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MY DIAMOND STUDS.

(From the New York Metropolitan Record.) "Diamonds of a most proved water."—Peric's "You will forgive me, sir, if I hasten over this portion of my narrative. It is of a nature so agonizing to my feelings, that I must content myself with merely stating a few leading facts, and passing on to subsequent events. Prince Ivan, struck with remorse and horror, solicited the emperor's leave to retire from the army, and entered a convent of monks near Moscow. I received an intimation from the government that I should do well to travel for the next eight or ten years. It was a polite form of exile, to which I was compelled to accede, greatly to the sorrow of my parents. For my own part, I was utterly heart-broken, and cared little what became of me. I went direct to Paris, and plunged into a course of the most reckless dissipation. Billiards, race-horses, dinner-parties, betting, and follies of every description, soon brought upon me the expostulation of my family. But I was careless of every thing—of health, of fortune, reputation—all. When my father refused any longer to supply my wilful extravagance, I incurred innumerable debts, and giving no heed to the consequence, spent and drank and gambled still. At length, by some account or chance a rumor got about that my father had disinherited me. From this moment I could find no more credit. The eclat by which my follies had been attended seemed to vanish away. My friends dropped off one by one; and, except by a few blacklegs, and two or three good-natured chums, I found myself deserted by every one. And still, such was my infatuation, instead of reforming—instead of meriting my father's aid and forgiveness—I only sank lower and lower, and continued to tread the downward path of vice. An event, however, occurred which altogether changed the tendencies of my career. I had been dining with some wild fellows at the Maison Dorce. After dinner, when we were all nearly intoxicated, we called as usual for cards and dice. I soon lost the contents of my purse; then I staked my cabriolet, and lost it; my favorite horse, and lost them. On this, somewhat startled, I paused. "I'll play no more to-night," I said doggedly. "Pshaw!" cried my antagonist. "Throw again; next time you'll be sure to win." But I shook my head, and rose from the table. "I'm a beggar already," said I, with a forced laugh. De Lancy shrugged his shoulders. "As you please," he replied somewhat contemptuously. "I only want you to have your revenge." I turned back irresolutely. "Will you play for my house and furniture?" I asked. "Willingly." So I sat down again, and in a few throws more found myself homeless. This time I was reckless. I poured out a bumper of wine, and tossed it off at a draught. "If I had a wife," I cried madly, "I would stake her next; but I have nothing left now, gentlemen—nothing but wine and liberty, and myself. As this is no slave-country, you won't play, I suppose, for the latter." "Not I," said De Lancy, sweeping his gains into his hat. "I suppose you have no objection to make out that little affair of the house, cabriolet, &c., in writing, have you?" There was an easy, satisfied, sarcastic triumph in his tone that irritated me more than the loss of all the rest. I made no reply; but, tearing a leaf from my pocket-book, wrote hastily, and half threw the paper at him. "Take it, sir," I said bitterly; "and I wish you joy of your property." He surveyed the acknowledgment coolly, put it in his purse, and said with a sneering smile: "Does it not seem a pity now that you should have absolutely nothing left whereby to retrieve these things? Another throw, another billet of a hundred francs, and perhaps they would all be yours again. By the way, you forgot your diamond studs all this time. Will you try once more?" And he threw the dice as he spoke. They turned up sixes. "You might have thrown that, Petrofski," he said, pointing to them. I was sorely tempted, but I resisted. "No, no," I said, "not my diamond studs—they are an heir loom, and—and I shall write to my father to-morrow." "Like a penitent, good little boy," said De Lancy, with an impatient gesture. "Nonsense, man; throw for the studs. I feel convinced you'll win." "Say, rather, you feel convinced that you'll win," De Lancy. "Have you not stripped me of enough already?" "Insolent!" he cried. "Do you think I value the paltry winnings?" "I think you grasp all you can get." "Liar!"

