THE WILD GEESE

BY Stanley J Weyman

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Synopsis of Previous Chapters

Colonel John Sullivan, an Irish soldier, who has served abroad for many years, returns to his native Kerry on the sloop Cormorant, a French smuggling vessel, laden with Bordeaux wines. The cargo of the sloop is seized by the natives of Skull, against the futile protests of Captain Augustin, who realizes that he has no law on his side.

Colonel Sullivan is coldly received by Flavia and her brother, The McMurrough, because of his alian faith and his undesirable position as their legal guardian. When Captain Augustin returns with Luke Asgill, the nearest justice, and demands the return of the confiscated cargo, Flavia and her guardian are in favor of returning the cargo on the captain's payment of the dues. The McMurrough objects to this, but finally agrees to it on Colonel Sullivan's offer to get back Flavia's favorite mare, which was seized by British soldiers. The Colonel and his servant, Bale, set out and find the mare at the barracks of Tralee. The Colonel is invited into the mess room by the English officers, and one of them, named Payton, who seized the mare, throws wine in his face. The Colonel refuses to fight, because his right arm is permanently disabled. He wins a left-handed fencing bout with the maitre d'armes, at the same time winning the mare on a wager. At dinner upon his return to Morristown, he is amazed when Flavia drinks a toast "to the King across the water" and fears that a rising is contemplated. His fears are realized next morning when his kinsman, Ulick, warns him to leave the place and the people to their fate. The Colonel refuses and next morning after breakfast is invited to join a family council of war. He refuses to join the proposed uprising, knowing its futility. Fearing that the Colonel may turn informer, The McMurrough and his friends imprison him and his servant Bale. The next morning the two are led out to their death by the agent of The McMurrough, O'Sullivan Og. At the last moment this sentence is revoked and the Colonel and Bale are rowed out through the mist to imprisonment on a Spanish war ship in the harbor. The rowboat capsizes and the two prisoners, luckily escaping, take refuge on the French sloop. Captain Augustin and his sailors, under the Colonel's direction, steal to the house at Morristown under cover of the fog, and seize and imprison the leaders of the uprising on the sloop. The Bishop and Admiral Cammock are to be carried to sea for a period and The McMurrough, on swearing that he will attempt nothing against Colonel John nor against the government, is released and he returns to Morristown with the Colonel. Flavia, incensed at his return and the failure of the uprising, attacks the Colonel, who narrowly escapes death at her hands. She and her brother find the Colonel's presence irksome and consider means of getting rid of him. When Asgill comes wooing Flavia, and because of earlier treachery is forbidden the house by the Colonel, The McMurrough and his sister rebel at the Colonel's authority. Flavia induces the Colonel to send away his faithful servant, Bale, on the plea that he may be injured by the inimical peasantry. She then lures the Colonel to an old tower at night and has him imprisoned there, without food or water, in the hope that he may thus be induced to sign over to The McMurrough all that he holds under the will of Sir Michael McMurrough. Meanwhile, Payton with some of his soldiers come from Tralee on investigation. Flavia is remorseful, fearing the Colonel, still obdurate, may die of starvation and his death be upon her head. She releases him and bears him back to Morristown, with the assistance of Payton, while her brother and Asgill flee.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Scene in the Passage

UNDER the shadow of the great peat-stack, whither he had retired that he might make up his mind before he faced the three, Asgill cursed The McMurrough with all his heart. It was, it must be, through his folly and mismanagement that the thing had befallen, that the prisoner had been released, that Payton had been let into the secret.

How was he to get rid of Payton? How prevent Colonel John from resuming that sway in the house which he had exercised before? How nip in the bud that nascent sympathy, that feeling for him, which Flavia's outbreak the night before had suggested? Or how, short of all this, was he to face either Payton or the Colonel?

