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A Mystery Of Jewels

It Remained a Mystery For Many Years

By F. A. MITCHEL

When I first met Lucy Larraway she was living with her mother, and they were having a hard time to make ends meet. We were both very young then and formed a boy and girl attachment. As we grew older and I reached an age at which I realized that I had a career before me and must be considering how to meet it the fact that neither Lucy nor I had any capital seemed to render a marriage between us undesirable.

I don't remember that I stated this to her in so many words. Indeed, there was no need to do so, for she spoke of it herself. She was a practical girl and looked at things as they were rather than as she would have them. "I would only be a drag on you," she said. "You are capable of taking a good stand in the world provided you don't handicap yourself in the start with a wife who must throw the whole burden upon you."

"Would you have me—that is, considering yourself out of the question—marry a girl with a fortune?"
"No," she replied; "I would not."
"What are your reasons?"
"First, it would deprive you of the stimulus of necessity, which is the foundation of all or nearly all success. Second, I do not believe that any poor man of proper pride can ever feel comfortable if his wife possesses a fortune and he has nothing."
"The deduction being that a poor man had best not marry so long as he is poor?"

"Rather that if he marries a woman who supplies comforts and luxuries he is in an unpleasant position, and if he marries one as poor as himself he is very badly handicapped."

In all this I agreed with Lucy, but I neither admitted nor denied its truth. We being practical young persons, there was never a proposal on my part or an acceptance or refusal on hers. We conferred upon the matter of our marrying much as two persons will talk over the practicability of forming a business partnership. Whatever of love there was underneath this common sense deliberation was unexpressed.

This condition lasted about a year, when Lucy's mother died. It seemed to me then that Lucy might best marry me, for she must live alone. But the conditions were otherwise unchanged, and since her mother had been nonproductive peculiarly Lucy could provide for her wants more easily than before. I was then struggling to get a start in my profession, and it did not seem wise for me to urge her.

Then followed a period in which Lucy and I saw very little of each other. I was away from home a great deal, and I heard of her being away, too, though where she had gone I did not learn. I wrote her a despondent letter, in which I said that at the rate we were progressing—or, rather, not progressing—financially she would soon be an old maid. I advised her, if she found a suitable opportunity, to marry. She replied that if she found the opportunity she would let me know before engaging herself.

Such was the very practical situation when one morning I received a package by express. Not expecting anything in that way, I looked long at the typewritten address before opening it. There seemed to be a box under the wrapper, and had it not been very light I might have feared an infernal machine. Untying the string and taking off the cover, there, true enough, was a box. Its lid was on hinges and was held shut by a spring, which I pressed and raised the lid.

I recall with the freshness of that moment the dazzling splendor of what lay before me. The box was lined with purple satin, on which rested a heap of diamonds. For a moment I was lost in contemplation of their beauty; then I began to wonder how they could have come into my possession. Again I took up the wrapper and scrutinized the address. There were my name, street and number, plain as the stones in the box. Turning again from the printing to the jewels, I made a rough estimate of their value. Several large stones I believed, if genuine, to be worth between \$10,000 and \$12,000 each. There were many smaller ones, and when I figured up the value of each I concluded the lot was worth not much less and not much more than \$50,000.

After many theories as to why this treasure had been sent me I came to the conclusion that it had been stolen, the thief had feared being caught with it in his possession and had shipped it by express to get it into the hands of some one else. But in doing so he must have given up all claim to the property, for he must have expected that the receiver would report the matter to the police. But why had he chosen me for his purpose? My only theory on this point was that he had taken up a directory to find a name and address and his hitting on mine was a mere coincidence.

Being a methodical sort of person, I thought out what I would do before doing it. I made a list of the stones, giving a description of each, then start-

ed for a safety deposit company. On the way I submitted the jewels to a diamond expert, who pronounced them genuine, of excellent quality and offered me \$30,000 for the lot. At the deposit company I rented a box, locked the stones in it, then reported the matter to the police.

There had been several jewel robberies reported, but none very large. I looked over the description in each case, but none of them tallied with the case in hand. Mine were all unset, but this made no difference, for they might easily have been removed from the setting. Mine were all diamonds, while in the other cases the stones consisted of various jewels.

By arrangement with the police I had each stone weighed and described by a diamond expert, and they were authorized if any one described any of the jewels correctly to put him in communication with me, that he might prove property. A number of descriptions of stones or lots of stones came to me, but none tallied with those that had been sent to me. It was impossible that I should be imposed upon in a matter of weight alone.

The theory of the police was that the jewels had been stolen, probably in one lot, from a diamond merchant, who had reasons for not reporting his loss. Sometimes those losing goods, suspecting or not suspecting the thief, put a private detective on the case, who advises keeping the whole matter secret. I showed the gems, the box in which they came, the paper in which they had been wrapped, to a detective, who studied them closely, but without getting a clew. Had the box been a new one he might possibly have traced it from the maker to the person who had bought it, but it was evidently very old, nothing of its kind having been manufactured for many years.

I told no one except officials of my find for several months. Then I informed Lucy Larraway of it. She gave me no assistance in ferreting out the sender. That I had not yet heard from him did not argue that I would not hear at any time, though the longer the delay the less likelihood. The fact of their having been sent to me instead of a confederate tended to indicate that when the thief had shipped them his object was to get rid of them without even calling for them.