The word had scarcely passed his lips, when I flung a glass of wine in his face. In another moment all was confusion. Blows were exchanged, the table was overturned, the lights extinguished. I received a severe wound upon the temple from falling against the open door, and fainted. When I came to myself, I was stretched upon a sofa in an adjoining room, with a surgeon bending over me. The morning sun was streaming in at the windows. My companions were all gone, no one knew whither. "What is the matter?" I asked faintly. "Am I dying?" The surgeon shook his head. "You are severely hurt," he said; "but with care and quiet you will recover. Had I not better communicate with your friends?" "Write to my father," I murmured. "You will find his—his address in my pocket-book." The surgeon took up pen and paper, and wrote immediately, partly from my dictation, and partly from his opinion of my condition.—He then said that I must not be moved, and must, above all things, avoid all excitement. As he uttered these words, and rose to take his leave, a sudden idea, or rather, a sudden presentiment, struck me. I put up my hand to my bosom. The diamond studs were gone. After this I remember no more. The shock produced upon me that very effect which the surgeon had been so anxious to avoid. I lost consciousness again; and on being restored to life, passed into a state of delirious fever. For many weeks I lay upon the threshold of the grave; and when I at length recovered, it was to find my dear father and mother at my side.—They had hastened over with succor and forgiveness, and to their tender cares I owed a second existence. As soon as my health was tolerably established, my father went back for a few weeks to Russia, disposed of his business, realized his fortune in money, and returned to France an independent man. The excellent man did not long survive this change. Within two years from the period of his establishment in Paris he died; and my mother survived him only a few months. They left me the enjoyment of a princely fortune, which former experience has taught me to use worthily. I neither drink nor gamble. I pass my life chiefly in travelling. I am not married, and I do not think it likely that I ever shall be; for Katrina is ever present in my heart; and when I lost her, I lost the power of loving. Since that period fifteen years have elapsed. I have wandered through many lands; trodden the ruins of Thebes, and waked the echoes of Pompeii; shot the buffalo on the Western prairies, and pursued the wild boar amid the forests of Westphalia. I am now on my way to Denmark; but purpose remaining a few days in Brussels, where probably I shall have the pleasure of meeting you again. The stranger bowed as he said this, and I bowed in return. "And now, sir," he continued "from the night that I lost them in a scuffle at the Maison Dorce, till this evening, when I beheld them upon your shirt-front, I never saw those diamond studs again. I have sought for them, advertised them, offered rewards unnumberable for them, during the space of fifteen years—up to the present moment all was in vain. Not for their intrinsic worth—for I could purchase plenty like them—but for the associations connected with them, do I place so high a value upon those stones. They are the same which my grandfather concealed in his pillow of matting, which my father gave to me upon my birthday, which fire drew upon me the eyes of my lost Katrina. Surely, sir, you will acknowledge that this is a pardonable weakness, and also that the studs are really mine?" "Your tale, sir," said I, politely and firmly, "is indeed very surprising, and I may say very conclusive; but the case is so singular, the studs belong with so much apparent right to both of us, that I really think we must refer all decision on the point of ownership to the law. You cannot expect me to relinquish any thing so valuable without first ascertaining whether I really am compelled legally to do so." "My dear sir," replied the stranger, "I had no idea of asking you to relinquish the studs. If you will do me the favor once more to show me that little bill (the amount of which I have forgotten), I shall be delighted to give you a cheque for the same sum." But I had no wish to part from my studs. "Excuse me, sir," I said somewhat uneasily, "but you have not yet proved to me that these stones are those of which you were robbed in the Maison Dorce. Make it evident to me that this is not a case of accidental resemblance, and—"

deteriorated perhaps from the market value of the gems; but it made them infinitely more precious to me. If, sir, you will have the goodness to take them out of your shirt, I will show you the initials P. P. upon the under side." By this time the train had reached the suburbs of Brussels, and in a few moments more we should arrive, I well knew, at the station. "I think, sir," said I, "we had better defer this examination till to-morrow. We have almost gained our destination; and by the feeble light of this roof-lamp I—" The stranger brought out a small silver box filled with wax-matches. "By the light of one of these convenient little little articles, sir," he said, "I will engage that you shall see the letters. I am most anxious to convince you of the identity of the stones.—Pray, oblige me by taking them out." I could no longer find any pretence for refusal. The studs were attached each to each by a slender chain, and to examine one I was forced to take out all. As I was doing this the motion of the train slackened. The stranger lit one of the matches, and I examined the stones in tremulous impatience. "Upon my honor, sir," I said very earnestly, "I can perceive nothing upon them." "Had you not better put on your glasses?" asked the stranger. "Brucell?" shouted the guard. "Change-ment de convoi pour Gand, Cruges, et Ostend!" Hang the glasses! they were so misty I could not see an inch before me. "Allow me to hold the studs for you while you rub them up," said the stranger politely. I thanked him, polished the glasses with my sleeve, held them up to the light, put them on. "Now, sir," I said, "you may light another match, and give me the diamonds." The stranger made no reply. "I will not trouble you, sir, to hold them any longer," I said. I turned; I uttered a shriek of dismay; I stumbled over my own portmanteau, which stood between me and the doorway. "Monsieur veut descendre?" said the guard, with a grin. "Where is the stranger?" I cried leaping and dancing frantically about the platform. "Where is the stranger?" "where is Peter Petrofski? where are my diamond studs?" "Has monsieur lost anything?" asked the railway interpreter, touching his cap. "He had my studs in his hand! I turned my back for a moment, and he was off? Did any one see him?" "Will monsieur have the goodness to describe the person of this thief?" "He was tall, thin, very dark, with black eyes and an aquiline nose." "And long hair hanging to his shoulders?" asked the interpreter. "Yes, yes." "And he wore a large cloak with a high fur collar?" "The same; the very same." The porters and bystanders smiled, and glanced meaningly at one another. The interpreter shrugged his shoulders. "Every effort shall be made," he said, shaking his head; "but I regret to say that we have little prospect of success. This man's name is Vaudo. He is an experienced swindler, and evades capture with surprising dexterity. It is not three weeks since he committed a similar robbery on this very line, and the police have been in pursuit of him ever since without effect." "Then his name is not Peter Petrofski?" "Certainly not, monsieur." "And he is no Russian?" "No more than I am." "And—and his grandfather, who was a Hindoo—and the Empress Catherine—and the beautiful princess who was shot—and—and—" "And monsieur may be convinced," said the interpreter with a smile, "that whatever story was related to him by Pierre Vaudo was from beginning to end—a fiction!" Quite chafallen, I groaned aloud, and took my melancholy way to the Hotel de Ville.—There I stated my case, and was assured that no pains would be spared on the part of the police to apprehend the offender. No pains were spared, nor money neither; but all was in vain. From that day to this I never laid eyes upon my diamond studs. THE END.

