

THE TRUTH ABOUT The Blue-Diamond Robbery.

Those who pay attention to the records of criminal cases, as reported by the newspapers, and who have a good memory for such matters, will recollect the interest aroused, now several years ago, by the trial of one Robert Morris for what was known as "The Blue-Diamond Robbery." In the minds of some, perhaps, the details of this crime may be still fresh. But for the benefit of that infinitely greater number of persons whose memorial faculty is only a nine days' affair, it will be as well to recapitulate all the facts of the case before proceeding to the elucidation of one very mysterious point, which at the time baffled the cleverest detectives in London.

First, then, for the recapitulation of the facts, as disclosed before the Right Honorable the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House and subsequently before the Recorder of London at the Old Bailey. The victim of the robbery was one Jacob Blumefield, an Anglo-German Jew and a well-known diamond merchant in Hatton Garden. This gentleman, in the course of a visit to the Dutch East Indies, with a view to the purchase of pearls (in which also he dealt) had picked up from a native Sumatran, for a song, six stones, which the vendor supposed to be small, pale and therefore comparatively worthless sapphires, but which Blumefield's practised eye told him at once were those rarest and costliest stones in the market, viz., blue diamonds. It was stated in court, I recollect, by expert witnesses, that there were not more than 30 blue diamonds known to exist and that the ratio of their value to ordinary diamonds of the same size and water was at least 100 to 1. On this basis the six stones referred to, despite their insignificant size, were worth fully £20,000; indeed, at the time when they were stolen Blumefield was negotiating a sale of them to Messrs. Rostron, the Bond street jewelers, for a sum several thousands in excess of that amount. It may be readily imagined, therefore, that the theft of such gems excited no small sensation.

The circumstances of the theft were, or appeared to be, sufficiently commonplace. On the day of the robbery Blumefield had carefully locked the diamonds in his safe when he quitted his office at 6 o'clock. At about 8 or 9 the watchman who was on duty, and who had received particular instructions to keep an eye on Blumefield's office, happened to catch the flash of a light through the keyhole, and pushing open the door, which he found unfastened, made his way inside and actually caught the thief red-handed in Blumefield's room. He at once collared the fellow—a small, weak man, who made little resistance to his stalwart captor—and raised the alarm. In a minute or two several constables were on the scene, and a little later an inspector arrived, who lost no time in despatching a special messenger to Blumefield's private residence in Pembroke square.

On the diamond merchant's arrival a thorough examination of the premises was made, disclosing the fact that his safe had been opened with a duplicate key, which, in fact, was still in the lock, and that, while everything else had been left untouched, the most valuable contents, namely, the blue diamonds, had been abstracted. The thief, of course, was then conveyed, without delay, to the nearest police station and duly charged by Blumefield, who now recognized him as a man who had called upon him at his office a few days previously in reference to a proposed purchase of gems, which had fallen through. He recollected, also, that he had had occasion to leave the stranger alone in his office for a minute or two, when, probably, the latter had managed to get an impression of the lock of his safe. The prisoner did not deny this. Nor, in spite of the usual caution, did he make any secret of the fact that he had broken into the office for the purpose of stealing the blue diamonds. But that he had stolen them he stubbornly denied. "Someone else had forestalled me," he said. "I found the safe open and a key already in the lock. I'd got my own duplicate, but I didn't have to use it. If you search me you'll find it in my waistcoat pocket."

In confessing he had entered the office with felonious intent he was, of course, only admitting as much as the circumstances of his capture rendered obvious and incontrovertible and, so far as that went, was doing himself neither harm nor good. But his statement that he had been forestalled was so clearly of the cock-and-bull type that no credence whatever was naturally attached to it. He was subjected to the usual rigorous search. The duplicate key, as he had said, was in his waistcoat pocket, and in his coat pockets there were one or two other felonious instruments. Yet not a sign of a blue diamond, nor any other jewel or valuable, was found upon him. His clothes, his boots, his hat, his person, even to the inside of his mouth, were again and again examined. And this

was the more remarkable because he had been collared red-handed, and from that moment had no chance whatever allowed him of throwing away or otherwise disposing of the stones.

