

The Chatham Record.

THE GREAT HESPER OR THE SEARCH FOR THE BIGGEST DIAMOND IN THE WORLD. By FRANK BARRETT.

CHAPTER XIX. Continued. We could no longer hear the rushing of the stream on the other side, only the dull roar of the water as it struck the bottom of the canon some thousands of feet below.

"You tell me the thing is on the other side of the ropes, my gel," he said. "She answered yes, and we went slowly forward and downward along the narrow and jagged ledge, our faces toward the glittering quartz, seeking interstices and projections for hold to our hands.

"We were passing away from the fall, but at a certain point the natural path returned toward it in a zigzag along a lower projection. At the angle which offered a little wider standing space we stopped.

"This here hole was fust showed me by the Kid's mother," said Brace; "and served her father for a cachette in quite the early days of this country's glory."

"A cachette," he explained, "is a place where you keep things snug. Almost every miner before the Vigilance Committee nominated me judge, and had a cachette. This was mine, and many a ounce I've brought down here; for you see, barrin' accidents, it's wonderful safe. You will allow that no one could find his way down here in the dark."

"And from here right up to the hole is a fair straight line, so that no light could come down without its being seen; but that ain't the only safeguard, as you shall see. Come sit."

"We made our way foot by foot along the narrow ledge for some distance, still descending. When Brace again halted the light of his torch revealed the yellow stream falling silently through space, a few feet below him. That silent fall impressed me with a sense of the awful depth of the gulf beside us.

"The ledge ended abruptly where Brace stood; a recess in the wall allowed ample standing room for us three. The greaser never got no further down than this; but it weren't fur enough for me," said Brace. "I had my idea of gettin' right down to the bottom of this hole, where these waters must have carried tons of gold."

"But the ledge ends here," he said. "It do; but," he added, lifting his torch, "it goes on again over there."

"The light fell on the jutting projection of quartz upon the opposite side of the chasm, distant at least twenty feet. "But you cannot leap that."

"Correct, and I ain't going to try." He laid upon his face, and stretched his arm down the chasm; when he rose he had a coil in his hand. Pulling this in, he drew up two coils of stout rope.

"As he drew them in I saw that their other ends were attached to rocks upon the opposite ledge, one above the other, with about four feet between. "I must hitch 'em tight—give us a hand, sir," he said.

"mine—weath and the woman you love. Die!" And with that he severed the last strand, and I swept down through space, clinging with desperate energy to the rope in my hands. I swung, cramping myself together in anticipation of a violent shock against the side of the precipice. Happily, the rock above projected a little, so that the blow was less severe than I expected. I rebounded, and swung to and fro like a pendulum in the pitchy darkness.

For, in order to get a firmer grasp upon the rope when I saw his intention of cutting it, I had dropped the torch, which fell like the spark of a rocket into the depths below. "What was I to do? I dared not try to pull myself hand over hand up the wet rope, for the slightest relaxation of my hold might allow the rope to slip, and I should be lost assuredly."

"It's the very same," said Brace, taking the stone in his hand. "Do you take care of it," said I, "for I find enough to do to take care of myself."

"Wal, I reckon it won't be long afore we're on the best side 'o' this hole," he replied, putting the stone in his pocket. He was certainly fit at ease and less confident than usual, for he took his torch and examined the fastenings of the ropes, and then from an adjacent cavity he brought out another coil of cord, in which cross pieces of stout hickory were knotted at intervals of a foot. He unfastened it and laid it loose upon the rock, with the looped end free.

"The ropes has been years exposed to the damp and they're bound to go one day. Hef they should happen to go this day, this here knotted rope may come in particular handy. You know how to use it, my gel. Here's for a start."

With the torch in his hand he began the return along the rope. He had got to the middle when he stopped. "What's that?" he asked, sharply, holding the upper rope with one hand, while he raised the torch with the other and peered out into the darkness.

"I was fearful to see him standing there with the upheld torch over the awful chasm, the one luminous object in the blackness. "Did you hear anything, pardner?" "No."

