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## **TREASURE**

## By ALEXANDER J. SNYDER

S THE Staten Island ferry-boat neared the St. George slip, young Doctor Marsden left his seat in the smoking cabin and went out on the forward deck. His face broke into a smile of recognition as he perceived a trim, soldierly-erect old gentleman standing next the safety gates as if desirous of leaving the boat as soon as she should be berthed. Marsden made his way to the side of the older man.

"Hello, there, Doctor Fleming!" greeted Marsden. "How are things with you?"

"Fine, thank you," returned the older man. "I've just come from the Charity Hospital."

"Do you come across anything worth while there?" asked Marsden, interested in the possibilities of finding an unusual case among the dregs of humanity that ebbed through the hospital doors.

Doctor Fleming smiled at the younger man's evident enthusiasm.

"I came across something good this afternoon," he said. "Biliary case. The man was a sailor. When I got hold of him he looked like a Chinaman. By the time I was through with him I took three—"

The loud and musical clank of the windlass reeling in the hawser of the ferryboat kept the next few words from the ears of a seedy individual, who, leaning against a near-by stanchion, had absorbed the latter part of the conversation. As the gates swung aside, he strained forward to eatch further words.

"—regular 'pearls'. Beauties! I have them with me," said the elderly gentleman, touching his breast pocket. "Well, I'm bound for home. I'll say good-bye before we're separated in this crowd."

The eavesdropper grinned mirthlessly as he followed the old surgeon. Bull Evans at his best had never made an attractive figure, and now. down at heel, unshaved, unshorn and ragged, he was positively repulsive.

"Gor' bli' me if 'e don't deserve it," he muttered, shaking his head to emphasize the fact to himself. "A-gougin' of charity patients that wye! Three pearls, eh? An' orf a Chink sailor! A Kanaka, more like. Hi'll keep me heye on 'im, thinks I."

Following Doctor Fleming to a Stapleton car, he boarded it and settled himself in a far corner. He pulled his faded slouch hat deeper over his eyes, and erected a discarded newspaper as a barricade between himself and the eyes of the man he was trailing. A block beyond the doctor's alighting place, he swung off the moving car and again shadowed his man.

Bull evans found his vigil irksome, out there in the dark,
crouched beneath the window of the
doctor's study. The lamp on the desk
illumined a stethoscope, several books,
an inkwell, and the desk-blotter on
which they lay. Beyond the compass
of the desk top, the rest of the room
was in comparative darkness. The
motionless figure of the doctor leaned
attentively, eyes shaded from the

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glare of the lamp, over a heavy tome lying open on the desk before him.

At last Bull Evans stiffened into an attitude of expectation. The man at the desk was pushing aside the textbook and reaching into his inner breast pocket. He brought forth an envelope, opened it, and carefully inverted it over the desk blotter. Three lustrous white objects, the size of peas, rolled out and shimmered softly in the light as the doctor poked them about with an inquisitive finger. He seemed pleased about something as he took a sheet of paper from a desk pad and jotted a few words down. Then he folded the slip, placed it with the three nacreous objects in the envelope, and gave himself up to a mental review of his tactics of the afternoon.

Bull Evans licked his puffed lips nervously. He had to have those pearls, he wanted them badly enough to do murder for them; but the modus operandi for procuring them came only after considerable knitting of shaggy brows. He turned from the window, shrugged his shoulders with a glance upward to where a dim light should the total to the front door. He rang the bell and stepped to one side, awaiting with upraised hand the coming of the doctor.

With measured trend the old surgeon traversed the short hall between study and front door, opened it, and seeing no one waiting outside, stepped across the threshold to the porch to investigate.

Like a snake striking, Bull Evans' blackjack descended. Pausing an instant to ease his victim's fall, and dragging him inside the hall, Bull Evans darted into the study, snatched the envelope from the desk and made a panic-stricken departure.

He crashed against a picket fence, recoiled, stumbled through knee-high growths of rank weed across several vacant lots, and furtively looked up and down the dimly lit and deserted cross streets. Panting with his exertions and pent-up emotions, he hailed a car, rode back to the ferry and crossed to the Battery. He hurried along South Street and paused before a dingy, shuttered, sailors' boarding house. Not until he had locked the door of his room, hung a filthy bandanna over the keyhole, and drawn the tattered shade to its fullest extent did he dare to examine his loot,

With avidity his grimy fingers clutched the envelope and drew forth the objects of his desire. He stared at what he saw. Could these deadwhite, chalky little pebbles be the pearls he had seen the doctor examine? Puzzled, he reviewed his actions of the evening and assured himself that he had taken the right envelope-at least there had been no other in sight. To make assurance doubly sure, he looked for and found the slip of paper he had seen the doctor place in the envelope. Uncomprehending, on the first reading of what he saw, he scanned the writing again and then cursed wildly and blasphemously, for the doctor had written:

"Memo and specimens for lecture on calcareous bodies. Three gallstones removed from duct of Case 462, Charity Hospital. Note: The pearly appearance of these calculi, strongly apparent at time of operation, seems to be disappearing rapidly."

