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Amateur Cracksman.

By E. W. Hornung, Author of "Shadow of the Rope," "Rogue's March." Etc. your presence, Bunny) does not bore the world with them without ulterior motives. So far so good. What are this chap's motives? Does he want to advertise himself? No, he's somebody already. But is he rich? On

the contrary, he's as poor as a rat for his position and apparently without the least ambition to be anything else. Certainly he won't enrich himself by making a public fad of what all sensible people are agreed upon as it is. Then suddenly one gets one's own old idea—the alternative profession. My ericket-his Rational Drink! But it is no use jumping to conclusions. must know more than the newspapers can tell me. Our aristocratic friend is forty and unmarried. What has he been doing all these years? How the

devil was I to find out?" "How did you?" I asked, declining to spoil my digestion with a conundrum, as it was his evident intention that I should.

"Interviewed him!" said Raffles, smiling slowly on my amazement. "You-interviewed him?" I echoed.

'When-and where?" "Last Thursday night, when, if you remember, we kept early hours because I felt done. What was the use of telling you what I had up my sleeve, Bunny? It might have ended in fizzle, as it still may. But Lord Ernest Belville was addressing the meeting at Exeter Hall. I waited for him when the show was over, dogged him home to King John's Mansions and interviewed him in his own rooms there

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before he turned in." My journalistic jealousy was piqued to the quick. Affecting a scepticism I did not feel (for no outrage was beyoud the pale of his impudence) I inquired dryly which journal Raffles had pretended to represent. It is unneecssary to report his answer. I could not believe him without further

explanation. "I should have thought," he said, "that even you would have spotted a practice I never omit upon certain occasions. I always pay a visit to the drawing-room and fill my waistcoat pocket from the card tray. It is an immense help in any little temporary impersonation. On Thursday night I sent up the card of a powerful writer connected with a powerful paper. If Lord Ernest had known him in the flesh I should have been obliged to confess to a journalistic ruse. Luckily he didn't, and I had been sent by [ lift?" my editor to get the interview for next morning. What could be better

-for the alternative profession?" I inquired what the interview had "Everything," said Raffles. "Lord Ernest had been a wanderer these twenty years. Texas, Fiji, Australia. I suspect him of wives and families

in all three. But his manners are a

liberal education. He gave me some beautiful whiskey and forgot all about his fad. He is strong and subtle, but I talked him off his guard. He is going to the Kirkleathams' to-night. I saw the card stuck up. I stuck some wax into his keyhole as he was switching off the lights."

And with an eye upon the waiters Raffles showed me a skeleton key newly twisted and filed, but my share of the extra pint (I am afraid no fair | style, and making as many remarks share) had made me dense. I looked from the key to Raffles with puckered | clerk with an inventory to prepare

forehead, for I happeened to catch sight of it in the mirror behind him. "The Dowager Lady Kirkleatham," he whispered, "has diamonds as big as beans and likes to have 'em all on, and

goes to bed early, and happens to be And now I saw. "The villain means to get them

Yet the way people pose on the sub-"And I mean to get them from the ful, and good cabinet-making, it's good villain," said Raffles, "or, rather your | enough for me."

share and mine." "Will he consent to a partnership?"

"We shall have him at our mercy. He daren't refuse."

would be when I called his attention Raffle's plan was to gain access to Lord Ernest's rooms before midnight. "If Lord Ernest finds his rooms lock-There we were to lie in wait for the ed up he'll raise Cain," said Raffles; aristocratic rascal, and if I left all de-"we must let him come in and lock tails to Raffles and simply stood by in up for himself before we corner him. casce of a rumpus I should be playing | But he won't come yet; if he did it my part and earning my share. It | might be awkward, for they'd tell him was a part that I had played before, down below what I told them. A new not always with a good grace, though | staff comes on at midnight. I discoverthere had never been any question ed that the other night." the share. But to-sight I was "Supposing he does come in before?"

morning wath. I had had just champagne enough-how Raffles knew my measure!-and I was ready and eager for anything. Indeed, I did not wish to wait for the coffee, which was to be especially strong by order of Raffles. But on that he insisted, and it

was between 10 and 11 when at last we were in our cab. "It would be fatal to be too early," he said as we drove. "On the other hand, it would be dangerous to leave it too late. One must risk something. How I should love to drive down Piccadilly and see the lights! But unnecessary risks are another story."

hansom crossed our bows, because I

could not help seeing it, but I should

not have given the incident a second

thought if it had not been for the ex-

traordinary effect upon Raffles. In an

instant he was out upon the curb pay-

"Where on earth are you going?"

