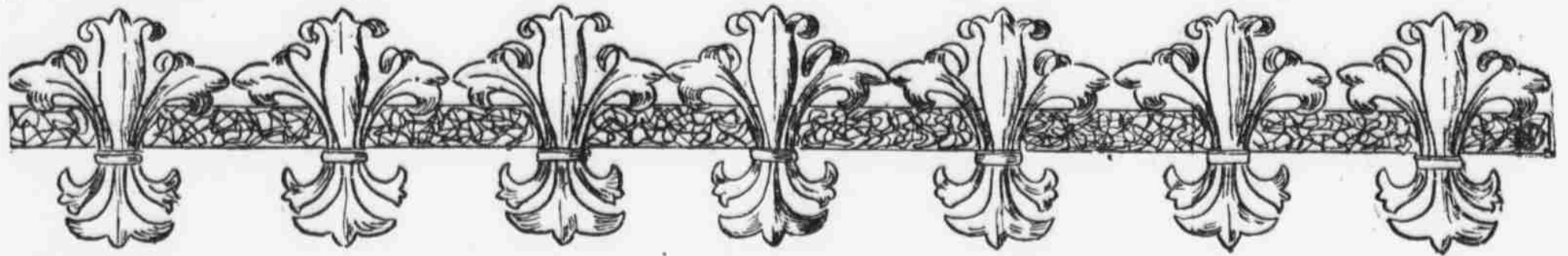


# The Diamond Derelict---Being the Record of a



## Young Man Who Finally Won Out---By Edward Marshall

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### CHAPTER I.

It takes a better seaman sometimes to get his vessel out of dock than it does to get her 'cross the ocean.—The Log Book of The Lyddy.

**T**HE fog was dense in London. The city lay smothered in it. It was not later than half after 2 in the afternoon, yet the lamps were lighted, only to throw sickly yellow beams a few inches into the gray, dense air, where they perished miserably.

A young man emerged from the door of a comfortable looking house near Russell Square. For a moment he paused upon the high steps in front of it, half expecting that he would be called back. Then he glanced quickly at the knot of black crepe and ribbon which depended from the bell pull. Indeed, he reached out his hand as if to touch the grim decoration, but quickly drew it back again with a shudder.

Then he hurried down the steps. In a moment he had reached a point where it would have been difficult for any watcher from within the house to recognize his features. An instant later and a few steps more had taken him so far that even his form would have been indistinguishable from the windows.

He looked back, and for a moment observed dimly the outlines of a building. Then they, too, were veiled from his view by the gray curtain of the mist.

He was a well made young fellow of perhaps 28, immaculately dressed in black frock coat, gray trousers, silk hat and patent leather shoes. Yet there was that about such portions of his deeply bronzed face as could be seen, and about his quick, athletic carriage, which indicated the lithe, strong muscles of the active country man, rather than the thin and jaded sinews of the city dweller. But his beard, black and strong, was precisely trimmed to a point, and his hands were carefully gloved.

He grasped in his left hand the double handles of a large, black bag, such as might be used by a man who travels long distances competently. It was well worn and eminently practical looking. It had been pasted by many labels of railroad lines, steamship companies and hotels. They showed that it had journeyed in South Africa, and an expert could have traced them through tours in Cape Colony, the Free State and the Transvaal, as well as on the steamers which ply between England and the Cape. The bag was not cumbrously heavy, for its bearer did not lean to one side as do those who carry very weighty burdens with one hand.

He walked rapidly, and there was indicated, by his frequent turnings to look behind him, a nervousness not at all compatible with his general air of complacent health, prosperity and respectability. He made his way with some difficulty, due to the all-pervading mist, to a point fully half a mile distant from the house from which he had emerged. There he paused and stood at the curb. Once or twice a cab popped out of the fog, close at hand, and the young man peered earnestly at it to see if it were occupied. At last he hailed an empty hansom, and, climbing in, told the driver to take him to the offices of the Royal Union Safety Deposit Institution.

Once there—and because of the fog the short trip was made neither quickly nor easily—he dismissed the cab and mounted the great stone steps. Inside he was greeted by the official in charge with evident respect, and soon disappeared in the direction of the vault, which burrowed deeply behind great gates of steel into mysterious regions beneath the earth.

He carried his bag with him as he entered the dimly lighted passages, the guardians of the treasure caves opening the steel doors before him in answer to an official's nod, and, after he had passed through, locking them behind him. The sound of the grating bolts and rattling keys jarred on his nerves. Unpleasant possibilities were suggested by them.

When he had reached a certain department of the great vaults he turned aside into a minor passageway, branching from a sort of underground waiting room, where were provided tables, at which customers of the vaults who had taken their treasures from their private drawers might examine them at leisure.

