

The Moma Diamond.

OVER and over again John Marsden had been told that his nocturnal rambles would bring him into contact with unpleasant citizens. If he had contented himself with walking upon the main highway that ran past his suburban home, his midnight walk, which he said was absolutely necessary to his getting sleep when he went to bed, would have been safe enough. But there were byways in that neighborhood, some of them narrow, many of them with evil reputations, all of them very dark and entirely deserted by honest citizens at a quarter to 1 in the morning—which was John's favorite hour for a solitary stroll—and these queer byways were his favorite strolling paths. Again, if he had had nothing about him to tempt a footpad his friends would not have been so solicitous, but, for a man in which there was no suspicion of foppery, John Marsden carried a remarkable collection of valuable jewelry about his person. There was his watch, with a circle of brilliants and a remarkable enameled miniature set in the back, presented to him as a souvenir by a famous foreign actress whose life he had saved in a railroad wreck; there was also a wonderful old intaglio bloodstone, an heirloom, which he wore in a huge signet ring, and lastly, there was, as a general



A HAND FLEW STRAIGHT AT HIS THROAT

thing, the Moma diamond, which ought to have been kept in a museum or a safety vault, but which John Marsden persisted in wearing constantly as a cravat pin.

He said he wore the Moma diamond for luck, but no one who knew him believed that the man had even one superstition. It would have been worth the while of any footpad to engage professional assistance just to get possession of the Moma diamond, and hundreds of persons connected with the profession knew that Mr. Marsden carried that stone in his cravat.

And at last the warnings of John Marsden's friends were justified. He was walking on a dark, autumn night along one of his favorite byways, with a row of blank, windowless brick walls on his right, and on his left a ditch and rail fence, when there was a sudden leap of something from the ditch, and a hand flew straight at his throat.

Instantly—as if he had been expecting to meet the attack just at that spot—John Marsden's left fist darted out and up, and there was a sound like the fall of a bale of hay on the earth. Then he leaned forward cautiously, and the next moment he was glad of his caution. The man leaped to his feet almost as soon, it seemed, as he had touched the ground, and then, instead of drawing knife or pistol, he went at him in the most approved pugilistic fashion.

Very likely, if the fight had been in a five-foot ring, by daylight, begun in lar form, the other man might have won the Moma diamond—supposing it had been the prize. As it was the Moma diamond had been taken by surprise, and Marsden's very bony fist fitted itself snugly into the delicate space between the triangle of the jaw and the Adam's apple. The man that his antagonist had recognized so quickly after such a short fight Marsden had had no time to deal with. Still, he placed the other man at arm's length and the fistcluffs did not last less than two minutes. The man was back in the ditch, and he had sprung, only striking convulsively and

coughing in a way that meant, as Marsden knew, internal hemorrhage.

Now, when you have been assaulted on a lonely road in the small hours, and the assault has been with the evident intention of stealing your valuables, you are generally inclined rather to go your way rejoicing, and leave well enough alone, if you have been as fortunate as to knock the intending thief silly. That is what most people would do. But Marsden was in many ways unlike most people. He sat on the edge of the roadside ditch, lifted the man's head, and fanned his face until, in the darkness, he could detect signs of recovery.

"Feeling better now?" he said. The only answer was a struggle to sit up, which ended in the beaten man sinking back exhausted. Then there was another pause, and Marsden began to be really alarmed. He had almost made up his mind to go and look for water when the patient suddenly made one more violent effort, succeeded in sitting up, and stared at him.

"Who are you?" were the first words that came, in a hoarse, half-strangled whisper. "You're not a policeman?" "Oh, no," said Marsden, "I'm not a policeman. Hope I haven't hurt you badly. Now, look here, young fellow, a man that can box like you isn't a common thief. That's sure. If you had been a common thief, you would have come at me with a pistol or something."

The prostrate man said nothing. "See here," Marsden went on. "I can easily hand you over to the police, you know. Oh, you needn't try to get up and run. I could give five yard's start and catch you in 100, as you are now. I'll let you go. I'll take you to my house and fix you up ship shape, if you'll do one thing. Tell me why you have turned highway robber just to get the Moma diamond?"

At that question the man seemed to start. Marsden waited a few seconds and then repeated, "Tell me about it." "Where did you get it?" was at first the only answer vouchsafed him, and that in a vehement, angry whisper. Then the man in the ditch went on: "You're right. I didn't want your watch. The diamond is mine."

"Aha!" said Marsden. "I thought so. I knew there was something wrong about that blessed diamond. Did you see me wearing it?" "No."

"Did some one tell you I wore it as a scarf-pin?" "Yes."

"Well, you can't go on talking in the condition you are in. Come to my house and let me give you a drink. It isn't far."

There must have been something very frank and convincingly honest in the ring of Marsden's voice, for the man actually consented to go with him, even leaving his watch for support on the way.

They went to Marsden's house together, one else was in bed, and Marsden struck his highwayman where he soon showed his powers. "You see," he said, "after a

"You have treated me fairly," he said, "so far, at least. Tell me where you got my diamond, and I'll tell you how I lost it."