"I tell you I haven't got them," he kept persisting. "I'd have prigg'd 'em if I'd had the chance, I don't deny, and it would be no use if I did. But I was forestalled, I tell you. Some other chap must have got in just before me and lifted 'em. You're only wasting time and trouble in searching me. You are, indeed."

Of course, no attention was paid to this ridiculous assertion, and after the process of search had been repeated again and again, Blumefield returned with two of the police to his office in Hatton Garden, where it was thought possible that the thief might have managed to drop the stones. But the most careful scrutiny of every nook, cranny and corner failed to discover them. Blumefield, very naturally, fell into a fine state of mind.

In the interval between the arrest and his trial Blumefield obtained leave to see the prisoner in Newgate. "Look here," he said to him (I am condensing the evidence subsequently given by a warder at the trial), "I'll make you an offer. If you'll tell me what you've done with those diamonds, and enable me to recover them, I'll pay £2000 to any representative of yours you like to name. The money shall be paid to him in cash here, in your presence, and then you can have it when you come out. You're not making matters a bit better for yourself by sticking to that absurd and incredible story. If anything, rather worse, for you'll get dropped on more heavily by taking that line than if you do your best to restore me my stolen property. Now, then, you'll be a fool if you refuse; you will, upon my word."

"If I had stolen the diamonds, or knew where they were, I'd close with you like a shot, Mr. Blumefield, for I know very well that I'm in for five years, anyhow. But I didn't steal them, and I don't know where they are any more than you do," answered Morris. "My story sounds unlikely enough, I'm well aware. Maybe the judge and jury won't believe it, either; but it's true, and that's all about it."

From this position—true or false—nothing could induce him to budge. The day of his trial arrived. The case excited great interest, and the recorder's court was packed. There were two counts in the indictment, the one (I'm not a lawyer, and I only quote from memory, therefore I will crave indulgence in case my legal phraseology be incorrect)—the one of "feloniously breaking into" Blumefield's premises in Hatton Garden; the other of "stealing therefrom diamonds to the value of £20,000." To the former the prisoner pleaded guilty, to the latter not guilty, and the prosecution, in the hope of procuring a more exemplary sentence, proceeded with the charge of stealing the jewels. But this was a difficult matter to prove. Everybody, of course, was convinced that Morris had stolen the diamonds; but to establish it by the technical rules of evidence was another affair. Against the fact that he was caught on the premises, admittedly with the intention of stealing the diamonds, had to be set the fact that no sign of a diamond, or any other stolen article, was found upon him when caught. Furthermore, the circumstance of his having refused Blumefield's offer of £2000, which was elicited by his counsel in evidence, went to some slight extent in his favor. But this the prosecution tried to discount by advancing the theory that he must have had an accomplice who had made off with the jewels and that the prisoner would be hardly likely to give away £20,000 for £2000. On the other hand, the defence urged that there was absolutely no evidence of the existence of any accomplice; and, besides, after the manner in which the theft of the blue diamonds had been bruited abroad and advertised, it would be impossible for the thief or thieves to dispose of them for a quarter of their real value, if indeed at all. In which contention, of course, there was some truth.

The recorder summed up at considerable length—a careful, equipped summing up, as I remember thinking at the time, balanced, like the sentences in a Greek dialogue, with perpetual "on the one hand" and "on the other hand"; impartial, no doubt, but colorless, and affording no assistance whatever to the jury. The latter, after considering their verdict for an hour or so, at length brought the prisoner in "not guilty" on this indictment. He was then sentenced on the other indictment to 20 months' hard labor, the recorder observing that if anything previous had been known against him, which apparently there was not, he should have sent him into penal servitude.

Such is a brief—a very brief—recapitulation of Robert Morris's trial and sentence in connection with the theft of the blue diamonds. I now come to the important point in my story, the only part of it which is

not mere recapitulation, namely—the elucidation of the mystery as imparted to me only a few weeks ago by Morris himself. I may take this opportunity of saying that I am the doctor who attended the ex-convict in his last illness, of which the fatal termination came so recently as a fortnight since. He died in a lodging in Bloomsbury, in miserably poor circumstances, and being unable to pay me any fee, imparted to me his secret to do what I could with, as a sort of last acknowledgment of my services.

