



Doctor Watson's Neglected Patients medical bulletin



A Scion Society Of The Baker Street Irregulars &

August 1989 Vol. 14 Nos. 3 and 4

"His medical practice had been so punctuated by scandals that he had practically abandoned the practice the better to apply himself to the scandals."

From the Chief Surgeon by Stan Moskal

The 1989 Sherlockian year started off in traditional fashion with the Sherlock birthday dinner and annual meeting.

On the evening of Friday, January 6, over fifty patients and guests met at the Denver Press Club to honor Sherlock, conduct necessary business and be thoroughly entertained by the guest speaker.

The Press Club was suggested as a potential dinner site in the past, but was never selected. I think we missed a great bet! My sincere thanks to our patients, who are also members of the Denver Press Club and through whom we are permitted to use that fine facility.

How does a mystery writer go about writing a novel? Rex Burns, a well known Denver writer of mysteries gave an excellent presentation on what goes into writing one of his books: where he gets his ideas, how the research is conducted, and then how he comes up with the finished product. His presentation was all the more interesting because his principle character Gabriel Wager, is a Denver Police Department detective. The research and setting involve Metropolitan Denver and Colorado. Many of the idea examples he discussed we read in the local newspapers. It is interesting to speculate that Sir Arthur conducted the same kind of research those many years ago!

Our calendar of events continued on May 18 with High Tea at the "House Of Windsor" in Lakewood. This was the second year we met there for a Sherlockian evening of videos and tapes. As before, the food and hospitality were outstanding and the fifteen members and guests who attended thoroughly enjoyed themselves. John Stephenson once again provided the entertainment. The highlight was listening to the only known tape of William Gillets' voice presenting a Sherlockian story.

The next event on the horizon is Doctor Watson's birthday scheduled for September 24. It will again be at Sterne Park in Littleton. An afternoon of food, fun and croquet is planned. Hope to see you there!

Those members who desire more Sherlockian activities than the four D.W.N.P. events are invited to participate in the activities at St. Bartholomew's Chemical Laboratory, a fellow Scion Society here in Denver. You can contact Debbie or Jim Butler (DWNP members) for more information, Phone 425-6175.

We are always looking for new Sherlockian ideas for our Society. If you have an activity that could be incorporated into our list of events, please contact any member of the board. Let us know.

May your summer be one of Sherlockian delights !



Toast -

W - is for the wonderful tales he gave us,
A - is for the ache in his game leg, (or was it his shoulder),
T - is for Tokay he stole from the villain Von Bock,
S - is for the Shingle of Southsea for which he yearned,
O - is for the opium den in Swanden Lane,
N _ is for the Northumberland Fusiliers with whom he served.

Put the them all together you have WATSON, the name without whom we would never have heard of Sherlock Holmes. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Dr. John H. Waston

Bill Dorn

1/6/89

Call Our Bluff Trips

The Polite Fantastic

by Scott Marley



When our good friend Jeremy Piltown, made a formal call on us recently, we knew by his engraved visiting card and his tan kid gloves that something was up. Jeremy has been studying the complicated rules of etiquette of Victorian America, and it's gone to his head. He left with us the assortment of social dictates below, saying that they were all taken from American etiquette books of the 1880s. But knowing Jeremy's penchant for practical joking, we're certain he's slipped in a few phonies to keep us on our toes. Can you save us from social impropriety by spotting the fakes?

-1-

Conspicuous inattention is an insult to the speaker, and, therefore you should not ask the repetition of a sentence, unless your hearing is defective, or you have some other good excuse.

-2-

Sherbets and iced creams are properly eaten with the fork alone, and so, must be served well chilled. Using the spoon to gather the melted liquid left behind betrays a greedy nature.

Gentlemen never invite a lady to any public amusement on the spur of the moment. The day before is the shortest notice that should be given, and when the gentleman is inviting the lady for the first time, he must include another lady or a member of the family.

-4-

Unmarried ladies will not dance more than twice with one gentleman, because doing so will suggest a particular attraction.

-5-

It is a rare gentleman who so dishonors his dinner as to eat at a mid-afternoon party. But a lady seldom refuses an ice or oysters, and not infrequently she partakes heartily of a sumptuous entertainment.

-6-

Pausing to examine the contents of a store window evinces bad taste; you can visit the store at any time whenever you desire to make purchases.

-7-

The host should make available two closets for the hats and outer garments for arriving guests, one for the gentlemen's garments, and one for the those of the ladies. If two are not available, opposite ends of one closet may be used, taking care that men's and ladies' clothing do not mingle.

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-8-

Before the dessert, finger glasses containing rose water may be placed on each guest's left hand, though the present mode is for the perfumed water to be taken around in a deep silver dish, each person, in turn, dipping the corner of his napkin into it and wetting the finger and lips.

-9-

Gentlemen will not swing their arms, nor sway their bodies in a ungainly manner when walking; ladies are never guilty of any such ungracious action, and need no counsel in that respect.

-10-

Before going abroad, or on a long journey, you should either call in person upon all your friends or send visiting cards. Upon your returning home, your friends must first call upon you. You may with propriety drop the acquaintance of those who neglect to do so.

-11-

When the dinner is concluded, replace the silver at the sides of your plate as you found it, first removing any fingerprints or traces of food with your napkin. This will help to preserve the silver and save it from tarnish.

