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MYSTERY OF THE GREAT RUBY.

BY LUCIE ST. DEANE.

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CHAPTER XVI.

The good old lady was horrified at my suggestion, but I forced matters. "You know the punishment for obstructing an officer of the law in his duty?" I added in my most impressive manner.

"No," she replied faintly. "What is it?"

"Well, it is not hanging," I answered, with a smile, "but a heavy fine or imprisonment. I have my suspicion who those burglars were, and by examining the marks they have left may be able to



"Is this the window which the burglar tried to enter?"

fix the crime upon them. You certainly wish to give me all the help you can."

"Yes, sir, but--"

"Nonsense! Come on."

Having gone thus far, it would have been fatal to hesitate. She had some powerful reason for preventing my going up stairs, but she did not dare state it and was awed by my assumed character.

I started at a brisk pace up the broad winding stairway. Was I mistaken, or did I catch the sound of light, hurried footsteps along the upper hall?

She was more deliberate of movement, and at the landing above I waited for her with an apology for taxing her strength so much.

It was easy to tell from the location of the rooms on the second floor which was the one to be examined. Not desiring to betray myself too soon, I opened the door on my right.

It was a bedroom, neat, clean and simply furnished. A glance showed that it was occupied, for the signs were everywhere present.

"That isn't what you want," she said, breathing fast because of her exertion. "That is a front room."

"I beg pardon, but, you see, I am not acquainted with your house."

"I wish you would let me lead the way and not be in so great a hurry."

This was said with an impatience which showed that she resented the way I had taken matters in my own hands.

"I beg your pardon, but I am younger than you and presumed on your strength."

"It seems to me you are presuming on a good many things. How do I know you are what you claim to be--an officer of the law?"

A very proper question, and I answered it by drawing from an inner pocket my shield, which showed that I was a member of the detective police of New York.

This of itself was proof that I was not what I had claimed to be--an officer of Union county, N. J. I had not stated that, but I gave the impression. Had her husband been present he doubtless would have been quick to detect the deception and would have quickly ended my visit.

But fortunately he was absent, and the trick served me. She was impressed and made no further protest.

But, simple hearted and honest as she was, she showed a cunning that surprised me. Having stated that I had entered the wrong room, she led the way to another apartment, whose windows opened at the rear of the house.

That, too, was an occupied bedroom, but the furniture was much plainer than in the other. I decided that it was the one used by herself and husband, while the other belonged to Mr. and Mrs. Howard.

"Now we shall see what we can learn," I remarked in a businesslike way, stepping to one of the rear windows, raising the sash and examining the window sill and the stones beneath.

"Nothing here," I quickly added.

"The gentleman left no trace that can be of any help to me. Let's try the other."

This sash was also raised, and I made a prolonged and minute examination of the interior and outside. Nothing was to be noted, and I knew such would be the fact the moment I crossed the threshold, for although this was a rear room it was not the one which the East Indians had attempted to enter. That was to the left and could be reached only by passing out again into the hall.

Still it served my purpose not to let her know for the moment that I saw the clever trick she had played on me. I pressed my examination, and then, with the window raised and my head partly out, I turned quickly toward her:

"Is this the window which the burglar tried to enter?"

"Well, that is--didn't I tell you I didn't see any of 'em?"

I pressed the smile that tugged at my mouth. Here was an old lady so conscientious that she would not tell a false-

hood to save her life, yet neither would she betray those whom she believed it her duty to protect. Instead of answering me she parried my question.

"Come here one moment," I said kindly.

She obeyed timidly and stood at my side. I drew back my head, leaving the sash raised, and replaced my derby.

"Now, it doesn't look reasonable to me that two or three burglars would have tried to get in this window when they had no means of doing so. Of course you have a ladder about the premises, but they did not make use of it."

"I don't think they did, for it is in the barn, where it has been for weeks."

"Exactly. Then how could they get up to this window from the ground?"

"How many of them was there?" she asked in turn.

"We understand there were three."

"Well, couldn't one of them stand on the other's head and then let the third climb up on his head?" she demanded triumphantly, as though her answer solved the question.

Under the circumstances it was an ingenious reply, and my respect for her cleverness rose.

"I declare I did not think of that, but how do you account for the fact that they left no signs behind them?"

"I'm not counting for anything. You pretend to be an officer of the law, and if you are as smart as you think you can answer the question yourself. My eyes ain't as good as they used to be, but maybe I can see where you can't."

And, stepping forward, the "good gray head" leaned out of the window and peered through her spectacles at the old stone wall and the ledge as if she expected to discover a written explanation of the whole mystery.

Not only that, but I saw her chip a piece of mortar with her thumb nail from between the stones just below the ledge.