"Into the park," said he. "We are

His voice told me more than his

"Well, then, the coast's clear," said

then and there, but Raffles forced me

"It was a nearer thing than I care

on with a hand that hardened on my

about," said he. "This seat will do. No.

the next one's further from a lamp-

post. We will give him a good half

We had been seated some minutes

when Big Ben sent a languid chime

over our heads to the stars. It was

half-past 10 and a sultry night. Eleven

had struck before Raffles awoke from

his sullen reverie and recalled me

from mine with a slap on the back.

In a couple of minutes we were in the

lighted vestibule at the inner end of

the courtyard of King John's Man-

"Just left Lord Ernest at Lady Kirk

leatham's," said Raffles. "Gave me his

key and asked us to wait for him in

In a small way, I never knew old

Raffles do anything better. There was

not an instant's demur. Lord Ernest

Belville's rooms were at the top of the

building, but we were in them as

quickly as lift could carry and page-

boy conduct us. And there was no

need for the skeleton key after all;

the boy opened the outer door with

one of his own, and switched on the

"Now that's interesting," said Raf-

fles, as soon as we were alone; "they

can come in and clean when he is out.

What if he keeps his wag at the bank?

By jove, that's an idea for him! I

don't believe he's getting rid of it; it's

all lying low somewhere, if I'm not

While he spoke he was moving

about the sitting-room, which was

charmingly furnished in the antique

as though he were an auctioneer's

and a day to do it in, instead of a

cracksman who might be surprised in

"Chippendale of sorts, eh, Bunny?

Not genuine, of course; but where can

who knows it when they see it?

There's no merit in mere antiquity.

ject! If a thing's handsome and use-

"Hadn't we better explore the whole

place?" I suggested nervously. He had

not even bolted the outer door. Nor

you get genuine Chippendale now, and

mistaken, and he's not a fool."

his crib at any moment.

lights before leaving as.

his rooms. Will you send us up in the

hour, and I don't want to talk."

"Was that him-in the hansom?"

words. It was strangely stern.

the mansions.

too early."

"It was."

I naturally exclaimed

King John's Mansions, as everybody knows, are the oldest, the ugliest and the tallest block of flats in all London. But they are built upon a more gener-

ous scale than has since become the in my man!" rule and with a less studious regard for the economy of space. We were about to drive into the spacious courtyard when the gatekeeper checked us in order to let another hansom drive out, it contained a middle-aged man of the military type, like ourselves in evening dress. That much I saw as his

"Then we stultify ourselves downstairs," said Raffles. "No. I'll be shot if I do! He may come in with the Kirkleatham diamonds! You do what you like, Bunny, but I don't budge." "I certainly sha'n't leave you," I retorted, "to be knocked into the middle

yourself."

I had presumed to glance.

his gray head in a mixture of childis pique and puerile bravado which

the small end under my arm, and pre

"Hold him tight," he whispered, smiling. "He's not only a better man than I thought him, Bunny, he's hit upon a better dodge than ever I did, of its kind. Only I should have weight-

He had screwed the gimlet into the circular butt, close to the edge, and now we were wrenching in opposite directions. For a moment or more nothing happened. Then all at once something gave, and Raffles swore an oath as soft as any prayer. And for the minute after that his hand went round and round with the gimlet, as though he were grinding a piano-

Here we have probably the Kenworthy diamonds \* \* \* I don't know the history of these pearls \* \* \* This looks like one family of rings-left on the basin-stand, perhaps

Our eyes met across the bed. hoarsely.

"Impossible to say, But more than all we ever took in all our lives. That I'll swear to." "More than all"-

without first seeing who we are, and word with him. Unless my suspicions are unfounded, I mean." "Isn't it about time to test them?"

Cenuine

Carter's

Little Liver Pills.

Must Bear Signature of

See Pac-Simile Wrapper Below.

"But it'll take some turning into

"And-must it be a partnership?"

asked, finding a lugubrious voice at

"Partnership be damned!" cried Raf-

fles, heartily. "Let's get out quicker

We pocketed the things between us

cotton-wool and all, not because we

wanted the latter, but to remove traces

wanted the latter, but to remove all

immediate traces of our really meritor-

"The sinner won't dare to say a

word when he does find out," remark-

ed Raffles of Lord Ernest; "but that's

no reason why he should find out be-

fore he must. Everything's straight in

here, I think; no, better leave the win-

dow open as it was, and the blind up.

Now out with the light. One peep at

the other room. That's all right, too.

Out with the passage light, Bunny,

His words died away in a whisper.

"Out with it-out with it!" whisper-

ed Raffles in agony; and as I obeyed

he picked me off my feet and swung

me bodily but silently into the bed-

room, just as the outer door opened,

The next five were horrible minutes.

