

SERIAL STORY

The Chronicles of Addington Peace

By B. Fletcher Robinson

Co-Author with A. Conan Doyle of "The Hound of the Baskervilles," etc.

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MR. TAUBERY'S DIAMOND

"Hi, young fellow! Does Inspector Peace live here?"

He spoke roughly enough, and I returned his stare with equal irritation. When a man may not indulge in day dreams on his own doorstep the state of society wants mending. He was a big bully of a fellow, with a red face, a curled, white mustache, and a single eye-glass, through which he regarded me with an air of extreme ill-temper.

"The inspector lodges on the third floor," I told him coldly.

"Do you live here too?"

I had a mind not to answer him, but, after all, it was not worth while making trouble over an impudent question.

"Yes," I said; "I rent the ground floor and the studio behind. My name is Phillips. I am an artist. For the past four years I have studied abroad. If you would like to see my birth certificate I will go and fetch it for you."

To my surprise, he burst into a shout of laughter, swaying his body from side to side. It was quite a time before he recovered himself.

"Good, lad—good, lad," he chuckled; "Gad! but I deserved it. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Guntton, str—Colonel Theophilus Guntton—and I'm very pleased to meet you."

He held out his hand, which I shook, without any great degree of enthusiasm.

"Is this Addington Peace at home, do you think?" he continued.

"I don't know," I told him. "I should walk upstairs and find out if I were you."

"There I recognize the practical head. You know him?"

"Yes."

"Then, we will go together. You can introduce me."

I was offended at the noise and bluster of the man; but he had grabbed my arm, and I didn't want a scene at my own door. I led him up the stairs, his voice growing silent as his lung capacity weakened. The inspector's voice cried an invitation to my knock, and I entered, with the colonel puffing at my heels like a locomotive on a stiff incline.

"Sorry to disturb you, Peace," I said; "but this is a gentleman by the name of Guntton, and he appears anxious to make your acquaintance."

The little man rose from his easy-chair, and stood looking at the stranger with an expression of great good-humor.

For myself, I was about to withdraw when the colonel's hand dropped heavily upon my shoulder.

"Don't you go," he said. "A cosmopolitan, a detective and a man of the world, as I am, form a unique combination. And, by Gad! gentlemen, we shall want all our brains over this affair."

I glanced at Peace, who smiled and nodded. So I stayed.

The colonel kindly consented to take the most comfortable chair, sighed, stretched out his legs, lit a cheroot and then, without further introduction, plunged into his story.

"Perhaps you have heard of Julius Taubery? No? Well, it's a name as well known throughout India as the viceroy's. He is the head of one of the richest firms in Calcutta. Went out there as a young man, worked well, married well, and ended well in all things, save his constitution, with which he played the very devil. In 1900 he returned and took a fine London house in Portland place, together with an old hall down in Devonshire. A month ago the doctors ordered him out of England for life. Rough on him, wasn't it, seeing that he had spent two-thirds of his time out of it already? But the south of France is his only chance, they tell him; so, like a wise man, he is selling off his sticks, and settling down at Mentone, without squealing to show how much it hurts him.

"Julius and his wife—she's one of the kindest-hearted women—have been giving some farewell parties to their old friends. They had a lunch today, one-third sharp, and a lot of people turned up. After the ladies had left us, the talk, as luck would have it, fell on precious stones; and Julius Taubery is a crank on them if there ever was one. His wife wears the finest jewels in London, and the old man is supposed to have many thousand pounds' worth more locked away, which he won't trust even her with the handling.

"Gentlemen," says he, 'I will show you something that may interest you.

It is a new purchase of mine, and it happens to be a remarkable stone!"

"He pulled a green case from an inside pocket, flipped it open, and there the thing was as big as a walnut. The lights were on, it being dull weather, and the stone blinked and sparkled like the sun on dancing water.

"My word, Julius," I said. "But that's a risky bit of stuff to carry about with you."

"It's going to the bank this afternoon," he answered. "So if you want to examine the pretty pebble, gentlemen, this is your last chance."

"And with that he took it from its case, as proud as a young husband of his first baby, and sent it round the table.

"I was sitting on Julius' left. Between us was a fat old boy, who was a stranger to me. He took a long stare at the stone, whistling softly between his teeth, before he passed it on. It went from hand to hand, never out of sight, so far as I could notice, until it came to Sir Andrew Carlillon, who fancies himself an expert on gems. They say that when Lady Carlillon is in the stalls, the play is finished to the women sitting behind her, for they can't keep their eyes off her pearls. Sir Andrew pulled out a magnifying glass, and began examining the diamond.

