egham, and by the first post in the morning a photograph of Rupert Errol was on its way to Beautiful Bob. Errol was not a bit like Bob except for the nose, and they were almost as similar as two peas, but I knew my chum's skill in make-up and felt no fear."

At 11 o'clock on Saturday morning I saw a telephone boy enter the grounds, and then I prepared for some excitement, and I was not disappointed. The news came over the place like wildfire, and all I could hear for the next hour was "Mr. Rupert is coming this afternoon," and I smiled all by my lonesome.

At 5 o'clock Miss Curzon grouped us all on each side of the porch, while she herself stood on the steps to give him a royal welcome.

Almost to the minute the carriage and the pair of grays which had been sent to the station swung up the drive and, amid our cheers of welcome, a handsome, brown-bearded man stepped to the carriage door.

With hardly a look at the servants he dashed up the steps, and in another instant, before us all, he had Miss Nelly in his arms, kissing her and—well, I didn't think Beautiful Bob had it in him.

"Rupert, Rupert! come back at last," she said.

"At last," he says, "my happiness is complete."

Then he kisses her again. Oh! he was having a real good time, was Bob, and he makes a speech to the servants and thanks them all for their welcome.

That evening I waited on them at dinner. I always knew Bob was a bit of an artist in the way of romancing, but his conversation at that meal was an eye-opener. He told her of his travels all over the world; his luck at the gold diggings in California; the tremendous estates he had purchased out there; and the beautiful palace he had built. A wonderful place it seemed to be, complete in every particular save one.

"And what is this one thing that is missing, Rupert?" she asks—innocent like.

"A queen, my darling," he answers, "and as soon as my palace was ready I set out for England in the hope that I could bring you back with me to share my throne."

"Oh, Rupert, do you—do you mean us to leave England?"

"Why not, my darling? We two are alone in the world, and with you by my side the place is just what I need for a paradise. I propose to sell Sandilands and get away as soon as we can."

Well, I was so flabbergasted that I dropped a bottle of fizz. I was always under the impression that Bob would lose the matter comfortably; but when I heard him talking of selling the place so audaciously, well, my breath seemed a bit tight on my chest.

Dinner was over, and they strolled into the drawing room, and I didn't see Bob again that night, but just after breakfast the next morning Miss Curzon tells me to send a man over to Richmond to ask Mr. Woodrow to come to Sandilands at once.

"Who's Woodrow?" I asked Bloxam.

"Woodrow! He's the family lawyer."

I thought Bob was playing a very risky game, and I began to get nervous. The lawyer turned up about midday, and after the three had had a long conversation they started on lunch.

I was waiting, of course, and the lawyer did most of the talking.

"Couldn't have happened more conveniently," he said. "Lord Sandilands came to me yesterday and asked me if Sandilands was in the market. I said, 'No, not that I was aware of; he replied that if it was he would buy it as it stands, lock, stock, and barrel, all except the horses.'"

"Well, he can have it, and the horses can be sent to Tattersalls."

"And you will send my jewels over tomorrow? Rupert is so anxious to see me in the family diamonds."

"I shall bring them over myself."

I had heard a lot about those diamonds, and I smiled broadly as I thought of Bob's smartness.

I tried to have a word or two with Bob, but he always seemed to frown when I approached him, and I remembered his instructions not to speak to him until I was spoken to.

That, to tell the truth, I began to get a bit doubtful about Miss Nelly. I thought Bob was going a bit far. It is all very well making up to a servant when you want a bit of information, but to make love to a beautiful girl like Miss Nelly and even fix up the wedding day was, to my mind, only complicating things.

The next day the lawyer turned up in time for dinner, bringing with him a heavy brass-bound box, which was sent straight up to Miss Nelly's room.

Bob was ready to receive Mr. Woodrow, and as they discussed a preliminary sherry and the contents of the chum did look a regular dork, with his evening tugs and his diamond stud. Goodness knows where he got them from, I don't.