Lucy suggested that there was some story in high life connected with them, possibly a tragedy. She fancied, for instance, a profligate son of a wealthy father stealing them from him, then becoming terror stricken at exposure and shipping them at random. A case like this would probably never be exposed.

As time went on this theory or something like it seemed to be gaining ground with Lucy, and I fell in with it myself. I stated it to the police, who told me that not a tittle of the skeletons in family closets ever walked out into the open. Possibly an explanation of this case of mine might come in time, but there was little likelihood of my having been put in possession of the jewels temporarily or I would have been called on for them before now.

At last I came to the conclusion to use the property for my advancement. At a time following a financial panic when securities were much depressed I made a loan on the diamonds and bought productive property. A quick rise followed, and I sold out at a considerable profit.

When I told Lucy of what I had done I expected that she would blame me for jeopardizing property that I might at any time be called upon to return. She did not seem to take this view of it, however, reminding me that I had done all I could to discover the owner, whereupon I told her that I now saw no reason why we should not be married, and she consented.

For years the diamonds remained in the safety deposit company's vault. Children grew up about Lucy and me. But I prospered, and there was enough for all. When sons and daughters were going to college and our expenses were considerable my wife suggested that I sell the jewelry and put the money into interest bearing property. But I declined to do so, intending them for my children after my death.

For thirty years I lived a happy life with my dear wife; then she left me. Some time after her death I devoted myself to the melancholy duty of weeding out those numberless effects, consisting of old letters and trinkets, that accumulate during a lifetime. Going over some private papers of hers, I found a list of diamonds, giving their standing as to purity and their accurate weight. I recognized that it comprised the gems which had been sent to me years ago. I could not remember my wife having had a copy of this inventory.

Passing on to other papers in the same receptacle, I came upon a will executed more than thirty years before by one Jane Larraway, bequeathing to her niece, Lucille Larraway, all her property. I opened my eyes at this and pushed on through the bundle of papers among which I had found it and saw at once that they concerned the settling of the estate of Jane Larraway and that Lucy had received an inheritance of \$63,000.

If ever man looked back with emotion on a noble deed of one lost I did so seeing the evidence that my beloved Lucy had converted a fortune into diamonds and given them to me, concealing herself as the donor. Oh, that I could bring her back for one moment in which to take her in my arms and tell her—or try to tell her—what I felt!

Ah, how many of us realize sacrifices that have been made for us only after the beloved one has passed beyond our gratitude!

I told my children what their mother had done for us all and divided the gems among them, to keep in memory of her.

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THE BATTLE OF MARATHON.

And the Ground Under Which the Old Grecian Heroes Rest.

A great Grecian landmark is the Soros, the mound erected over the graves of 192 Athenians who fell in the battle of Marathon, Aug. 12, 490 B. C. The mound is about forty feet high and 300 yards in circumference. Underneath the mound lie the heroes who died in this most decisive victory which prevented the Persians from invading Europe.

The battle had hardly begun when the Persians in immensely superior force, doubtless ten to one, pulled themselves together and by sheer mass broke through the Greek center. But this had been calculated upon beforehand. Miltiades employed strategy, making his line weak at the center, and allowed the Persians to break in. Then, with his heavy masses at the ends, he ground the Persian wings to pieces and fell upon their center. The most stubborn fighting, apart from the battle at the ships, was probably at this spot, half a mile from the shore. Six thousand four hundred Persians lay on this plain and along the shore, while 192 men of Marathon lay wrapped in glory on the field.

It was long suspected that the heroes of Marathon were buried under the mound, but Mr. Stais, one of the Greek ephori of antiquities, studying the plain, came to the conclusion that the surface of the soil had been raised by alluvial deposits eight to ten feet above the level of 490 B. C. In 1890 he drove a trench with a downward slant into the center of the mound and found the bones of the heroes with their weapons beside them.—Strand Magazine.

SINKING SHIPS.

If Completely Submerged They Must Go to the Bottom.

Answering a correspondent who writes: "I am very anxious to find out whether a ship will sink if the bottom of the ocean is at great depth or, at least, at such depth that the weight of the water would be greater than the weight of the ship. It is the opinion of many that at a certain depth the ship would remain suspended instead of sinking to the bottom. Please explain the exact truth of the matter," Edgar Lucien Larkin in the New York American says:

"Any mass that will entirely sink below the surface of the ocean will sink to the bottom of any sea or ocean on earth. This is because water is almost incompressible.

"Enormous pressure in hydraulic presses has been made upon distilled and also upon sea water, and the diminution of volume—that is, increase of density—is only 0.000044 for ocean water for each atmosphere, i. e., each addition of fifteen pounds to each square inch. Then water soaked wood would be increased in density by very nearly the same amount.

"Hence if all of the wood in a wooden ship sinks below the surface it must go to the bottom. The question of reaching the bottom of the ocean is decided for any kind of matter of any ship or boat by its behavior at the surface. If all of the material of the boat sinks at all below the surface, they will fall to the bottom of any sea, there being such a slight increase in density of water at the bottom of the deepest ocean."

It requires little exertion upon our part to bring misfortune upon ourselves.—Menander.

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