"Your diamond—if it is yours," said Marsden, "was won by me at a game of cards. I staked \$1,000 in American money against it. The game was played in the smoking-room of an ocean steamer."

"Was it an elderly man you were playing with?" "Yes. A Brazilian, I believe—wore the stone in a ring."

"The impudent scoundrel! Anything peculiar about his eyebrow?" "One eyebrow had a cut across it that gave it a peculiar tilt."

"That's right—the left eyebrow. And the gentleman always spoke as if his mouth was full, didn't he?" "He did. You have described him perfectly. He was a Brazilian."

"I beg your pardon. He was my maternal uncle, Charles August Froeham. My father borrowed money from him to buy shares in his confounded bogus enterprises, and gave him mortgages on everything we possessed. It was understood, when the mortgage was drawn on our household effects, that my mother's jewelry was not included. At my father's death the rogue put in a legal claim for the Moma diamond, because, he said, it was set in a ring which my father wore and not my mother's. The lawyer advised my mother to let it go, for fear of the expense and uncertainty of litigation. In that

way the scoundrel got possession of a jewel worth as much as three times all the money he had lent my father. When his stock-watering tricks were found out he had to leave England. That was five years ago."

"That was when I met him," said Marsden. "And now at last I have been obliged to come to this country and try to earn a living as a car conductor. I can't complain of that; I was always an idle, good-for-nothing fellow."

"H'm," said Marsden. "And your uncle—I mean the Brazilian gentleman—said this stone was called the Moma diamond from the name of the negro who found it in Brazil. Was that correct?"

"Perfectly."

"Now, please give me your own address and—is your mother still living?"



"I AM A STRANGER TO YOU."

The would-be highway man gave both. That night he slept in Marsden's house. A month later he sailed for England, a steeage passenger, but rich, for the eccentric Marsden had made him a present of the Moma diamond.—Pittsburg Press.

A Witty Peasant.
A thunder-storm overtook the Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria, when out shooting in 1873 with old Emperor William of Germany and Victor Emmanuel. The three monarchs got separated from their party and lost their way. They were drenched to the skin, and, in search of shelter, hailed a peasant driving a covered cart drawn by oxen along the high road. The peasant took up the royal trio and drove on.

"And what may you be, for you are a stranger in these parts?" he asked after a while of Emperor William. "I am the Emperor of Germany," replied his Teutonic majesty.

"Ha, very good," said the peasant, and then addressing Victor Emmanuel, "And you my friend?"

"Why, I am the King of Italy," came the prompt reply. "Ha, ha, very good indeed! And who are you?" addressing Francis Joseph.

"I am the Emperor of Austria," said the latter. The peasant then scratched his head, and said with a knowing wink, "Very good, and who do you suppose I am?"

Their majesties replied they would like very much to know. "Why I am His Holiness the Pope."

Big Ben's Tone.
Whatever complaints may be made against the tone of Big Ben, the famous London clock, and musicians say it is a terribly bad "E," at any rate, every one will acknowledge that the clock in the House of Commons tower is a wonderful timekeeper, not varying a second in time all the year through. The mechanism for setting in motion the massive hammer which brings out the tone of Big Ben's sixteen-ton bell is very interesting. The striking machinery is driven by weights of about a ton and a half, which hang on a shaft 174 feet deep; and it is so arranged that after the chimes are over the hammer falls on the big bell within one second of Greenwich mean time.

Timothy's Mistake.
Timothy Knockdown, the auctioneer, took his wife for a seaside trip to Margate. On the second day of their visit Mr. K. evinced a strong desire to return home. "And pray for what reason, Timothy?" angrily inquired his better half.

"Simply because everybody knows my business down here. To-day, for instance, I have been confronted by at least forty grinning boatman who reminded me that it is 'a nice day for a sale,'" sadly responded the unhappy auctioneer.—Answers.

The Dewey Plant.
A blooming plant, with clusters of blood-red tassels depending from its glossy leaves, is to be seen not far from Broad and Chestnut streets. It is labeled "The Dewey Plant" in conspicuous letters. Six months ago the duplicate was seen in another part of town, with an inscription declaring it was "Admiral Dewey's favorite flower!" The plant is a native of the Philippines islands.—Philadelphia Record.

Some people are willing to let a good excuse answer for good conduct.

ESTERHAZY OWES HIM \$10.

A Telegraph Operator in New Orleans Says French Officer "Did" Him.

"Count Esterhazy, who figured so prominently in the Dreyfus trial, has been in New Orleans several times," said a guest at the Grunewald Hotel. "I myself saw him on one of his visits, and was present when he did some cabling to France, the cost of which, or rather a portion of the fee, he deliberately defrauded the operator out of. It happened thus:

"Esterhazy had come in town by one of the roads from the north and went to the Southern Pacific depot to board a train for the West. While waiting for his train he remembered that he had some cabling to do and walked over to the telegraph operator in the building and asked for a blank.