Just then the door opens and in saunt Miss Nelly. Lord! the blaze of twinkling light! Oh! the diamonds! the rubies, the sapphires. I shut my eyes, turned away, and gasped. And these were all to be ours, mine and Bob's!

However, I learned something at the dinner. Lord Sandilands had agreed to purchase the place for £200,000, the deeds were to be prepared at once. This was £100,000 each for Bob and me.

Then after dinner Bloxam was asked to assemble the servants in the hall. I wondered what was up, but I was soon to know.

And then Bob made a speech. It completely knocked me into the wall. The servants all listened and cheered, until Bob came near the end, then they got a staggerer.

"And so, Miss Curzon and myself are to be quietly married next Saturday, and when we leave Sandilands Hall we will take with us those of you who have arranged that those of you who have been in the service of the family for ten years shall receive a check for five years' wages; in fact, you will all be paid for half the term you have served."

There was a lot more, but this was the stuffing of the goose, and when he

finished they gave cheers for both of them.

"Things were going splendidly for us, but I was worried. I did not see any necessity for the wedding, and I determined to risk it and speak to Bob."

It was not until Tattersall's men came that I thought I had an opportunity. Bob and Miss Nelly had gone to the stables to say good-bye to the horses, and I followed them out. I found Bob standing by himself lighting a cigar.

He looked up as I approached him. "Well, my man, what is it?"

"I say, don't run it too hard, guv'nor."

Just then Miss Nelly comes out and bears my words.

"What is the matter, Rupert?"

"I don't know. This man says something about being too hard."

"Oh, I know, of course," says she; "you see, dear, he has only been here a few days, and, of course, the checks you promised the servants will not include him."

"What hard luck, likewise, we must after it. You look a likely young fellow—how would you care to come to California?"

"I'll follow Miss Nelly anywhere," I answers.

"Good judge," he laughed. "Well you shall have a check for £100 and our address in California. If you find your way out there, well and good; if not, that is your own lookout."

I thanked him, of course, and determined to let things take their own way. Bob knew what he was about, and I must not spoil his game.

When Saturday came Mr. Woodrow arrived at Sandilands, and at 10 o'clock all drove to the church and Rupert Errol was quietly married to Miss Nelly.

Then when the time came we all went up to say "Good-bye" to the happy pair, and as we passed by with a hand-shake the bride handed each of us a check.

When my turn came I went up and received a check for £100, and as Bob shook hands with me, he says, "We shall be seeing you again shortly, and I thought he gave a wink, which I returned.

I came to London that night and Bob went on his honeymoon. All through the succeeding days I kept repeating my chum's words.

"A week after Rupert Errol disappears from Sandilands Hall Beautiful Bob will be awaiting you here with your share of a fortune."

Trembling with excitement I waited for Bob at the place appointed. He was not long in making his appearance, but a more forlorn, more-begone-looking object I have seldom seen.

"Why, Bob!" I says, "what on earth has happened? Wherever have you been?"

"Quoted," he answers.

"Quoted? Where? Surprised. 'Why—and where is Nelly?'"

"Nelly! Who's she? Have you gone daff?"

"Nelly Curzon, the girl you married at Egham church last week."

"You are mad—I was in good luck last week."

"Now, look here, Bob, you can't bluff me like this; you nicked the fortune, and I want my share."

"My dear Bill Jack, you don't seem drunk, but you talk like it. I have not been near Egham, and I have not nicked a fortune. I tried to pinch a purse to avoid the necessary trouble for our enterprises, but I got nailed and fourteen days in the jug. I came out this morning."

"Then who—who came to Sandilands, married Miss Nelly, sold the place up, and paid the servants off?"

"The man I called Rupert Errol, according to the paragraph in today's paper. I say, an account of his marriage and his beautiful place in California. But did you really think Rupert Errol was Beautiful Bob?"

"Did I, did; and he gave me a check for £100."

"Good, good, that puts us in funds at any rate."

"But, old ass that I was, I thought it was your bogus check and lit my pipe with it."

I will not repeat what Bob said, but I have been such good friends since I got home that I will tell you. Miss Nelly was not deceived in her happiness; but many a time, when things look blue, I think remorsefully of that lost fortune.—Tid-Bits.



