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HER LADYSHIP'S DIAMONDS

By C. B. LEWIS

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Her ladyship's extravagance was a subject of general remark, but it was true that his lordship did not stint her in money matters, and so what she threw away was nobody's business after all. It was so for the first five years of their married life, and then his lordship began to feel the pinch. He delayed saying anything to her of the matter as long as possible, but there came a day when he had to tell her that retrenchment must be the watchword for several years to come. He had figured up her bills and found she had spent more money in a given time than the richest woman in the kingdom. In a way he was proud of it, but in another way he had to give her a word of caution. She could still be extravagant and reduce her expenses one-half.

His lordship found out something too late. Give a wife rein for the first five years, and she will take the bit in her teeth for the rest of her life. Talk of economy should come before instead of after. In addition to gratifying her own many whims and caprices her ladyship had a brother in the navy and another in the army, both officers, of course, and both living more or less of his lordship's money. Only the day before his lordship had asked for a private interview to talk retrenchment she had sent the naval officer a liberal check to straighten up his debts of honor and to the members of the parish. The other one must have a much larger amount or throw up his commission in disgrace.

His lordship's news, therefore, came like a douche of cold water. If there was any sort of scene it was kept from the servants and therefore from the public, and things seemed to go on as before. The day, however, Her ladyship had her diamonds duplicated in paste and raised a large sum on the real goods to help others and herself. This was done quietly and secretly and only a part of a plan she had in her mind.

After the close of the London season his lordship retired to his country estate and was soon followed by a score of his guests. The astute English robber is always on the watch for these house gatherings. Every woman guest is certain to bring at least a good part of her jewelry to wear at dinner, and there are always chances for a smart thief to get in his work. As an offset the host employs a detective to mix in with the guests for the time being and keep watch over things.

It was so in this case. Scotland Yard had loaned him Inspector McDonald, and there never had been a robbery in a country house since he was put there.

The inspector, under another name, mingled with the guests and made himself at home, but he was given to passing much of his time watching over the estate and musing in the shade of its forests. One of his musing fits was one day interrupted in a rather singular manner.

He was lying on the moss under a spreading beech when the sound of footfalls disturbed him, and he rolled over on his side, to discover her ladyship making her furtive way through the woods. At a given pace from him she stopped and with a stick dug a hole in the ground at the foot of a tree and concealed something. When she had run away the inspector scooped out the dirt until he came to an object which contained her ladyship's diamonds. They were all there to her last ring, and the inspector knew enough about precious stones to know that these were paste.

This happened at 8 o'clock in the afternoon. What her ladyship would do without her diamonds at dinner time the inspector could not tell. Her secretarial of them meant to him simply one thing—she was going to be "robbed" of them. She would have to show him where she hid them, either that or she must be "indisposed" at dinner time and not appear among her guests during the evening.

Her ladyship succeeded at once to business. An hour before dinner, and after all the guests, including the inspector, had been indulging in games of whist, she went to her room to discover that her diamonds were missing. There was a sensation at once. No one had seen any stranger lurking about, and the robbery must have been perpetrated by some of the servants, including maids and valets, these numbered over sixty, and each one was obliged to come forward and be investigated. His lordship insisted on the most rigorous examination, and this led to protestations and hard feelings. Within twenty-four hours the house party was broken up and scattered, and Inspector McDonald had to admit that he had no clue. The only thing his lordship could do was to offer a reward and he had to estimate the density of the one and the cunning of the other. It was more than cunning. Her ladyship had more nerve and cheek than the detective ever before had found in a woman. She was a most convincing liar, and if he hadn't had the paste diamonds in his pocket he would have been inclined to believe that the scene in the woods was a day dream. She could furnish no information as to how her diamonds had disappeared.

She cleared her own maid of suspicion, but would not vouch for the honesty of the others. It was through her advice and insistence that his lordship advertised "No questions asked." The stolen plunder could thus be returned by any one of her choosing. The \$25,000 would get the originals out of the hands of the thieves. The inspector held but one interview with her ladyship alone. At that interview, after she had retold her story and looked him as straight in the eye as a woman could be he said:

"I can't believe that the plunder was carried far. I shouldn't wonder if it was buried in the woods."

"That may be," she innocently replied. "They didn't happen to be your paste diamonds, while the real gems are in a vault in town?"

"Would his lordship advertise such a reward for paste diamonds? Have you ever heard that I have resorted to paste?"

"I did not mean it in that sense. The reason I spoke of the woods was because I was out there that afternoon."

"Well?"

"I thought I saw a woman prowling around."

HER LADYSHIP'S DIAMONDS

By C. B. LEWIS

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"Then you have been derelict as a detective. Why didn't you speak of the matter before?"

"The more I think of it the more I believe that this woman buried something at the foot of a tree."

