"and if after you have spoken I can throw any additional light upon the obscure matters considered, I shall deem it my duty to do so." Without further words between them, Stacey commenced:

"Whilst I am to-day, comparatively speaking, a poor man, I have the honor to be the lineal descendant of a wealthy and highly respected family, who in the early part of the seventeenth century resided in Islington, a fashionable suburb of London. The family to which I refer was a small one, numbering only three persons, but that trinity of virtues, and love, and happiness, and wealth combined to render their home a veritable earthly paradise.

"Heaven had blessed a Godly union with but one child, a son, and all that parental devotion and lavish expenditure could suggest was done for the betterment of that boy.

"He had, at the period to which I refer, just arrived at manhood's estate, and with a future laden with all that life holds to be conductive to earthly peace and happiness, he started out from one of the great universities of Europe a graduate, and a man of more than the average quality of mind. Scarcely had he time to sip the foam from off his blissful cup, before there came upon his most devoted home, an affliction of the direst kind. The noble, loving father and husband had met with sudden death in a religious riot in the streets of London, and that house so long the citadel of cheerfulness and mirth was quickly changed into a scene of grief and lamentation.

"Sullenly did the clouds of sorrow hang about that afflicted home. Tenderly was every act and attribute of the saintly dead rehearsed through sobs and tears. Life seemed to the bereft as only an unproductive, wintry waste, and one had almost come to believe that hope and consolation had forever from that habitation fled.

"Gradually the mists of woe were brushed away by the assauging hand of time, and those deep-seared hearts were comforted.

"About two years after the devoted father's death, a new sorrow was born to that loving, doating mother's heart by the son's hasty resolve to join the band of pilgrims then being formed by the Calverts, and who were soon to set sail for America to establish the priceless boon of liberty and religious freedom. The young man became an enthusiast upon the subject, and his mother humoring his will, made ample provisions for his far-off and uncertain journey. The hour of departure was at hand. The Ark and Dove were ready to sail from the old fortress-like quay on the Isle of Wight. Just as Arthur Adair, the youngest member of the expedition, was about to board the Dove, his mother pressed upon his broad forehead, a loving, parting kiss and threw about his neck a rich Mosaic charm attached to a golden chain. On the one side was a picture of the Madonna and on the reverse a newly painted miniature of the late lamented Sydney Adair. As she took the locket from her neck she reverently kissed it, saying: 'My dear son, take along with you as an amulet, this, my baptismal gift from the saintly Abbess of Lucerne, and may the martyred saint, whose property tradition says it was, be your guardian spirit in the wilds of America, and bring you safely back to your sorrowful mother's arms. Promise me one thing and I ask no more. Say that you will never part with that locket as long as you shall live.' The son faithfully promised as his mother desired, and kissing her affectionately, rushed aboard the Dove, and the vessels weighing anchor, passed out through the anchorage of St. Helen's roads, to the English channel, and as the shades of twilight commenced to creep over the waters, the Ark and the Dove

"Sailed into the fiery sunset,
Sailed into the purple vapors,
Sailed into the dusk of evening."

"What transpired on this side of the Atlantic with those heroic men who faced the perils of water and land that freedom of conscience might reign, you are better aware than myself.

"Mrs. Adair was ever hoping, ever praying for the success of the Ark and Dove. For some time she received message from Arthur, and several times she sent him more supplies; but suddenly his letters ceased. The mother tried in vain to ascertain the cause. The dread uncertainity caused her deep distress and the awful anxiety told upon her health. From a light-hearted winsome woman, she grew to be morose and eccentric, and died, just six years from the time her son left home.

"After death it was ascertained that Mrs. Adair had left a carefully indicted will, provisions of which strongly evidenced the prevailing—nay, the overpowering emotions of her heart and mind. It is a strangely conceived paper but so deftly drawn, and so hedged about with qualifying phrase, as to have successfully evaded every device which legal acumen, or tricky strategem has been able to hurl against it. In turn, every generation since the death of testatrix have sought to break through its provisions, in the hope of obtaining the enormous sum contained within its iron bound grasp. But still unmoved by every assault made upon it, there yet remains in England's chancery court, filed in musty parchment in the usual way, the enduring evidence that what has grown to be about £200,000 is safely hid away in the banks of England vaults and that it is at anytime accessible to the heirs who can produce the evidence required.