In counsel with James McMurrough he might have arranged a plan of action; at least, he would have learned from him what Payton knew. But James' absence ruined all. In the end, after waiting some time in the vain hope that he would appear, Asgill went in to supper.

Colonel Sullivan was not there; he was in no condition to descend. Nor was Flavia; whereon Asgill reflected, with chagrin, that probably she was attending upon the invalid. Payton was at table, with the two O'Beirnes, and three other buckeens. The Englishman, amused by the discovery he had made, was openly disdainful of his companions; while the Irishmen, sullen and suspicious, were not aware how much he knew. If The McMurrough chose to imprison his unpopular kinsman, it was nothing to them; nor a matter into which gentlemen eating at his table and drinking his potheen and claret were called upon to peer too closely.

But for his repute as a duelist they would have picked a quarrel with the visitor there and then. And but for the presence of his four troopers in the background they might have fallen upon him in some less regular fashion. As it was, they sat eyeing him askance; and, without shame, were relieved when Asgill entered. They looked to him to clear up the situation and put the interloper in his right place.

"I'm fearing I'm late," Asgill said. "Where'll The McMurrough be, I wonder?"

"Gone to meet your friend, I should think," Payton replied, with a sneer.

Asgill maintained a steady glare. "My friend?" he repeated. "Oh, Colonel Sullivan?"

"Yes, your friend who was to return today," the other retorted. "Have you seen anything of him?" he continued, with a grin.

Asgill fixed his eyes steadily on Payton's face. "I'm fancying you have the advantage of me," he said. "More by token, I'm thinking, Major, you have seen that same friend already."

"Maybe I have."

"And had a bout with him?"

"Eh?"

"And, faith, had the best of the bout too!" Asgill continued coolly, and with his eyes fixed on the other's features as if his one aim was to see if he had hit the mark. "So much the best that I'll be chancing a guess he's upstairs at this moment, and wounded! Leastwise, I hear you and the young lady brought him to the house between you, and him scarcely able to use his ten toes."

Payton, with his mouth open, glared at the speaker in a manner that at any other time must have provoked him to laughter.

"Isn't that the fact?" Asgill said coldly.

"The fact!" the other burst forth loudly. "I'm cursed if it is! And you know it is not! You know it as well as I do"—and with that he poured forth a version of the events of the afternoon.

When he had done. "That's a strange story," Asgill said quietly, "if it's true."

"True?" Payton rejoined, laying his hand on a glass and speaking in a towering rage. "You know it's true!"

"I know nothing about it," Asgill replied, with the utmost coolness.

"Nothing?"

"And for a good reason. Sure, and I'm the last person they would be likely to tell it to!"

"And you were not a party to it?" Payton cried.

"Why should I be?" Asgill rejoined. "What have I to gain by robbing the young lady of her inheritance? I'd be more likely to lose by it than gain."

"Lose by it? Why?"

"That is my affair," Asgill answered. And he hummed:

"'They tried put the comether on Judy McBain;
One, two, three, one, two, three!
Cotter and crowder and Paddy O'Hea;
For who but she's owner of Ballymacshane?'"

He made his meaning so clear that Payton, scowling at him with his hand on a glass as if he meant to throw it, dropped his eyes and his hand and fell into a gloomy study. He could not but own the weight of the other's argument. If Asgill was a pretender to the heiress' hand the last thought in his mind would be to divest her of her property.

Asgill read his thoughts, and presently:

"I hope the wound is not serious?" he said.

"He is not wounded," the Major answered curtly. Meanwhile the O'Beirnes and their fellows grinned their admiration of the bear tamer; and went out one by one, until the two men were left together.

They sat some way apart. Payton brooding savagely, with his eyes on the table, Asgill toying with the things before him. Each saw the prize clear before him; each saw the other in the way. Payton cared for the girl herself only as a toy that had caught his fancy; but his mouth watered for her possessions. Asgill cared little or nothing for the inheritance, but he swore that the other man should never live to possess the woman. "It's a pity," Payton meditated, "for, with his aid, I could take the girl, willing or unwilling. She'd not be the first Irish girl who has gone to her marriage across the pommel!" While Asgill reflected that if he could find Payton alone on a dark night it would not be his small sword would help him or his four troopers would find him! But it must not be at Morristown.