"Some one must have done that," she remarked, scrutinizing the mark with interest. "What do you think of it?"

"I think it was removed by your thumb--in fact, I saw it done--though, of course, you did not know it."

"Is that true?" she asked as innocently as a child. "Well, I must be more careful. They could have come in this window the way I said, couldn't they?"

"Probably they could, but I don't think they did."

"Why not?"

"That isn't the way with burglars."

"Do you know much about such folks?"

"Madam, my business brings me in contact with them," I remarked, with all the impressiveness I could assume, "and it is my duty to study their ways."

"That's the way you learned, eh?"

"Exactly, and in no other. I am convinced that neither one of those criminals attempted to enter this room by the means you name."

It was quite clear that she meant to keep me from entering the right one, and I was determined that neither she nor any one else should do that.

I lowered the window and slowly walked across the room and out of the door leading to the hall. My head was bent as if in troubled thought.

"Wait," she interposed, hurrying to place herself in front of me. "It would be more polite if you would let me lead."

"I must beg your pardon again, but I wish to relieve you of all the labor I can."

"The best way to do that is by leaving the house."

"I will be glad to do so when my work is completed."

It was no fancy this time that I heard a soft footfall and saw the door opening to the room slightly ajar. Some one was on the other side, stealthily watching us and listening to our words. The



"Well, sir, what do you want?"

door itself was less than six feet distant and almost before me. I acted as if I saw it not, but nothing escaped me.

"Do you want to go on the roof," she asked, "and look down the chimney?"

"That would be hardly worth while, but there is another apartment on this floor, and it is that which the burglars attempted to enter last night and which I must examine."

have it locked in my face, but it was not, and shoving it vigorously inward I stepped across the threshold and almost stumbled over Mrs. Darius C. Howard, who calmly confronted me with the icy question:

"Well, sir, what do you want?"

CHAPTER XVII.

The room which I had entered was one of those broad, old-fashioned apartments such as may be found in almost any large dwelling built 40 or 50 years ago. It was plainly carpeted, without any pictures on the walls, with a stove at one side, a number of chairs and a long flat table, which stood between the two windows, beyond which, had not the shades been lowered, I would have seen some of the trees in the rear of the yard.

On this table were a number of vessels, mostly of glass, a retort, several jars, vials, small delicate tools and fully a dozen little contrivances the like of which I had never seen, and which I will not attempt to describe, except to say they were constructed of glass. Some were spiral in form, while others had odd, twisted shapes, evidently understood only by the persons who had brought them thither and made use of them.

The room was closed so as to permit no ventilation. The heat of the stove intensified a peculiar, subtle perfume, which, at first pleasant, after a time became nauseating.

I knew when I turned the knob of the door that some one was within. I did not believe it was Mr. Howard, for I had seen him leave the railway station several hours before. Therefore, when I almost collided with his wife, I was nerved for it. She was standing in the room, near the door which I pushed quickly inward, and confronted me with the question:

"Well, sir, what do you want?"

Jove! wasn't she a beauty? I had seen her before, and, as I have said, was braced for the meeting, but when I looked at that superb figure, with the matchless black eyes, abundant hair, olive complexion, perfect features, small white teeth and fascinating form, I was almost overwhelmed.

I could well understand how almost any man would have been overcome by such a vision and would drop his weapons as if in the presence of death itself. Surely she must have made many conquests by the very momentum of her marvelous beauty, which was sufficient to make a man forget duty, honor--everything but his mad infatuation for her.

I stood a minute, staring vacantly with open mouth and wondering eyes, and then I could no more keep back the words than I could stop my respiration:

"Heavens, I never saw so wonderful a woman!"

"Idiot, you have not answered, my question!" she said in a freezing voice, which ought to have stricken me to the floor, though I kept my feet. Neither of us stirred, but in the bewildering moment I was conscious that Mrs. Bridges had closed the door behind me. I was alone in the presence of the beautiful fury, and duty whispered in my ear:

"Have a care or you are lost!"

By a supreme effort I pulled myself together. It was useless to quail before this being, for she had no mercy. If I shrunk or faltered, she would crush me behind that regal form crouched the mystery of Nana Sahib's ruby, and naught but boldness, daring, audacity, mercilessness, would avail me. In a minute I was myself.

"Madam," I said, with a bow, "I am an officer of the law. You heard me tell Mrs. Bridges my errand?"

"But it was a lie!" she broke in with a sweep of her right arm and a step forward. "Leave this instant, or it will be the worse for you!"

This threat and the biting words nerved me still more strongly. I became calm, cool, self-possessed, on the instant.