We heard the apostle of Rational

Drink unlock one of the deep drawers

in his antique sideboard, and sounds

followed suspiciously like the splash

of spirits and the steady stream from

a siphon. Never before or since did I

experience such a thirst as assailed

me at that moment, nor do I believe

that many tropical explorers have

known its equal, But I had Raffles

with me, and his hand was as steady

and as cool as the hand of a trained

nurse. That I know because he turned

up the collar of my overcoat for me,

for some reason, and buttoned it at

the throat. I afterward found that he

had done the same with his own, but

I did not hear him doing it. The one

thing I heard in the bedroom was a

tiny metallic click, muffled and dead-

ened in his overcoat pocket, and it

not only removed my last tremor, but

strung me to a higher pitch of excite-

ment than ever. Yet I had no more

conception of the game that Raffles

was deciding to play, and that I was

It cannot have been longer before

Lord Ernest came into his bedroom.

Heavens, but my heart had not for-

gotten how to thump! We were stand-

ing near the door, and I could swear

he touched me; then his boots creak-

ed, there was a rattle in the fender-

glare with one Indian club held by the

end, like a footman with a stolen bot-

tle. A good-looking, well-built, iron-

gray, iron-jawed man; but a fool and

a weakling at that moment, if he had

"Lord Ernest Belville," said Raffies,

"it's no use. This is a loaded revolver,

and if you force me I shall use it on'

you as I would on any other desperate

criminal. I am here to arrest you for a

series of robberies at the Duke of

Dorchester's, Sir John Kenworthy's,

and other noblemen's and gentlemen's

houses during the present season.

You'd better drop what you've got in

Lord Ernest lifted the club an inch

or two, and with it his eyebrows-and

after it his stalwart frame as the club

crashed back into the fender. And he

stood at his full height, a courteous

but ironic smile under the cropped

"Scotland Yard?" said he.

all means. But look at this!"

"That's our affair, my lord."

mustache, he looked what he was,

"I didn't think they'd got it in them,

said Lord Ernest. "Now I recognize

didn't think any of you fellows had

got all that in you. Come into the

other room, and I'll show you some-

thing else. Oh, keep me covered by

On the antique sideboard, their size

doubled by reflection in the polished

mahogany lay a coruscating cluster of

A brush that bears on its

handle the name of an old-

established and reliable

maker, such as Bosckh, is

sure to be superior to un-

known or nameless varie-

ties. The name is the

manufacturer's guarantee

you. You're my interviewer. No,

never been either before.

your hand. It's empty."

criminal or not.

Lord Ernest Belville crouched in its

and Raffles switched on the light.

to play with him in another minute.

and a masterful step strode in.

A key was fumbling at the lock out-

than we came in."

ious deed.

while I open"-

FOR BILLOUSNESS.

FOR TORPID LIVER.

FOR CONSTIPATION

Very small and as easy

"My good Bunny, what do you sup-

pose I've been doing all this while? He keeps nothing in here. There isn't a lock to the Chippendale that you couldn't pick with a penknife, and not a loose board in the floor, for I was treading for one before the boy left us. Chimney's ne use in a place like this where they keep them swept for you. Yes, I'm quite ready to try his bed-

There was but a bathroom besides no servant's room; neither are necessary in King John's Mansions. I thought it as well to put my head in-side the bath-room while Raffles went by the horrible idea that the man might all this time be concealed some-where in the flat. But the bathroom blazed void in the electric light. I found Raffles hanging out of the right ry square which was the bedroom win dow, for the room was still in dark-ness. I felt for the switch at the door. "Put it out again!" said Raffles fiercely. He rose from the sill, drew blind and curtain carefully, then switched on the light himself. It fell

upon a face creased more in pity than in anger, and Raffles only shook his head as I hung mine. "It's all right, old boy," said he "but corridors have windows, too, and servants have eyes; and you and I are supposed to be in the other room, not in this. But cheer up, Bunny! This is the room; look at the extra bolt on the door; he's had that put on, and there's an iron ladder to his window in case of fire! Way of escape ready against the hour of need; he's a better man than I thought him, Bunny, after all. But you may bet your bottom dollar that if there's any boodle in the flat it's in this room."

Yet the room was very lightly furnished; and nothing was locked. We looked everywhere, but we looked in vain. The wardrobe was filled with hanging coats and trousers in a press, the drawers with the softest silk and finest linen. It was camp-bedstead that would not have unsettled an anchorite; there was no place for treasure there. I looked up the chimney, but Raffles told me not to be a fool, and asked if I ever listened to what he said. There was no question about his temper now. I never knew him in a worse.

