

The Diamond From the Sky

By ROY L. McCARDELL

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once, as though he rather doubted the alleged harmlessness of the animal he deemed a denizen of the local jungle. At the gloomy threshold of Mrs. Lamar Stanley's house the London lawyer received further confirmation of his personal belief that Blair Stanley, whose vicious propensities he remembered, would never outgrow the sanguinary propensities of his childhood.

In the bitter mood that now obsessed her Blair's mother informed the startled lawyer that her son, now next in line for the proud Stanley earldom, had fled, no one knew whither, and she hoped to never see his face again.

All she would say in reply to the barrister's nervous pleadings—for he dreaded a long search for the heirs of Stanley in barbarous America—was that Blair might be found at the home of Mrs. Burton Randolph, his cousin, in Richmond. And for that place the lawyer took the first train from Fairfax.

The swine. Mr. McGee is not fastidious. He flashes out the bauble.

It is the diamond from the sky! And it looks good to Mr. McGee, and he sees with it at his best speed, followed by a shower of rocks from the colored pig boy, bereft of the sparkling thing he found in an owl's nest.

Richmond is not far away, and Mr. Strap McGee has some loose change he won at gaming in the jail. He proceeds to gamble, bidding his time to dispose of the bauble hidden in his rags.

But when he drops into the curio shop, optimum den joss house maintained by Chinese acquaintances, his tipsy vanity impels him to show the bauble to the crafty Hung Li, priest, den keeper and tong leader.

It is a fatal thing to do, for luck has been bad with Hung Li and his friends. The police have closed their gambling joint and shut down on opium smoking. Hung Li believes that the god of the sky, the great god Lung, needs propitiating, and then he will bring back good luck in plenty.

Has word from the diamond from the sky traveled to China and back? The effigy of the great god Lung is in its sanctuary in the next room, and Lung is the god of the sky. The body of a strangled tramp is dropped through a trap door, and the diamond from the sky is hung about the neck of the great god Lung.

This night Mrs. Burton Randolph would a slumming go. Blair and Miss Marston are all the little party, and Tom Blake, the detective, is to be their guide. A significant glance of caution and silence passes between the detective and Miss Marston when they meet again.

The Chinese quarter, with its joss house, is the first place they visit. The wily Hung Li wishes no visitors to the inner sanctuary of his joss, the great god Lung; but Blake will not be denied.

He says his friends have come especially to burn incense for good luck before the great god Lung. And so they enter the sanctuary and behold on the breast of Lung the diamond from the sky!

Detective as he is, and, possessing great and evil powers in the eyes of Hung Li, Blake and his friends are forced from the place. The ladies, Mrs. Randolph again in a "state of nerves," are sent home, and Blake from the nearest telephone summons Abe Bloom and his brother.

Meanwhile an English lawyer has arrived at the Randolph house seeking Blair Stanley. Determined upon his quest, the lawyer gets directions and arrives at the joss house. Hung Li and his confederates will have none of the London lawyer.

But the exasperated Marmaduke Skaythe will not be denied. He says he knows the persons he is searching for are inside this beastly Chinese place.

Here now he is, re-enforced by the excited and money proffering Abraham and Isaac Bloom and the equally urgent but more self-controlled private detective, Tom Blake.

The investing allies, English, Irish and Hebrew, surge in upon the intruders to gain the sanctuary and get the money or by force the diamond from the sky is now at its fiercest.

But all the while a desperate man is climbing the fire escape at the back of the Chinese den. He has noted a certain draped window behind the joss. A crash of glass is heard within.

The frenzied Hung Li breaks from the invaders and rushes into the sanctuary, followed by the other Chinese, the two Blooms, the detective and the bewildered Englishman.

A hand through the broken glass behind the idol has torn the diamond from the sky from the neck and breast of the great god Lung. With a demonic scream the frenzied Hung Li aims a iron Chinese sword at the foot of the idol and aims a swift blow at the disappearing hand.

missed the deepjolling white hand and has severed the head of the great god Lung!

Another slash in excited frenzy and down comes the burning altar light, and the flimsy furnishings of the sanctuary and the whole den itself are a roaring blaze of fire!

gor, compelling desire, a desire that held her in provincial Richmond, was her desire for a star—her desire for the diamond from the sky.

Once in all its blazing magnificence it had shone upon her breast. Vivian Marston longed to again hold and possess the diamond. Her thoughts were upon it by day, and at night her dreams were bright like gold and red like blood.

She had heard its story and knew that, after Arthur, Blair was next in claim for its possession.

Vivian sank her head upon Blair's breast beneath the wistaria bough. She tempted him with languorous glance and alluring lips. "Get and give me the diamond and I will be yours," she

whispered. And Blair, much as he had longed for the beautiful jewel himself, now longed more for this woman.