His guide pointed out to him a small drawer, duly numbered and labeled in the wall of steel. This the young man opened with a key from his own pocket, while the

guide discreetly withdrew. He took from the drawer a long leather belt, which sagged, as if heavy in the middle, as he pulled it out. He had already unbuttoned his coat and vest preparatory to buckling the belt about him underneath these articles of clothing, when one of the custodians of the place called out politely to him:

"I'm sorry, but it's closing time, sir."

At the sound of the voice the young man shied like a frightened horse. The watchman glanced at him keenly. So pronounced was the nervousness of the young man's movements and so white and startled was his face, as he hastily rearranged his clothing and placed the belt within the big bag, that the custodian's wonder was aroused. He saw to it that the visitor was delayed at one of the outer doors until a person in authority had looked him over and vouched for the fact that he had had a right to do what he had done and was the real renter of the box which he had opened.

The young man left the building and hailed another cab. His nervousness had increased. When the driver offered to carry

As he affixed the stamps to the telegraph slip a vision of a still form lying in the parlor of that house passed through his mind and he hesitated for a moment before he passed the finished message to the clerk. There were strong urgings in his heart to tear up the message and tell the waiting driver to take him back at once, so that he might look again at his dead mother, but, recognizing the futility of running such a risk, he passed it in and hurried out. Then, climbing again into the hansom, he told the driver to take him to the Charing Cross railway station.

### CHAPTER II.

Re-paintin' of her name don't hurt a vessel's speed none.—The Log Book of The Lyddy.

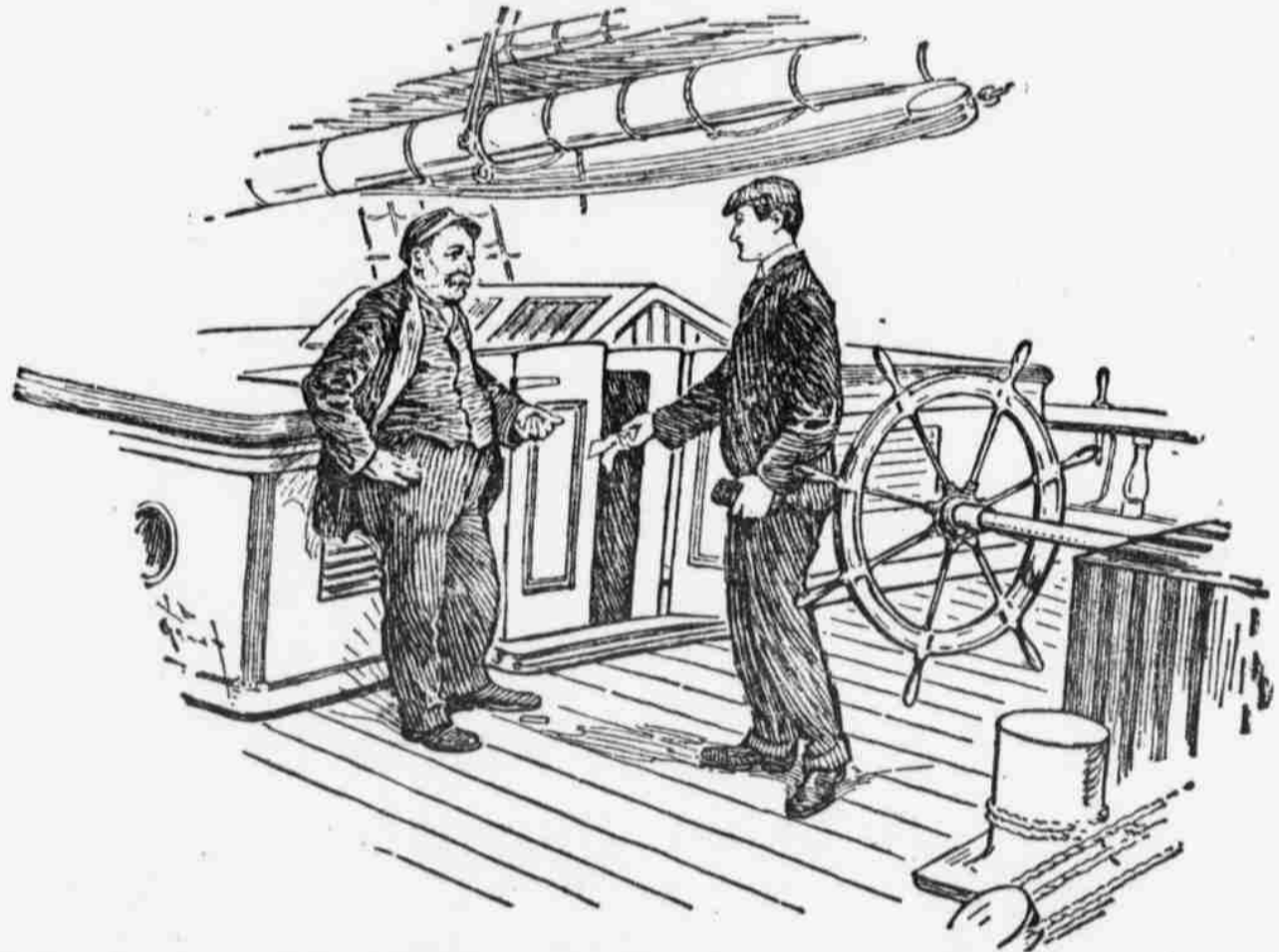
Charing Cross railway station in London is situated near to one end of that throbbing business artery called the Strand. It stands well back from the street and in front of it is a large paved area, barred from the thoroughfare by iron railings. At the hour when through trains arrive and just before they start this space is always crowded by cabs and pedestrians and progress through it is difficult, even for the

