

# ACRES OF DIAMONDS

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Russell H Conwell

Edited slightly to accommodate the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Student

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# **Introduction to Acres of Diamonds**

By John Wannamaker



**AN APPRECIATION**

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THOUGH Russell H. Conwell's Acres of Diamonds have been spread all over the United States, time and care have made them more valuable, and now that they have been reset in black and white by their discoverer, they are to be laid in the hands of a multitude for their enrichment.

In the same case with these gems there is a fascinating story of the Master Jeweler's life-work which splendidly illustrates the ultimate unit of power by showing what one man can do in one day and what one life is worth to the world.

As his neighbor and intimate friend in Philadelphia for thirty years, I am free to say that Russell H. Conwell's tall, manly figure stands out in the state of Pennsylvania as its first citizen and "The Big Brother" of its seven millions of people.

From the beginning of his career he has been a credible witness in the Court of Public Works to the truth of the strong language of the New Testament Parable where it says, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, 'Remove hence to yonder place,' AND IT SHALL REMOVE AND NOTHING SHALL BE IMPOSSIBLE UNTO YOU.

As a student, schoolmaster, lawyer, preacher, organizer, thinker and writer, lecturer, educator, diplomat, and leader of men, he has made his mark



on his city and state and the times in which he has lived. A man dies, but his  
good work lives.

His ideas, ideals, and enthusiasms have inspired tens of thousands of  
lives. A book full of the energetics of a master workman is just what every  
young man cares for.

1915.

His yoke fellow

*John Wanamaker*



**A note from the author.**

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Friends. -- This lecture has been delivered under these circumstances: I visit a town or city, and try to arrive there early enough to see the postmaster, the barber, the keeper of the hotel, the principal of the schools, and the ministers of some of the churches, and then go into some of the factories and stores, and talk with the people, and get into sympathy with the local conditions of that town or city and see what has been their history, what opportunities they had, and what they had failed to do -- and every town fails to do something -- and then go to the lecture and talk to those people about the subjects which applied to their locality.

“Acres of Diamonds” -- the idea -- has continuously been precisely the same.

The idea is that in this country of ours every man has the opportunity to make more of himself than he does in his own environment, with his own skill, with his own energy, and with his own friends.

RUSSELL H. CONWELL.

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**ACRES OF DIAMONDS**

WHEN going down the Tigris and Euphrates rivers many years ago with a party of English travelers I found myself under the direction of an old Arab guide Whom we hired up at Bagdad, and I have often thought how that guide resembled our barbers in certain mental characteristics. He thought that it was not only his duty to guide us down those rivers, and do what he was paid for doing, but also to entertain us with stories curious and weird, ancient and modern, strange and familiar. Many of them I have forgotten, and I am glad I have, but there is one I shall never forget.

The old guide was leading my camel by its halter along the banks of those ancient rivers, and he told me story after story until I grew weary of his story-telling and ceased to listen.

I remember that he took off his Turkish cap and swung it in a circle to get my attention. I could see it through the corner of my eye, but I determined not to look straight at him for fear he would tell another story. I did finally look, and as soon as I did he went right into another story.

Said he, "I will tell you a story now which I reserve for my particular friends." When he emphasized the words "particular friends," I listened, and I have ever been glad I did.



The old guide told me that there once lived not far from the River Indus an ancient Persian by the name of Ali Hafed. He said that Ali Hafed owned a very large farm, that he had orchards, grain-fields, and gardens; that he had money at interest, and was a wealthy and contented man. He was contented because he was wealthy, and wealthy because he was contented.

One day there visited that old Persian farmer one of these ancient Buddhist priests, one of the wise men of the East. He sat down by the fire and told the old farmer how this world of ours was made. He said that this world was once a mere bank of fog, and that the Almighty thrust His finger into this bank of fog, and began slowly to move His finger around, increasing the speed until at last He whirled this bank of fog into a solid ball of fire. Then it went rolling through the universe, burning its way through other banks of fog, and condensed the moisture without, until it fell in floods of rain upon its hot surface, and cooled the outward crust. Then the internal fires bursting outward through the crust threw up the mountains and hills, the valleys, the plains and prairies of this wonderful world of ours.