"Seemed to me I heard a rifle cocked, Blamed old fool!" he muttered in self-reproach, as he continued his course. "Without accident or other incident he reached the ledge, and with a grunt of content seated himself on a boulder, letting the torch drop by his side. There was a pool of water there; with a hiss the light went out.

The next instant there was a flash in the darkness beyond, followed by the sharp crack of a rifle shot. "We could see nothing, but from the ledge opposite came a groan, and Brace called faintly: "I'm hit, pardner; look out for yourself."

The shot had been fired after the light was put out, leaving him in obscurity. The faculty that enabled the assassin to see him standing in the dark had enabled him to mark down poor Brace when he was no longer visible to our eyes. This reflection struck me, as, torch in hand, I sprang upon the rope bridge to cross to my fallen partner.

"Back, pardner, back," groaned Brace; "he's got the Hesper, and he'll have your life; back!" I raised my torch, and looking toward the ledge, I saw a man kneeling over Brace.

He raised his arm to silence Brace, and the light fell on the bright blade of the knife he held in his hand. I shouted. Turning, he saw me midway across the chasm, and sprang to his feet. Then I recognized him. It was Von Hoeck.

It was he, but could I believe my senses? His eyes were not the same. At that distance his sightless eyes should have been hardly distinguishable from his cadaverous face, but now they seemed to fade away in the light of my torch. And this was no deception of my sight.

Humor of Today

On Life's Highway. Sons of rich men leave behind them, As they zip past those who drive, Dust and odors to remind them That it's lucky they're alive. Chicago Record-Herald.

During Devotions. Stella—"How do you know she is old-fashioned?" Bella—"She occupies the sermon in planning a gown instead of an auto."—New York Sun.

Eighteen Holes. First Microbe—"Having a good time?" Second Microbe—"Yes; I found a perfectly splendid golf course in a Swiss cheese."—New York Sun.

The Place For Him. "Notwithstanding what you say about Kratie," said Goodart, "he seems to be a loyal fellow. He appears to keep in with his friends."

"He should be kept in with them," replied Grabbe. "Most of his friends are in jail."—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

Cynical Bachelor. "I think," said the strong-minded female, "that women should be permitted to whistle, don't you?"

"Certainly," replied the cynical bachelor. "There is no earthly reason why women should be denied the privilege accorded to locomotives and tugboats."—Chicago News.

Misjudged. "That Bilgins is the worst fool I ever saw."

"You misjudged him. He's not as much of a fool as he seems. He has succeeded in ranking his wife think his senseless performances are manifestations of the eccentricities of genius."—Chicago Record-Herald.

In 1925. The grand stand as well as the bleachers was filled to overflowing and it was time there was something doing.

"How many of you are there on the grounds?" asked the umpire of a policeman. "About 500," was the reply. "All right," said the umpire. "Play ball!"

Destitute. "You look sad," said Mrs. Much weed. "I feel sad," responded Mrs. Tenth time.

"Why so?" "You'd feel sad, too, if you didn't know where your next husband was coming from."—Louisville Courier Journal.

It's Final. Tess—"Isn't your new gown finished yet?" Jess—"Gracious! No. The dressmaker's work on it was only completed last Saturday."

Tess—"But if the dressmaker's through what else?" Jess—"O! all my friends have to criticize it yet."—Philadelphia Press.

In Bad Way. "Yes, poor pap's been shut up in the house so long. The doctor says it he could only get out to take a little exercise he would be very much better."

"Is he too weak to go out?" "Oh, no, but there's process servers all around the house, even down to the back gate."—Baltimore American.

A Special Make. "What's this peculiar instrument?" inquired the visitor. "That," replied the manufacturer, "is a table knife. We've just filled a large order for a Chicago firm."

"But what's the idea in the raised rim all around the blade?" "That's to keep peas and things from rolling off."—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

Point Not Well Taken. Mrs. Jenner Lee Ondego—"I don't see why they call it 'grand opera' when it's in English. It isn't grand opera when you can understand what the singers are saying."

"Mrs. Seldom-Holme—"Why, bless you, you can't understand them any better when they sing in English than when they sing in Italian."—Chicago Tribune.