Each owned, with reluctance, that the other had advantages. Asgill was Irish, and known to Flavia; but Payton, though English, was the younger, the handsomer, the higher born, and he flattered himself that, given a little time, he would win, if not by favor, by force or fraud. But, could he have looked into Asgill's heart he would have trembled. He would have known that, while Irish bogs were deep and Irish pikes were sharp, his life would not be worth one week's purchase if he wronged this girl.

And Asgill suspected the other; and he shook with rage at the thought that Payton might offer the girl some rudeness. When Payton rose to go, he rose also; and when, by chance, Payton sat down, he sat down also. At once the Englishman understood; and thenceforth they sat with frowning faces, each more certain, with every moment, that, the other removed, his path to the goal was clear and open.

There was claret on the table, and the Major did not spare it. When he rose to his feet to retire he was heated and flushed, but not drunk. "Where's that young cub?" he asked.

Asgill shrugged his shoulders. "I can't hope to fill his place," he said with a smooth smile. "But I will be doing the honors as well as I can."

"You are very officious, it seems to me," Payton growled. And then, more loudly, "I'm going to bed," he said.

"In his absence," Asgill answered, with mock politeness, "I will have the honor of lighting you."

"You needn't trouble."

"Faith, and it's no trouble at all," Asgill replied in the same tone. And, taking two of the candles from the table, he preceded the Englishman up the stairs.

The gradual ascent of the lights and the men's footsteps should have given Flavia warning of their coming. But either she disdained concealment or she was thinking of other things, for when they entered the passage beyond the landing they espied the girl standing outside the Colonel's door. A pang shot through Asgill's heart and he drew in his breath.

She raised her hand. "Ah," she said, "he has been crying out! But I think it was in his sleep. Will you be making as little noise as you can?"

Asgill did not answer, but Payton did. "Happy man!" he said. And, being in his cups, he said it in such a tone and with such a look that a deep blush crimsoned the girl's face.

Her eyes snapped. "Good night," she said, coldly.

Asgill continued to keep silence, but Payton did not take the hint. "Wish I'd such a guardian!" he said with a chuckle. "I'd be a happy man then!"

He Dashed the Glass and Its Contents Into Payton's Face

Asgill's face was dark with passion, but "Good night" Flavia repeated coldly. And this time the displeasure in her tone silenced the Major. The two men went on to their rooms, though Asgill's hands itched to be at the other's throat. A moment later two doors opened and closed sharply.

Flavia remained in the darkness of the passage, but she no longer listened—she thought. Presently she went back to her room.

There she continued to stand and to think. And the blush which the Major's insinuation had brought to her cheek still burned there. It was natural that Payton's words should direct her thoughts to the man outside whose door he had found her; nor less natural that she should institute a comparison between the two, should consider how the one had treated her, when he had held her struggling in his arms, when in her despair she had beaten his face with her hands, and how the other had treated her in the few hours he had known her! Thus comparing she could not but find in the one a nobility, in the other a—a dreadfulness. Looking back, and having Payton's words and manner fresh in her mind, she had to own that, in all his treatment of her, Colonel Sullivan, while opposing and thwarting her, had still, and always, respected her.

Strange to say, she could not now understand that rage against him which had before carried her to such lengths. How had he wronged her? She could find no sufficing answer. A curtain had fallen between the past and the present. The rising? It stood on a sudden very distant, very dim, a thing of the past, an enterprise romantic, but hopeless. The contemptuous words in which he had denounced it rang again in her ears, but they no longer kindled her resentment; they convinced. As one recovering from sickness looks back on the delusions of fever, Flavia reviewed the hopes and aspirations of the past month. She saw now that it was not with a handful of cotters and peasants that Ireland could be saved or the true faith restored.

