A BRILLIANT ADVENTURE, What do You take Your old Bad

For?" From Harper's Weekly. The time was about a fortnight before Christmas. There were not joined me many travelers, and I had a compartment in the early tidal train to mpself. My destination was Paris, my errand to convey from my father (a London jeweler and sliversmith) to his agent in that city a very valuable brilliant ring. "The diamonds in it are worth five hundred pounds if they are worth a penny," my father had said to me; so I hope you will take special care of the ring, Ned. and neither lose it' on the way nor allow yourself to be robbed of it." I smiled a little superciliously as my father spoke. As if it were at all likely that I should either lose it or ellow it to be stolen from me! I was just turned one-

and twenty, and father had no right

to speak to me as if I were still a I had got the ring in an inner pocket of my waistcoat, as I took care to assure myself from time to time. I had not seen it since my father put it into a velvet-lined box, in which it was still shut up. When I had finished my first eigar and had got through the morning news, the thought struck me that I might as well have another look at the ring. There could be no harm in that, you know. I took the box out of its hiding place and opened it. My eyes were dazzled as I looked. There laid the darling in its nest of purple velyet. Who could have resisted the pleasure of taking it out and trying it on? Certainly not I. First on one finger and then on another I tried it. Had it been made for the third finger of my right hand, it could not have fitted me

better. It looked simply exquisite Now I came to think of it, was there or could there be a safer hidingplace for the ring than my finger? I had only to keep my glove on and not a soul would know anything about it. It was far safer there than in my pocket. In such a case to hesitate was folly. I placed the ring on my finger, and put the empty box back into my pocket. As I was alone, there was no occasion to put my glove on just then; so I mused and smoked, and watched the manycolored rays of light that flashed from the brilliants, and wondered what great swell's finger it was destined to decorate. How I wished that I could call it mine.

There was no harm in dazzling the eyes of the ticket collector with He was only a railway official. But I took care to pull on my glove and button it before alighting from the train. A quarter of an hour later we were steaming swiftly out

There was not more than a dozen passengers on deck. The day was cold and clear, with just anough sea on to make the voyage unpleasant middle-aged person. who was cating and drinking nearly the whole way across-evidently an old salt. The other was -well, simply the most charming creature I had ever set my eyes on. In point of fact, I could not keep my eyes off her. I passed her and repassed her as I paced the deck from end to end, and every time that I passed her I looked at her. What lovely gray eyes! What superb yellow hair! But as for her complexion, it would need a poet to describe its wild-ose tints. Once or twice her eyes met mine just for a moment, and it struck me that they were full of a wistful sad. ness. So far as I could judge, she was entirely alone. We were about half way across when, as I passed her for the fiftieth time, she spoke. 4 Would monsieur have the goodness to ask the steward to bring me a little cognac?" She spoke in French. As the song says, "Her voice was low and sweet." I was too flattered to answer her. I could only bow and grin, and make a bolt to the steward's den. Of course I took the cogna: to her myself. You should have seen how prettily she thanked me. She sipped at it as a canary might do. if that bird were in the habit of drinking brandy. "I hope that mademoselle is somewhat re-

vived," I ventured to observe presently. "Yes, very much revived, thanks to monsieur. But I am not a mademoselle. I am a madame. I am a widow." She pressed her handkerchief to her eyes as she spoke. How interestina, nay, how touching was this simple confession. The wistful sorrow in her eyes was at

There was a camp-stool close by. to be disturbed. Madame,"
Presently I ventured to draw it a added "has not yet returned." little nearer and to sit down on it, blushing at my temerity as I did so. She did not seem at all offended and we were presently in the midst of an animated and interesting conversation. There was no hauteur about madame. On the contrary, she was candor itself. She had only been three days in London, with Sir Henry Fitz Evans, who ill; and ran to fetch some cognac. going back into seclusion-going swindled, and by a common advenback to the little cottage in which turess. she had dwelt ever since her dear husband's death. She would not be before my father, a miserable, hagable to go forward by the tidal train, gard, woebegone wretch. I told my she told me, having a business call tale, but as I did so I could not keep to make in Calais. She wou'd go down my tears—tears of mingled forward by the evening train. All shame add vexation. He listened this was told me with charming frankness. There was no reason why I should not wait and go for ward with her by the evening train -if she would allow me to do so. When I threw out a hint to that effect, she offered no objection. She admitted at once that she was fond of society, and then she looked at session, left you asleep, she was just me and-well, I could almost sworn in time to catch the afternoon boat that she blushed. I had already told her that I was bound to Paris on a special errand for my father; night." but I had not said a word about the ring, nor had she even seen it. I don't understand. When she had had put on on my glove before leav- once got the ring in her possession, ing the train at Dover, and I still wore them. A little while longer and we found ourselves at Calais.

course of half an hour, madame that I thought it would do you no

of luncheon in kid gloves. The vincing you that there are people in questi n was whether I should por the world quite as clever, or it may take mine with the rin on my fin- he cleverer, than a certain young ge, or whether I should put it care- nincompoop of one-and-twenty. If fully away in the box and hide it you profit by the lesson my money out of sight. If you have anv will have been well spent. knowledge of what human nature is at twenty-one, especially when there's a pretty woman in the case, you will know the decision I arrived