"Then he has got it in the bank," he growled. "I'll swear I'm not mistaken I had the tact not to differ with him

there. But I could not help suggesting that now was our time to remedy any mistake we might have made. We were on the right side of midnight

of next week by a better man than

I had borrowed his own tone, and he did not like it. They never do. I thought for a moment that Raffles was going to strike me-for the first and last time in his life. He could if he liked. My blood was up. I was ready to send him to the devil. And I emphasized my offense by nodding and shrugging toward a pair of very large Indian clubs that stood in the fender, on either side of the chimney up which

In an instant Raffles had seized the clubs, and was whirling them about should have thought him altogether above. And suddenly as I watched him his face changed, softened, lit up, and he swung the clubs gently down upon

"They're not heavy enough for their opened the gimlet he handed me the club he held. Instinctively I tucked

The clubs were as hollow as drinking-horns, the pair of them, for we went from one to the other without pausing to undo the padded packets that poured out upon the bed. These were deliciously heavy to the hand, yet thickly swathed in cotton-wool, so that some stuck together, retaining the shape of the cavity, as though they had been run out of a mould. And when we did open them-but let Raffles

He had deputed me to screw in the ends of the clubs, and to replace the latter in the fender where we had found them. When I had done the counterpane was glittering with diamonds where it was not shimmering

ofvalue. If you want the bost in brushes ask for

about Lord Ernest's fingers as he handed them to Raffles with scarcely

was obviously a winning one.
"Wouldn't take a share, I suppose?"

Lord Ernest said casually, Raffles did not condescend to reply. I rolled back my lips like a bull-pup.

shook his head impatiently. "We must be going, my lord, and you will have to come with us."

together? Pair of pajamas and toothbrush, don't you know?" "I cannot give you many minutes, my lord, but I don't want to cause a call a cab if you like. But I shall be

better keep this while I am gone." And I was left alone with that dangerous criminal! Raffles nipped my but I got small comfort out of that.
"'Sea-green Incorruptible?'" inquired Lord Ernest as we stood face

through naked teeth. "Then come into my room. I'll lead

I put the bed between us without a into it with a dejected air; suddenly, as he was fitting them in, without raising his head (which I was watch-

"You'd better not shoot," he said, a knee upon his side of the bed; "if you do it may be as bad for you as it will be for me!"

"I will if you force me!" I hissed,

"You'd better not," he repeated smiling; and now I saw that if I di I should only shoot into the bed or my own legs. His hand was on the top of mine, bending it down, and the revolver with it. The strength of it was the strength of ten of mine; and now both his knees were on the bed; and suddenly I saw his other hand, doubled into a fist, coming up slowly over the suit-case.

"Help!" I called feebly. you are from the Yard," he said-and his uppercut came with the "yard." It caught me under the chin. It lifted me off my legs. I have a dim recollection of the crash that I made in falling.

Raffles was standing over me when I recovered consciousness. I lay stretched upon the bed across which that blackguard Belville had struck his knavish blow. The suit-case was on the floor, but its dastardly owner had

disappeared. "Is be gone?" was my first question. "Thank God you're not, anyway!" replied Raffles, with what struck me then as mere flippancy. I managed to raise myself upon one elbow.

I with dignity. "Are you quite sure that he's cleared out?" Raffles waved a hand toward the window, which stood wide open to the summer stars.

(To be continued.)

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"The Kirkleatham diamonds," said and between the two his incisive features and his keen, stern glance, he looked the ideal detective of fiction and the stage. What I looked God knows, but I did my best to glower and show my teeth at his side. I had thrown myself into the game, and it

"Then a drink, at least!"
My mouth watered, but Raffles

ready in five. Here, inspector, you'd

"You don't corrupt me," I replied

the way. Think you can hit me if I J. V. LD IV AKUJ O (U second's delay. My prisoner flung a suit-case upon it, and tossed things

ing), his right hand closed over the barrel with which I covered him.

I tried to wrest the revolver from

"Help, forsooth! I begin to believe

"I meant Lord Ernest Belville," said

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FARM FOR SALE-100 acres, lot R. J. McLAUGHLIN, K.C. J. A. PEEL.

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a tendency to consumption. Ayer's Cherry Pectoral breaks up the takingcold habit. It strengthens, heals. Ask your doctor to tell you all about it.
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The old cold goes; a new one quickly comes. It's the story of a weak throat,

ing the cabby, and in another he was leading me across the street away from I comfortably. I was for turning back

size," said he rapidly; "and I'll take my oath they're not the same weight!" He shook one club after the other, with both hands, close to his ear; then he examined their butt-ends under the electric light. I saw what he suspected now, and caught the contagion of his suppressed excitement. Neither of us spoke. But Raffles had taken out the portable toolbox that he called a knife, and always carried, and as he

sented the other to Raffles.

ed them evenly-to a hair."

organ, while the end wormed slowly out on its delicate thread of fine hard

"If this isn't the tiara that Lady May was married in, said Raffles, "and that disappeared out of the room she changed in, while it rained confetti on the steps, I'll present it to her instead of the one she lost. \* \* It was stupid to keep these old gold spoons, valuable as they are; they made the difference in the weight \* \* \*

-alas, poor lady! And that's the lot." "what's it all worth?" I asked

My tongue swelled with the thought.