"I congratulate you, Taubery," he said, after about a minute. "You have acquired a historical stone!"

"Old Julius leant back, with a smile half-way round his head, but he didn't say a word.

"This stone," said Sir Andrew, in the heavy, pompous way that he has, tapping it with his magnifying glass to attract attention, "this stone is the celebrated Hyderabad diamond, to which first historical reference is made in the year 1584. It was captured by the Rajah of Hyderabad from a ruling chief in the Deccan after a battle, in which four thousand men lost their lives. In 1680 it was stolen from the rajah's palace by a Spaniard, who escaped to Bombay, where he was robbed and murdered. The stone disappeared for about sixty years.

"It subsequently came into the possession of one of the East India company's agents, who was stabbed to death in his bungalow near Calcutta about 1760. The diamond, which is held to have inspired the attack, was saved from the robbers by the appearance of his guests and servants. The widow brought it to Europe and sold it to the Duc d'Alembert, who lost his diamond and incidentally his life in the French revolution. It turned up again at the court of Napoleon III., being then in the possession of Henri Marlin, the well-known financier. Until today I thought it was still in his family.

"It is one of the very few large diamonds that is absolutely without a flaw, and its value in the open market today would be approaching thirty thousand pounds. Any one who takes an interest in historical stones might be tempted to give even a higher price; for there has been enough blood split over it, gentlemen, to fill the bath of its fortunate possessor."

"He laid down the diamond on the table and looked at his host with a malicious grin. But all connoisseurs are alike; they are as covetous of each other's pet treasures as so many cats.

"All the time that Sir Andrew had been speaking, the fat fellow next to me had been snorting and swelling until, 'pon my soul, I thought he was in for a stroke of apoplexy. I am the best-tempered of men, but I have my limits, and the old grampus was one of them.

"Are you in pain, sir?" I asked him.

"Yes, I am, sir," he said, in such a high, squeaky voice that all the table could hear him. "I object to listening to the definitions of so-called experts, who cannot tell a diamond from a glass marble. Experts? Humbugs, that's what I call them!"

"Do you refer to me, Professor Endicott?" began Sir Andrew, leaning forward, with a very red face.

"Most certainly I do."

"Then I must ask you for an explanation or an immediate apology."

"A man who can make so ludicrous an error deserves neither the one nor the other," cried the professor, in great excitement. "That stone has been in the possession of the Princes of Pavaloff for three hundred years. Prince Peter, the present head of the family, kindly allowed me to examine it when I was in Moscow in 1894. I was not aware that he had sold it. I trust, Mr. Taubery, that you obtained it from a respectable source; if not, I should be no true friend did I hide from you my belief that it had been stolen."

"If a man had said such a deucedly insulting thing to me I should have knocked him down there and then. I would, 'pon my soul, without thinking more about it. But Julius lay back in his chair, smiling all over his face. I suppose those collectors get accustomed to each other's little ways; they're a queer lot, anyway.

"You can be quite easy on that point, Professor Endicott," he said. "Prince Peter was, unfortunately, involved in the late Dolorouski conspiracy, but had time to slip across the Russian frontier before the police could arrest him. I bought the diamond from his agent in Paris."

"You interest me deeply, Mr. Taubery," struck in Sir Andrew, speaking very softly, though we could all see he was in a devil of a rage. "Even I was not unaware of the existence of the Pavaloff diamond. If my memory does not fail me, it is slightly disfigured by a flaw on the eighth facet?"

"Certainly, Sir Andrew," said our host; "if you examine the stone you will see that such is the case."

"There is no such blemish on the diamond I have before me. Therefore I humbly suggest that you have been deceived by this Parisian agent as to its origin."

"Professor Endicott climbed to his feet with a grunt of dissatisfaction, and leant over the table, thrusting out his podgy fist to receive the jewel. He remained standing, with his body swayed forward, so that the electric lights above the silver center piece might shine the brighter upon what he held. Presently he dropped his hands to his sides and stood staring about him like a plowman lost in Piccadilly.

"This is not the stone I examined five minutes ago," he muttered.

"Nonsense," said old Julius, with a shadow of fear in his eyes. "Nonsense, Endicott; look again."

"Can it be that two such famous experts have made a mistake?" sneered Sir Andrew. "Can it be that a humble amateur like myself is right and that they are wrong? As I told you, gentlemen, the Hyderabad diamond—"

"Hyderabad diamond be d—d!" squealed the fat man. "This thing is a fake, a clumsy imitation. Taubery, you have been robbed!"