Madame pecked a little at this swiftly the minutes seemed to fly! thing but paste." I could have lingered in in that cozy little room for a year. When the cloth was drawn and we were left to ourselves, with a bottle of hock on the table between us, somehow our chairs seemed to gravitate toward each other. Or perhaps it was the stove that attracted us, for the atternoon was chilly. In any case, we found ourselves in closer proximity. Then said madame. 'Do you smoke, monsieur?" "Yes, considerably more than is good for me I'm afraid " "Then smoke now. Oblige me. I like to see a gentleman smoke." I rose in order to get my cigar case out of the pocket of my overcoat. Madame laid her hand lightly on my arm -and what a charming hand it was. "Tenez. 1 am going to make a confession. said she. "I smoke, too,-moi Cigarettes. I lived for several years in Spain, where nearly all the ladies smoke. You are not shocked, I hope at the idea of a lady smoking a cigarette?"

"Shocked, madame\_" "No, of course not. You are too much a man of the world. You are above such insular prejudices. Ph bien, you shall smoke one of my cigarettes." From the sachet by case which she opened and bade me choose a cigarette. I did so, and she took another. Then with ber own fair fingers she struck an allu mette. and held it while I lighted her own. She could not fail to see my ring as she lighted the match.

"I dare say you will find the flavor a little peculiar," said madame, a minute or two later. "These cigarettes are made of perfumed topacco. I never smoke any others. I hope you don't find yours very disagree

"On the contrary, madame, I am quite in love with it. As you say the flavor is quite peculiar, but aromatic and pleasant-very pleasant." To tell the truth, I didn't like it at all, but I wouldn't have said so for worlds.

We smoked on in silence. What would this superb creature say to me, I wondered, if I were to tell of interest. her how madly I had fallen in love for bad sailors. Only two ladies with her? Would she reject me were visible One was a stout, with scorn, or would she I gave a sudden start, and was shocked to find that I had been falling asleep. Fortunately madame had not no ticed me. Her large melancholy oyes were bent upon the stove. There was certainly something very soothing, something that inclined to slumber and happy dreams about madame's peculiar cigarettes. If I had but two thousand a year now, and this swest creature to share it with me, how happy could I be! Certainly she must have been some six or seven years older than myself, but I never was one to care for your chits of school girls, who set up for being women before they are out of their teens. Here was an angel who had been left desolate, who had been cast on a bleak and unfeeling world, who had pined for a heart and home - for a heart brimmed over with love. Gracious goodness! I had a heart that yearned toward her-that-that-Why-eh -how was this? And where was

awoke with a shiver. But for the lamp in the courtyard the room would have been quite dark. My head was aching frightfully. I got up and staggered to the window. When I looked out and saw the familiar courtyard, everything came back to me like a flash of light. Where was madame? Why had I slept so long? What a boar she must tuke me to be? I groped for the bell and rang it violently. Up came the waiter with a candle 'Where is madame?'' I demanded. 'Madame," he answered, "went out nearly three hours ago, saying that she wanted to make a few purchases, and would be back in a once accounted for. Would that it little while. On no account, she had been my happy lot to comfort said, was her brother, who had suffered from mal de mer in crossing, to be disturbed. Madame," he

Gone three hours ago! Her brother! Mal de mer! What could it all mean? As I sat down, utterly bewildered, my arm pressed against the little box in my pocket. Mechanically I glanced at my finger. The ring was no longer there! My heart turned sick within me. I sank down and buried my face in my she told me. She had been staying hands. The waiter thought I was had charge of her husband's inter- saw it all now. Fool-fool that I ests in England. She was now wes! I had allowed mysel to be

> At 9 o'clock next morning I stood down my tears-tears of mingled to me with a curious, cynical smile. When I had done he went to his bureau and opened a drawer. "Set your mind at rest; Ned," he said.

'Here's the ring safe and sound !" I could only stare at him in openmouthed astonishment. "When madame, with the ring in her posback to Dover. The ring was in my hands again before 10 o'clock last

"But-but," I stammered out, "] why did she bring it back to you?" "Because she was paid to do so. Because she was hired by me When we landed, madame admit- through the agency of a private inted that she was hungry, and that quiry office to act as she did act.

luncheon would be a desirable feat- Madame by profession is not a thief AMERICAN SURGICAL INSTITUTE ure of the programme. According- but a thief-catcher. You had grown ly, while she went about her busi- so self-conceited of late, Master Ned, ness, I took a voiture and drove to you had such a mighty tail opinion the Hotel Dessin. There in the of yourself and your abilities harm to take you down a peg or Now, one can't very well partake two I hope I have succened in con-

An hour or two later I said: "But wasn't it rather risky thing to do with a ring worth five hundred pounds !"

My father winke 1 at me with the solemnity of a Judge. "My dear and that, but hardly ate more than Ned, what do you take your old a sparrow might have done. How dad for? The diamonds were no-

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