"It must have been that Madaline Adair had an inward conviction that Arthur would some day come to light, and be in a position to claim what of right was his, for the point that proves incontestible is the clause which reads, "This testratrix wills that no disposition whatever shall be made of her estate unless the claimants shall produce conclusive evidence of my son's decease, and no evidence shall be deemed conclusive unless there be produced in court a linken shape mosaic, which he was known to have always on his person. Upon the one side of the said mosaic, wrought in varied shades of stone, is the Mandonna's face, whilst on the reverse side appears the miniature of my deeply lamented husband, whom soon I hope to meet. There is upon the mosaic thus described but a single word baptisma, which is wrought in old English text. The death of Arthur Adair being proven upon these lines, the whole estate is duly disposed of to relations in a way clearly indicated.

"I am now the only living heir to that vast estate, and like my predecessors have taken a turn in chancery proceedings—only to find like them, my best efforts thwarted, because of failure to produce that "Missing Link." Only a few words more kind madam, continued Stacey, raising his voice somewhat and becoming a little nervous at the conclusion of his part, "and my portion of the recital is over." "Very well," replied the madam, "let us hear it through. I find it quite interesting."

"On that memorable May afternoon," Stacey continued, "when you were standing before me, and engaged in kicking away the firebrands, which my men had placed beneath your house, about your neck, and lit up by the sun's bright rays, I plainly saw the word "Baptisma." I knew I gazed upon the lost mosaic. I realized the "Missing Link" was found. I know full well I must have acted like a truant child, for my nerves were all unstrung, and I scarce could realize what providence had thrown across my way. This, then about concludes my side of the strange affair, and yet the mystery is only stated, not explained. Upon you the fortune possessor of that small but priceless gem, which has the power to nullify all previous decisions of the English court of claims, and hand the grateful estate over to its rightful owner, must devolve the weighter task of clearing up the hidden source from whence that locket came."

"Well, really, admiral," spoke Madam Sunstrum, who appeared a little dazed at the singular and somewhat lengthy story to which she had been a most attentive listener, "I think I can already see the affinity existing between your "English edition" and my "American production" aforesaid, and whilst I fear that some points may prove a trifle involved, I will proceed at once and allow you to be the judge.

"About four miles down from here, in the direction from whence you come, is a most charmingly picturesque island, which to-day is occupied only by a single soul, a recluse, who there has habitated in a cave, excavated in the river's bank, but once that Island was the Indian village of the mighty Tocwogh tribe. The great Wicomico was the chief, his daughter, the fair Pomona, who was princess of that island, and the idol of all the neighboring tribes. She was a winsome maiden, and by her comeliness of feature, her gracefulness of form, and above all, her mild and kindly disposition, had she come to be the one adored by all the friendly tribes, whose rude villages dotted the winding shores and the wooded banks of this favorite indian stream. Many a brave and youthful warrior had cast admiring glancesupon the laughingeyed Pomona's charms. Some had even made so bold as to seek her heart to win; and yet her hands was free. Free to engage in kindly acts for all. Free to give, as yet to whomsoever she pleased.

"It was in the "Spring's first moon," and to celebrate the "growing-time's" return. Wicomico had made a mighty feast, and in Pomona's name he bade all friendly tribes to come and enjoy his bounteous meal and try their skill at divers Indian sports, and whoso'er should best excel at archery, the gracious privilege should enjoy of placing a wreath of bay-leaf, rush and ferns upon the pretty Pomona's brow, and should thus become her best friend for the next 12 months to come. It was a glorious April afternoon and the little isle was bathed in vernal sheen. So unobstructed was the sun's bright rays, that ne'er a cloud had crossed the sky that day, and all was decked in holiday attire. Small craft, innumerable, with splashing oars, and hailing from everywhere, were heading for the beach, for it was a mighty feast and none must do Wicomico the ill to stay away.

"Soon all were landed save a birch canoe more trim than all the rest, and bearing only one lone occupant. It was a pale-face stranger to them all, and one on whom all eyes in wrath were turned. Just as he set his foot upon the beach and sought to pull his laden boat up, an hundred arrows from an hundred practiced bows were set in deadly aim upon the rash intruder. Suddenly a cry was heard. It was the fair Pomona's voice, and instantly all bows were dropped, then rushing to the stranger's side she led him gently to her father's tent. Two baskets made from cat-tail sticks were soon well fixed with beads and knives and trinkets of all kinds, which the stranges asked Pomona to give out in honor of the feast. Soon every warrior had of these his share. The Indian maiden brought the stranger forth, and in his fair white hand she placed the trustiest bow, and then proclaimed him master of that 'First Moon Feast.' She bade him try his hand at archery, and seemed to wish he might excel.