"The operator gave it to him, and the Frenchman wrote out quite a lengthy coded cablegram and addressed it to a private party in Paris. By this time there were only a few moments left for him to get aboard the train, and the operator had to hurry in looking up the rate. To arrive at the exact figures necessitated some little calculation, and the operator, to expedite matters for the noble count, told him the rate and asked him to make the calculation, too.

"This the Frenchman, who was evidently quick at figures, did, and had finished a moment before the operator called out his result, and asked if that was what he made it. Esterhazy looked straight at the operator a second, as though rending his very thoughts, and unhesitatingly replied: 'It is correct.'

"He paid the amount and hurried away. A few minutes later the operator discovered that he had been paid just \$10 less than the correct amount; he had made an error in his calculations, and the count had taken advantage of his error to save the money. The young man immediately wired ahead of the train asking the conductor to see Esterhazy, explain the calculation, and request the \$10. The conductor complied, but when he had explained to the noble traveler, the latter only shrugged his shoulders and replied that it was no concern of his. And the operator made good the shortage from his own salary. It was as clear a case of steal as I ever heard of."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

How the Walls Ran Down.

The Irishman who went up in the hotel lift without knowing what it was did not recover easily from the surprise. He relates the story in this way.

"I went to the hotel, and, says I, 'Is Misher Smith in?'"

"'Yes,' says the man with the sojer cap. 'Will yez step in?'"

"So I steps into the closet, and all of a sudden he pulls the rope, and—it's the truth I'm telling yez—the walls of the building begun running down to the cellar.

"'Och, murther!' says I, 'what'll become of Bridget and the children which was left below there?'"

"Says the sojer-cap man, 'Be aisy, sorr; they'll be all right when yez comes down.'

"'Come down, is it?' says I. 'And it is no closet at all, but a baythinish balloon that yez got me in!'"

"And wid that the walls stood stock still, and he opened the door, and there I was wid the roof just over my head! And, begorra, that's what saved me from goin' up to the hevins intirely!"—Irish Independent.

Thumb Marks.

It seems an astonishing thing that the natural signature, the impression of the thumb or finger tip, is not used to a greater extent than it is for purposes of identification. If the thumb be lightly pressed on a surface smeared with printing ink, and then pressed upon clean paper, an impression is obtained which is distinctive for the particular individual who owns the member. No two thumbs or fingers are alike in the arrangement of their multitudinous lines; each, therefore is a seal which is unique, and a seal which cannot readily be mislaid or lost. The French police use this test to assure themselves of the identity of a prisoner; but surely the system could be usefully extended.

Elderdown.

The elder duck lines its nest carefully with its own down. The nest is robbed of the down by the icelanders and the duck quickly proceeds to reline her nest, supplying the feathers from her own body. The third time the drake gives his down, and this is allowed to remain.

Ten thousand pounds of elderdown are gathered annually in Iceland and the natives receive for it about \$3 a pound, although the trade is carried on through a barter, the natives receiving little or no money.

Wiggs—Why does B Jones have that phonograph going all the time? It's awful. Wagg—Well, you see his wife's away, and when he has the phonograph going he says he doesn't miss her so much.—Philadelphia Record.

She—What's the difference between a dimple and a wrinkle? He—Oh, about thirty or forty years.—Town Topics.

A soft heart and a hard head make a combination that is hard to beat.

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Is in the Eating.

It is not what we say, but what Hood's Sarsaparilla does, that tells the story. Thousands of people give the proof by telling of remarkable cures by Hood's Sarsaparilla of Scrofula, Salt Rheum, Dyspepsia, Catarrh, Rheumatism, and other blood diseases and debility.

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Never Disappoints

The prevailing use of electricity has brought about a large increase in fire insurance to crossed wires. Ten years ago there were only 66 such fires, and last year there were 958.

Statisticians have been studying up the Spanish Armada, apropos of the statement that never in the history of Europe has so large a force been sent by sea as that now on its way to South Africa. The estimate of the number sent from Spain in 1588 on the 130 ships of the Armada is this: Sailors, 8,050; galley slaves, 2,088; soldiers, 18,973; volunteers, 1,382; total, 30,493. But England is sending 49,000 soldiers and followers, without counting the crews of the transports.

It has been discovered that what may be called the first daily newspaper was a manuscript letter written by salaried correspondents and forwarded by them every 24 hours from London to the provinces. That was in the days of the early Stuarts. During the commonwealth these London letters were printed in type and circulated in large numbers. Even so long ago as 1680 the law of libel was such as to be characterized by Judge Scruggs as making any newspaper publication illegal and tending to provoke a breach of the peace.

Brooklyn stair builders have the Saturday half holiday and a wage scale of \$3.25 a day, including Saturdays, on which the same wage is paid as on the longer working days.

Mothers will find Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup the best remedy to use for their children during the teething period.

Judge Falconbridge, of the high court of Canada, has ruled that it is not compulsory for persons to give evidence that may incriminate themselves in liquor cases.

Friction in machinery started 295 fires last year.

Buffalo bridge and structural iron workers want the eight-hour day and \$2.50.



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