She was still standing a pace within her dooor when a foot stumbled heavily on the stairs. She recognized it for James' footstep—she had heard him stumble on those stairs before—and she laid her hand on the latch. She had never had a real quarrel with him until now and, outrageously as he had treated her, she could not bear to keep without making an attempt to heal the breach. She opened the door and stepped out.

James' light was traveling up the stairs but he had not himself reached the landing. She had just noted this when a door opened and Payton looked out. He saw her, and still flushed with claret, he misunderstood her presence and her purpose. He stepped toward her.

"Thought so," he chuckled. "Still listening, eh? Why not listen at my door? Then it would be a pretty man and a pretty maid. But I've caught you." He shot out his arm and tried to draw her toward him, "There's no one to see, and the least you can do is to give me a kiss for a forfeit!"

The girl recoiled, outraged and angry. But, knowing her brother was at hand, and seeing in a flash what might happen in the event of a collision, she did so in silence, hoping to escape before he came upon them. Unfortunately Payton misread her silence and took her movement for a show of feigned modesty. With a movement as quick as hers, he grasped her roughly, dragged her toward him and kissed her.

She screamed then in sheer rage—screamed with such passion that Payton let her go and stepped back with an oath. As he did so he turned, and the turn brought him face to face with James McMurrough.

The young man, tipsy and smarting with his wrongs, saw what was before his eyes—his sister in Payton's arms—but he saw something more. He saw the man who had thwarted him that day, and whom he had not at the time dared to beard. What he might have done had he been sober matters ont. Drink and vindictiveness gave him more than the courage he needed, and, with a roar of anger, he dashed the glass he was carrying—and its contents—into Payton's face.

The Englishman dropped where he was, and James stood over him, swearing, while the grease guttered from the tilted candle in his right hand. Flavia gasped, and, horror struck, clutched James' arm as he lifted the candlestick and made as if he would beat in the man's brains.

Fortunately a stronger hand than hers interfered. Asgill dragged the young man back. "Haven't you done enough?" he cried. "Would you murder he man, and his troopers in the house?"

"Ah, didn't you see, curse you, he—"

"I know, I know!" Asgill answered, hoarsely. "But not now! Not now! Let him rise if he can! Let him rise, I say! Payton!"

The moment James stood back the fallen man staggered to his feet, and though the blood was running down his face from a cut on the cheekbone, he showed that he was less hurt than startled. "You'll give me satisfaction for this!" he muttered. "You'll give me satisfaction for this," he repeated, between his teeth.

"Ah, by heaven, I will!" James McMurrough answered furiously. "And kill you, too!"

"At eight tomorrow! Do you hear? At eight tomorrow! Not an hour later!"

"I'll not keep you waiting," James retorted.

Flavia leaned almost fainting against her door. She tried to speak, but her voice failed her.

And Payton's livid, scowling, bleeding face was hate itself. "Behind the yews in the garden?" he said, disregarding her presence.

"Ah, I'll meet you there!" The McMurrough answered, pot-valiant. "Ah, more by token, order your coffin you'll need it!" Drink and rag[illegible] no place in his brain for fear.

"[illegible] Englishman answered, in a tone that chilled the girl's marrow. Then, with his kerchief pressed to his cheek to stanch the blood, he retreated to his room and slammed the door. They heard him turn the key in it.

Flavia found her voice. She looked at her brother. "Oh, heavens!" she cried. "Why did I open my door?"

James, still pot-valiant, returned her look. "Because you were a fool," he said. "But I'll spit him, never fear! Faith, and I'll spit him like a fowl!" In his turn he went on unsteadily to his room, disappeared within it, and closed the door.

Flavia and Asgill remained together. Her eyes met his. "Ah, why did I open my door?" she cried. "Why did I?"