Annoying. Mr. Gardner—"Well, dear, how are the tomatoes you planted?" Mrs. Gardner—"Oh, John! I'm afraid we'll have to buy what we need this year."

Mr. Gardner—"Why, how's that, Mary?" Mrs. Gardner—"I recollected to-day that when I left the planting I forgot to open the cans."—Puck.

Lady-Like. "Pop?" "Yes, my son."

"You know those little firecrackers that make so much noise are called lady crackers?" "So I believe."

"Why do they call 'em lady crackers, pop?" "Because they make so much noise I suppose."—Yonkers Statesman.

An Abiding Faith. "I don't see why there should be any difficulty about settling these life insurance complications," remarked the patient looking man.



The Rev. Dr. P. S. Henson says the country is going insane because it refuses to take sufficient rest.

An expert manicurist says that the manicure habit will cure children of the stubborn habit of biting their nails.

An eminent bacteriologist has a theory that trypanosomes in fish are responsible for the sleeping sickness in Uganda.

The highest recorded velocity of underground water is said to be 144 feet in twenty-four hours. The new record is for water flowing through gravel near Tucson, Arizona.

The observations were made during the last Christmas holidays by Mr. H. C. Wolff, of the Department of Mathematics of the University of Wisconsin.

In heated rooms we often perceive an unpleasant tickling odor, which irritates the mucous membrane of the larynx and causes coughing. It comes from burnt and decomposed dust, from which ammonia and other harmful substances arise.

This decomposition, which occurs only when the dust is damp, is most frequently found with the usual iron stoves whose sides easily become red hot, in consequence of which the particles of dust lodging on the stove burn and vitiate the air. But the hot air flues of furnaces also easily become overheated, in consequence of which dust lodging bars and the products of the burning mingle in the air.

At the summer solstice at Paris, France, the sun descends only eighteen degrees below the horizon, and twilight continues from the setting of the sun in the northwest until his rising in the northeast. At midnight a luminous arc several degrees high can be observed in the North.

This faint light was first photographed by Pouchet and Quisset from the top of the Eiffel tower, and it was conclusively proved to be from the sun. Photometric study was urged by the late M. Cornu.

A special photometer has now been constructed by M. Touche, and with this apparatus the varying intensities of the twilight arc will be accurately measured from the Eiffel tower observatory.

The authorities of Birmingham University, England, have recently opened on the university grounds an experimental coal mine, occupying nearly a acre of ground. The purpose is to give practical instruction to students in all the problems and operations of coal mining.

They are exercised in underground surveying, the connection of surface with underground surveys, the testing of ventilation, the measurement of air volumes and velocities, the friction of air currents, the various methods of breaking coal, and the management of different kinds of drills and cutting machines. The completion of this artificial mine has been awaited with interest, and it is expected to prove very valuable in teaching the science of mining.

ARBOREAL DENTISTRY. Cement Fillings Protect Giant Oaks From Ravages of Decay.

Considerable interest, says the New Orleans Times-Democrat, attaches to the cement filling in the trunks of the great oaks near St. Charles avenue, and many questions have been asked about this method of arresting the decay of trees.

Horticulturnists have found that they have been able to prevent limbs from decaying by wrapping them in cloth. This helps to exclude the dampness. Carrying their experiments one point further, it was found that cement would preserve the trunks of trees from rotting, just as a filling in a tooth prevents further decay.

The question arose last year as to what would be done to preserve the great oaks at Audubon park, which were losing their growth and verdure by reason of big holes in their trunks, and it was accordingly decided to fill the apertures with cement. Several cartloads of sand, mortar and brick were used in the operation, which has been attended with great success. Old oaks regained their strength, new branches began to grow, and altogether they put on signs of renewed life.

The art of "arboreal dentistry" has since then been perfected to such an extent that even a new bark can be given to a tree. It is proposed at some future date to cover the filling with a layer of cement the color of the oak's bark, which can be so worked as to resemble a natural covering. It is said that this will preserve the tree even better than will ordinary cement, while at the same time it will add to its beauty by hiding the mortar.