"We were all on our feet in an instant amid a clamor of tongues. But there was one man amongst us that kept his head; one man who realized that his honor was in peril; that immediate action was necessary. His name—if I am not too egotistical—is Theophilus Guntton.

"Fortunately I have a voice of some power, and a manner that, when my feelings are strongly moved, is perhaps not unimpressive. I commanded and obtained silence. I begged them to resume their seats; they obeyed."

"Julius Taubery," I said, "has your diamond disappeared?"

"He answered that it had, looking at the imitation stone, which they had returned to him, in a silly, scared way."

"Julius Taubery," I continued, "we, your guests, lie under a stigma, an imputation. We cannot leave the house under such circumstances. Some one must have brought the imitation stone with him for a purpose that it is needless to define. The real jewel must be in his pocket at this moment. Let us, therefore, be searched."

"They all sat silent as mice under my eye, save the professor, who grunted as if in dissent.

"Do I understand that you object to my plan, sir?" I asked him. "Do you refuse to be searched? And if so, may I ask why?"

"He gave me an angry look, but he had not the courage to contest the point.

"Then, I may take it that we are all agreed. Taubery, you have a library upon this floor. As I passed the door before lunch I noticed that there was an excellent fire there. Professor Endicott and myself will retire to that room. I will search the professor; the professor shall search me. After that the rest of the guests will come, one by one, into the room, where we will search them in turn. Let us have no delay. Professor Endicott, I am very much at your service."

"I went through that party, gentlemen, as our Transatlantic cousins would express it, with a fine-tooth comb. And I feel it my duty to say that not one of them raised the smallest objection to the severity of my methods. They were like lambs, gentlemen, they were, by thunder! But I obtained no result. The Taubery diamond had disappeared.

"Poor old Julius was quite broken down about it. He placed the whole matter in my hands. On my way to Scotland Yard I remembered what an old friend of mine had told me about you. 'If you are ever in a hole, Guntton,' he said, 'get Addington Peace—he is the man.' You were off duty. I inquired your address; I am here. And now, what are you going to do?"

"Can you remember who it was that introduced the subject of precious stones at your luncheon party?" asked Inspector Peace.

"'Pon my life I don't know," said the colonel, polishing his eye-glass with a red silk pocket handkerchief.

"It was one of the fellows at the other end of the table, but I can't say which of them."

(CHRONICLES TO BE CONTINUED.)

"WAR PENS" HIGHLY VALUED

Those Used in Affixing Signatures to Peace Treaties Command a Big Price From Collectors.

The pens with which peace treaties are signed invariably fetch high prices, if they happen to find their way into the market, and there are many people who would be willing to draw a check for \$1,000 or more for the pen which will be used to sign the treaty of peace between the Balkan states and Turkey.

It is interesting to know that when it became public property that peace had been proclaimed between Russia and Japan pen manufacturers in all parts of the world sent supplies of their pens to those engaged in drawing up the treaty, hoping that the document would be completed by the agency of their wares. In order to avoid any unfair discrimination between the penmakers it was eventually decided to use quill pens for the signing of the treaty.

It was a quill pen that was used by the Spanish commissioners when they put their signatures to the treaty of peace drawn up after hostilities had ceased between this country and Spain. This particular pen, by the way, sold for \$125 some time afterward.

The pen used by the plenipotentiaries in signing the memorable treaty of Paris fell into the hands of the Empress Eugenie. Apart from its historical interest, this pen is of considerable value, for it is mounted in solid gold and encrusted with diamonds.

The English home secretary occasionally receives an application from a relic hunter for the pen with which he has signed the actual order of a reprieve. When Viscount Llandaff was home secretary, during the reign of the late Queen Victoria, he received several hundred such applications.

Queen Victoria always retained possession of the pens that were used to set aside death sentences. One of these pens which was studded with jewels and worth several pounds, was presented by her majesty to Mme. Albani, the vocalist.

Mme. Patti received a "reprieve pen" from ex-Queen Isabella of Spain, and for many years the diva carried it with her wherever she went.

Pens which have been used by famous authors often fetch high prices when put up for sale by auction. Charles Dickens used a quill pen to write part of "Hard Times," "Little Dorrit" and "Bleak House" at the Villa Les Montineaux, and this was sold some time ago for \$17.50.

Europe's Smallest State.

