

# FOUND BY the MISSING LINK.

ONE OF MR. W. L. ALDEN'S  
QUAINT SHORT STORIES.

[NOT FOUNDED ON FACT.]

*Illustrated by S. H. Vedder.*

"IF we could only find the Missing Link," said the Professor, "there would be an end to all doubt as to the theory of development. My own idea is that some day he will be found."

"Wasn't there an expedition in search of the Missing Link a few years ago?" asked young Horton. "If I remember rightly, the expedition went to Borneo, or some such place, and never returned."

"Precisely so," replied the Professor. "I fancy that the whole affair was mismanaged, for the man at the head of the expedition was certainly not the man for the place."

We were sitting in the smoking room of the Lord Warden hotel at Dover—a company of weather-bound travellers, waiting for the storm to abate sufficiently to permit the Calais steamer to leave the shelter of the breakwater. There were a dozen of us all told, but the Professor, as we called him, without, however, having any real authority for conferring the title upon him, rather monopolised the conversation, which for some time had been devoted to the Darwinian theory. Suddenly an American, who had something of the look of the merchant sailor about him, took his cigar from his mouth and remarked: "Finding the Missing Link is all right. But having the Link find you mightn't be altogether satisfactory."

"I do not quite understand you," said the Professor rather stiffly.

"O! I ain't giving out any conundrums. I said that having the Link find you might not suit you all the way down to the ground.

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I'm speaking, sir, from experience, for I was once found by that identical Missing Link that you are so anxious to see, and the experience was a mighty curious one. If you gentlemen want to hear about it, just sing out, and I'll give you the whole yarn."

Several of us replied that we should be glad to hear the sailor's story, and without any further delay he launched into it.

About six years ago I was at Singapore, and I don't mind saying that I was on the beach—if you know what that means. I had shipped as A.B. aboard a big four-masted ship out of Newcastle, bound to Shanghai, and I got disgusted with the grub, and the way in which I and the rest of the men were treated. So when we put into Singapore for water—having met with calms and head winds that had delayed us on the passage out—I deserted, and kept shady till the ship had sailed. I found out afterwards that I would have done better if I had stuck to the ship, for after waiting pretty near five weeks in Singapore, and not being able to get a ship, I was kicked out by the boarding-house keeper, and had to sleep in the open, and live on food that I could beg from the natives.

Well! One day there came to Singapore a scientific chap by the name of Butler, and my idea is that he was the identical chap

that the Professor was speaking of just now. He was going into the Interior to hunt for a new style of monkey that he called the Missing Link, and he was anxious to find a white man who would join him. I needn't

never been visited by a white man, and we supposed that it was full of tigers, and savages, and such-like things. But Butler was full of his project of finding the Missing Link. He had heard from the natives that somewhere in the Interior there was a big monkey, considerably bigger than a man, who was more of a man than a monkey.

The story said that he hadn't any tail to speak of, and that he was intelligent enough to build huts, and to knock down other animals with a club. Butler said that he was sure that this monkey was sort of half-way between man and beast, and he expected that if he could find him and bring him to Europe,

his fortune would be made. I didn't take any stock in the story, and didn't care whether it was true or not. All I wanted was to get a berth where I could earn my living, and it was all the same to me whether I was hunting Missing Links in the jungle, or doing sailor work aboard ship.

We started in good spirits, but I'm free to say that if any man who knew anything about expeditions in the jungle had seen us and expressed his opinion, he would have said that we were a set of—well, everlasting fools! We were armed all right, for every man



WHEN I WOKE UP, WHAT I THOUGHT WAS AN ENORMOUS MONKEY WAS  
STANDING OVER ME WITH MY GUN IN HIS HAND.