"Doctor," he said to me one day, about a week before he died, "I shan't leave any effects behind me to pay your bill. But I can leave you a little secret, which you might turn into a nice sum of ready, if you set about it the right way. Ah! what a fool I was to go and make ducks and drakes of all that oof! Do you know, doctor, after I came out of shop I was worth £8000?"

"Eight thousand!" I exclaimed. "Then, you did steal the blue diamonds? How did you manage to hide them?"

"That's the secret I'm going to tell you. Ah, doctor (he chuckled gleefully; I'm not writing a moral tale; I'm telling the truth, and the truth is that Robert Morris was not in the least penitent), "I had the diamonds on me when I was caught; I had them on me when I was searched at the station; I had them on me when I went before the lord mayor; I had them on me when I was tried at the Old Bailey, I had them on me all the 20 months I was in the stone jug—aye, all the blessed time."

"Impossible!" I cried. "You could not have concealed them."

"Couldn't I, though? Ah, doctor, I'll show you. Bring me that cup off the washstand, now. Do you see what's in it?"

"Your ginders," I said, looking down at the double set of false teeth lying in the cup, "what about 'em?"

"Nice ones, eh?" he asked with a leer and a wink.

"Very," I answered.

"Made 'em myself," he said, with another chuckle. "The p'lee-e knew I was a dentist's assistant, 'so. Wonder they never guessed."

"Guessed what?"

"Take 'em out of the cup," he told me.

I did so.

"There's a little mark at the side of the plate," he went on. "It's a spring. Press it with your thumb nail."

I obeyed his instruction. In an instant all the topgrinders sprang open, revealing to me the fact that each of them was simply a small hollow receptacle, contrived, as I saw on closer examination, with the most artful skill and workmanship.

The sick man broke into a yet more gleeful chuckle as he watched the amazed wonder with which I was gazing at this marvellously clever effort of skill and cunning.

"There!" he said, chuckling till he coughed himself speechless. "Not so impossible after all—eh, doctor?"

Subsequent inquiries which I addressed to Morris himself elicited the following facts: That, recognizing the extreme risk he ran of being caught, he had had two duplicate keys of the safe made, in order that, by leaving one of them in the lock, some color might be lent to his assertion that he had been anticipated by another thief. The extremely clever contrivance of his false teeth, however, was, of course, his chief device, and he had put the blue diamonds into those marvellously contrived receptacles the moment he took them. Hardly were the teeth safely back in his mouth before the risk which he feared eventuated, and he was pounced on by the watchman.

"But it was worth it," this impudent sinner told me. "Aye, if I'd got five years, it would have been worth it. They had my teeth out, too, so as to examine my mouth more carefully. I felt nervous just then, I can tell you. But it was O. K. For, sharp as the fellows were, they never thought of looking inside the teeth."—London Truth.

Fox Nearly Caused a Tragedy.

Mrs. Beaupre, an aged French woman of St. Denis, Me., was sitting at the door of her home when a fox, pursued by dogs, went under her chair for safety. Believing it to be a long-garçon, she screamed and fainted away, whereupon the fox ran to the fireplace and sought shelter in the wide chimney. When Mrs. Beaupre's grandson arrived he found her unconscious with four strange dogs in the room. Believing the dogs had killed his grandmother he slew two of them with an axe. As the survivors ran out the door the fox escaped from the chimney and hurried off to the woods. —New York Sun.

Saved From Drowning by an 8-Year-Old.

Annie, the four-year-old daughter of Frank Hoening, narrowly escaped drowning in the Blue Grass at Audubon, Iowa. She was returning from church with two other girls when she slipped off the narrow improvised foot-bridge over the dam and slid down the chutes into the deep eddy below. Little Joe Allen, a lad eight years of age, who was nearby, jumped in and pulled her out after she had gone below the surface the first time.

HINTS FOR HOUSEWIVES.

Keeping Ice from Melting.