The centenary of the Napoleonic wars calls attention to the existence of the smallest state in Europe, the autonomous republic of Moresnet, on the boundary between Germany and Belgium. Moresnet has an area of barely one and one-quarter square miles, and a population of 3,500. A boundary commission settling the frontiers after the fall of Napoleon in 1814 was unable to agree upon the ownership of this tiny piece of land, and finally left the question for future settlement. Meanwhile it was to be administered jointly by two states. The joint administration soon resulted in an administration by neither state, and the community became self-governing under the protection of Prussia and Belgium.

In 1841 the two guaranteeing countries gave the district its own independent administration. It has no courts, but litigants can choose between the Belgian and Prussian tribunals in beginning litigation, which is subject to the laws neither of Germany nor of Belgium, but of the ancient code Napoleon. On reaching military age, the youth of Moresnet have the choice of serving either Belgium or Germany.

Astronomical Discoveries.

The particular universe of stars in which we dwell is half again as large in scale as the world has been supposed. Our own sun is still youthful, and keeps traveling northwardly through space at the comparatively leisurely pace of twelve miles per second, or only two-thirds the average speed of stars of its own class. The North star is not really a single star, but triple, consisting of three suns revolving about a common center. These are some of the recent discoveries of the Lick observatory, the famous graduate astronomical department of the University of California. People who learned their astronomy twenty years ago, or five years ago, will have to change many of their ideas of the universe in the light of the Lick observatory's newly achieved knowledge as to how the heavenly bodies are born and live and die. Nowhere in the world is so much being done to alter and expand man's knowledge of the stellar universe as on Mount Hamilton, under the direction of Dr. W. W. Campbell, the famous director of the Lick observatory.

Queen's Pearl Rope Broke.

The accident which recently befell the pearl necklaces of the queen dowager of Italy, when the string broke and the priceless little spheres were scattered in every direction, recalls a similar mishap to the splendid fivefold rope which used to adorn the neck of Queen Alexandra on certain state occasions, the Pall Mall Gazette remarks.

On stepping into the gilded coach on her way to a state opening of parliament in the last reign her necklace caught in the ornate door handle and the pearls fell in a shower and rolled from the crimson carpet onto the muddy ground.

TRIP MADE TROUBLE

But Pa and Ma Stubbins Had a Long Journey Before Them, and It Was Their First.

Mrs. Melvina Stubbins threw up both floury hands in horror. Pa had fallen over something in the woodshed. The cat shrieked in pain. Then another crash added consternation to the startled woman.

Mrs. Stubbins rushed into the woodshed. Pa was down on the floor with a load of stove wood about him. His nose was bleeding and the water from the overturned pail on the wash bench was damped against his overalls. The cat covered under the washing machine, licking tenderly at her bruised tail.

"Josiah Stubbins, what be you a-doin'?" shrieked Melvina solicitously, grasping the prostrate man determinedly by the shoulder and striving to raise the groaning heap.

"I wuz—jest a-thinkin'—about that trip of ourn," he panted, gaining his feet, "an' stumbled over th' bootjack. Then the gold-darned cat got in my way, an' I went down."

Mrs. Stubbins waved her hands despairingly and sighed.

"I'm so fidgety now from jist thinkin' of goin' travelin'," she admitted, "thet I ain't good for nothin'—an' you're worse," heaping it onto Josiah mercilessly.

"Sometimes I reckon it ain't wuth th' candle—all this fussin' an' stewin' an' packin' an' plannin'," he wailed, wiping the blood from his hickory shirt and looking dazed. "Folks would be better off, I reckon, if they stayed home whar they wuz comfortable."

"An' never seein' nothin' at all!" agreed Mrs. Stubbins, turning the wash bench right side up and pouring a liberal helping of water into the basin. "Wash yerself. It looks like a murder."

Josiah went out to the barn, feeling ruefully of his nose. It was evident that these were perilous days in the Stubbins cycle. Getting ready to go traveling was sadly interrupting the even tenor of life on the farm. Half the countryside knew of the proposed trip by this time, for the local correspondent of the Advocate had chronicled the news weeks ago.

As the gala day approached, Pa and Ma Stubbins packed and unpacked, increasing the tension until neither of them slept at night for apprehending train wrecks. The train was due at 8:40 in the morning, but, in their anxiety not to be late, the couple arrived at the depot before 7, flustered and fidgety.

"Better to be a little airly," commented Melvina, fluttering into a seat in the big, barn-like station, where the drum stove valiantly gave out its redolent coal-smoke odors.

