

THE FORGOTTEN FLEET MYSTERY

by Van Wyck Mason

CHAPTER XVIII

There apparently was nobody on the *Mount Vernon*, for she stepped out upon the deck and sun warped deck only faded red, white and blue stripes of the *Amerika* and the *Washington* were to be seen still towering above a tangle of masts, rigging, lifeboats and ventilators.

Further careful reconnaissance showed the *Mount Vernon* to be indeed quite deserted for themselves. Signs of reactivity, however, were abundant—shall we see if there's a light in the smoking room?" inquired at length. "Or would rather wait?"

Her look while there's no one around," she murmured and her muddled arm through her own secret after all."

"Somehow it seems right—quietly opened that same through which a long lifetime seemed he had followed the sun thrust a shimmering above a dim head land down the gray Patuxent. Skillful clumps of Octopus Oil moored together in mid air, dyed distant marshes a emerald and drew bright squares from the still pools of Patuxent. It also seemed with a dreadful ruby tinge that pool of blood in the of the smoking room which under Colby's bullet.

Handing the girl by an elbow, he hurried her past the grue- souvenir and directed her to the enigmatic, dust dulled of the negro girl above fireplace.

"I cautioned when they before it, "not to let it be a disappointment if there anything there. There may be, you know—"

"I think," she said with a quick that warmed his heart, "I hear it better today than I had yesterday."

Don't say that unless you mean there was a fierce, insistent in his sunken and blood-

shot eyes as he stepped in front of her and caught her by the hands. "Do you—?"

"Oh, my dear—yes," was all Geneva could say, then his eager hard-lipped kisses checked further speech. If she was surprised to find herself in his arms she did not betray it. It was rather as if she had been surprised all her life at not being in his arms and that that situation had abruptly come to an end.

"I—I'm glad you did that—before we looked," she breathed.

"I wanted you to know," he cried in a voice far softer than she had ever heard him use before, "that—that—oh well, you know I— He kissed her again and yet again—they had been through so much together.

"Look here, young lady," he turned away, "you're corrupting me—I'd better be getting to work."

"But Don, I don't think it could be there," she protested. "Why would Kraus have hidden the jewels in a public room like this? It would have been hard for him to have worked undetected."

Colby paused, eyes wandering over the mantelpiece.

"Don't think your objection is well founded," said he. "I don't know of any more lonesome place than a ship's smoking room after one o'clock at night. Very likely Kraus picked a stormy night when people weren't moving about more than they had to."

"But wouldn't it take a lot of time to get one of those figures free?" Geneva insisted.

"Not necessarily. Look," He indicated the full bodied figure upon which their attention was centered. "With half an eye you can see that the carved figure is simply set into the mantel frame like a sort of inlay. Probably one or two French nails are all that are required to hold it in place. You see it would never come under much strain."

"But I still don't see, Don, why he would pick a public room."

The exsoldier's brown features contracted in thought.

"I think there are several good reasons. First of all Kraus wanted to put his loot in a place that would be always accessible. In other words, if he hid it in a cabin he might not be able to get that cabin just when he wanted it. And if he insisted too much on having a certain cabin, especially an unattractive one such as a man of his type could afford, it would arouse suspicion. Something he didn't want under any circumstances."

Colby cocked his head to one side and speculatively fingered the blunt tire iron which had served Vogel as a jimmy.

"Here in a public room he could always get at it. And then again there was no danger of the cabin plan being altered or renumbered. Something which happens quite

frequently on a steamer. As a last argument," he said as he drew up a chair to the mantelpiece, "I think Kraus wanted to pick a distinctive hiding place—one that a confederate could recognize without difficulty in case Kraus couldn't come for the loot himself, which is of course what happened."

He swung up on the mantelpiece and began to examine the wood-work with great care.

"Do you see anything?" she demanded.

"Yes," he replied, "there are four or five faint marks on this side of the molding, but they may have been made by workmen when they installed the figure. We'll see in a minute now, anyway."