The Alpine plants worth growing in America are chiefly hardy perennial herbs that make tufts or rosettes, or carpet the ground with a continuous sheet of flowers. Examples are the famous gentians, pinks and primroses of Switzerland. These plants are not confined to the European Alps, but come from all high mountains and, therefore, in horticultural literature, the word "alpine" has become so generalized that it is no longer capitalized.

Unfortunately some of the choicest alpine plants can be grown only in a special rockery, where they can have cool air, plenty of light, but without shade, and with constant moisture, but perfect drainage. Yet there are ordinary borders which are able to withstand the alternate freezing and thawing of American winters.—Garden Magazine.

Consoling. Even the hurricanes of life split the trees to kindling wood, and save us lots of trouble.—Atlanta Constitution.

Indiana's steam railroads were assessed at \$165,873,362 in 1905.

"He'll never do no more." Brace answered, pointing up the ledge. Van Hoeck had tried to escape the way he came, after shooting Lola, and had got to some distance along the ledge when the great rock opened and slid away.

He stood on the narrow path now—a ghastly spectacle. A piece of quartz had struck him on the head; a third stream of blood was trickling down his cheek. In one hand he held the Great Hesper; in the other he grasped his rifle.

But he dared not move from the position he had reached when the roof tilted up; for the light that burst it had blinded him once more. The sensitive retina had closed over the pupils and the blank, sightless eyes stared wildly around, incapable of seeing.

It was possible for Brace to reach him by going along the ledge. "Will you save him?" I asked.

"No, I pardner," he replied. "I leave him to Providence, be his end what it may. The shot he fired at my poor youngster started the consern, and brought the whole thing down. The God almighty's judgment. Let it be!"

Van Hoek let the rifle fall from his hand; how insignificant to us seemed the sound that came up from below; the weapon struck a rock, after the mighty discord that had thundered in our ears, and yet to him how terribly significant!

"I could see his hand quivering as he gripped the edge of the wall. I saw how he strained his eyes to see the ledge by which he had followed her. Yet he could not stand forever there."

He found a crevice for his fingers, and made a step forward; he advanced again, but the rock he put his foot on was a piece of the debris that had fallen from the ledge. It rolled under his weight. He staggered back, swinging his arms in the vain attempt to get an equilibrium, then he shot forward and fell headlong down, down into the abyss.

I held my breath; it seemed minutes before that hollow "pong" reached our ears, telling us that Van Hoek was gone forever, and the Great Hesper with him.

There was cord, and to spare, in the coils. Weighting one end with a stone, I threw an end across to Brace, and when the cut ropes were knotted and a bridge once more formed, he crossed, and knelt down by me over poor Lola.

He examined her wound and shook his head in silence; there was no hope. We made a mattress of the rugs on the smoothest part of the rock and attempted to lift her upon it. But the movement gave her pain, and she motioned us to desist. Then pointing upward, she made signs for us to leave her.

"Not while you are with us, my poor girl," said her father, with more tenderness than I had ever heard in his voice.

We had the flask, and some food in a wallet. We ate when we were hungry, seated beside Lola.

Then exhausted with fatigue, and the terrible strain we had been subjected to, we unconsciously fell asleep, with our backs resting against the rock. The last thing of which I was conscious was the pressing of Lola's lips upon my hand.

Brace touched my arm. "Pardner," he said, in a tone of awe, "the Kid's gone."

I looked where I had seen her lying with her face to my hand. She was gone literally. There was a little stain of blood upon the rock—a drop further on, another close to the edge of the platform. She had kept her promise—she had been good; and now the sufferings of her short life were ended.

"She knoped it was no good our waitin'—poor little cuss."

I felt something in my hand; opening it, I found a ring I had bought for Lola. She had slipped it there before she went.

Sir Edmund and Edith came to San Diego in June, the loveliest season of that lovely land. The air from the sea tempered the sun's heat. The plantations were already burdened with fruit and everywhere there was a redolence of orange blossom—a very suggestive fragrance, my dear fellow," said the baronet, pressing my hand.