He had no comfort for her. He shook his head, but did not speak.

"He will kill him!" she said.

Asgill reflected in a heavy silence. "I will think what can be done," he muttered at last. "Do you go to bed."

"To bed?" she cried.

"There is naught to be done tonight," he answered, in a low tone. "If the troopers were not with him—but that is useless. And—his door is locked. Do you go to bed, and I will think what we can do."

"To save James?" She laid her hand on Asgill's arm, and he quivered. "Ah, you will save him!" She had forgotten her brother's treatment of her earlier in the day.

"If I can," he said slowly. His face was damp and very pale. "If I can," he repeated. "But it will not be easy to save him honorably."

"What do you mean?" she whispered.

"He'll save himself, I fancy. But his honor——"

"Ah!" The word came from her in a cry of pain.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Behind the Yews

The passages were still grey and chill when one of the bedchamber doors opened and a face peeped out. The face was Flavia's. Presently the girl stepped forward—paused, scared by a board that creaked under her naked foot—then went on again. She reached one of the doors, and scratched on it with her nail.

No one answered the summons and she pushed the door open and went in. As she had feared, enlightened by Asgill's hint, she found James was awake and sitting up in his bed, his arms clasped about his knees. His eyes met hers as she entered, and in his eyes, and in his form, huddled together as in sheer physical pain, she read beyond all doubt fear. Why she had felt certain, courageous herself, that this was what she would find she did not know. But there it was, as she had foreseen it, through the long, restless, torturing hours.

James tried to utter the oath that, deceiving her, might rid him of her presence. But his nerves, shaken by his overnight drink, could not command his voice even for that. His eyes dropped in shame; the muttered, "What the plague will you be wanting at this hour?" was no more than a querulous whisper.

"I couldn't sleep," she said, avoiding his eyes.

"I, no more," he muttered. "Curse him! Curse you too! Why were you getting in his way? You've as good as murdered me with your tricks and your poses!"

"Heaven forbid!" she exclaimed.

"Ah, you have!" he answered, rocking himself to and fro in his excitement. "If it were any one else, I'm as ready to fight as another! But he's killed four men, and he'll kill me! Oh, if I'd not come up at that minute! If I'd not come up at that minute!"

The picture of what he would have escaped had he mounted the stairs a minute later was too much for him. Not a thought did he give to what might have happened to her had he come on the scene later; but, with all his cowardly soul laid bare, he rocked himself to and fro in a paroxysm of self-pity.

Yet he did not suffer more sorely under the lash of his own terrors than Flavia suffered—seeing him thus, the braggadocio stripped from him, and the poor, cringing creature displayed. If she had thought too much of her descent—and the more in proportion as fortune had straightened the line, and only in this corner of a down-trodden land was its greatness even a memory—she was chastened for it now! She could have wept tears of shame. And yet, so plain was the collapse of the man before her that she did not think of reproach, even had she found heart to chide him, knowing that her words might send him to his death.

All her thought was, could she hide the blot? Could she, at any rate, so veil it that this insolent Englishman, this bully of the conquering race, might not perceive it? That were worth so much that her own life seemed a small price to pay for it.

But alas! she could not purchase it with her life. Only in fairy tales can the woman pass for the man and Doris receive in her tender bosom the thrust intended for the sterner breast. Then how could they shun at least open disgrace—open dishonor? For it needed but a glance at her brother's pallid face to assure her that, brought to the field, he would prove unequal even to the task of cloaking his fears.

She sickened at the thought, and her eyes grew hard. Was this the man in whom she had believed? And when he turned on his side and hid his face in the pillow and groaned she had small pity to spare for him. "Are you not well?" she asked.

(To be continued)

THE KING'S WINE BUTLER

MR. LUXON is the head servant in the department at Buckingham Palace charged with the care of the wine cellars. His duties are manifold; in the first place, whenever the cellars are re-stocked he has to record in the stock books in his charge the quality and vintage; any bottle removed for consumption is also checked and entered by him into the stock ledger.