Josiah took up his stand before the closed ticket window and waited impatiently. As the minutes passed and the agent busied himself beyond his portals, their nervousness increased. Josiah looked apprehensively at Melvina and shifted his big form onto the other foot.

"Gittin' most time, ain't it, pa?" asked Mrs. Stubbins, wiping her sharp nose with a polka-dot handkerchief.

Josiah consulted his watch.

"I wish this here window would open up," he complained restlessly. "We ain't got more'n 45 minutes."

Finally Josiah could hold himself no longer. He stepped determinedly up to the ticket-shelf and rapped loudly on the window. The sounds from beyond stopped. The agent approached and threw up the sash.

"I—er—could ye wait on us?" Josiah asked apologetically.

"Which way you goin'?" queried the agent, none too affably.

"East," replied Josiah. "I wuz afeared it wuz gittin' late."

"Huh!" grunted the railroad man. "Plenty of time! Where to?"

"How fur is it to Harpersville?" questioned Mr. Stubbins, looking the agent in the eye.

"Eighteen miles."

"At two cents a mile?"

"Yes."

"All right. Gimme two tickets—an' return," with the air of a man about to take Niagara. "Melvina an' me air goin' travelin'!"

Globe-trotting is only relative, after all.—Judge.

Early Siege of Turkish Capital.

Constantinople has been threatened before by the Bulgarians, the most memorable of the early attacks having been made in 813, when the barbarian Krum arrived before the city's walls. The siege, it is related, was begun with high ritual, but before more than a demonstration had been made, the Byzantine emperor came to terms. While the negotiations were going on Krum was nearly killed, a peril which so enraged the founder of the Bulgarian empire that he laid waste the suburbs and retired with a host of captives. Fortunately for Constantinople, when the Bulgarian prince returned to take a fuller revenge he was seized with apoplexy and died.

Parcel Post.

"What is that chirping sound in the closet?"

"Young chickens," gasped the husband guiltily.

"I knew it. You forgot to mail that dozen eggs I gave you three weeks ago."

Must Be.

"Is he making good?"

"No question of it. He can get coal on credit."—Detroit Free Press.

Nature's Balance of Power.

In view of facts, one is almost willing to accept the statement of a well-known French scientist, who has asserted that without birds to check the ravages of insects, human life would vanish from this planet in the space of nine years. But for the vegetation the insects would perish; but for the insects the birds would perish, and but for the birds vegetation would be destroyed. Nature has, therefore, formed a delicate balance of power which cannot be disturbed without bringing great loss and unhappiness to the world.

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Can Write His Name 394 Ways.

Probably no surname has undergone so many changes as that of Sir Harry Stapleton Mainwaring (pronounced Manring). At Peover hall, his Cheshire home, there is a paper showing the name written in 394 ways.—London Mail.

PATENTS Watson E. Coleman, Patent Lawyer, Washington, D.C. Advice and books free. Rates reasonable. Highest references. Best service.

Mosquitoes Attracted by Music.

In some parts of India, where mosquitoes abound, it is impossible to play the violin because the music attracts the insects in great numbers. When the first notes are heard, the mosquitoes swarm in clouds around the player and make the movements of the hand impossible.—Harper's Weekly.

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"Sloan's Liniment has done more good than anything I have ever tried for stiff joints. I got my hand hurt so badly that I had to stop work right in the busiest time of the year. I thought at first that I would have to have my hand taken off, but I got a bottle of Sloan's Liniment and cured my hand."

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G. G. JONES, Baldwin, L. I., writes: "I used Sloan's Liniment for broken sinews above the knee caused by a fall and to my great satisfaction was able to resume work in less than three weeks after the accident."

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WATER PORTERS OF QUITO

They Carry Big Earthen Jars on Their Backs and Bowing, Create a Cataract.

Around a fountain in one of the principal squares of Quito assemble every morning the city's aguadores. These water porters differ from the less energetic ones of some South American cities in carrying their jars upon their backs instead of on the backs of mules. Their earthen jars are deep, have a wide mouth, and hold about 40 liters.

The porter carries it on his shoulder fastened with leather straps. He never detaches himself from his jar either to fill it or to transfer its contents to that of his customer.

He turns his back to the fountain so that the jar comes under one of the jets of water, listens to the sound of the water in the jar, and his ear is so well trained that he always walks away at the exact moment when it is filled to the brim.

Arriving at the house of a customer, he goes to the household jar, makes a deep bow, and disappears behind a torrent of water. Foreigners can never receive, without laughing, the visit of their aguador, the respectful little man who bows to one behind a cataract of water.

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