say that I was glad to go with him, for it meant food and the half of a tent and twenty dollars a month to me. I was the only white man in the expedition besides Butler. We had three Malays with us, who were to carry our provisions and things and act as a sort of guard, and the five of us calculated to travel across the peninsula, heading in a North-easterly direction, and coming out on the opposite coast. The country that we were to go through had

had a rifle, and Butler had a spare shotgun besides. And we had plenty of ammunition—about enough, as I judged, to supply a small army for a six months' campaign. But in the matter of food we were on short rations from the first. Butler carried very little except a sort of lozenge, made, as he said, out of meat. He calculated that we would find all the game we wanted, and that the lozenges would come in handy when he happened to be out of

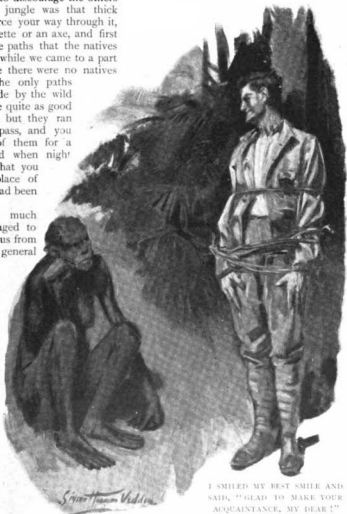
game. We didn't take any water except about a pint for each man in a water-bottle, and there was only a pint of brandy in the whole expedition, Butler being a teetotaler.

We had bad luck from the very first. We didn't meet with many natives except for the first week, and most of them were reasonably friendly, though we did have to shoot one chap just to discourage the others from looting. The jungle was that thick that you couldn't force your way through it, except with a machette or an axe, and first along we kept to the paths that the natives had made. After a while we came to a part of the country where there were no natives to speak of, and the only paths were the tracks made by the wild animals. They were quite as good as the native paths, but they ran all round the compass, and you might follow one of them for a whole day and find when night came round again that you were nearer your place of departure than you had been in the morning.

We didn't see much game, but we managed to get enough to keep us from starving, though, as a general thing, we were pretty hungry. About the tenth day, as near as I could reckon, one of the Malays was gathered in by a tiger. We shot the beast, but there wasn't enough left of the Malay to be of any use. Three days later the other two bolted in the night, taking their rifles with them. This left Butler and me alone, but he wasn't a bit discouraged. We filled our pockets with cartridges, and left the rest of the outfit behind us.

Butler said that, according to his reckoning, we had about reached the part of the country where he expected to find his Link, but he didn't see any signs of him. We marched along pretty steady during the morning and

evening, but we had to halt during the middle of the day on account of the heat. Our tobacco gave out after the first week—that is, mine did, for Butler didn't use tobacco—and I suffered more from that than I did from the heat or hunger. We couldn't make a fire, except once in a long while, for we hadn't brought but a few boxes



I SMILED MY BEST SMILE AND SAID, "GLAD TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE, MY DEAR!"

of matches, and we couldn't afford to run through with them. Of course, we had to take watch and watch at night, so as to be ready for any wild beast that might try to investigate us: but with the exception of

the tiger that carried off the Malay, hardly any animal came near us. I suppose the jungle was too thick to be a handy place for big game, but it suited the small fellows and the snakes and other vermin. I never saw such a place for snakes of all sizes and colours, but Butler said most of them were harmless. Perhaps they were, but I never put any confidence in a snake, no matter who he is; and it might have been better for Butler if he'd done the same.

I tell you it was lonesome, sitting down in that jungle in the dead of night, with Butler asleep close by, and all sorts of strange rustlings going on among the trees and the underbrush. Overhead I could see the stars stretched along a narrow lane made by the tops of the trees on each side of the wild beast track. I found it lonesome sometimes at sea when I was on the fo'c'sle-head on the look-out, with the rest of the watch snoring under the weather bulwarks, and not a sound stirring except the creaking of a block and the strokes of the bell from aft. But in that jungle you felt as if you were cast away in a boat without another soul. It's queer what noises go on in such a place—noises that are not made by animals, or yet by the wind. I've heard deep breathing close beside me, when there wasn't a breath of air stirring and not an animal within hearing. An animal can't move in a jungle without rustling the leaves or making the twigs crackle, but that heavy breathing would come within a yard of me without the least rustle or crackle. It was as if the earth itself breathed in the night; as if she had been overheated and tired in the day, and then when night came she took long breaths and settled herself to sleep.