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If you take the trouble to examine this system thoroughly you will be surprised how far ahead it is of the Custom Tailors' system. It's the care and thought of every detail with the combination of stylish cloth patterns, perfect tailoring and the fitting of every

garment to living models that makes this Atterbury System popular among men who always worshipped at the custom tailors' shrine. There are many distinguishing features that cannot be explained fully in this writing; visit our "Atterbury" floor, there these fine examples of the Tailor's Art can be fully demonstrated. Just a little talk on our part without that usual pressing to buy.

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ANOTHER JOHNNIE.

"I SHALL NEVER marry," said a man's voice from the depths of a huge lounge chair. People are fond of telling me I shall change my mind, but I can assure you that I shall never change my mind, because I've got a title and a fair amount of money. That shows all they know. It makes me laugh when my people wisely tell me I shall have it one of these days, and have it badly. I've had it, old chap, as badly as I could have it to live, and I'm inoculated for all time."

"So that's it, is it?" murmured Graves, sympathetically.

"Yes, that's it. The only girl I ever loved, Lord Kiddersleigh went on, not looking at Graves, but staring hard up at the ceiling high above their heads, "loved another Johnnie. Now, I take it, when a Johnnie loves a girl that loves another Johnnie there's nothing to be done but clear out; so I cleared out of the Old Black Horse into this regiment for no other reason than that it would keep me from seeing the other Johnnie having it all his own way."

"Is she married yet?"

"I suppose so. I really don't know, for I never heard a word about her. My people know her, oh, yes, but they've never mentioned her in their letters, as they don't know I take any interest in her—they think I haven't had it," he added with a burst of ribald laughter that all the same had a tinge of wretchedness in it.

"Do you know the other man?" asked Graves.

"No, I haven't the least idea who he is, and I didn't feel like making any particular inquiry on that point, but that's why I never mean about

after the women, old chap; I'm off all that kind of thing."

"I never suspected it," said Graves. "I've often wondered why you kept yourself as you do, but, by Jove, I never guessed at the reason."

"I darsay not. It ain't the kind of thing a Johnnie cares to talk about to everybody. I wouldn't have told you, old fellow, if you hadn't happened to chum up with me as you have done, and nursed me through that last go of fever."

"Oh that was nothing at all," Graves thrust in hurriedly.

"Nothing—nothing at all from your point of view," declared Kiddersleigh in his mildest tones. "From mine, though, it's the sort of thing one don't forget, and, by Jove, if ever you go home, just you go and tell my mother and you'll find out whether she calls it nothing any more than I do."

"Oh, I say, stop that," said Graves, shutting up suddenly in his long chair.

"For a few minutes neither of them spoke. Then Kiddersleigh went on. "I don't know that I'd mind India if it wasn't for the beastly climate," he said in the querulous tones of a semi-convalescent. "It's all about as happens to suit you. Look at my mother's instance, for as long as she lived, and as healthy as a roach; but it don't seem to suit me, somehow, and three goes of the fever take it out of one horribly."

"I'll be damned if I get any more of it," said Graves. "You don't get up any more as you sit down. For as long as good as said to me, 'I'll be damned if I get any more of it.'"

"I'll go, I'll go with me," said Kiddersleigh.

"I don't see how I can. I've no

chance of getting more leave just yet," Graves replied, "and, besides, it costs a lot."

"As to cost," replied Kiddersleigh, "you'll go as my guest if you go at all. And as for leave, I can't go alone. I'll try to work it."

"In India it is not difficult to work things; it mainly depends on who pulls the wires. Eventually it was worked, and the two friends went off to Simla together. And with every day the invalid shook off the evil effects of life in the plains more and more until a healthier-looking young man could not have been found in all the length and breadth of India. Then leave came to an end, and they went back to the regiment, where, in less than a month, Kiddersleigh was down with fever again."

