

A Successful Clew

By SARAH BAXTER

An ocean steamer was going to pieces on the eastern coast of Canada. She had struck during a storm and too far out for a line to be shot to her by the men of the life saving station. And now that the storm was abating and there was a possibility of a boat reaching her it was too late. Persons were struggling in the water, but few were reaching the shore. The life savers succeeded, after a number of futile attempts, in launching a boat and making a trip toward the wreck and at last brought back several persons, among whom was a little boy about five years old, who had been secured to an improvised raft.

The child's identity was never discovered. He was adopted by a family of country people living on the coast, and when eighteen years old shipped on a steamer as deckhand. But he had some education, and it was not long before he was made a subordinate officer. The steamer on which he was wrecked was called the Alexander Hamilton, and the boy took this for his name. He knew nothing of the great statesman of that name, therefore his act was not immodest.

It was evident from young Hamilton's personality that he was a child of aristocratic lineage. Those who knew how he had been picked up from the wreck wondered why those connected with him by blood had not found him. Before going to sea he had been advised to hunt up his origin, but more than a dozen years had elapsed since he had been brought ashore, and he knew not where to begin.

The young man's idea of going to sea was that he hoped for an opportunity to visit points of interest in different countries. When he drew his pay he would invariably use it for this purpose. During a voyage his ship remained some time at Tangier, opposite Gibraltar, unloading and taking in Arab goods. Hamilton obtained leave to visit Seville in Spain. Having artistic tastes, he visited a gallery containing some pictures, works of the old masters. Stopping before a Madonna and child by Murillo, he stood looking at it, a feeling growing up within him that he had seen it before. Presently he felt assured that he had not only seen it, but that it had been very near to him. The face of the Madonna was associated in his mind with some loved memory.

"It may be," he said to himself, "that the picture is a key to my childhood." If this were so it might be possible for him to find the lock.

An object had come to the young man. The circumstances attending his having been taken by shipwreck from his natural surroundings had cast a gloom over him. Now he brightened up and resolved that he would follow the clew on detective principles and never give up the search so long as there was a ray of hope. Sitting on a bench before the picture, he gave himself up to a mental investigation. This was the result: Either his parents had brought him to Seville, where he had seen the picture, or he had somewhere seen a copy of it.

He went to every hotel in the city, got permission to look at the records previous to the time of the shipwreck and asked every landlord whether he remembered hearing of any one who had been at his house being lost on the steamer from which he had been saved. But this investigation led to no result.

He next turned his attention to the matter of any copy that might have been made of the picture. After much questioning he found that but one copy had ever been made and that was for a bishop of the Roman Catholic church. Hamilton discovered who the bishop was and went to the episcopal palace. The bishop was dead, but a priest told the searcher that the copy was intended for a rich Englishman, who as a price for it gave a large sum to the church.

Hamilton's next move was to learn the name of the Englishman. The priest examined papers back for more than twenty years and found letters written eighteen years before from the man for whom the copy had been made, one letter giving directions as to where it was to be sent. The name was John N. Boyington, — Harley street, London.

Hamilton had money enough to take him to London, but no more. He decided to make the journey, and if he discovered no relative he would ship on some vessel bound for America. On reaching London he found that John Boyington had been an eminent surgeon, but was now an old man and retired. The sailor went to his residence, was ushered into the drawing room, and there on the wall hung the copy of the Murillo "Madonna and Child." When Dr. Boyington came down to see him and Hamilton told his story the old man sat silent for a time, then said:

"I believe that you are my grandson. Your father married an American lady, and a son was born in this house. That picture was placed in my daughter-in-law's room shortly before you were born that the mother might have a fitting object before her. When the boy was four years old my son and his wife visited America. They were lost on the return voyage on a ship called the Alexander Hamilton."

"That was the ship from which I was saved."

Hamilton, or rather Boyington, is now a wealthy Londoner.

Two Kinds of Emulsions.

Milk and butter are both emulsions. Professor F. G. Donnan of University college, London, defines an emulsion as a distribution of one liquid in another. A little oil shaken with much water gives an emulsion in which the particles of oil have a diameter of about a thousandth of a millimeter. Such an emulsion is milk. A little water in much oil gives particles of water even smaller; such an emulsion is butter.

Climbing the Ladder.

"Take a good look at this ladder, my boy."

"What for?"

"And then remember that if it were possible to get to the top at a single bound there would be no need for the bottom rungs."—Detroit Free Press.

Good Enough.

"Do you think you can support my daughter in the style to which she has become accustomed?"

"No, sir, but I think I can support her in the style to which her mother had to become accustomed when she got married."—Pittsburgh Press.

Paradoxical Content.

"I feel safe from accident on this train."

"Why so?"

"Because it is in charge of an engineer who has the reputation of being a wreckless one." — Baltimore American.

Corn Can Pop Only Once.

Ethel (munching and chattering)—How white corn gets when it pops. Marie—Yes; just like some men when they pop.—Boston Transcript.

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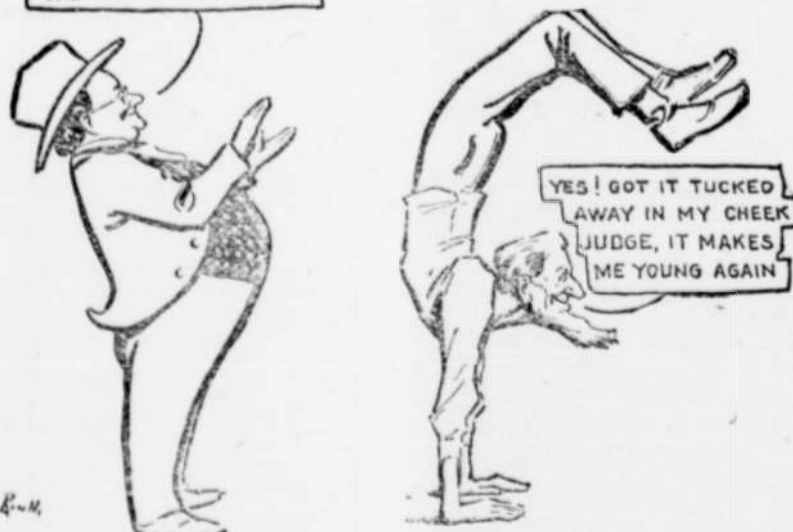
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