However procured, even if it be ice that has been put up by the user, ice has cost something and should be made to last as long as possible. Keep the ice in a large piece so long as you can, and wrap it in something that is a poor conductor of heat. Woolen cloths are better than cotton, for they conduct the heat less rapidly. Paper is better than woolen as it will not admit air. If newspapers are used to wrap ice in they can be thrown away after they have served this purpose without any loss.

A Frequent Cause of Fire.

An unexpected but frequent cause of fire is due to cleaning carpets on the floor without taking them up. Nearly all the preparations guaranteed to make carpets good as new without making it necessary to lift them from the floor contain naphtha, which has inflammable qualities in a disagreeable degree. When used for cleaning carpets on the floor it soaks into the floor boards to a greater or less extent, and contact with an overheated steam, hot air or hot water pipe will do the rest.

To Clean and Preserve Oilcloth.

An oilcloth may be cleaned and made to last as long again if treated in the following manner: Cut into pieces half an ounce of beeswax, put in a saucer, cover entirely with turpentine and place in an oven until melted. After washing the oilcloth thoroughly with warm water and soap, dry it and rub the whole surface lightly with a bit of flannel dipped in the melted wax and turpentine. Then rub with a dry cloth. A polish is produced and the surface is lightly coated with the wax. When the floor requires to be cleaned the wax is washed off, together with the dust or dirt that may have gathered, while the oilcloth is preserved. In halls and rooms where no grease falls on the floor it is not necessary to wash the oilcloth after the first application, but simply to dust it well and polish it again with the wax and turpentine.

To Have a Cosy Veranda.

Those people who have picturesque verandas, where in summer much of their time is spent, will find the low willow couches, the broad, luxurious armchairs and their dainty tables just the things to turn the outdoor nooks into habitable apartments. The veranda should be as much shaded by vines as possible and then hung with bamboo porch blinds.

The floor of the veranda is best stained and polished and ornamented with one of the bright jute rugs that exposure to the weather does not spoil. A table in the centre of the veranda for afternoon tea or magazines and books may be had in several shapes. Some of them are provided with little undershelves and are made entirely of the wickerwork. The couches are of various shapes. Some of them are straight-backed affairs covered with an upholstered fitted mattress. Over this any quantity of soft cushions may find a resting place, to be used to prop up tired heads or weary backs.

Recipes.

Spiced Veal—Three pounds of veal, chopped fine, eight crackers, rolled, two eggs, one tablespoonful each of salt and pepper, one small onion, minced, a piece of salt pork, chopped fine. Mix well together and bake for two hours.

Scalloped Cauliflower—Boil a medium-sized cauliflower in slightly salted water until tender, make a bed of the leaves, break up the flower and place it on top, covered with a sauce made of one heaping tablespoonful of butter (melted), two tablespoonfuls of bread crumbs, two tablespoonfuls of milk, pepper and salt to taste, and one beaten egg. Sprinkle with bread crumbs and bake until a light brown.

Saratoga Potatoes—Pare several potatoes. Cut in very thin slices or slice with a vegetable slicer. Put them immediately into ice water for twenty minutes. Drain them and dry on a towel. Put a few slices at a time into the frying basket. Lower the basket into the hot fat carefully and slowly. When a delicate brown turn them into a paper to drain. Sprinkle with salt. Fry only a few at a time.

Frozen Kentucky Cream—Take three pints of rich cream, sweeten it very sweet with powdered sugar, whip it to a stiff froth with a cream whip, put it in a freezer, packed in an ice tub, turn the crank until the cream is half frozen, then stir through the cream a pound of raisins which have been stoned, chopped fine and dredged with a little corn starch to keep them from sticking together in a mass. Serve the cream in glass cups.

Canning Pineapple—Pare and shred the fruit into pieces of moderate size, weigh and allow half a pound of sugar to every pound of fruit. Put the fruit with a little water into a porcelain-lined or granite preserving kettle, cover closely, bring to a boil and cook slowly for half an hour. At the expiration of that time add the sugar, which has been previously heated in the oven, and cook together ten minutes. Fill the jars to overflowing and seal.

QUAINT AND CURIOUS.