This was the worst attack of any, and long before he was free of it, Graves took upon himself to write to Lady Kiddersleigh his exact impression of her son's state of health. He came out to see some sport, and the had none. This beastly fever must wear itself out in time, and I'm not going to be beaten by it. I never allowed my life to be lived in India, and I'm not going to be able to call his soul to me any longer as he lived. Give me some more of quinine, doctor; my medicines are so afraid of your nostrums."

The doctor shook his head and left

him. "Graves," he said, a little later in the day, "that young fellow will cross one of these days if we don't look out. Can't you persuade him into listening to reason?"

"You mean he ought to go home?"

"I do, can you do nothing?"

"I'll try," said Graves.

And Graves did try. He opened the conversation by speaking of Kiddersleigh's home-going as a certainty, at which the invalid caught instantly.

"I ain't going home," said he.

"Look here, old chap," said Graves. "Don't you think you're paying that girl too high a compliment altogether? No woman in the world is worth a man's life, and that's what you're giving in this case."

"Do you say I shall die?"

"For the life of him Graves could not keep his voice quite steady, and afterwards he admitted that he had never felt so helpless or so lonely in his life as he did at this time.

"Well, then, I'd just as soon," said the invalid, tactless of his own idea.

"She isn't worth it," growled Graves.

"Yes, she is, though that ain't the question," Kiddersleigh replied. "Eh, what, old chap, what are you looking so solemn about? Life's no such desirable pleasure that one need mind its coming to an end, especially if the main things don't go right. If I croak out here, I shan't feel or know or worry any more about it. If I go home and get well, I shall do all three."

Graves jumped up and went out of the room. For the life of him he could not have spoken at that moment. He went out on the veranda and winked the scalding tears back from his eyes and swore a little under his breath,

and then he took a resolve. It was that he would write again to Lady Kiddersleigh. And so that same evening he laid, laying bare his whole idea to her, and begging her to use her best efforts to persuade her son to go home with another man, and he came out here to be out of the way. He never told me her name, but last night, when he was thoroughly off his head—which he is most nights—he kept calling out for "Tit"—"Tit." From what he told me she must be married by this time, but I think if you were to send out the papers with the accounts of it he would feel that it was really over, and resign himself to the inevitable.

It was exactly three weeks after Graves had planned his second visit to Lady Kiddersleigh that he received a telegram from home, "coming at once, John Kiddersleigh," it said, and Graves shoved it into his pocket with a long breath of intense relief, knowing that whether his friend lived or died he had done the right thing and could never be reproached with having unduly kept his people in the dark.

He calculated that Lady Kiddersleigh would just catch the P. & O. boat at Marseilles, and that she would arrive at Bombay about the 15th of the month. He made every arrangement for someone to receive her there with proper attention and start her off on her journey up country. And sure enough, on the evening of the 15th he received a telegram announcing her arrival, and adding that she was continuing her journey without delay.

At last he went to meet the train which would bring her, and stood there scanning the different carriages with eager eyes. Yes; there she was, a tall, slight woman; nay, very young looking to be the mother of a big fellow like Kiddersleigh, and with her was a very smart looking maid and a courier.

Graves went forward, Lady Kiddersleigh knew him by instinct and came forward, too. "You are Mr. Graves," she said.

"I can never, never thank you enough. How is he?"

"Very ill, but not worse than the last few days," he replied. "I'm so glad you've come, Lady Kiddersleigh. You'll do him more good than any one."

Lady Kiddersleigh smiled. "I don't know about that," she said. "I fancy my niece here will do more than any of us. Mr. Graves this is Titia, about whom you wrote to me, otherwise Miss Valence."

Miss Valence blushed a fine scarlet color as she returned Graves' bow.

"You have come none too soon," he said gravely. "Shall I take you to the carriage now, Lady Kiddersleigh?"

She put her hand upon his arm instantly. "I've had a journey and a half, Mr. Graves," she whispered rapidly. "There's been no mistake—she adores

Kiddersleigh, always has done. She has almost broken her heart and—oh, yes," with a quick change of tone, "it will be able to be settled down for a few days. It's a horrid journey."

