

WHEN GEMS WERE PRECIOUS.

stones. To reproduce the gems shown in the photographs he had crystals cut like the originals, then exposed them to the influence of radium.

"It wasn't a week after this that one of the multimillionaires of America came to Berlin. At the same time came a princeling, a cousin of the emperor. A state dinner was given, the emperor pretending that it was for the princeling, but it was really for the big American banker. The empress called for all her jewels. Bertha brought them to her, and neither she nor any one else knew that they had been manufactured. The funny part of it was that the great banker, who was a collector of all kinds of rare articles, through a medium, offered the empress five times the cost of her jewels. She sold them to him, and he presented them to an American museum. They are really a curiosity, though he didn't know it, for they were the first manufactured real gems, though now there are millions of them. And because they are cheap people don't wear them any more.

"Meanwhile Bertha suspected one of the maids of honor of stealing the lost gems. The girl finally confessed to Bertha and returned them. This was after the manufactured ones had gone to America. Bertha consulted with Maximilian as to what they should do. He said their return would make a dreadful scandal and might create a bad feeling between Germany and America, so they said nothing about them, but buried them."

"Now, Maximilian took very little interest in court matters. He was a student, always experimenting with liquids that he poured into little glass tubes and boiled and froze and did all sorts of queer things with. It was about this time that a new and funny substance was discovered called radium. It had a sort of glow that never died out. Maximilian took great interest in radium and was constantly trying its glow on different other substances.

"One day Bertha—it was about two years after she had been appointed lady in waiting—went to the vault where the empress' jewels were kept, and, lo and behold, they were gone—that is, all except the diamonds, which were in a safe within the vault. She fainted, but soon recovered and went out, locked the vault and sat down to think what she should do. It was enough that the jewels had been taken while under her care, but would she not be held responsible as the thief? While she was in agony as to what in the world she should do Maximilian was announced. In a few minutes she was pouring her troubles into his ear.

"Maximilian thought for a long while then told her to say nothing about the theft. All would depend upon the empress not calling for her lost gems for some time. Photographs of them were kept that they might be identified in case of loss. Maximilian took these photographs and told Bertha that he was going to put the best detective in Berlin on the track of the jewels. What are detectives? There are no such persons now. There used to be, but there were so many ingenious detective story tellers that they revealed to the thieves all possible ways of tracing them, and the detectives ceased to be of use.

"Well, Maximilian took two sets of photographs away with him, telling Bertha that if the gems were not called for for a month all would be well. It happened that the empress was indisposed about that time and attended no state occasions, so she did not need her jewels. Bertha was in an agony of suspense for the thirty days; then one day Maximilian came to see her. When they were alone he unrolled a parcel, and there were the gems.

"Of course she was wild to know how he had recovered them, and to her astonishment he told her that they were not the original gems, but others he had manufactured. I will try and explain to you how he did it. He had noticed that that funny substance called radium imparted to the little glass tubes he used a beautiful blue. This led him to a new experiment. He took certain crystals of different hues, put them away in the dark, and when, after several weeks, he looked at them, what do you think? Why, the white crystals had become yellow topazes, the blue crystals green emeralds, while the violet crystals had turned into blue sapphires. He had made the discovery that has since led to the manufacture of what used to be called precious

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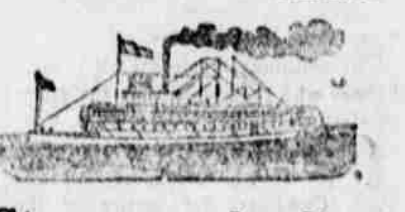
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