A family comprising seven persons left Scranton, Penn., the other day, the whole party traveling on one full fare railroad ticket. There were the mother and her three pairs of twins, none of the children being up to the half-fare age of five years.

A curious case is reported by a German dentist, Dr. Muhl Kubner. One of his patients was a woman of 24, whose right arm and right side of the neck had been paralyzed for two years and a half as a result, it was supposed, of a fall and broken arm, and he filled several of her teeth and extracted the much-decayed third molar or wisdom tooth of the right side. The patient returned next day to state that her paralysis had disappeared.

Here are a few names taken at random from the delinquent tax list of Hawaii for 1898, as printed in one of the Honolulu papers: Alapaki, Bila Alapai, Ah Kui, Ah You, C. S. Ah Fat, Boo Tau Tong, Bow Din, Doi, As Goo, Iokepa, Ellen Kahaunaela. Lukia Kaholoholo, Leihulu Keobokalo, Kahakumakalani, Not At and B. Se. The "Ks" take up three columns of space, being three times as numerous as the delinquents under any other letter.

In reference to a recent paragraph on mermaids, a correspondent of the London Telegraph writes: "It may not be generally known that Japan exports these shams in assorted sizes, in glass cases, at so much per foot-run. They are made of the body of a fish and the dried head of a monkey, so skillfully united that it is difficult to detect where one begins and the other ends. Of late the market for mermaids has been flat; at one time they were fairly common in the curiosity shops."

In 1550 a remarkable lamp was found near Ateates, Padua, by a rustic, who unearthed a terra-cotta urn containing another urn in which was a lamp placed between two cylindrical vessels, one of gold and the other silver. Each was full of a very pure liquid by whose virtue the lamp had been kept shining upward of fifteen hundred years. This curious lamp was not meant to scare away evil spirits from a tomb, but was an attempt to perpetuate the profound knowledge of Maximus Olybius, who effected this wonder by his skill in the chemical art.

An English agriculturist has been experimenting with bees as letter carriers. Having conveyed a hive to a house four miles distant, he let out a few of them in a room where a plate of honey was placed to attract them. When they had settled upon this feast the experimenter fastened tiny dispatches upon their backs with a drop of paste, taking care at the same time that the motion of their wings was not interfered with. He then set them free, whereupon they immediately set out for their old home, where the writting was read with a magnifying glass.

SULTAN'S GIFTS TO UNCLE SAM.

They Were Sent to President Van Buren and Caused No End of Trouble.

On the seventh day of the month of Schawwal, in the year 1254 of the Hegira—which is the Arabian way of writing Dec. 25, 1839—the Sultan of Oman, whose name was Seyyid Saood, Bin Sultan Bin Ahmed, addressed a gracious letter to "His Excellency, Martin Van Buren, President of the United States of North America," in which he informed the president that he had sent him by the Royal ship Sultanea a few trifles as a token of friendship and good feeling. These trifles consisted of two Arabian horses and their groom, one bottle of attar of roses, two pieces of gold, five demijohns of rose water, one Persian carpet, one gold ornament with a silk tassel, four camel-hair shawls, one gold-mounted sword, two large pearls, a string of one hundred and fifty pearls, one gold plate, one bottle of diamonds, one gold snuff-box studded with precious stones, and one box of mixed pearls and diamonds. Under the constitution, the president is prohibited from accepting a personal gift from any foreign state or power, and as the Sultan's gifts had arrived in New York and the commander of the Sultanea would not leave the country without presenting his master's offerings, an embarrassing complication was the outcome. The matter was finally referred to Congress, and after three months of correspondence, red tape, diplomacy and legislation the Sultan's Christmas presents were finally accepted; and then the president was put to the trouble of selling the horses, the shawls and the rose-water, while Uncle Sam was given the further trouble of finding a suitable place to store the remaining gifts, and was afterward put to great expense in capturing the thief who carried off the entire collection in a bag and was only caught after a long chase.—Ladies' Home Journal.

Prudence.
"A prudent man," says a witty Frenchman, "is like a pin. His head prevents him from going too far."—Tit Bits.

A-PUTTIN' UP THE MAY.