-12-

In crossing the street, a lady should gracefully raise her dress a little above her ankle with one hand. To raise the dress with both hands is vulgar, except where the mud is deep.

-13-

None but the uncultivated would offer a partner in the dance an ungloved hand, as it savors of intentional disrespect.

-14-

Gentlemen indicate the brevity of a formal call by holding their hats and gloves. The cane or umbrella may be left in the hall. Ladies need not remove their gloves, and they retain their parasols while they remain.

-15-

The bridal veil may be thrown back from the face of the bride at the altar, by the groom, if he pleases; but it is not now considered quite reverent or respectful for him to kiss her thus publicly. A delicate woman always rebels against the now disused formality of kissing in the church, and it is pleasant to announce this habit as one of the obsolete customs of public marriages.

-16-

Near relationship, or very closest intimacy, will alone excuse a young unmarried lady speaking in the street to a gentleman; she should bow slightly and pass on.

-17-

Continued references to experiences "During the War," or "While I was down South," or "When we were in Europe" should be avoided. These sentences suggest affectation.

-18-

Should a lady accost a gentleman on the street when he is smoking he will at once extinguish his cigar, and decline politely but firmly to resume it, even though the lady should urge him to continue.

When leaving one's visting card at the home of an acquaintance, the circumstances of the visit may be conveyed by turning down the corners of the card. The upper right corner turned indicates the card was left by a man; a woman may turn the upper left corner of her card. The lower left corner turned tells that the vistor desires to end the acquaintance. The lower right corner may indicate either a proposal of marriage or the acceptance of such a proposal, depending on whether the card is left by a man when calling on a woman or the opposite.

When setting the table for a dinner party, on the right of each space, place at least four glasses, as it a great breach of etiquette as well as a sign of vulgarity to drink more than one kind of wine out of a glass.

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Toast -

"To Sherlock Holmes she is always the woman in his eyes she eclipses and predominates the whole of her sex.." But I can't help wondering if they had married and....

- Her checkbook didn't balance for the sixth month in a row!

Would she still be the woman?

- She called to say the rabbit died....again!

Would she still be the woman?

- Her mother-in-law came for Christmas and stayed until Easter!

Would she still be the woman?

- She vacuumed that vile white stuff from his Persian slipper!

Would she still be the woman?

Well, they didn't wed, and she still is the woman!!

Stan Moskal

1/6/89

Watson's Maze

by

D. Howland

1. Afghan War
2. Army
3. Baker S.
4. Battle
5. Bets
6. Brigade
7. Bull Pup
8. Chronicler
9. Criterion
10. Doctor
11. Digs
12. Fever
13. Friend
14. Fusilier
15. Ghazi
16. Hansom
17. Holmes
18. Hudson
19. James
20. Jazail Bullet
21. John
22. Lazy
23. Maiwand
24. Mary Morstan
25. Moustache
26. Murray
27. Muscular
28. Netly
29. Ormond Sacker
30. Orontes
31. Patients
32. Pension
33. Peshawar
34. Pistol
35. Rache
36. Rifle
37. Roommate
38. Said
39. St. Bart's Hospital
40. Soldier
41. Square Jaw
42. Stamford
43. Subclavian Artery
44. Surgeon
45. Trap
46. Watch
47. Webley
48. Whetstone
49. Wound

Words in the list appear in Watson's maze. As you locate each one circle it in the maze and check it off the list.

B	R	I	G	A	D	E	S	E	M	L	O	H	R	A	R	T	F
N	A	P	P	O	V	O	S	X	S	V	F	A	C	A	R	P	R
E	Z	K	C	I	L	S	S	Q	D	U	W	R	W	T	A	M	E
E	L	T	E	D	S	S	E	O	U	N	R	A	I	T	A	R	Y
O	O	T	I	R	D	T	W	T	A	A	H	G	I	E	A	W	R
R	F	E	T	N	S	A	O	H	N	S	R	E	E	L	N	P	E
M	R	E	U	A	T	M	G	L	E	O	N	E	U	O	E	D	T
O	M	O	V	M	B	F	J	P	L	T	R	C	J	N	N	T	R
N	W	I	N	E	A	O	V	G	S	E	S	O	S	A	A	E	A
D	O	I	Y	A	R	R	U	M	L	U	H	I	W	O	W	L	N
S	L	A	Z	Y	T	D	Y	C	M	N	O	I	O	A	Z	L	A
A	C	H	T	A	S	B	I	M	O	N	A	N	W	N	T	U	I
C	R	W	A	A	H	N	R	O	O	M	M	A	T	E	E	B	V
K	I	N	I	N	O	G	T	U	O	R	S	R	N	Z	U	L	A
E	T	D	S	R	S	Z	S	S	P	E	S	O	I	L	Y	I	L
R	E	R	H	G	P	O	N	T	M	N	S	T	L	F	E	A	C
A	R	C	A	D	I	E	M	A	E	D	S	P	A	L	L	Z	B
C	I	L	M	P	T	D	J	C	U	B	U	R	O	N	B	E	U
H	O	D	E	L	A	T	O	H	S	P	J	J	M	R	E	J	S
E	N	F	Y	B	L	S	R	E	I	L	I	S	U	F	W	H	J

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WRITERS ART by James J. Kilpatrick

The last word comes from Allen D. Howland of Greenville, S.C., who recently browsed through the story of Sherlock Holmes and the Reigate Squires. Said Holmes to Dr. Watson "I am afraid my explanation may disillusionize you." For shame, Mr. Holmes!

