

THE KING DIAMOND.

BY CUTOIFFE HYNE.

"Speaking of pluck," said the purser of the Laticonia, "the bravest man on the very bravest man I ever knew, was a thief. Mr. Horrocks delivered himself of this statement during a momentary lull in the after-dinner chat of the smoke room, and withdrew his eyes from the little, neat man who had just come in. He examined with interest the butt of his cigar, and carefully licked an angle of leaf which threatened to come loose. Sir Randall, Vereker, the hydraulic specialist, who had won the auction pool on the run that day, was standing coffee and liqueur round; and the purser, after telling the attendant steward that his was a kummel and cognac, stuck the cigar into a corner of his mouth and fingered the keys in his trouser pocket. Then he drew his heels straight out before him and blew truncated cones of tobacco smoke at an incandescent lamp in the deck above.

The general talk in the smoke room did not go on. Mr. Horrocks, as became his office, was a noted raconteur, and only Pitcairn continued his remarks on the silver question as an afterthought, when Bradford manufactured goods, Pitcairn had crossed to New York nine times in the Laticonia already, and had a notion that he knew by heart the names of all the drummers over, being in his capacity of drummer a most widely traveled man himself, he quite believed that his own remarks were thoroughly well calculated to make an impression on the ears of the Laticonia crew. "He stole the biggest diamond I ever saw," the purser remarked meditatively during one of Pitcairn's pauses for breath. "It was a stone that had been given down into history on the rim of some emperor's crown. But so far as I know it never came up to the surface again after that fellow stole it."

"Probably broken up," suggested Vereker, "and sold in pieces." "The purser nodded sharply. "How did you hear about it, Sir Randall?" he asked. "Vereker laughed. "It was only generalizing on my part. I haven't a notion of what you're talking about." "You've christened it 'The King Diamond' out at Kimberly?" "I have christened it that," said Sir Randall. "I leave Lady Vereker to specialize in diamonds for the pair of us." "Now there you are again," said Pitcairn. "The price varies according to the quantity put on the market, and as things are situated at present the quantity is very small. You've got to get capital and brains enough to make corners. Now, if I had the managing of it—"

up the knowledge, but you can take it from me that I not only know who's on board, but I also know that yacht's exact position. "That's all as usual," said Vereker, "and then stepped and considered a minute. "Is there any consideration that I could offer which would induce you to part with the knowledge?"

"My dear Horrocks," he said, "if you want to know, of course I'll tell you freely enough. I'd have told you any time if you'd asked me. Only I don't think we've secured another one since the yacht's been in sight."

"If you had more," he went on, "but if you can't spare a minute or so I'll tell it to you now—if you think no one is likely to overhear us, standing where we are."

"Certainly, Mr. Farren," said Vereker. "You come right along to my room and have a cigar. You won't drink whisky, I know, but you shall have had lemonade in two shakes if you care for the thing." The purser of the Laticonia ceased speaking and stepped a minute. When it was all over he held the charter of his yacht in his hand and searched it with interest. "I am afraid," he said, "that I am bringing you gentlemen with all these preliminaries, but never could tell you any more until there's some man in this smoke room who could finish this yarn much better than I can. He knows a lot of facts about it that I have not even guessed at up to now."

The eyes of the smoke room swung round till they all converged on Pitcairn, but that excellent person for once in his life looked slightly non-plussed. The purser came to his rescue. He intimated that Pitcairn's brain was quite unequal to guessing the sequel of the yarn, and again invited the shonky man to go and get up to do in detail. We began to look at one another with interest. It was striking to each of us that we must have struck up a shipboard acquaintance with some man who only a few years previously had been concerned in a very remarkable robbery. But after a cursory survey had not shown any one to appear obviously guilty (although for some reason we few of us seemed to be looking exactly at our best just then), a quiet feeling of restraint got hold of us.

Each man seemed to feel that it was vaguely insulting to look at his neighbor, and eyes glanced up toward the deck above and the smoke mist thickened. But by degrees the purser's eye wandered, and found a safe resting place on the person of Mr. Horrocks. It was Vereker who voiced the general wish. "I think, Purser," he said, "we shall have to bother you. You have shown such power as a raconteur that the other fellow, whoever he is, is evidently nervous of entering into competition."

The purser grinned and bit the end of a fresh cigar. "Funny thing, Sir Randall," he said, "but I haven't a notion of what you're talking about. When Farren came into my room that day I thought he would have fainted, and for good ten minutes he sat there on my sofa with the colors coming and going from his face like the limelight in a theater. But I didn't know it was you."

"I beg your pardon," said the little quiet man, "but I don't think I have said anything to you. I'm sure I haven't said anything to Vereker, but you apparently mean me. Purser, my name's Dundas, and through sea sickness this is my first appearance in this room. I can't say I'm a great hand at sea."

"You did," said Horrocks, grimly. "Well," said the small man, "I appear to be more fortunate than I thought, and far more than I deserve. The women of the world are very good-tempered, and for quick or evil tempered ones there is but one remedy—the bathroom. The most perfect lover is the one who best understands how and when to apologize."

The adoption in Germany of a general and common code of laws applicable to all parts of the empire has aroused the indignation of the women of that country to the new code, because of its discrimination and oppressive features toward them. Up to this time each province of the empire has had its own laws. Under the provisions of the new law an unmarried woman is regarded as almost penniless. Her property is in her husband's hands, and she becomes a wife and mother she is looked as a minor. She has no right over her own property. She cannot transact any business without the signature of her husband. Then the new law defines the power of her entire and when a woman's children, placing it all in the father's hands, divorces on account of ill-treatment, drunkenness and other offenses. It grants to her property, but she is not to be a relation of his illegitimate child, all duties and cares belonging to the mother. The bill, which has passed the Reichstag, does not become a law until 1900, and many women are agitating the question of its reconsideration and repeal before that time.