If this internal molten mass came bursting out and cooled very quickly it became granite; less quickly copper, less quickly silver, less quickly gold, and, after gold, diamonds were made.



Said the old priest, "A diamond is a congealed drop of sunlight." Now that is literally scientifically true, that a diamond is an actual deposit of carbon from the sun.

The old priest told Ali Hafed that if he had one diamond the size of his thumb he could purchase the county, and if he had a mine of diamonds he could place his children upon thrones through the influence of their great wealth.

Ali Hafed heard all about diamonds, how much they were worth, and went to his bed that night a poor man. He had not lost anything, but he was poor because he was discontented, and discontented because he feared he was poor. He said, "I want a mine of diamonds," and he lay awake all night.

Early in the morning he sought out the priest. I know by experience that a priest is very cross when awakened early in the morning, and when he shook that old priest out of his dreams, Ali Hafed said to him:

"Will you tell me where I can find diamonds?"

"Diamonds! What do you want with diamonds?" "Why, I wish to be immensely rich."





“Well, then, go along and find them. That is all you have to do; go and find them, and then you have them.”

“But I don’t know where to go.” “Well, if you will find a river that runs through white sands, between high mountains, in those white sands you will always find diamonds.”

“I don’t believe there is any such river.”

“Oh yes, there are plenty of them. All you have to do is to go and find them, and then you have them.”

Said Ali Hafed, “I will go.”

So he sold his farm, collected his money, left his family in charge of a neighbor, and away he went in search of diamonds. He began his search, very properly to my mind, at the Mountains of the Moon. Afterward he came around into Palestine, then wandered on into Europe, and at last when his money was all spent and he was in rags, wretchedness, and poverty, he stood on the shore of that bay at Barcelona, in Spain, when a great tidal wave came rolling in between the pillars of Hercules, and the poor, afflicted, suffering, dying man could not



resist the awful temptation to cast himself into that incoming tide, and he sank beneath its foaming crest, never to rise in this life again.

When that old guide had told me that awfully sad story he stopped the camel I was riding on and went back to fix the baggage that was coming off another camel, and I had an opportunity to muse over his story while he was gone.

I remember saying to myself, "Why did he reserve that story for his `particular friends'?"

There seemed to be no beginning, no middle, and no end, nothing to it. That was the first story I had ever heard told in my life, and would be the first one I ever read, in which the hero was killed in the first chapter. I had but one chapter of that story, and the hero was dead.

When the guide came back and took up the halter of my camel, he went right ahead with the story, into the second chapter, just as though there had been no break.

The man who purchased Ali Hafed's farm one day led his camel into the Garden to drink, and as that camel put its nose into the shallow water of that garden



brook, Ali Hafed's successor noticed a curious flash of light from the white sands of the stream.

He pulled out a black stone having an eye of light reflecting all the hues of the rainbow. He took the pebble into the house and put it on the mantel which covers the central fires, and forgot all about it.

A few days later this same old priest came in to visit Ali Hafed's successor, and the moment he opened that drawing-room door he saw that flash of light on the mantel, and he rushed up to it, and shouted:

"Here is a diamond! Has Ali Hafed returned?"

"Oh no, Ali Hafed has not returned, and that is not a diamond. That is nothing but a stone we found right out here in our own garden."

"But," said the priest, "I tell you I know a diamond when I see it. I know positively that is a diamond."

Then together they rushed out into that old garden and stirred up the white sands with their fingers, and lo! ...there came up other more beautiful and



valuable gems than the first.

“Thus,” said the guide to me, and, friends, it is historically true, “was discovered the diamond-mine of Golconda, the most magnificent diamond-mine in all the history of mankind, excelling the Kimberly itself.

The Kohinoor, and the Orloff of the crown jewels of England and Russia, the largest on earth, came from that mine.”

When that old Arab guide told me the second chapter of his story, he then took off his Turkish cap and swung it around in the air again to get my attention to the moral.

As he swung his hat, he said to me, “Had Ali Hafed remained at home and dug in his own cellar, or underneath his own wheat fields, or in his own garden, instead of wretchedness, starvation, and death by suicide in a strange land, he would have had `acres of diamonds.’

For every acre of that old farm, yes, every shovelful, afterward revealed gems which since have decorated the crowns of monarchs.”