Excerpted from column 'New Words Are Better Left Unknown.'
Rocky Mountain News June 25, 1989
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The Major's Commission.

BY W. CLARK RUSSELL.



My name is Henry Adams, and in 1854 I was mate of a ship of 1,200 tons named the *Jessamy Bride*. June of that year found her at Calcutta with cargo to the hatches, and ready to sail for England in three or four days.

I was walking up and down the ship's long quarter-deck, sheltered by the awning, when a young apprentice came aft and said a gentleman wished to speak to me. I saw a man standing in the gangway; he was a tall, soldierly person, about forty years of age, with iron-grey hair and spiked moustache, and an aquiline nose. His eyes were singularly bright and penetrating. He immediately said:—

"I wanted to see the captain; but as chief officer you'll do equally well. When does this ship sail?"

"On Saturday or Monday next."

He ran his eye along the decks and then looked aloft: there was something bird-like in the briskness of his way of glancing.

"I understand you don't carry passengers?"

"That's so, sir, though there's accommodation for them."

"I'm out of sorts, and have been sick for months, and want to see what a trip round the Cape to England will do for me. I shall be going home, not for my health only, but on a commission. The Maharajah of Ratnagiri, hearing I was returning to England on sick-leave, asked me to take charge of a very splendid gift for Her Majesty the Queen of England. It is a diamond, valued at fifteen thousand pounds."

He paused to observe the effect of this communication, and then proceeded:—

"I suppose you know how the Koh-i-noor was sent home?"

"It was conveyed to England, I think," said I, "by H.M.S. *Medea*, in 1850."

"Yes, she sailed in April that year, and arrived at Portsmouth in June. The glorious gem was intrusted to Colonel Mackieson and Captain Ramsay. It was locked up in a small box along with other jewels, and each

officer had a key. The box was secreted in the ship by them, and no man on board the vessel, saving themselves, knew where it was hidden."

"Was that so?" said I, much interested.

"Yes; I had the particulars from the commander of the vessel, Captain Lockyer. When do you expect your skipper on board?" he exclaimed, darting a bright, sharp look around him.

"I cannot tell. He may arrive at any moment."

"The having charge of a stone valued at fifteen thousand pounds, and intended as a gift for the Queen of England, is a deuce of a responsibility," said he. "I shall borrow a hint from the method adopted in the case of the Koh-i-noor. I intend to hide the stone in my cabin, so as to extinguish all risk, saving, of course, what the insurance people call the acts of God. May I look at your cabin accommodation?"

"Certainly."

I led the way to the companion hatch, and he followed me into the cabin. The ship had berthing room for eight or ten people irrespective of the officers who slept aft. But the vessel made no bid for passengers. She left them to Blackwall Liners, to the splendid ships of Green, Money Wigram, and Smith, and to the P. & O. and other steam lines. The overland route was then the general choice: few of their own decision went by way of the Cape. No one had booked with us down to this hour, and we had counted upon having the cabin to ourselves.

The visitor walked into every empty berth, and inspected it as carefully as though he had been a Government surveyor. He beat upon the walls and bulkheads with his cane, sent his brilliant gaze into the corners and under the bunks and up at the ceiling, and finally said, as he stepped from the last of the visitable cabins:—

"This decides me. I shall sail with you."

I bowed and said I was sure the captain would be glad of the pleasure of his company.

(From the Strand Magazine, 1893)

THE MAJOR'S COMMISSION.

"I presume," said he, "that no objection will be raised to my bringing a native carpenter aboard to construct a secret place, as in the case of the Koh-i-noor, for the Maharajah's diamond?"

"I don't think a native carpenter would be allowed to knock the ship about," said I.

"Certainly not. A little secret receptacle — big enough to receive this," said he, putting his hand in his side pocket and producing a square Morocco case, of a size to berth a bracelet or a large brooch. "The construction of a nook to conceal this will not be knocking your ship about?"

"It's a question for the captain and the agents, sir," said I.

He replaced the case, whose bulk was so inconsiderable that it did not bulge in his coat when he had pocketed it, and said, now that he had inspected the ship and the accommodation, he would call at once upon the agents. He gave me his card and left the vessel.

The card bore the name of a military officer of some distinction. Enough if, in this narrative of a memorable and extraordinary incident, I speak of him as Major Byron Hood.

The master of the *Jessamy Bride* was Captain Robert North. This man had, three years earlier, sailed with me as my chief mate; it then happened I was unable to quickly obtain command, and accepted the offer of mate of the *Jessamy Bride*, whose captain, I was surprised to hear, proved the shipmate who had been under me, but who, some money having been left to him, had purchased an interest in the firm to which

the ship belonged. We were on excellent terms; almost as brothers indeed. He never asserted his authority, and left it to my own judgment to recognise his claims. I am happy to know he had never occasion to regret his friendly treatment of me.

He came on board in the afternoon of that day on which Major Hood had visited the ship, and was full of that gentleman and his resolution to carry a costly diamond round the Cape under sail, instead of making his obligation as brief as steam and the old desert route would allow.

"I've had a long talk with him up at the agents," said Captain North. "He don't seem well."