From what one hears of the Danish girl she has all the privileges open to her sisters, and she is not to be regarded as a minor. She finds herself free to take up any branch she may choose, and medical, mathematical and scientific honors fall to her share quite frequently as to her husband. As among us, too, teaching seems to be the most universal employment for women who wish to earn their own living. Yet there are so many of them who are not content with the rich families who teach simply as a pastime, with no remuneration, that the pay is very small and not at all in proportion to the extent of their education. In fact, the English literature of the day, distinguished themselves as artists, authors and musicians, found schools and asylums for various charitable and educational purposes, and many women have taken to photography and started out as professionals. In spite of all their professional work, Danish girls are famous for their beauty. The orange for bicycling seized them some time ago, and they are already expert riders, for the level country favors this sport. Some of the Danish girls who are engaged in teaching, and they are never quite so pretty and graceful as when they are skating, which is a general amusement for fully three months in the year. A Danish girl in good society makes her debut at 16, when she is confirmed. If she is not married at 22 she is left out of all parties and amusements, and every woman who is not a fortune teller or engaged against old maids still obtains among these otherwise enlightened people.

FEMINE GOSSIP.

Florida advise that the coming season will see a return to the custom, more honored of late years in the breach than in the observance, of sending bouquets to debutantes and to young women generally whom the senders delight to honor. The statement must be taken with more than a grain of discount. The passing from favor of the bouquet was not caprice, but it was a result of the fact that much more lovely in their loose profusion, and so much more adaptable to enjoyment by their fair recipients, that they are not likely to be superseded by stiff, wired clusters. Nor is it unnecessary to advise the receipt of flowers by overloading one's self with them at opera or ball. The man who knows how to send flowers accompanies the one who knows how to receive them by a knot of ribbon or a dainty conceit in lace for a wrapper, and the equally well-informed young woman, who wishes to recognize that she is being attentively watched, will be glad to have her bouquet. It is possible to coarsen even the lovely courtesy of flower giving by exaggeration. It is possible to make the gift of modern refinement fully recognized.

Even the head of the state in France is obliged to take out a fresh shooting license every year when his chasseur reopens. So President Faure duly applied for his license to the Prefecture of the Seine Inferieure in response for September 1. As this document must describe the owner's personal appearance the clerks were most anxious not to hurt the president's vanity. He was described as "turning gray," and a long discussion took place whether the same term should be used, the president having a notably gray hair since then. French politeness finally compromised the matter by putting down the hair as "white" and the hair as "gray." The president was shown Lord Rayburny's portrait, which was on his right in his pocket, and then they shaved across for the Mexican gulf.

Last year, says a Parisian writer, the old curiosity shops were ransacked for the ancient buttons which lent such a stylish air to the then fashionable Louis XV and Louis XVI coats. Frequently some buckles had their turn. Now the objects in the pursuit of which many fruitless hours are spent are the ancient buttons and buckles of the more absorbing that the game is wotfully scarce. She who can ferret out a collar of unmistakable seventeenth or eighteenth century origin is indeed a fortunate woman. Many have to content with the acquisition of small chased silver bells, which they hang round the necks of their pets by means of a leaden chain. The size of the silver bell is generally in inverse ratio to the dimensions of the dog.

A woman was singing at a charity concert and the audience insisted on hearing her sing a second time. Her daughter, a little child, was present, and on being asked whether her mother had sung, she replied: "Very badly; for they made her do it all over again."

"It is a question with me," writes Lilian Bell in October Ladies' Home Journal, "whether a woman ever knows all the joys of matrimony who has never seen a silent husband who doubtless adores her, but is able to express it only in deeds. It requires an act of the will to remember that getting down town at 7 o'clock every morning is all done for you, when he hasn't been able to tell you in words that he loves you. It is hard to get a letter telling you that you are loved, and how busy he is, when the same amount of space saying that he got to thinking about you yesterday, when he was a girl on the street who looked like you, only she didn't carry herself so well as you do, and that he loves you, good-by—would have fairly made your heart turn over with love if you knew the hurried lines and thrust the letter in your belt, where you could crackle it now and then just to make sure it was there. Nearly all nice men make love in deeds. A great many fall at some important crisis in the handling of words."

The last test of all, and, to my mind, the greatest, is in the use of words as a balm. Few people, be they men or women, be they only friends, lovers or married, can be occasionally hurting each other's feelings. Accidents are continually happening even when people are good-tempered. And for quick or evil tempered ones there is but one remedy—the bathroom. The most perfect lover is the one who best understands how and when to apologize."

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Fashionable hostesses aiming at perfection and change at the same time will have, if they will, this season the privilege to display their exquisitely appointed tables with the use of napkins. Already in the aristocratic homes of England the movement has gained a foothold, inspired, according to some reports, by the example of the continent to the refined table manners of the guests."

While napkins are not likely to be at once, if ever, adopted by all American tables, the discussion of the question is of value if only to accentuate the careless and slovenly way most American children behave at tables. Who can fancy these youngsters ever trained to a neatness of eating which will preclude their need of a napkin? Many of them stand with a basin and soap served for every course. A Danish girl in good society makes her debut at the end of his meal by calmly announcing his place to the floor and following it by the contents of his cup

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