was a comfort to him. He reflected that there must be safety in crowds for the fleeing man; that it must be easier to lose one's self among a multitude than in a wilderness.

In the great train shed, thronged with busy porters, travelers and their friends, the correctly dressed young man carrying the black bag attracted only the most casual of attention. For a few moments he wandered apparently about aimlessly, but really with eyes keenly alert to see if he were followed. Then he entered the passageway leading to the "booking," or ticket, office, and, stepping up to the window of the man in charge, asked for a circular tour ticket to Paris by the train which was to leave at 6 o'clock.

He had considered carefully what variety of ticket he should take. He assumed that the time would not be long distant when anxious inquiries would be made there, as at other points where he could arrange to depart from London, and at this booking office he wished to have them answered.

This was his reason for choosing the circular tour form of ticket, as one which requires that the purchaser's name shall be



A CARD DROPPED FROM THE POCKETBOOK TO THE FLOOR.

the bag upon the roof of the cab the courteously-intended suggestion was rejected gruffly.

The young man climbed in, placing the bag on the seat beside him, while he cast a glance of definite suspicion at the man on the box. His agitation was suddenly and strikingly increased by the appearance of a policeman close by the cab. The officer, however, glanced at him carelessly and passed on.

With a deep breath of evident relief the young man directed the driver to stop at a public house.

He gave his order to the barmaid, calling for a double measure of Scotch whisky, and as he took it his hand trembled so noticeably that it attracted her attention.

He drank the fiery liquor neat, paused a moment and asked for another glass. The barmaid again glanced curiously at him.

Feeling that his pale face and trembling hands really demanded some explanation, he said, mendaciously:

"I've been a bit shaken up by a cab accident in the fog."

Smiling somewhat weakly, he told her to put him up a flask of gin. Then he made his way out into the fog and climbed into the hansom with his bag.

This time he bade the man take him to a telegraph office. There he sent a message to the house near Russell Square, announcing that it would be late at night before he should return. In reality it was of the nature of a final farewell. He knew that in all human probability he should not go back that night at all, or ever.

artful dodger.

It was at such a time that the young man with the bag arrived there. His driver had some trouble in getting the cab near to the entrance leading to the booking office and the young man alighted in the middle of the area with the bag in his hand, paid the fee and left him.

Then he hurried into one of the long, narrow alleys leading backward through the building. One of these goes to the luggage room, one goes direct to the train shed and another offers entrance to the hotel office and the station waiting room.

The hotel towers over all and completely hides from the street any evidence that there is a railway station behind it, except, of course, the signs which say so. The hotel is owned by the railway company and is managed in connection with the station.

It is patronized chiefly by transients—guests who stay only a day or two, or, perhaps, only a few hours—and the young man reasonably assumed that the constant changing of the guests would detract from the attention which the employes would bestow upon individuals.

It was the combination of its proximity to the railway station and the ephemeral character of its custom that had led him to choose it as a fitting starting point for his flight from London.

As he walked across the area into the building with his bag in his hand, he had to pass close to a policeman more than once, and the nearness was unpleasant. It was difficult to avoid noticeable shrinkings. The fact that the place was crowded

given when he takes it.

"What name, please?" asked the man in charge.

"Henry Parton," said the young man, firmly.

But after the ticket had been handed to him and he had placed it in his pocket, he looked anxiously about to see if anyone had been watching or listening. No one had been, so far as he could see, but not ten feet away a calm, impassive-faced policeman stood stiffly at his post.

Parton wondered if the man had heard him. He wondered how he would have acted if, before he had heard the name given at the booking office, he had been notified by his superiors at Scotland Yard that any man who gave it was to be taken in charge.

From the booking office Parton went again into the train shed, but lingered there a moment only before he turned back and entered another passage which led from it to the hotel elevator. A nimble porter in the hotel livery offered to take his bag. He refused the aid and carried it himself as he went up on the elevator and entered the hotel office.

Here he first inquired about the trains for Paris, and then asked the clerk if he could get a room. When he was answered in the affirmative he signed a name on the hotel register, but it was not the one which he had given to the ticket agent.

The clerk called a boy, and, giving the key to him, told him to take the gentleman's bag and show him to his room. There was a little struggle in Parton's