HERBERT MAY. Beautiful, indeed, looked Ella Gray in her bridal robe, on that bright June morning, as she stood before the altar and pledged her vows to him, the idol of her young heart, Herbert May. How trustingly she goes forth with him to battle with the world and its realities. Ay, very much as a child looketh to a parent does she look to him for support and guidance. Fair Ella Gray, thy life has been one of sunshine, may no cloud arise to dim its brilliancy! Reared not in the lap of luxury, still thy tender feet have never strayed from the flowery pathway in which you have been led by a mother's earnest love and father's fond indulgence. Ah, gentle one may the roses still remain to shield thy tender feet from the barbed thorns that so quickly grow in life's rugged pathway. We do not wonder at the words that struggle up from thy father's heart as he imprints the last kiss upon thy brow, and you pass that threshold never to return again as of yore. "Be kind to our darling, Herbert; remember, she is our only one, our pride and pet; and, as you deal with her, so may Heaven deal with you." It was not to a princely mansion that Herbert May bore his young bride, but to a fairy cottage, half hidden by the climbing vine and the clustering cypress bough, at the entrance of a quiet little village a short distance from their native place; and to the fair young bride it seemed a second Eden—lighted by a husband's love, almost any place would have been to her a paradise.—The cares of her new station rested lightly upon her, and many a leisure hour she found to commune with the illustrious sages of bygone ages, with which their library abounded. And thus the time passed on, till several years were winged away beyond recall. Were we to go back and read the record of those years we would there find recorded in characters of gold a story of a happy contentment and unalloyed bliss; you would find, too, the ruling power of their home was love, and kindness and implicit confidence in each other had been their abiding guests. You would mark, also, that time had dealt kindly, even graciously with them, as you step within the charmed circle of their little parlor, and behold Ella seated before a glowing grate of anthracite, with her hand resting carelessly on auburn ringlets of her little daughter, who had been asking, for nearly the hundredth time, why papa does not come. Slight, indeed, had been the change, scarcely perceptible—more matured is the girlish beauty, and more dignity is added to the graceful form. There is no more apparent change in Mr. May—who has just entered, and is almost smothering his little wife Effie, as he styles her, with kisses—than in his wife, for there is the same manly brow, curling hair, laughing eye, and fair form as of yore. "You are late to-night, Herbert; tea has been waiting some time," said Mrs. May, as she took her seat at the table. "Yes, business has been very pressing to-day, unusually so," he replied. "Sometimes I almost wish that Dame Fortune had not been so lavish with her bounty," said his wife rather sadly. "Why so?" he asked, looking up with astonishment. "Why so?" "Because it necessarily takes you from home so much. It does seem to me that you might sometimes leave it in the care of Charles. Pray, Herbert, what is the use of keeping a clerk if you have to do the work yourself?" "Oh, Ella! that is a mistake of yours: although I am obliged to work very hard, yet not by any means do I do it all; oh, no! Charles is a noble fellow, and very trustworthy; still, you know, if we would prosper, we must trust only to ourselves." "I know that, Herbert; but, oh, it is so lonely here. I do not mind it much during the day, but now the long winter evenings are approaching, I shall miss you more: you have not been home at evening for three weeks." "Well, Ella, you will have to keep a brave heart, at least till this pressure is over; then I will try and arrange matters so as to be with you more." "I will try, for your sake," she replied. Silence gradually gained sway the remainder of the meal, for each were too busy with their own thoughts for conversation. A shadow for nearly the first time, rested upon Mrs. May's brow. "You need not sit up for me to-night, dear, for I shall not stay late," said Mr. May, as he drew on his coat preparatory to going out. As the door closed on the retreating form of her husband, a sigh involuntarily escaped her lips; a feeling of melancholy was on her spirit, she hardly knew why, a strange feeling of dread had taken possession of her which she could not define. The time dragged slowly away, the hour of ten arrived, and still he came not. Ella at length laid down her work and went to the window. A bleak November wind was sweeping by, carrying its burden of faded leaves, and robbing the clinging vine of its seared foliage, and shaking it from its resting-place over the window: the cypress boughs swayed mournfully in the passing breeze, and the fitful mournings that ever anon were borne along, seemed but a requiem for dying nature.