"They only attend commonplaces as they drove towards the bungalow which Kiddersleigh and Graves shared.

"I'd better go and prepare him," said Graves, as he helped them to alight.

He found Kiddersleigh lying in his long chair, staring blankly at the ceiling. He was not smoking, for he was too ill to care for his pipe any longer. Graves' heart smote him as he noted the sharp outlines of temple and wrist.

"Old chap," he said in a voice that, try as he would, he could not make an ordinary one, "don't be startled. Your mother's come to see you."

"My mother? Did you send for her? Am I—"

"Old chap," said Graves. "I don't want you to croak without making an effort to straighten things out a bit. She's come, too. There's been a big mistake somewhere here."

But the girl Titia waited no longer; there was a rush of light feet, a sob and a choking kind of laugh and she was down on her knees by the long chair. "Kiddie! Kiddie!" she cried, "I've almost broken my heart!"

"But, the other Johnnie?" he asked.

"There wasn't another Johnnie," she cried, the tears running down her face and almost drowning the smiles in her eyes. "I don't know what you mean, Kiddie. There never was any one but you."

"Titia—my Titia?" he murmured; and then he quietly faintly away. Then when they had brought him round again he said with a weak chuckle, "Don't let Titia go. I want my revenge on the other Johnnie"—St. Louis Star.

rector of Grace Episcopal church, Onk-ford, is slowly recovering from a three weeks' illness.

A number of Susquehanna people are in Carbondale today, attending the funeral of the late Mrs. Rev. William M. Hillier.

One or two new streets will be opened on the Oakland side in the spring and the erection of many buildings will follow.

The old Oakland Methodist church edifice has been torn down.

County Superintendent of Schools Charles E. Moxley, of Hallstead, was officially engaged in town on Thursday evening, Dec. 2.

Miss Mary Proctor, a former esteemed resident of Susquehanna, died at Tostindale, Mass., on Sunday last, after a lingering illness, of consumption. She was the eldest sister of Edward Proctor, of this place.

Special services are being held in the Methodist Episcopal church this week and are well attended.

"Twas Saturday night, and a teacher sat Alone, her task pursuing; She rocked the cradle and she averaged that. Of all that her class was doing, She averaged percentages so many boys, And so many girls all counted, And marked all the tardy absentees, And prepared a list of graduates. Names and residences wrote in full, Their many columns and pages; Canadian, Texan, African, Celt, And averaged all their ages, The date of admission of every one, And cases of flagellation, And prepared a list of graduates. For the county graduation.

Her weary head sank low on her book, And her weary heart still lower, For some of the pupils had little brains, And she could not furnish more. She slept, she dreamed, it seemed she died, And her spirit went to Hades, And they met her there with a question fair, "State what the per cent of your grade is!"

Agas, but slowly rolled away, Leaving but partial traces, And the teacher's spirit walked one day In the old familiar places. A mound of fossilized school reports Attracted her observation, As high as the state house dome, and as wide As Boston since annexation.

She came to the spot where they buried her bones, But labored digging threw a skull, Once planted beneath the clover. A disciple of Galen, wandering by, Paused to look at the diggers, And plucking the skull up, looked through the eye, And saw it was filled with figures.

"Just as I thought," said the young M. D. "How easy it is to kill 'em!" Statistics furnished every fold. Of excrement and cerebellum, 'Tis a great curiosity, sure," said Pat. "By the bones you can tell the creature's age, holding strange," said the doctor, "that Was a nineteenth century teacher." —Chicago Tribune.

SUSQUEHANNA.

Susquehanna, Nov. 8.—The Carbondale club held a pleasant hop last evening in Hogan Opera House.

The funeral of the late Edwin P. Lake took place from the home on East Church street, on Thursday evening, Rev. E. E. Riley, pastor of the Presbyterian church, officiating. Interment was made in Evergreen cemetery.

"I can never, never thank you enough. How is he?"

"Very ill, but not worse than the last few days," he replied. "I'm so glad you've come, Lady Kiddersleigh. You'll do him more good than any one."

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