"Then let me call his lordship, and we will go at once."

"When it was too late he saw that she wouldn't take a hint, and he was obliged to accompany the pair to the woods. He walked straight to the tree and showed them the cavity. He looked straight into the eyes of the woman, but she did not falter in the gaze. He saw by her attitude that she was even ready to hear him say that she was the woman he saw and to drag from his pocket the bag of diamonds in corroboration. He dared not put her to the test.

"Then his lordship criticized his action in not overhauling the unknown woman, the detective could only swallow his chagrin and beg to withdraw from the case. Two hours later he was packed and ready to go. As he was descending the stairs he encountered her ladyship ascending. She gazed straight into his eyes and raised her hand. There was no bribe in her fingers—she knew the inspector to be above that. He took the bag of diamonds from his pocket and passed it over without a word and raised his hat to her, he kept on his way out of doors. Two weeks later a London paper said:

"We are glad to hear that her ladyship's diamonds have been restored to her. It is hinted that the person claiming the reward had the manners of the gentleman, though in disguise."

"One of her brothers, maybe," said Inspector McDonald to himself, as he turned to the case in his book and wrote "Closed" at the bottom.

His Religion.
Not long ago a certain clergyman from the west was called to a church in Jersey City. Soon after his arrival the divine's wife made the usual visit to the members of the parish. One of these, a plumber's wife, was asked by the good lady whether they were regular churchgoers, whereupon the wife of the plumber replied that while she and her children were at church at divine service quite regularly, her husband was not.

"Dear me," said the good lady, "that's too bad! Does your husband never go to church?"

"Well, I wouldn't say that he never went," was the reply. "Occasionally he will go to the church, and then to the Methodist, and I have known him to attend the Catholic church."

A look of perplexity came to the face of the visitor. "Perhaps your husband is an agnostic," suggested she.

"Not at all," hastily answered the other, "he's a plumber. When there's nothing for him to do at one church there is very likely something for him at one of the others."—Harper's Weekly.

Where the Sea Disappears.
A girl was recently overtaken and drowned by the incoming tide on the west coast of England. A transplanted Breton said of this fatality:

"Can you, who see your own tides crawl in at the rate of ten feet or so an hour, imagine tides racing like wild white horses at the rate of a mile a minute? The extraordinary fitness of our Breton coasts gives us these phenomenal tides. The sea does not rise and fall. It appears and disappears. You have a vast and flat plain of sand. At a set hour the sea rushes in, white, wild, submerging this vast plain. At a set hour an unseen hand sucks back the waters—back thirty, forty, fifty miles—and nothing is visible but the plain of pale sand again. We unto such as walk on the desolate plain when the tide begins to rise, for they must drown! Nothing can save them."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Experienced Traveler.
"Look here," demanded the irate hotel proprietor, "what did you say to that guest?"

"Why," replied the waiter, "he didn't pass over a tip, so I said, 'I think you have forgotten something, sir.'"

"That's just it. After you said that he returned to the table and took out oranges and six pears."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Conscience.
A man, so to speak, who cannot bow to his own conscience every morning is hardly in condition to respectfully salute the world at any other time of the day.—Dongola.

Isolation of the Deaf-Mute.
The eye can never take the place of the ear. During the first twelve or fourteen years of normal life, knowledge is mainly appeals to the ear. Moreover, the little deaf mute is, therefore, a thousand times more isolated than the child who is born blind. In the domain of morals the uneducated deaf-mute is isolated in a dangerous way by the fact that the allurement to sin are mostly addressed to the eye, while its restraints, in youth at least, are mainly appeals to the ear. Moreover, the blind child, cultivating his hearing, is only going back to nature—their forbears, the cave dwellers.

Next to the search for the best testing grounds is, perhaps, man's strongest primal instinct. The deaf learner, dependent solely upon his eyes, has, of course, the first instinct, without the safeguard of the second.—Reader.

The Violin.
It seems strange to think that my violin was once a tree, but it does not know what else could have caught the music that lies within it, waiting for the touch. It must be centuries old, and through all those years it was witnessing and learning, growing in its growth the forest melodies to sing to generations yet unborn.

Wind and wave and song of bird, crash of thunder, drip of rain and muttering hail—all of these are in the fiber of the violin. And the thousand notes of sea and storm, the music of the waterfall and stream, what wonder that it is so nearly the human voice! There must have been a love story in that forest, for it sings love, love and only love, though I do not remember hearing it until I knew you.—Fuel.