We'd been marching through that jungle for more than a fortnight—perhaps three weeks—after leaving Singapore, when Butler was bitten by a snake, and died in less than six hours. He was a brave man, if he wasn't a first-class explorer, and he died as coolly as if he was going to sleep. There was nothing I could do for him, for we hadn't any medicine for snake bites, and if he had been loaded down with it I don't believe it could have saved him. I got him to take some brandy, but he wouldn't take enough to do him any real good. He talked sensibly with me, though he was suffering a lot of pain. He told me to take his compass and steer north-east till I came to the coast, where I would stand a chance of

finding a settlement. He left me all his money, which was about three hundred pounds in gold, and urged me to keep my weather eye lifting for the Missing Link, and, if possible, to capture him and take him down to the coast with me. Finally, he made me promise not to bury him—and, considering that I had no undertaking tools except a knife, I don't know as I could have buried him if I had tried. It was his idea that the wild beasts would superintend his funeral, and he said he had as soon be disposed of in that way as in any other. Perhaps he was right. We do take a lot of trouble about what is left of us when we die, and perhaps it's all sentiment instead of sense.

When Butler was gone, I dragged him a little way into the jungle and covered him as well as I could with leaves and twigs. He and I had never been pals, for I was just a sailorman hired to work for him, but when he died and I was left alone in the jungle, I felt as you feel on a bright, breezy day, when the sun suddenly goes under a thick cloud, and the sea turns grey, and the wind begins to moan in the rigging. I knew that I hadn't any chance worth speaking of. I was alone with the thick jungle around me, that seemed to press tight on my throat like a hot Hooghly fog. If the wild beasts didn't gather me in, or savages make a dinner of me, I should probably die of starvation long before I could reach the coast. All that day I tramped along, getting hungry and tired, and not meeting any game that I could shoot; and when night came I lay down, wishing that I was back at Singapore starving among human beings in what you might call a social sort of way.

When I woke up it was daylight, and what at first I thought was an enormous monkey was standing over me on his hind legs with my gun in his hand. I jumped up pretty lively, but he had me by the scruff of the neck by the time I was on my feet. His hand was like a steam engine. I could fairly feel his fingers sinking into the flesh. However, I didn't say anything, or even try to twist myself loose. He had me, and the only thing I could do was to wait and see what would turn up.

We started along the narrow path, I in front and he behind, shoving me along with his grip on my neck. The only part of him I could see were his feet which now and then came into sight when he took a long step.

I noticed that they were like hands. They had fingers instead of toes, and a regular thumb in the place where a man's big toe is placed. All of a sudden it came to me that this was Butler's Missing Link. I had often heard him say that the Link would be

don't walk on their hind legs, and carry guns in one hand and hold a man by the neck with the other. He wasn't a man, for he had the feet of an ape, and he wore fur instead of clothes. Consequently, he must be the Missing Link, and I remember thinking



SMILING AT THEM BOTH, I ATE RAW  
RABBIT AS IF IT WAS PLUM DUFF.

covered with hair, and would probably have feet something like hands, but in other respects he would be pretty much like a human being. The creature that had captured me answered exactly to this description; I knew he wasn't any sort of a monkey—or ape, as I should say, for apes

that it was a big joke that I should have started to find him and that he should have found me instead.

In about half an hour, as I should judge, we left the path, and pushing our way through the jungle where the undergrowth was thinner than usual, we came to

a little clearing, where there was a hut built of young saplings, driven into the ground, and lashed together at the top with vines. We stopped outside of the hut and the Link sang out in his lingo, and presently there came out of the hut another Link, his wife, as I supposed. The two chattered about me, Mr. Link shewing me and my gun, and they evidently agreeing that I was a valuable specimen. Finally, Mr. Link stood me up against a tree and made me fast to it with a rope of twisted tendrils, and then, picking up a big club, went into the forest.