When hayin' time comes round I go
And git the water jug
And take it over to the barn
And git a corn-cob pig;
Then go down to the pasture lot
And bridle Ma's old Gray,
And carry water for the men
A-puttin' up the hay.

I ride the horse down to the spring
And plump the jug right in—
And if you put it down too deep
It bobs right up ag'in!
And then it "bubbe-bubbe bubs,"—
It goes just that a-way.
Your wrist it gits as cold as ice—
A-puttin' up the hay.

Then, when it's full, I fasten it
To Uncle Bill's plow line
And drag it round. Pa says as that's
A lazy scheme of mine.
But you just bet I'd rather drag
A jug round any day
Then have to hold it on a horse—
A-puttin' up the hay.

One day the doggoned jug it hit
A stone—broke all to mash!
Then Pa he got a willow branch
And said that he would thrash
Me good; but Uncle Bill said "Aw!
The boy must have some play."
By gosh! a feller don't have much
A-puttin' up the hay.
—Harold Douglas Robins, in Puck.

HUMOROUS.

"In my business," said the counterfeiter, "I do not expect to lose anything on bad bills."

"Didn't he once say he would never speak to you again?" "Yes; but he saw I had a cold, and he couldn't resist the temptation to tell me of a sure cure."

"Doesn't your mother-in-law take any interest in your domestic affairs?" "Oh, yes; she licks up my wife and the cook when I find fault with the dinner."

Popper—That boy of mine is a regular phenomenon. Batcheller (wearily)—In what way? Popper—Six years old, and never said a bright thing in his life.

Tommy—Paw, what is the difference between economy and stinginess? Mr. Flagg—Saving on my own clothes is economy and saving on your mother's is stinginess.

"Why the dickens don't you stop?" asked the angry householder. "The fire is all out." "I allow it is," admitted the leader of the hose company, "but they is three winders not broke yet."

Cleverton—I want to consult your opinion on a point of etiquette. When I take a girl to luncheon, is it proper to ask her what she wants to eat? Dashaway—It is if you have money enough.

"Don't touch me," said the chrysanthemum, as it leaned away from the rose. "I would be foolish to attempt it," replied the rose; "it's a well-known fact that you haven't got a scent."

Teacher—What are marsupials? Boy—Animals which have pouches in their stomachs. Teacher—And what do they have pouches for? Boy—To crawl into and conceal themselves in when they are pursued.

Miss Prim—Don't let your dog bite me, little boy. Boy—He won't bite, ma'am. Miss Prim—But he is showing his teeth. Boy (with pride)—Certainly he is, ma'am; and if you had as good teeth as he has you'd show 'em, too.

Weary Willy (thoughtfully)—Ah, lady! you are so young, so good, so beautiful and so true, dat—Mrs. Justwed—That what? Weary Willy—Dat it would be de height of rashness to try and eat any of your cooking!—so I won't stop!

Young Housekeeper—Have you any nice ducks this morning? "Yes, here are some nice canvas-backs." Young Housekeeper—Oh, dear! I am so inexperienced! I think I would rather have the old-fashioned kind that have feathers on.

"Uncle," said the scientific youth, "don't you know that you ought to have your drinking water boiled, so as to kill the microbes?" "Well," answered the old gentleman, thoughtfully, "I believe I would as lief be an aquarium as a cemetery."

The Other Side.

Optimists are pleasant people to meet, but those who have business dealings with them sometimes regret the easy cheerfulness of their views.

Somebody once asked a distinguished English barrister whom he met at a railway station, where each was waiting for a train, how he managed when he was called in two ways at the same time.

"Of course I can't be in two places at once," said the barrister, easily "so I have to make a choice. For instance: today two cases in which I am concerned were called in different courts. One was in the interests of a clergyman, and the other of a railway company."

"On the whole, it seemed wise for me to stick to the railway company, and leave the clergyman to providence. And I won my case."

"Will you allow me to add," said a mild-individual, who had stood close at hand during this conversation, "may I be permitted to say, sir, that we lost ours."

The Liverpool docks, one of the wonders of modern commerce, extend along the Mersey a distance of six and a half miles.