Oblivious to faint voices sounding on shore and from the Monticello, Colby continued to examine the mantelpiece while Geneva meanwhile sank into a shrouded arm chair and sat quite still, ignoring the fact that a little puddle was forming from the drip of her wet skirt, looking up at him from adoring wide gray eyes.

What a strange mixture was this man. Of him she even now knew nothing save that she was content to follow him anywhere, anyhow.

The crackle of splintering wood drew her attention as he applied Vogel's jimmy to the backing of the carved figure.

"She's fairly loose," he called excitedly. "I think we—" But just then the grinning negro girl jerked forward and came loose so easily that Colby had to clutch wildly at it and was barely able to prevent its crashing to the tile before the fireplace.

It was characteristic of Donald Colby that he said nothing when he found himself peering at a long slot into which the nymph's backing had been fitted. Now there was exposed a further space perhaps four inches wide by eight inches tall and securely jammed into it, was a flat parcel done up in yellow newspaper. Still silent, Colby got down and passed it to the seated girl, and she accepted it but with her eyes still fixed on his.

"That table please," was all she said. When he brought it she carefully slipped aside the cotton string securing the package and commenced to unwrap it, creating little crackling noises that filled the whole garish smoking room.

The sun, on rising a little higher, crept in through a leaded window and revealed in Geneva's cheeks color whipped back by an overwhelming excitement.

Towering above the wholly absorbed girl stood Donald Colby, feet a little apart and looking more like an Indian than ever. His lips took on a peculiar twist when the paper fell apart and a lance-like sunbeam leaped into a mass of diamonds, emeralds, sapphires, and pearls, to escape again amid a maddening burst of rainbow hues.

"Thank God," murmured Geneva Benet, and then again very softly, "Thank God, Mother—darling!"

Suddenly, in a single gesture,

SCOTT'S SCRAP BOOK By R.J. SCOTT

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she divided the glittering heap in half and held out a handful of gems to the spare figure before her. A strand of glorious emeralds throbbed with the verdant lights of a tropic jungle, a huge sapphire gleamed like the Caribbean, but the ex-soldier stood very still and slowly shook his narrow head.

"Thanks," he murmured. "I can't take them."

"But you must!" she pleaded and sprang up. "Here! Take them—You've earned them, I want you to have them."

"Sorry," he insisted earnestly. "There are regulations against it."

"Regulations?" she burst out. "Surely the rules of that funny little country you used to serve aren't binding now?"

"They aren't," he admitted, taking the jewels and replacing them with their fellows. "But the regulations of the Department of Justice are. They say in so many words: 'No operative of this department shall under any circumstances whatsoever accept a gratuity for the performance of his duty.'"

Geneva Benet began to tremble a little.

"Then—then you aren't a soldier of fortune?"

"In one sense I was until about

Here's How You May Send Gifts Overseas

Here are the post office department's recommendations for Christmas mail to service men outside the United States:

1. Parcels, letters and cards should be mailed between October 1, and November 1—the sooner the better, regardless of where you live or where the article is going. De-
2. Gift packages should be marked "Christmas Parcel."
3. Parcels should not exceed 11 pounds in weight or 12 inches in length or 42 inches in length and girth combined. If possible, hold them to six pounds and the size of a shoebox.
4. Don't send food (except hard candies) or clothing. Service men have plenty of both. Don't send anything inflammable like matches or lighter fluid. Don't send intoxicants.
5. Wrap packages substantially but fix them so they may be easily opened for censorship inspection. Be sure that smaller packages, inside the big package, are tightly packed.
6. Postage must be fully prepaid. Consult your post office for parcel post rates. Better insure packages.
7. Such messages as "Merry Christmas," "Do Not Open Until Christmas," etc., are permitted if they do not interfere with the address.

No sadder proof can be given by a man of his own littleness than disbelief in great men.—Carlyle.