I needn't say that I was pretty badly scared. Without my gun I was helpless, and there didn't seem to be much chance that I would get hold of it again. I couldn't get my hands free, for Mr. Link had lashed them to the tree with the judgment of an able seaman. I imagined, from his having taken his club with him, that he had gone off in search of game, which looked as if he and his wife didn't consider me to be good eating. You needn't remind me that monkeys don't eat meat. I knew that, and thought of it at the time, but a Missing Link has risen above the monkey species so far that I thought it very probable that he might have learned to eat his cousin man, as well as other sorts of meat.

Mrs. Link sat on the ground about two yards distant from me, looking at me with what I fancied was a rather admiring expression in her eyes. Says I to myself—"You're in a mighty tight place, and your only chance is to make friends with these Links." So I smiled my best smile and said to Mrs. Link—"Glad to make your acquaintance, my dear!" It fetched her the first time. She couldn't smile, for her mouth wasn't built for it, but she chuckled in a way that shewed she was pleased, and then she came over to me and patted me on the cheek. I kept on smiling for all I was worth, and talking to her in a friendly and respectful way. Of course, I knew that she couldn't understand a word I said, but I calculated that she, being a female, would understand that I was paying her compliments, and that I was full of respect for her character. A woman is a woman even when she is a Link, and I didn't make any mistake about this one.

By-and-by Mr. Link came back with a dead rabbit, and the two sat down to breakfast. They evidently didn't know anything about a fire, for they ate the rabbit raw, pulling it to pieces with their hands and

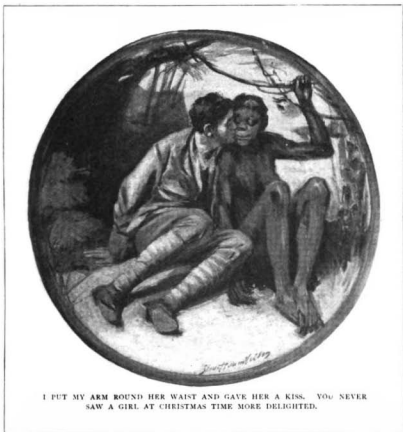
teeth. Presently Mrs. Link tossed me over a choice bit, and when I looked reproachfully at her, as if to say, "How on earth do you expect me to eat with my hands tied behind my back!" she said something to her lord, and he then came and cast off the lashing. I didn't lose any time in sitting down close to Mrs. Link, and smiling at them both, while I ate raw rabbit as if it was plum duff. They were a good-tempered couple, and before I had got through with breakfast they had plainly made up their minds that I was an intelligent and harmless animal, and that they'd take me in and make a sort of domestic pet of me.

I don't propose to read off a regular log of every hour I spent with the Links. I was with them close on to four weeks, and they treated me civilly all the time. At night I slept in the hut with them, and they gave me a pile of leaves for a bed that was twice as thick as the beds they used for themselves. Mr. Link wouldn't let me go into the forest either alone or with him, but that was about all the restriction that he put upon me. He was gone on the hunt for game most of the day, and Mrs. Link and I stopped at home, and slept and talked. That the Links had a genuine language I never had the least doubt, though I could never get to understand more than three or four words of it, and those I have forgotten. It sounded to me something like French, though I don't really know much about French, and perhaps the reason why I fancied it sounded like French was that somehow a man always associates French with monkeys. As I said, Mrs. Link and I talked a lot to one another, and it seemed to do her good, though I could never exactly see why.