A large quantity of various wines is laid down in the Royal cellars from time to time to ripen, and are not intended to be consumed for several years. These are placed in a special cellar, and Mr. Luxon has to see that they are properly placed, so that wine laid down, say for three years, can be removed without shifting or disturbing the wines laid down for longer periods; he also has to see that the temperature of the cellars is always maintained at the same level. This matter, however, form but a small part of his duties. Every morning he receives from the head steward's department, through Mr. Kingscote, a list of the wines that will be required for consumption at the Royal table at lunch and dinner. These are removed from the cellar by the wine butler's assistants, and are duly entered in the stock book by Mr. Luxon.

The usual wines served at lunch are light claret, hock, and moselle, and some very old liqueur brandy. As a matter of fact, very little wine is consumed at the Royal table at lunch. The King drinks a little light claret or hock and soda-water, and her Majesty may take a little claret, but more often only drinks some aerated water.

When there are any guests present, champagne is served, but lunch at Buckingham Palace is not a meal to which guests other than members of the Royal Family are often invited.

The light wines are always decanted, the wine butler carefully supervising the operation. The decanters are of very heavy cut-glass, rather small sized, and on each there is engraved a Royal crown. The decanters are placed on a wine table in charge of the wine butler and his assistants who serve the wine to the Royal table. The wine butler himself serves only his Majesty.

The King selects the wines for lunch and dinner every morning, and the list is then sent to the Lord Steward's department, from which it reaches the wine butler.

The wine list for dinner varies, though it aiways includes champagne and claret, and there may be chablis, port, or Burgundy, none of which are decanted.

There is one rule which prevails in the Royal establishment which does not obtain in any other household in England; the name of the shipper or grower of the wine is carefully removed from the bottles before they are sent into the Royal dining-room. This rule has been established for many years, the object of it being to avoid giving the shippers or growers of the wine the big advertisement of having their names seen on the bottles at the Sovereign's table.

The wine menu is placed opposite each person at the Royal table; it is written on white parchment and framed in plain silver. It is headed "Buckingham Palace," underneath which is the date.

Mr. Luxon is a great authority on the historical aspect of wines. He can trace the history of the rise of champagne into favor in England, and its fall and subsequent rise into fashion again some sixty years ago. He knows all about the great vintage growers and the colossal fortunes that have been made and lost by daring speculators in the wines of certain years.

Visitors to Buckingham Palace often go over the cellars, accompanied by Mr. Luxton, who is a very interesting guide.

On one occasion, a story is told, that after he had related the history of a certain almost priceless claret to a foreign Royalty who was inspecting the cellars, the latter exclaimed with a laugh:

"Why, wine like that ought to be in a museum."

The wine butler and his assistants are usually among the servants who move with the Court. The King practically never drinks any wine except his own, and a certain quantity of it is always taken from the cellars at Buckingham Palace for his Majesty's use wherever he may go. Even when the King stays anywhere as a guest, his Majesty usually drinks the wine from the Royal cellars.

The arrangements for the carriage of the various wines are very elaborate, and are carried out under the supervision of Mr. Luxton.

The wines to be carried are all selected by the King in the first place. They are then packed in wine boxes, each box containing from a dozen to five dozens of bottles, the bottles are placed on their sides in heavily padded compartments into which they exactly fit, and the wine boxes are then carefully packed in hampers. The wine is generally sent at least two days ahead to wherever his Majesty may be going, so that it will have time to settle after such shaking as it has been necessarily subjected to, but great care is exercised to shake it as little as possible.

Sherry is a wine, by the way, that has almost disappeared from the Royal table. The King, some years ago, sold a large quantity of sherry that had been laid down in the Royal cellars many years before his Majesty's accession, and since the sale, sherry has quite fallen out from the list of fashionable wines.