NOTICE

All persons will take notice that the undersigned, who was convicted in the Superior Court of Jackson County of a charge of violating the prohibition laws, will apply to the Parole Commissioner to the end that he be paroled. All persons objecting to the granting of a parole will file said objections with the Parole Commissioner, Raleigh, N. C.

ROY LEATHERWOOD.
No. 1245—Oct. 8-15.

THE END

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ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE

Having qualified as administrator of the estate of Mrs. W. H. Liner, deceased, wife of Dr. W. H. Liner, late of Haywood county, N. C., this is to notify all persons having claims against said estate to exhibit them to the undersigned at Waynesville, N. C., on or before the 2nd of September, 1943, or this notice will be pleaded in bar thereof. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate settlement.

This September 2nd, 1942.
DR. W. H. LINER,
Administrator.
No. 1230 Sept. 3-10-17-24 Oct. 1-8

NOTICE OF SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, COUNTY OF HAYWOOD.
HAZEL T. COWAN vs. GEORGE M. COWAN, JR.

The above named defendant will take notice that an action has been commenced against him by the plaintiff for the purpose of securing an absolute divorce from him on the grounds of two years separation; and the defendant will further take notice that he is required to appear at the office of the Clerk of the Superior Court of Haywood County not more than thirty days from the 16th day of October, 1942, and answer or demur to the complaint filed in this action, or the relief demanded by the plaintiff will be granted.

This the 23rd day of September, 1942.

KATE WILLIAMSON,
Assistant Clerk Superior Court.
No. 1239—Sept. 24—Oct. 1-8-15

NOTICE SERVING SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT NORTH CAROLINA, HAYWOOD COUNTY, TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE vs. REAGAN L. WELLS and wife, LUCY WELLS, and HAYWOOD COUNTY.

The defendants Reagan L. Wells and wife, Lucy Wells, will take notice that an action entitled as above has been commenced in the Superior Court of Haywood County, N. C., to foreclose tax and special assessment liens on real estate situated in aforesaid County and State, and the said defendants will further take notice that they are required to appear at the office of the Clerk of the Superior Court of said County in the Courthouse in Waynesville, North Carolina, within thirty days after the 14th day of October, 1942, and answer or demur to the complaint in said action or the plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief demanded in said complaint.

This September 14th, 1942.
C. H. LEATHERWOOD,
Clerk Superior Court.
No. 1237—Sept. 17-24 Oct. 1-8.

We were born and raised in these parts, just like most of our customers...

Down here live the folks we grew up with... our neighbors. We work alongside you, pay taxes with you and vote with you. So we have come to think of you as our very own customers—so long as we deserved your trade.

To do that, of course we had to make as good Ale and Beer as you can get anywhere in these United States.

We seem to have done that, because the very best breweries in the country have come into this community and fought for your trade. It was a good fair fight, and we are proud that in the face of it Atlantic Ale and Beer have for years held their lead over all other brands.

Now war has come along and the needs of war have brought all sorts of restrictions. Metal caps... restricted deliveries and whatnot. You can't get help—it's gone into the Armed forces... to fight for our way of life.

Many competitors have abandoned this market and are now devoting all their efforts to serving their own home communities.

That means that somehow we've got to step up production so as to not only fill the gap but meet the increased needs of our "home folks". And it's a vital need to many, a refreshing glass of cold beer is a pleasant way to essential relaxation, and helps combat the tension and strain of the war job.

Faced with unprecedented demand, the Atlantic Company has increased its production to the limit of the capacity of its four breweries without sacrificing quality one iota.

Sincerely, it's not a question of selling beer or making money. Under present conditions we can probably sell all we can brew... and more. It's a matter of pride with us now, to keep the faith by looking after our own "home folks".

ATLANTIC ALE AND BEER

Atlantic Co. Breweries in Atlanta, Charlotte, Norfolk, Orlando