"Suffering from his nerves, perhaps," said I.

"He's a fine, gentlemanly person. He told Mr. Nicholson he was twice wounded, naming towns which no Christian man could twist his tongue into the sound of."

"Will he be allowed to make a hole in the ship to hide his diamond in?"

"He has agreed to make good any damage done, and to pay at the rate of a fare and a half for the privilege of hiding the stone."

"Why doesn't he give the thing into your keeping, sir? This jackdaw-like hiding is a sort of reflection on our honesty, isn't it, captain?"

He laughed and answered, "No: I like such reflections for my part. Who wants to be burdened with the custody of precious things belonging to other people? Since he's to have the honour of presenting the diamond, let the worry of taking care of it be his; this ship's enough for me."



"A SQUARE MOROCCO CASE."

"He'll be knighted, I suppose, for delivering this stone," said I. "Did he show it to you, sir?"

"No."

"He has it in his pocket."

"He produced the case," said Captain North. "A thing about the size of a muffin. Where'll he hide it? But we're not to be curious in *that* direction," he added, smiling.

Next morning, somewhere about ten o'clock, Major Hood came on board with two natives; one a carpenter, the other his assistant. They brought a basket of tools, descended into the cabin, and were lost sight of till after two. No; I'm wrong. I was writing at the cabin table at half-past twelve when the Major opened his door, peered out, shut the door swiftly behind him with an extraordinary air and face of caution and anxiety, and coming along to me asked for some refreshments for himself and the two natives. I called to the steward, who filled a tray, which the Major with his own hands conveyed into his berth. Then, some time after two, whilst I was at the gangway talking to a friend, the Major and the two blacks came out of the cabin. Before they went over the side I said:—

"Is the work finished below, sir?"

"It is, and to my entire satisfaction," he answered.

When he was gone, my friend, who was the master of a barque, asked me who that fine-looking man was. I answered he was a passenger, and then, not understanding that the thing was a secret, plainly told him what they had been doing in the cabin, and why.

"But," said he, "those two niggers'll know that something precious is to be hidden in the place they've been making."

"That's been in my head all the morning," said I.

"Who's to hinder them," said he, "from blabbing to one or more of the crew? Treachery's cheap in this country. A rupee will buy a pile of roguery." He looked at me expressively. "Keep a bright lookout for a brace of well-oiled stowaways," said he.

"It's the Major's business," I answered, with a shrug.

When Captain North came on board he and I went into the Major's berth. We scrutinized every part, but saw nothing to indicate that a tool had been used or a plank lifted. There was no sawdust, no chip of wood: everything to the eye was precisely as before. No man will say we had not a right to look: how were we to make sure, as

captain and mate of the ship for whose safety we were responsible, that those blacks under the eye of the Major had not been doing something which might give us trouble by-and-by?

"Well," said Captain North, as we stepped on deck, "if the diamond's already hidden, which I doubt, it couldn't be more snugly concealed if it were twenty fathoms deep in the mud here."

The Major's baggage came on board on the Saturday, and on the Monday we sailed. We were twenty-four of a ship's company all told: twenty-five souls in all, with Major Hood. Our second mate was a man named Mackenzie, to whom and to the apprentices whilst we lay in the river I had given particular instructions to keep a sharp lookout on all strangers coming aboard. I had been very vigilant myself too, and altogether was quite convinced there was no stowaway below, either white or black, though under ordinary circumstances one never would think of seeking for a native in hiding for Europe.

On either hand of the *Jessamy Bride's* cabin five sleeping berths were bulkheaded off. The Major's was right aft on the starboard side. Mine was next his. The captain occupied a berth corresponding with the Major's, right aft on the port side. Our solitary passenger was exceedingly amiable and agreeable at the start and for days after. He professed himself delighted with the cabin fare, and said it was not to be bettered at three times the charge in the saloons of the steamers. His drink he had himself laid in: it consisted mainly of claret and soda. He had come aboard with a large cargo of Indian cigars, and was never without a long, black weed, bearing some tongue-staggering, up-country name, betwixt his lips. He was primed with professional anecdote, had a thorough knowledge of life in India, both in the towns and wilds, had seen service in Burmah and China, and was altogether one of the most conversible soldiers I ever met: a scholar, something of a wit, and all that he said and all that he did was rendered the more engaging by grace of breeding.

Captain North declared to me he had never met so delightful a man in all his life, and the pleasantest hours I ever passed on the ocean were spent in walking the deck in conversation with Major Byron Hood.

For some days after we were at sea no reference was made either by the Major or ourselves to the Maharajah of Ratnagiri's splendid gift to Her Majesty the Queen

THE MAJOR'S COMMISSION.



"EXCEEDINGLY AMIABLE AND ACCEPTABLE."

The captain and I and Mackenzie viewed it as tabooed matter: a thing to be locked up in memory, just as, in fact, it was hidden away in some cunningly-wrought receptacle in the Major's cabin. One day at dinner, however, when we were about a week out from Calcutta, Major Hood spoke of the Maharajah's gift. He talked freely about it; his face was flushed as though the mere thought of the thing raised a passion of triumph in his spirits. His eyes shone whilst he enlarged upon the beauty and value of the stone.