I did considerable work for the Links first and last. I improved and enlarged their hut until they regarded it as the swellest place ever built. I made forks for them out of big thorns, and I was tempted to shew them my matches, and teach them the use of fire. But I had only a small box of matches left, and I knew that if ever I escaped from the Links, I would need them myself—the worst way. They never discovered them, for they never dreamed that I had pockets. Their idea was that my clothes were permanent, just like their fur, and as I never took them off while I was with them they never suspected that I wasn't born in a blue flannel shirt and ragged trousers. Why,

Mrs. Link mistook a hole in the left leg of my trousers for some new kind of sore, and one day she insisted on rubbing it with some patent salve that she got out of a sort of gum tree. They saw very soon that raw meat didn't altogether meet my views, and after that they always brought me nuts, and a sort of wild turnip. Take those Links by and large they treated me the best they knew how, and in my opinion Mr. Link was

her. She used to pick out the best bones and the biggest nuts for me, and she was always bringing me water to drink in a cocoanut shell, and she never got tired of patting me on the head. Mr. Link never shewed the least sign of jealousy. I supposed that he considered the idea that a Link could fall in love with a creature like a man was too ridiculous to be thought of for a moment. All the time I kept longing for



I PUT MY ARM ROUND HER WAIST AND GAVE HER A KISS. YOU NEVER SAW A GIRL AT CHRISTMAS TIME MORE DELIGHTED.

more of a gentleman than half the men in Singapore, though I'll allow that isn't saying very much.

As for Mrs. Link, I don't deny that she made a dead set at me. Mind, I'm not saying a word against her character, for as far as I know, she was a perfectly respectable Link. All I mean is that she took a great fancy to me, and tried to make me take the same to her, for which nobody could blame

my gun, which the Links had hid in some place where I couldn't find it. I don't know what they thought of the gun, or why they hid it. Perhaps their idea was that it wasn't respectable for a Link to be seen in the possession of such a thing, just as an Englishman when he goes to Italy thinks that it is preposterous in the Italians to wear cloaks. I'm ashamed to say that the way I got possession of that gun again was

by teaching Missus Link the art of kissing. I often made signs that I wanted the gun, and I could see that she understood them, but she would never bring it to me. One day I put my arm around her waist and gave her a kiss. It hit her where she lived, and you never saw a girl at Christmas time, who had been kissed under the mistletoe by her young man, seem more delighted than Mrs. Link seemed.

The next time we were alone she hinted by her manner that she would like to try the lesson over again, but I wouldn't understand her, and kept on making signs about the missing gun. After a while she got up, and went into the jungle, and I began to think that she was pouting, but in a few minutes she came back and handed me the gun.

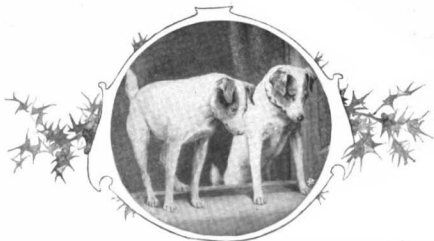
Then I did give her an honest kiss, and to tell the truth, though she wasn't much more of a beauty than the orang in the Zoo, I felt almost fond of her.

I hid the gun under my bed, a plan she evidently approved of, and that made me understand that she had run some risk of displeasing the other Link by sneaking the gun. That night, when the two Links were sound asleep, I reached for the gun and slipped out of the hut. I hated to leave them without saying good-bye, but, of course, that wasn't possible. However, I

did leave on the side of Mrs. Link's bed a little bit of a looking glass that I had carried in my pocket, and I hope it reconciled her to my loss.

I ran the most of that night, and must have put fifteen miles between myself and the Links by daylight. Then I lay down for a nap, and when I got up, and started on the march again, I caught sight of something blue shewing through the jungle; I had found the sea after all, and by noon I was safe aboard a ship that I had sighted close into shore, and swam to, taking the chances that it was an honest ship and not a pirate.

Now gentlemen, you may not believe this story, but it's the solemn truth! The Missing Link lives somewhere in the north-east part of the peninsula, and though I can't exactly say that I found him, I'm dead certain that he found me. I've never told the story before, because I hate to be taken for one of your newspaper reporters, that are always having tremendous adventures that never happened. But if you should see my old rifle, and notice the marks of teeth on the barrel where one of the Links tested it, you'd have to admit that either the marks were made by the teeth of a man who could bite laminated steel, or that they were made by an animal answering to the description of the Missing Link.



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WATCHING THE PROCESSION.