"Oh! why does he not come?" she murmured, as she turned from the window; "has his home lost all charm for him, or does he love us no longer? Oh, if it should be so! Ah, no; this is injustice. I will not wrong him thus. I will do as he bade me, I will not wait." And she passed into her room; leaning over the couch of her sleeping child, imprinted a kiss upon its brow, and sought her pillow. Time wore on. Winter came with its driving snows and chilling blasts, still Herbert May pleaded business to call him from home, and many a long weary hour did his partner wait his coming, when he came not; many a long vigil did she keep with none to cheer solitude. It was at the close of a dreary day in mid winter that she sat before the gate in troubled thought; it was already long passed their tea hour, and still he was not there; at length he came with a hurried step, and to her eager inquiry as to what detained him, he carelessly replied that he had met a friend down the street. "You are not going out to-night, are you, Herbert?" said Mrs. May, as she saw him arise from table and take down his coat. "Yes, you know our club meets to-night, and Howard is to be there; and, furthermore, I promised to meet him." "But, Herbert, the storm is dreadful, the night is not fit for you to be out; and, besides," she faltered, "I did so much want you to stay with me, it has been so long since you spent an evening at home. Will you not stay, my husband?" she said, as she laid her hand lightly on his arm. "No, Ella, it is impossible; I have passed my word, and it would be dishonorable not to go." "If he were a reasonable man he would not expect you; or, if I have been rightly informed, it would be more of an honor to break this engagement than to keep it." "Why so?" "Because I do not think Mr. Howard a man worthy your regard; he is unprincipled, immoral, and, worse than all, a drunkard." "Mrs. May," spoke her husband, sternly, "I did not think this of you. I did not think that you would allow your selfishness to lead you so far; you wish to rob me of an evening's entertainment, and failing to do it otherwise, you have attacked the character of my friend to accomplish it; but you have made a mistake, madam; you have failed; I shall go." And, shaking her off rudely, he left the room. Amazed, bewildered, she remained standing for some moments where he left her, immovable as a statue; his strange words and sudden passion had awakened conflicting emotions in her breast; she could not fathom the mystery, nor understand how she had offended. Had she not heard him speak disparaging words of him in other days? Ah! blinded one you did not know of the change that had taken place in your husband's character since then; you did not know that a guilty conscience caused him to construe your words into an injury. Oh, how wearily the hours wore away to the anxious Ella, as she sat awaiting her husband's return. "I will sit up for him, or he may think me angry," she soliloquised, as again and again the temptation was presented to her to seek oblivion from troubled thought in the outstretched arms of Morpheus. "Oh, this is dreadful, this silence is oppressive." She arose and paced the room with rapid steps. She went to the window; the storm had abated, and great masses of clouds were drifting away in the distance; the calm, pale face of the moon was turned down upon the scene; the clock told the hour of twelve, and still she was alone. One o'clock came, and the silence was unbroken; another hour had fled, and the last stroke had died away when there came a rap at the outer door. Taking up a lamp, she passed out and withdrew the bolt. What a revelation awaited her. No tongue can tell, no pen portray the fearful scene. There before her was her husband, unconsciously supported in the arms of his boon companions: no smile parted his lips, no beaming eye met her gaze; but, instead, the heavy lids are closed over those jetty orbs, and the wild winds was making merry with his glossy curls, that had ever been her special care.—Was he dead, did they bring him home a corpse? you ask. Ah, no, better, perhaps, it would have been for her had it been so, or if unconsciousness had come to her relief, or the pent-up agony of her soul had found vent in words; but too sudden was the shock, it deprived her of utterance. In silence she obeyed their command, and led the way to the parlour; and, not till they had laid him upon the sofa and turned to leave the room, could she find voice to ask the cause.—They hesitated, and in their hesitation she read all. She could now account for the flushed face, the excited manner of other evenings.—Ah she knew all now. How blinded she had been. Who can tell the anguish of the heart-