The captain and I exchanged looks; the steward was waiting upon us with cocked ears, and that menial, deaf expression of face which makes you know every word is being greedily listened to. We might therefore make sure that before the first dog-watch came round all hands would have heard that the Major had a diamond in his cabin intended for the Queen of England, and worth fifteen thousand pounds. Nay, they'd hear even more than that; for in the course of his talk about the gem the Major praised the ingenuity of the Asiatic artisan, whether Indian or Chinese, and spoke of the hiding-place the two natives had contrived for the diamond as an example of that sort of juggling skill in carving which is found in perfection amongst the Japanese.

I thought this candour highly indiscreet:

charged too with menace. A matter gains in significance by mystery. The Jacks would think nothing of a diamond being in the ship as a part of her cargo, which might include a quantity of specie for all they knew. But some of them might think more often about it than was at all desirable when they understood it was stowed away under a plank, or was to be got by tapping about for a hollow echo, or probing with the judgment of a carpenter when the Major was on deck and the coast aft all clear.

We had been three weeks at sea: it was a roasting afternoon, though I cannot exactly remember the situation of the ship. Our tacks were aboard and the bowlines triced out, and the vessel was scarcely looking up to her course, slightly heeling away from a fiery fanning of wind off the starboard bow, with the sea trembling under the sun in white-hot needles of broken light, and a narrow ribbon of wake glancing off into a hot blue thickness that brought the horizon within a mile of us astern.

I had charge of the deck from twelve to four. For an hour past the Major, cigar in mouth, had been stretched at his ease in a folding chair; a book lay beside him on the skylight, but he scarcely glanced at it. I had paused to address him once or twice, but he

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RESTING AT HIS EASE IN A FOLDING CHAIR.

showed no disposition to chat. Though he lay in the most easy lounging posture imaginable, I observed a restless, singular expression in his face, accentuated yet by the looks he incessantly directed out to sea, or glances at the deck forward, or around at the helm, so far as he might move his head without shifting his attitude. It was as though his mind were in labour with some scheme. A man might so look whilst working out the complicated plot of a play, or adjusting by the exertion of his memory the intricacies of a novel piece of mechanism.

On a sudden he started up and went below.

A few minutes after he had left the deck, Captain North came up from his cabin, and for some while we paced the planks together. There was a pleasant hush upon the ship: the silence was as refreshing as a fold of coolness lifting off the sea. A spun-yarn winch was clinking on the fore-castle: from alongside rose the music of fretted waters.

I was talking to the captain on some detail

of the ship's furniture, when Major Hood came running up the companion steps, his face as white as his waistcoat, his head uncovered, every muscle of his countenance rigid, as with horror.

"Good God, captain!" cried he, standing in the companion, "what do you think has happened?" Before we could fetch a breath he cried: "Someone's stolen the diamond!"

I glanced at the helmsman who stood at the radiant circle of wheel staring with open mouth and eyebrows arched into his hair. The captain, stepping close to Major Hood, said in a low, steady voice:—

"What's this you tell me, sir?"

"The diamond's gone!" exclaimed the Major, fixing his shining eyes upon me, whilst I observed that his fingers convulsively stroked his thumbs as though he were rolling up pellets of bread or paper.

"Do you tell me the diamond's been taken from the place you hid it in?" said Captain North, still speaking softly, but with deliberation.

"The diamond never was hidden," replied the Major, who continued to stare at me. "It was in a portmanteau. *That's* no hiding-place!"

Captain North fell back a step. "Never was hidden!" he exclaimed. "Didn't you bring two native workmen aboard for no other purpose than to hide it?"

"It never was hidden," said the Major, now turning his eyes upon the captain. "I chose it should be believed it was undiscoverably concealed in some part of my cabin, that I might safely and conveniently keep it in my baggage, where no thief would dream of looking for it. Who has it?" he cried with a sudden fierceness, making a step full of passion out of the companion-way; and he looked under knitted brows towards the ship's fore-castle.

Captain North watched him idly for a moment or two, and then with an abrupt swing of his whole figure, eloquent of defiant resolution, he stared the Major in the face, and said in a quiet, level voice:—

"I shan't be able to help you. If it's gone, it's gone. A diamond's not a bale of

THE MAJOR'S COMMISSION.



"SOMEONE'S STOLEN THE DIAMOND!"

wool. Whoever's been clever enough to find it will know how to keep it."

"I must have it!" broke out the Major. "It's a gift for Her Majesty the Queen. It's in this ship. I look to you, sir, as master of this vessel, to recover the property which some one of the people under your charge has robbed me of."

"I'll accompany you to your cabin," said the captain; and they went down the steps.

I stood motionless, gaping like an idiot into the yawn of hatch down which they had disappeared. I had been so used to think of the diamond as cunningly hidden in the Major's berth, that his disclosure was absolutely a shock with its weight of astonishment. 'Tis well wonder that neither Captain North nor I had observed any marks of a workman's tools in the Major's berth. Not but that it was a very ingenious stratagem, far cleverer to my way of thinking than any subtle, secret burial of the thing. To think of the Major and his two Indians sitting idly for hours in that cabin, with the captain and myself all the while supposing they were fashioning some wonderful contrivance or place for concealing the treasure in! And still, for all the Major's cunning, the stone was gone! Who had stolen it? The only fellow likely to prove the thief was the steward, not because he was more or less of a rogue than any other man in the ship, but because he was the one person who, by virtue of his office, was privileged to go in

and out of the sleeping places as his duties required.