THE EQUANIMOUS FROG

A DROUGHT of sustained duration which recently prevailed in the Delaware Valley, offered some interesting facts with respect to the question how frogs and mud-minnows managed to survive under the most adverse conditions.

While the mummified remains of ordinary minnows, salamanders, and aquatic insects were scattered in the parched mud of dried-up pools, the mud-minnows and the frogs buried themselves where the ground was still moist, although the surface above them was crusted hard, and apparently went to sleep. When taken out and placed in water they gradually revived and seemed none the worse for their experience. On the sudden termination of the drought, within a single day the mud-minnows reappeared in their usual numbers, and the frogs were seen squatting on the banks of the half-filled brooks and leaping into the streams as unconcernedly as if nothing unusual had happened.

BORN TO STARVE

FIFTY years ago an American naturalist, Dana, discovered on the surface of the sea a little animal of so singular a character that he named it "monstrilla." It is a small crustacean, akin to the cyclops so common in ponds. But, while the latter are furnished with all that is necessary to capture and digest their food, the monstrilla has neither apparatus for seizing prey, nor any digestive tube. It is richly provided with muscles, nervous system, and organs of sense; it lacks only what is necessary to prolong life by alimentation. The monstrilla is doomed, therefore, to natural death.

MANUFACTURING REAL STONE

BRICKS and blocks of stone have been manufactured for some years past from a mixture of sand and lime, but little is generally known concerning their strength and durability. In a short paper by Mr. J. C. Stead, which has just been published in the Journal of the Society of Chemical Industry, some of the troubles experienced in the manufacture of large blocks of stone from sand and lime are described, and the faults liable to be found in such stone are mentioned. It is shown that under certain conditions sound stone can be produced on a large scale, but we think that the impression conveyed to most readers by the paper will be that large blocks of artificial sand-lime stone are liable to vary greatly in strength and durability, and that they should not be used in positions of importance. The stone discussed by Mr. Stead was made by placing a mixture of sand and quicklime in moulds and subjecting the mixture to the action of steam or hot water under a pressure gradually rising to nine or ten atmospheres. The mixture was then cooled, removed from the moulds, and used without further treatment. Mr. Stead's tests show that with a mixture of about 13.5 per cent. lime with 86.5 per cent. sand it is possible to make stone which will bear a load of over 9,000 pounds per square inch, but with higher and lower proportions of lime the results were not so good.

DIAMOND TRUST RAISES WAGES; ALSO THE PRICE OF BRILLIANTS

IN these days, when the price of meat and butter and eggs is making an incessant effort to excel the Paulhan record for altitude, few persons are interested in the price of diamonds. The announcement that the gem of gems will from now on be more costly than ever recalls the days when many scintillating temptations were labeled, "Take me home for a dollar a week." However, it is well to note what has happened to our greatest luxury.

No one has heard any tearful complaints that the diamond business is not profitable. A trust makes the price, and as the demands of the rich keep pace with the supply there is no present danger of even Mr. Ripley's "extravagant American housewife" acquiring the habit of using diamonds for dress buttons. Under the circumstances, one might expect the diamond trust to stand a little raise of wages without shifting the burden. Vain hope! The diamond choppers and shavers and polishers recently insisted on a twelve and a half per cent. increase of wages. They got it, but the trust isn't out anything. Rather it is in something, for instantly the price of diamonds went up far enough to meet the real raise of wages and two or three imaginary raises.

Such is the method of the trust in the domain of luxury. Tomorrow or next month the price of diamonds will rise again, but the excuse will be different. Increase of wages is merely an occasional indulgence of the whims of the workers.

It is said that other trusts, some of them in the domain of such necessaries as food and clothing, are no more generous than the diamond trust.

SHE (protestingly)—That's just like you men. A man never gets into trouble without dragging some woman in with him.

He—Oh, I don't know. How about Jonah in the whale?