Edith was charmed with all she saw. "Is this my home?" she asked. "I turned to Sir Edmund.

"Well, we must go through the formality of looking at the books, my dear," said he.

I had no hesitation in showing them, and when he had seen the splendid results showed, he formally sanctioned a renewal of our engagement; but we had not waited for that consent to let our hearts join in unconstrained delight.

Our second engagement was happily longer than the first, but we were married the week after the vines were cleared.

Brace was at our wedding breakfast. When it was over, he took some of the flowers from the table and disappeared for some days. I knew how he had spent his brief holiday. If I had entertained any doubt, it would have been dispelled when, on his return, he took the old agreement from his pocket and pointed to the postscript:

"It is understood between the above partners that, in the event of a lucky find, the Kid shall not be forgotten."

And, indeed, in my wife I had found a dearer prize than any I had dreamed of when I signed the compact.

THE END. The annual loss from the burning of buildings in the United States is about \$135,000,000, not including cost of insurance and the appliances for fire protection.

GOOD ROADS. Helped by Autolists. INTEREST in good roads is spreading throughout the country to a greater extent than has ever been noticed, and a large part of this activity is directly due to the individual and committee efforts of automobilists.

The Good Roads Committee of the American Automobile Association is co-operating with local authorities in a number of States for the purpose of improving the more frequented sections of the highways. The recent run made by Asa Goddard from Boston to New York was taken with the object of studying the roads at an unfavorable period of the year when their bad spots would be more apparent and it would be easier to suggest definite places for improvement. A detailed report on these conditions is being prepared by Mr. Goddard, and the American Automobile Association will endeavor to get the clubs in Massachusetts and Connecticut to assist in carrying out the needed improvements.

Asa Goddard is now engaged in the good roads movement in Ohio. He has accepted the appointment as assistant secretary to the Cleveland Automobile Club, the office being created chiefly for the purpose of bringing influence to bear throughout the State for better highways. Mr. Goddard is one of the most practical and best posted men on automobile affairs in the country. He is a practical road builder, having had charge of the construction of some of the best roads in New England. For two years he has been a director of the American Automobile Association, representing the Worcester Automobile Club.

The projected plans for the Glidden tour this year have directed closer attention than ever before to the condition of roads in the West. Singular as it may seem, to those who know little of the true conditions, the roads in Canada above Detroit and Toledo are immeasurably superior to those in Michigan and Ohio. In fact, better automobile travel will be found by way of Canada from Detroit to Buffalo than through our own country. It is almost impossible to travel from Detroit to Toledo by automobile, and it has long been a standing joke among the members of the Detroit Automobile Club that the only safe way to take a motor car between the two cities is by boat.

In view of the enormous output of automobiles from Michigan it is but natural that the good roads subject should be agitated there, and an amendment to the Constitution has recently been adopted by popular vote authorizing State aid to road building somewhat on the principle that was adopted in New York a year ago. The Michigan Highway Commissioner and the autolists are now endeavoring to cooperate with the proper officials in Ohio toward the building of a firm, broad highway from Detroit to Toledo.

In Pennsylvania active steps have been taken to secure a proper automobile route from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh. The Germantown Automobile Club has taken the initiative. A macadamized road has just been authorized at an expense of \$90,000 from Baltimore to Washington. A bill to this effect has been signed by the Governor. Plans are being made in New Hampshire to improve the roads leading to the White Mountains. In New Jersey last year nearly sixty-eight miles of road were built at a cost of nearly \$165,000. Plans are being made for the improvement of several stretches of road in the upper part of New York. Even in the Far West the importance of the subject is assuming greater importance than in former years, California and Washington having taken steps to improve their State highways.—New York Times.

The Cumberland Pike. A bill for the restoration of the National highway commonly known as the Cumberland Pike, passing through Maryland, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, was introduced into the House recently. The bill makes it possible for State authorities to borrow money for the purpose of borrowing interest without interest, provided they do not more than \$100,000 per mile is used in the improvement of the road. This movement if successful will be of interest and value to our citizens living in the sections through which this famous road passes.

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