I was pacing the deck, musing into a sheer muddle this singular business of the Maharajah of Ratnagiri's gift to the Queen of England, with all sorts of dim, unformed suspicions floating loose in my brains round the central fancy of the fifteen thousand pound stone there, when the captain returned. He was alone. He stepped up to me hastily, and said:—

"He swears the diamond has been

stolen. He showed me the empty case."

"Was there ever a stone in it at all?" said I.

"I don't think that," he answered, quickly; "there's no motive under Heaven to be imagined if the whole thing's a fabrication."

"What then, sir?"

"The case is empty, but I've not made up my mind yet that the stone's missing."

"The man's an officer and a gentleman."

"I know, I know!" he interrupted, "but still, in my opinion, the stone's not missing. The long and short of it is," he said, after a very short pause, with a careful glance at the skylight and companion hatch, "his behaviour isn't convincing enough. Something's wanting in his passion and his vexation."

"Sincerity!"

"Ah! I don't intend that this business shall trouble me. He angrily required me to search the ship for stowaways. Bosh! The second mate and steward have repeatedly overhauled the lazarette: there's nobody there."

"And if not there, then nowhere else," said I. "Perhaps he's got the forepeak in his head."

"I'll not have a hatch lifted," he exclaimed, warmly, "nor will I allow the crew to be troubled. There's been no heft. Put it that the stone is stolen. Who's going to find it in a forecastle full of men—a thing as big as half a bean perhaps? If it's gone, it's

gone, indeed, whoever may have it. But there's no go in this matter at all," he added, with a short, nervous laugh.

We were talking in this fashion when the Major joined us; his features were now composed. He gazed sternly at the captain and said, loftily:—

"What steps are you prepared to take in this matter?"

"None, sir."

His face darkened. He looked with a bright gleam in his eyes at the captain, then at me: his gaze was piercing with the light in it. Without a word he stepped to the side and, folding his arms, stood motionless.

I glanced at the captain; there was something in the bearing of the Major that gave shape, vague indeed, to a suspicion that had cloudily hovered about my thoughts of the man for some time past. The captain met my glance, but he did not interpret it.

When I was relieved at four o'clock by the second mate, I entered my berth, and presently, hearing the captain go to his cabin, went to him and made a proposal. He reflected, and then answered:—

"Yes; get it done."

After some talk I went forward and told the carpenter to step aft and bore a hole in the bulkhead that separated the Major's berth from mine. He took the necessary tools from his chest and followed me. The captain was now again on deck, talking with the Major; in fact, detaining him in conversation, as had been preconcerted. I went into the Major's berth, and quickly settled upon a spot for an eye-hole. The carpenter then went to work in my cabin, and in a few minutes bored an orifice large enough to enable me to command a large

portion of the adjacent interior. I swept the sawdust from the deck in the Major's berth, so that no hint should draw his attention to the hole, which was pierced in a corner shadowed by a shelf. I then told the carpenter to manufacture a plug and paint its extremity of the colour of the bulkhead. He brought me this plug in a quarter of an hour. It fitted nicely, and was to be withdrawn and inserted as noiselessly as though greased.

I don't want you to suppose this Peeping-Tom scheme was at all to my taste, albeit my own proposal; but the truth is, the Major's telling us that someone had stolen his diamond made all who lived aft hotly eager to find out whether he spoke the truth or not; for, if he had been really robbed of the stone, then suspicion properly rested upon the officers and the steward, which was an *infernal* consideration: dishonouring and inflaming enough to drive one to seek a remedy in even a baser device than that of secretly keeping watch on a man in his bedroom. Then, again, the captain told me that the Major, whilst they talked when the carpenter was at work making the hole, had said he would give notice of his loss to the police at

Cape Town (at which place we were to touch), and declared he'd take care no man went ashore—from Captain North himself down to the youngest apprentice—till every individual, every sea-chest, every locker, drawer, shelf and box, bunk, bracket and crevice had been searched by qualified rummagers.

On this the day of the theft, nothing more was said about the diamond: that is, after the captain had emphatically informed Major Hood that he meant to take no steps whatever in the matter. I had expected to find the Major sullen and silent at



"THE CARPENTER WENT TO WORK."

THE MAJOR'S COMMISSION.

dinner; he was not, indeed, so talkative as usual, but no man watching and hearing him would have supposed so heavy a loss as that of a stone worth fifteen thousand pounds, the gift of an Eastern potentate to the Queen of England, was weighing upon his spirits.

It is with reluctance I tell you that, after dinner that day, when he went to his cabin, I softly withdrew the plug and watched him. I blushed whilst thus acting, yet I was determined, for my own sake and for the sake of my shipmates, to persevere. I spied nothing noticeable saving this: he sat in a folding chair and smoked, but every now and again he withdrew his cigar from his mouth and talked to it with a singular smile. It was a smile of cunning, that worked like some baleful, magical spirit in the fine high breeding of his features; changing his looks just as a painter of incomparable skill might colour a noble, familiar face into a diabolical expression, amazing those who knew it only in its honest and manly beauty. I had never seen that wild, grinning countenance on him before, and it was rendered the more remarkable by the movement of his lips whilst he talked to himself, but inaudibly.