"I shall never rest till I get it for you!" he replied fiercely. And he would have kissed her to seal the contract, but she drew herself from his arms, and he knew that her caresses were only to be purchased by the diamond, be the price of the diamond lives, souls or honor.

But the luxurious and vivacious Vivian was a practical person. She did not depend upon the romantic, if desperate, efforts of a lover alone to secure for her the star of her desire.

She consulted the businesslike and equally eager brothers Bloom. To the gaze mouthed Abraham and Isaac she confided the romantic story of the diamond and the confirmation of its great intrinsic value, which she had learned from Blair Stanley and others while in Fairfax.

"The diamond from the sky, as they call it, disappeared in Richmond, torn from your neck by the hands of an unseen thief, the night of Mrs. Randolph's ball," said Abe Bloom, the gambler. "The chances are a hundred to one it is still hidden in this town. Whoever stole it will want money on it. That's reasonable enough to assume. It will turn up."

"It itth enough to make a man put a thime in hith windowth thaying 'High-eth Pritheth Paid For Big Diamondth and No Questionth Athked,'" remarked Mr. Ike Bloom, who lisped when he was excited, and excited he was when he heard the romantic history of the diamond from the sky and its price. But especially did its price excite him.

"It shaan't thlip through my handth again if I get hold of it," he added. "I wouldn't leut it to the queen of Thpain." And as he said this he gave his brother's "indly friend" from New York, as he called her, a meaning glance.

"Let bygones be bygones!" Abe Bloom snarled at his brother. "VI didn't lose it on purpose. I have telephoned for Tom Blake, whom I consider the smartest detective in this country. He does what you pay him to do and keeps his mouth shut. If the diamond is in Richmond Blake will find it."

In a few moments the suave and reticent Mr. Blake arrived. Placed in possession of all the facts the Blooms and Vivian could give him, he remarked that he would do his best, and the first and last meeting of the syndicate to find the diamond from the sky broke up and the detective departed.

He was followed shortly afterward by Miss Marston of New York, whose Richmond society friends would have been shocked beyond expression did they know she paid an occasional secret visit to the establishment of Abe Bloom.

Meanwhile where is the diamond from the sky? It is not a pearl to be cast before swine, nor is it fated to remain the tinsel plaything of a negro lad who is a herder of swine.

In the frayed and dirty dress suit, all the dirtier for its jail stains, Mr. Strap McGee makes across country, cursing his luck. He pauses by a pig pen to play a grim and intensely practical joke on a negro boy bent over the sty. Mr. Strap McGee picks up a barrel stave and applies it to the person of the bent over negro lad.

Then Mr. McGee notes the boy, in sudden pain and fright, has dropped some bauble plaything into the swirl of

CHAPTER XVI
An Idol Adorned and Despoiled.
BLOYED by the hope that renewed association with her gypsy tribe might tend to restore Hagar to reason, Esther departed that night with Hagar from Stanley hall.

She was accompanied by Quabba, now her faithful attendant, and the sullenly insistent Luke Lovell. It was a sad return of their stricken queen to the grieving Romany people.

Hagar recognized the gypsies as gypsies, but she called on the names of those long departed, including the name of her dead husband, Matt Harding, whom she evidently deemed was alive and threatening her. For when she spoke his name it was in grim revolt and with bitter maledictions.

That night Quabba slept with his monkey beside him at the threshold of Hagar's van. Inside Esther had sunk in exhausted slumber on her cot beside the fever dream afflicted Hagar. Quabba's light slumber was broken by the crunching of a pebble beneath a heavy foot. Quabba roused and drew his knife, and the menacing figure of Luke Lovell slunk back from the accusative moonlight into the shadows and was seen no more.

That night at this same hour Arthur Stanley, a fugitive and a wanderer, a stranger in a strange land, by his smoldering campfire in a far western desert, dreamed a wild dream that roused him with a shriek. He saw the fear struck face of Esther and near her the sinister Luke Lovell, with his great gnarled hands stretched as though to clutch and crush her.

One who is in society in Richmond may forget unpleasant things in a ceaseless round of new frivolities.

Mrs. Burton Randolph returned from her stay in Fairfax to find her friends in an attitude of delighted commiseration toward her. She confided to her dearest friends that her life seemed fated to be one of turmoil and tragedy. But instead of finding herself pitied in society in Richmond Mrs. Randolph found herself envied as a social heroine in these "delightfully dreadful affairs."

So as the beautiful wistaria was enveloping her house and grounds Mrs. Burton Randolph announced a wistaria fete, and all Richmond society was nervously expectant of more delightfully dreadful occurrences.

But, although the wistaria fete was a wondrously brilliant affair, according to the society columns of the Richmond papers, no untoward event occurred to mar the pleasure of the day, somewhat to the disappointment of society.