Stones From the Sky.
Every country and every age has its historical, semi-historical or traditional stories concerning immense stones falling from the sky, or, more properly, from space. Let us take of a whole shower of aerolites which fell on the mountains near Rome in the year 654 B. C. The Arundel marbles (marble tables giving the events of the Greco-Roman history from 1582 B. C. to 624 B. C. in chronological order) give an account of a great stone which "fell down from heaven" (Ezogostami about the year 467 B. C. Pliny, who died in the year 79 A. D., says that in his time the "great air stone" mentioned in the foregoing was still to be seen on the Hellespont, "and," he quaintly adds, "it is even now of the big size of a wagon."

COMPASSES AND CONFUSION

By LOUIS PERCE

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Gladden looked up from the pan in which the bacon was sizzling. The start he gave tumbled the bacon into the fire, and the wild efforts to right the pan before the evening meal was spilled upon the coffee pot and out on the blaze.

Instead of expressing an opinion upon the happenings of the moment Gladden sprang to his feet and hurried to the beach just as the light canoe grounded on the shore.

One look into the bright face under the red Tam of Shanter and Gladden was glad that the bacon had been spilled. He had been in camp for six weeks, and even an ugly woman would have been welcomed at the camp. To have this graceful guest at his supper was something he would not have imagined possible ten minutes before.

"Welcome to camp," he said hospitably, extending his hand to assist her to step over the side. To his surprise she refused his aid and sprang to the shore as lightly as a bird. With a haughty glance she swept past him and into the tent, where she sat down at the table before him again, her eyes ablaze.

"Where are the others?" she demanded. "And where are all our things?"

"There are no others," he laughed. "I am afraid that the limited population of this camp does not permit the appointment of a reception committee; unless, indeed, you are willing to recognize me as such."

"What have you done with the others?" she repeated. "Have you killed them or have you merely driven them away?"

Gladden laughed. "There has been no one here for six weeks," he declared. "There was this morning," she corrected. "When I left to go over to town, there were six besides the guides. Now not even the things are left, and you have the audacity to camp right here. I suppose you thought that, since you had made away with them, you would be no longer detected for a few days at least. I suppose you will have to kill me now to keep from being exposed."

"Don't you think?" asked Gladden. "that you have made a mistake? Camps look very much alike to persons unaccustomed to the woods. Perhaps you are on the other arm of the lake, and you have mistaken it for this."

"There is no mistake," she insisted. "I steered by compass."

"Do you know how to use the compass?" he persisted. She looked at him in disdain.

"Is it necessary to insult me?" she demanded. "Why don't you kill me and finish off the work you have commenced?"

"That's a good idea," assented Gladden, recalled by the last half of the sentence. "The work I had commenced was to kill you, but you are as hungry as I am and you will regard me as a life preserver rather than a murderer."

"Without another word he went about the work of kindling a fresh fire. As he knelt over the twigs the girl made a rush for the boat. He reached the canoe first.

"See here," he said firmly. "You are just already. I cannot have you still further confused just because you insist that this is your camp and that I have slaughtered the whole family, to say nothing of the guides, for the sake of your canned goods. Sit down and rest, and after you have had supper I will try to find you."

The girl followed him back to the fire, cowed, but unbelieving. Skillfully Gladden fanned the fire into a bright glow and set the pot on. Then he sliced fresh bacon and set out the plates.

"Presently the smell of the browning bacon began to fill the camp, and the girl's face softened. She did not refuse to eat, but she was until the bacon began to fry. For the first time she took notice that this young man, in spite of his evidence of city breeding, was not only decidedly good looking, but skilled in woodcraft, and fear gave way to admiration of his deftness.

"I guess you can eat that," he said at last, as he placed some of the bacon on a plate and poured a cup of coffee for her. Silently she accepted the food and Gladden smiled softly to himself as he saw the way she ate. It had been his experience that girls were always more reasonable after they had been fed, and already she was unbendingly friendly.

"Are you convinced that I am more human than you were willing to believe at first?" he asked as the plates were at last cleared.

"Perhaps you have been some mistake," she grudgingly assented, "but I was so careful to steer by the compass that I cannot see how any mistake could be made and yet the bacon is so good."

"Perhaps you turned east instead of west," he suggested. "The camps are on the west lake because there is a small dell over there. That is why I close the compass in exactly the wrong direction. There was but one camp on the west lake that resembled this. That was the Driscoll camp, and this must be Benny Driscoll's sister. He rose to confront a very indignant young woman.

"I don't like to be laughed at," he said in a hurt little voice. "If I have made a mistake I want to go back to the other lake where they will be kind to me."

"My dear Miss Driscoll," he cried, "I will take you over to your camp in a jiffy, but not until you have forgiven my rudeness."

"You knew who I was all along," she said reproachfully.

"I just this moment found out," he assured her. "I remembered that the Driscoll camp probably looked like this to a newcomer to the woods. That is where you belong. Stay you will come here, and I'll paddle you right over."

"For answer she ran to the canoe and sprang into it. Gladden made a leap and sprang upon the bow just