A week slipped by; time after time I had the man under observation; often when I had charge of the deck I'd leave the captain to keep a look out, and steal below and watch Major Hood in his cabin.

It was a Sunday, I remember. I was lying in my bunk half dozing—we were then, I think, about a three-weeks' sail from Table Bay—when I heard the Major go to his cabin. I was already sick of my aimless prying; and whilst I now lay I thought to myself: "I'll sleep; what is the good of this trouble? I know exactly what I shall see. He is either in his chair, or his bunk, or overhauling his clothes, or standing, cigar in mouth, at the open porthole." And then I said to myself: "If I don't look now I shall miss the only opportunity of detection that may occur." One is often urged by a sort of instinct in these matters.

I got up, almost as through an impulse of habit, noiselessly withdrew the plug, and looked. The Major was at that instant standing with a pistol-case in his hand: he opened it as my sight went to him, took out

one of a brace of very elegant pistols, put down the case, and on his apparently touching a spring in the butt of the pistol, the silver plate that ornamented the extremity sprang open as the lid of a snuff-box would, and something small and bright dropped into his hand. This he examined with the peculiar



"SOMETHING SMALL AND BRIGHT DROPPED INTO HIS HAND."

cunning smile I have before described; but owing to the position of his hand, I could not see what he held, though I had not the least doubt that it was the diamond.

I watched him breathlessly. After a few minutes he dropped the stone into the hollow butt-end, shut the silver plate, shook the weapon against his ear as though it pleased him to rattle the stone, then put it in its case, and the case into a portmanteau.

I at once went on deck, where I found the captain, and reported to him what I had seen. He viewed me in silence, with a stare of astonishment and incredulity. What I had seen, he said, was not the diamond. I told him the thing that had dropped into the Major's hand was bright, and, as I thought, sparkled, but it was so held I could not see it.

I was talking to him on this extraordinary affair when the Major came on deck. The captain said to me: "Hold him in chat. I'll judge for myself," and asked me to describe how he might quickly find the pistol-case. This I did, and he went below.

I joined the Major, and talked on the first subjects that entered my head. He was restless in his manner, inattentive, slightly flushed in the face; wore a lofty manner, and being half a head taller than I, glanced down at me from time to time in a condescending way. This behaviour in him was what Captain North and I had agreed to call his "injured air." He'd occasionally put it on to remind us that he was affronted by the captain's insensibility to his loss, and that the assistance of the police would be demanded on our arrival at Cape Town.

Presently looking down the skylight, I perceived the captain. Mackenzie had charge of the watch. I descended the steps, and Captain North's first words to me were:—

"It's no diamond!"

"What, then, is it?"

"A common piece of glass not worth a quarter of a farthing."

"What's it all about, then?" said I. "Upon my soul, there's nothing in Euclid to beat it. Glass?"

"A little lump of common glass; a fragment of bull's-eye, perhaps."

"What's he hiding it for?"

"Because," said Captain North, in a soft voice, looking up and around, "he's mad!"

"Just so!" said I. "That I'll swear to *now*, and I've been suspecting it this fortnight past."

"He's under the spell of some sort of mania," continued the captain; "he believes he's commissioned to present a diamond to the Queen; possibly picked up a bit of stuff in the street that started the delusion, then bought a case for it, and worked out the rest as we know."

"But why does he want to pretend that the stone was stolen from him?"

"He's been mastered by his own love for the diamond," he answered. "That's how I reason it. Madness has made his affection for his imaginary gem a passion in him."

"And so he robbed himself of it, you think, that he might keep it?"

"That's about it," said he.

After this I kept no further look-out upon the Major, nor would I ever take an opportunity to enter his cabin to view for myself the piece of glass as the captain described it, though curiosity was often hot in me.

We arrived at Table Bay in twenty-two days from the date of my seeing the Major with the pistol in his hand. His manner had for a week before been marked by an irritability that was often beyond his control. He had talked snappishly and petulantly at table, contradicted aggressively, and on two occasions gave Captain North the lie; but we had carefully avoided noticing his manner, and acted as though he were still the high bred, polished gentleman who had sailed with us from Calcutta.

The first to come aboard were the Customs people. They were almost immediately followed by the harbour-master. Scarcely had the first of the Custom House officers stepped over the side when Major Hood, with a very red face, and a lofty, dignified carriage, marched up to him, and said in a loud voice:—

"I have been robbed during the passage from Calcutta of a diamond worth fifteen thousand pounds, which I was bearing as a gift from the Maharajah of Ratnagiri to Her Majesty the Queen of England."

The Customs man stared with a lobster-like expression of face: no image could better hit the protruding eyes and brick-red countenance of the man.

"I request," continued the Major, raising his voice into a shout, "to be placed at once in communication with the police at this port. No person must be allowed to leave the vessel until he has been thoroughly searched by such expert hands as you and your *confrères* no doubt are, sir. I am Major Byron Hood. I have been twice wounded. My services are well known, and I believe duly appreciated in the right quarters. Her Majesty the Queen is not to suffer any disappointment at the hands of one who has the honour of wearing her uniform, nor am I to be compelled, by the act of a thief, to betray the confidence the Maharajah has reposed in me."

He continued to harangue in this manner for some minutes, during which I observed a change in the expression of the Custom House officers' faces.