"The contest was long drawn, but the handsome paleface youth showed wondrous skill and won the prize. He deftly placed the diadem of leaf and ferns upon the comely maiden's head, and gave to every warrior there a golden coin. From that day forth the stranger youth was with all those tribes a very God, and when his beach canoe would ply about the stream they all would line the shores to give him welcome, and never did he fail to pass them some reward.

"Then oft he landed and bargained for their lands, and gave them in exchange a rich supply of gold and silver. One day the beach canoe came floating up the stream, and the youth was lying helpless 'gainst his oars. Wicomico saw something was amiss, and quickly brought the drifting boat ashore. The youth was ill of parching fever, and scarce could speak. The kindly chief conveyed him to his thatch-roofed tent, and laid him gently on a couch of furs. He was sood delirous, Pomona, like a ministering angel, stood about his couch. He rapidly grew worse and soon his spirit fled. Just betore he died he had a moments consciousness, and taking from his breast a chain and charm, he threw it over fair Pomona's head, saying as his last expiring words, 'My mother's gift I place upon your neck.' Keep it till you meet some pale-faced friends, then kindly hand it over to their care and tell whoso'er it may be to send it to—', but before the sentence could be finished he breathed his last.

"One of my paternal ancestors chanced to be the first pale face whom fair Pomona met, and she, with great tears in her lustrous eyes, told how the youth had died, and how wrapt, in their choicest furs, they had placed him in his beach canoe, and sunk it in the river's broadest part. Then told she as best she could explain, about the chain and charm, and insisted that my great-grandsire should keep it as his own. Upon my wedding day the charm and chain, as it was then donated, and which I had so long admired as being an Indian relic, was placed upon my neck by my loving grandsire's hand."

Here Madam Sunstrum paused, and looking directly into the admiral's face asked:

"Do you not think that noble pale-faced youth bears a striking resemblance to your English Arthur Adair, and does not this mosaic coming from his dying hand establish it as certain?"

The recital concluded, there was perfect unanimityupon the conclusion to be drawn, and Stacey's next move was to obtain the mosaic which was now carefully examined, and found to be the veritable "Missing Link." He asked the conditions upon which the madam would yield up her valuable possession, and volunteered princely remuneration when it had secured to him his vast estate. The demand for its surrender, which Madam Junstrum made was indicative of her noble character, and was couched in these words: "Upon condition that you indemnify to double the amount lost, every citizen of these twin villages, which you ruthlessly destroyed 16 months ago, I yield the locket up."

Stacey readily assented to the propoosition, and arrangements were made that Madam Sunstrum and her daughter Winnie meet him in London before the Christmas-tide, when he would receive the jewel, and produce it as the "Missing Link" in court. The engagement was kept, and the court officials and the legal lights of the great English metropolis were awe struck and mystified when Stacey interposed the long lost charm, but the immense fortune to which it was the "open sesame" was soon in Stacey's hands. He offered to make Madam Sunstrum the vehicle through which the contract should be fulfilled, and for a time it looked as though it were agreed that way, but change came about before the spring, when Madam Sunstrum was to return to America. Winnie Sunstrum became Mrs. Rear Admiral Stacey in turn became an American citizen. The three returned together, and the Sunstrum home, always elegant, became far famed for its magnificance and for its elegant hospitality. The people of those two ill-fated hamlets had ample cause to forgive the man who had so grievously wronged them, for his indemnity was so princely and so graciously dispensed, that all else must not be forgotten.

The Sunstrum mansion is a treasured landmark in the town of G—— today, and just beyond the borders of that still entrancing spot is an old stone church, and around it lies the city of the dead. The Sunstrum and the Stacey lot is there, and Winnie's only child, a son, is careful that his consecrated dead shall be remembered, for those three graves are so trimly kept that fairy feet might scarcely tread their even length, without leaving behind traces of intrusion. And o'er the tombs creep ivy, which seems to tell a happy immortality and to catch the tears that fall from the eyes of those who come to meditate upon the lessons which those noble lives have taught.

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