Blair Stanley, with plenty of money, but keeping sedulously away from Mr. Abe Bloom's temple of chance, turned up in Richmond in pursuit of Vivian Marston, with whom he was still infatuated. He knew the risk he took, for it was evident some one in Richmond had secured from Abe Bloom the check that, besides being worthless, had the fatal print of his thumb upon it. For the photograph of this check and thumb print, together with photographs of his thumb prints taken from Dr. Lee's study, had been in the possession of Hagar Harding when he had struck her down.

But such was his fierce passion for the luxurious and beautiful Vivian Marston that Blair walked in the shadow of death for her sake.

He intimated as much to her when he had led her aside beneath the bow-



"I have gone to the foot of the gallows for you, Vivian!"

er of the purple blossoms at his cousin's wistaria fete. "I have gone to the foot of the gallows for you, Vivian!" he whispered to her.

For he realized that this beautiful, languorous woman was one to whom an unscrupulous and desperate deed would appeal. He felt that she, too, had a past and that in wickedness they were well matched, and for that the desperate Blair loved her all the more.

For herself, Vivian Marston had lingered in Richmond, leading an existence that was puritanical and galling to her in the rapid restraints, as she deemed them, of conventional southern social restrictions. Her one strong, earnest

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Biliousness and Constipation.

It is certainly surprising that any woman will endure the miserable feelings caused by biliousness and constipation, when relief is so easily had and at so little expense. Mrs. Chas. Peck, Gates, N. Y., writes: "About a year ago I used two bottles of Chamberlain's Tablets and they cured me of biliousness and constipation." OBTAINABLE EVERYWHERE.

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Prescription No. 888 is prepared especially for MALARIA or CHILLS & FEVER. Five or six doses will break any case, and if taken then as a tonic the Fever will not return. It acts on the liver better than Calomel and does not gripe or sicken. 25c

Automobile For Sale.

I have a Chalmers five passenger automobile in fine condition, I will sell cheap for cash or on good terms. Apply at once to Lock Box 426, Louisville, N. C. 7-30-tf

Notice.

Notice is hereby given that Certificate No. A 10424, in the name of the Beasley-Alston Drug Co. for two shares of the Preferred Stock of the United Drug Co., of Massachusetts, has been lost or destroyed. Application will be made for the issue of a duplicate certificate and the undersigned will make suitable reward for the recovery of the lost certificate above described. 8-27-tf E. H. MALONE, Trustee

Administration Notice.

Having qualified as administrator of the estate of Joe Davis, deceased, late of Franklin county, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at Louisville, N. C., R. F. D. No. 2, on or before the 7th day of August, 1915, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment. This August 7th, 1915. FRANK FOGG Administrator, JOE DAVIS, Deceased BEN T. HOLDEN, Attorney. 8-13-6t.

Notice of Trustee's Sale.

Under and by virtue of authority conferred on me by a certain deed of trust executed by Joshua Cheek and Govan Cheek on the 10th day of January, 1914, which is duly recorded in the Register of Deeds office of Franklin county, in Book 177, page 156, default having been made in the payment of the notes secured in the said Deed of Trust, I shall sell, at the courthouse door in Louisville, N. C., at 12 o'clock M., on Monday, the 13th day of September, 1915, to the highest bidder, for cash, the following described land:

A certain tract of land in Hayesville township, Franklin county, State of North Carolina, adjoining the lands of J. A. Edwards, W. M. Mitchell, and others bounded as follows: Begin at a rock near house spring branch then Westwardly along the Hayesville road 16 poles to a stone, then North to a stone in J. A. Edwards line; thence East with his line to Millford road; thence South along said road to the Rockford church lot; thence by said church lot to the Hayesville road; thence along said road to the beginning, containing 126 acres more or less. For further description see deed fully recorded in Book 158, page 397, in Register's office of Franklin county, N. C. THIS 10th day of August, 1915.

R. S. McCOIN, Trustee.

8-13-6t.

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Notice.

Having qualified as executor of the estate of J. A. Nelms, deceased late of Franklin county, N. C., this is to notify all persons holding claims against said estate to present the same to the undersigned on or before the 11th day of August, 1915, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please come forward and make immediate settlement of their said indebtedness. This the 11th day of August, 1915.

JOHN EDWARD NELMS
THOMAS NELMS, Executors.
Bickett, White & Malone, Attorneys. 8-13-6t.

Important.

On and after the 1st of September, 1 will collect for clothes on delivery or clothes will be returned back to shop. ECONOMY PRESSING CO.
J. E. Hubbard, Mrg. & Prop. 9-3-tf.

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Carpets—If you want a carpet that will give you solid service and be an ornament to your home, we have them in great variety. There is nothing in the local market to compare with them.

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