Meanwhile Captain North stood apart in earnest conversation with the harbour-master. They now approached; the harbour-master, looking steadily at the Major, exclaimed:—

"Good news, sir! Your diamond is found!"

"Ha!" shouted the Major. "Who has it?"

"You'll find it in your pistol-case," said the harbour-master.

The Major gazed round at us with his wild,

THE MAJOR'S COMMISSION.



"I HAVE BEEN ROBBED."

bright eyes, with a face a-work with the conflict of twenty mad passions and sensations. Then bursting into a loud, insane laugh, he caught the harbour-master by the arm, and in a low voice and a sickening, transforming leer of cunning, said: "Come, let's go and look at it."

We went below. We were six, including two Custom House officers. We followed

the poor madman, who grasped the harbour-master's arm, and on arriving at his cabin we stood at the door of it. He seemed heedless of our presence, but on his taking the pistol-case from the port-manteau, the two Customs men sprang forward.

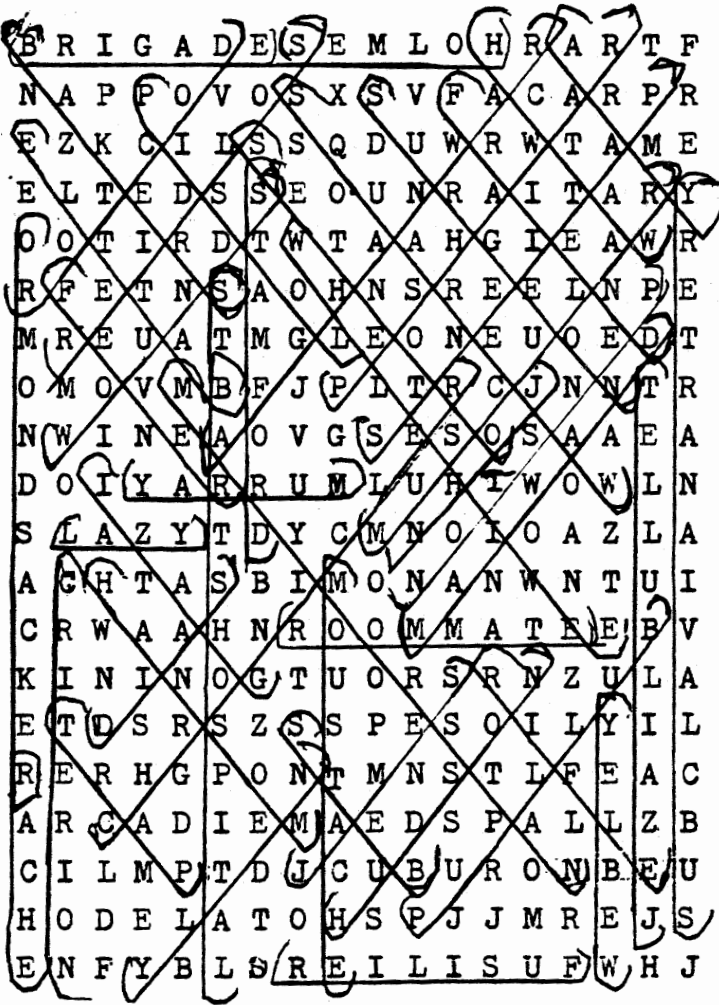
"That must be searched by us," one cried, and in a minute they had it.

With the swiftness of experienced hands they found and pressed the spring of the pistol, the silver plate flew open, and out dropped a fragment of thick, common glass, just as Captain North had described the thing. It fell upon the deck. The Major sprang, picked it up, and pocketed it.

"Her Majesty will not be disappointed, after all," said he, with a courtly bow to us, "and the commission the Maharajah's honoured me with shall be fulfilled."

The poor gentleman was taken ashore that afternoon, and his luggage followed him.

He was certified mad by the medical man at Cape Town, and was to be retained there, as I understood, till the arrival of a steamer for England. It was an odd, bewildering incident from top to bottom. No doubt this particular delusion was occasioned by the poor fellow, whose mind was then fast decaying, reading about the transmission of the Koh-i-noor, and musing about it with a madman's proneness to dwell upon little things.



THE MEDICAL BULLETIN

Editor:

Dorothy Ellis
2851 South Reed st.
Denver, Co. 80227

Calligrapher:

Nancy Iona

Send stories, essays, jokes, complaints (nothing personal) poetry, and ideas to the editor

RULES -

- The fakes are as follows:
- 2. Sherbet and ice cream have always been properly eaten with a spoon.
- 7. Etiquette deals with appearances , not morality. What the coats do when left alone in a dark closet is nobody's business.
- 11. Maintaining the silver is not the guest's responsibility. That's what all those servants are for.
- 19. Little messages can indeed be passed on by turning down the corners of visting cards, but the examples given aren't correct. (The visitor's sex may be deduced by the name on the card; one never admits to wanting to end an acquaintance--one simply stops returning calls; proposals are traditionally offered and accepted in person only.) The real meanings of the corners are:--upper left--the card was left in person, not by messenger; upper right--congratulations; lower left--the vistor is leaving town; lower right--condolences.

The genuine rules are from GASKELL'S COMPENDIUM OF FORMS (1884), THE NATIONAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BUSINESS AND SOCIAL FORMS (1880), and SOCIAL ETIQUETTE OF NEW YORK (1880).

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