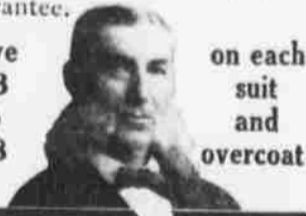


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make out what was wrong with them. I didn't bother much with them; there was a good head of water in the stream; going slow but steady, and I turned my Kafirs out.

"It was a beauty of a morning. The sun was well up, shining clear and splendid and the air was still cool from the night—a morning to make you want to stretch your muscles and put your strength into something. The niggers slouched up in gangs of a dozen and I hustled them across to the job. The stacks were ranged along the bank all ready, only needing to be shoved over. Niggers with poles were to go down and help 'em round the bends. Oh, I had it all worked out! At six sharp, I shouted to shove the first stack over.

"The fellers from the mine were with me, looking on. The niggers gave a kind of cheerful squeak, as niggers do when they're pulling or shoving together and over went the first stack, clattering down the bank and splashing into the water. The battery manager, standing next to me, hid his face in his hands and went off into an awful strangled yell of merriment. I was half way through a shout to send the next stack over when I stopped. Had I suddenly gone mad or lost my eyesight or some-

thing? I stared at the stream where the first stack had fallen and then at the fellers from the mine. They were leaning up against one another, helpless with laughing. With a feeling of weakness in the stomach, I signed to the Kafirs to send the next stack down, and then I knew."

"Knew what?" demanded the Young Men with Capital in chorus.

"The wood would n't float," said Mr. Carey. "I don't know the scientific name of the stuff; we call it 'gash-wood' and it sinks like a stone. And there I was, with enough of it cut to pave a continent, eighty Kafirs to pay, a contract to fulfil, and a name for being a born, frothy, boasting, bloomin' fool to live down. I remember the battery manager, with a tin mug in one hand and a bottle of champagne in the other, coming up to me, gurgling and choking.

"Sink-or-Swim," he was babbling. "Sink-or-Swim—that's your name now, world without end. Have some of this, Sink-or-Swim!"

"And it's stuck to me ever since." "Still," said the younger of the Young Men with Capital, "still, careful and —er—conservative investment—"

"Sorry," interrupted Mr. Carey rising. "I've got to go."

Lord Stranleigh on the High Seas

(Continued from Page 15)

Stranleigh took from his pocketbook several Bank of England notes; selecting two for fifty pounds each, he handed them to her.

"Good night," he said, hurriedly. "Good night," she whispered.

After dinner on the day they left Queenstown, Lord Stranleigh sat in an easy chair in the luxuriously furnished drawing room of his suite. A shaded electric light stood on the table at his elbow, and he was absorbed in a book. Stranleigh was at peace with the world, and his reading soothed a mind which he never allowed to become perturbed except on rare occasions. He thanked his stars that he was sure of a few days undisturbed by callers, and free from written requests.

Just at his highest appreciation of the moment he was amazed to see the door open, and a man enter without knock or other announcement. His first thought was to wonder what had become of Ponderby; how had the stranger eluded him? He was a ruddy-faced, burly individual, and as he turned around to shut the door softly, Stranleigh saw that his thick neck showed rolls of flesh beneath the hair. Stranleigh placed his book face downwards on the table, but otherwise made no motion.

"Lord Stranleigh, I presume," said the stranger.

His lordship made no reply, but continued gazing at the intruder.

"I wish to have a few words with you, and considered it better to come to you here, than to accost you on deck. What I have to say is serious, and outside we might have got into an altercation which you would regret."

"You need fear no altercation with me," said Stranleigh.

"Well, at least I believe you desire to avoid publicity, otherwise you would not be traveling under an assumed name."

"I am not traveling under an assumed name."

The stout man waved his hand in depreciation of unnecessary talk.

"I will come to the point at once," he said, seating himself without invitation.

"I shall be obliged if you will do so."

THE newcomer's eyes narrowed, and a threatening expression overspread his rather vicious face.

"I want to know, Lord Stranleigh, and I have a right to ask, why you gave a hundred pounds to my wife."

"To your wife?" echoed Stranleigh, in amazement.

"Yes; I have made a memorandum of the numbers, and here they are; two fifty-pound notes, Bank of England. Do you deny having given them to her?"

"I gave two fifty-pound notes to a young lady, whose name, I understood, was Trevelyan; a name which I also bear. She informed me, and somehow I believed her, that her purse, containing steamship ticket and money, had been lost, or stolen."

A wry smile twisted the lips of the alleged husband.

"Oh, that's the story, is it? Would you be surprised if the young lady in question denied that *in toto*?"

"I should not be astonished at anything," replied his lordship, "if you are in possession of the actual bank-notes I gave to her."

"She describes your having taken these fimsies from a number of others you carry in your pocket. Would you mind reading me the number of the next note in your collection?"

"Would you mind reading me the numbers on the notes you hold?" asked Stranleigh, in cool, even tones, making no sign of producing his own assets.

"Not at all," replied the other, whereupon he read them. The notes were evidently two of a series, and the numbers differed only by a single unit. Stranleigh nonchalantly took out his pocket-book, and the intruder's eyes glistened as he observed its bulk. Stranleigh glanced at the number on the top bank-note, and replaced his pocket-book, leaning back in his easy chair.

"You are quite right," he said. "Those are the notes I gave to Miss Trevelyan."

"I asked, why."

"I told you why."

"That cock-and-bull story won't go down," said the other. "Even the richest men do not fling money about in such reckless fashion. They do it only for a favour given or a favour expected."

"I daresay you are right. But come to the point, as you said you would."

"Is that necessary?"

"I don't know that it is. You want money; as large an amount as can be squeezed from a man supposedly wealthy. You use your good-looking wife as a decoy—"

"You are casting aspersion on a lady quite unknown to you!" cried his visitor, with well-assumed indignation.



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