"I will leave when I am through with the business which brought me here and not one second before. You and your husband and all the miscreants from India cannot compel me. I am armed and will defend myself even against you!"

Strange words to utter to a woman, whose strength could not have surpassed that of a child. A strong man like me ought to have been abashed at the sound of his own voice when they were spoken, but I was in for it and meant to maintain a bold front to the end.

That my reply was unexpected was shown by her manner. She never removed those piercing eyes from me, and once I believed, when I saw the delicate fingers nervously working, that she meant to leap at my throat. She breathed short and fast, but did not change her superb poise.

"Pray be seated," I added, with assumed courtesy, as I placed my hand on the back of the nearest chair and set it down beside her. "With your permission I will do the same. I wish a few words with you."

My own chair was placed so close to the door that had I inclined it to the rear it would have rested against it. I sat down with my hat in my lap and looked expectantly at her.

She did not stir a muscle, but remained like a statue, and it seemed that the flame of those eyes would burn me through.

"I am a detective and have been watching you and your husband for some time."

"I knew it!" she hissed as erect and upright as ever.

"Then I might have saved my words. I have learned some things, but there are a number of others about which I would like to question you. It's rather odd that you should register at the

Windsor, while your husband went to the Astor House. I hope there was no 'omnibus' trouble."

"She treated this impudence with the scorn it deserved."

"It sort of looked that way, for at the Jersey City station you avoided each other, not sitting even in the same car though you were friendly enough when you left the train at Rahway and rode to this place in a cab."

"However, all that is your own business and of no particular interest to me. Some days ago your husband sold an immense jewel, which he called Nana Sahib's ruby, to a gentleman in New York. Mr. Howard received the price he asked, but on the very night of the purchase the buyer was robbed of the stone, and I am seeking to find out the truth about it."

I watched that fascinating face closely while uttering these words. I expected her to show surprise when told of the theft of the ruby, for, if innocent, how could she know anything of the circumstance? But nothing of that nature lit up her face. She demanded with the coolness of a judge:

"Why do you come to me?"

"Because I am sure you can give me the information."

"Your words are what I might have expected from you. On what night did this robbery, if there was any take place?"

"Last Tuesday, the 13th--excuse me, you are going to say that you and your husband were not in New York that night, which is a fact, as I learned for myself. If the charge was made against either of you, therefore, you could prove an alibi. I presume you know the meaning of that word?"

She paid no attention to this slur, but calmly looking at me uttered the single word "Well?" with the most splendid circumflex inflection conceivable at the end.

"You know that sometimes several persons are concerned in matters of this kind. It is safer to employ an agent. Whoever took that ruby from Mr. Sandhuse's room at the Windsor did the cleverest job of the year. Now, if you will tell how it was done, I will let up on you and your pretended husband. Come now!"

I doubt whether a man pretending to be a detective ever did a more audacious and seemingly absurd thing than this. We have all heard of the profane farmer who, when confronted by an unusual case of provocation, simply held his peace because he could not do justice to the theme. It must have been something of the same with Mrs. Howard, for she merely looked at me and remained speechless.

My next move required explanation. I set my chair away from the door and in the nearest corner, which was only five or six feet from the door. I never removed my eyes from the woman while doing this. As I resumed my seat I drew my revolver and rested it loosely across my knee, in which position I could use it with the quickness of lightning. I inspected the occasion for such use as at hand.

"Don't be alarmed," I said, looking in her face. "If you intend no harm, you will receive none, but if anything is attempted against me God help you!"

"What do you mean?" she asked, with a slight recoil.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEDNESDAY.

THE MONEY GRUBBER.

There is not in the world a more ignominious character than the mere money-getting American, insensible to every duty, regardless of every principle, bent only on amassing a fortune, and putting his fortune only to the basest uses--whether these uses be to speculate in stocks and wreck railroads himself, or to allow his son to lead a life of foolish and expensive idleness and gross debauchery, or to purchase some scoundrel of high social position, foreign or native, for his daughter, writes Theodore Roosevelt, in *The Forum*. Such a man is only the more dangerous if he occasionally does some deed like founding a college or endowing a church, which makes those good people who are also foolish forget his real iniquity.

These men are equally careless of the workmen whom they oppress, and of the state whose existence they imperil. There are not many of them, but there is a very great number of men who approach more or less closely to the type, and just in so far as they do approach they are curses to the country. The man who is content to let politics go from bad to worse, jesting like the corruption of politicians, the man who is content to see the maladministration of justice without an immediate and resolute effort to reform it, is shirking his duty and is preparing the way for infinite woe in the future.

Hard, brutal indifference to the right, and an equally brutal shortsightedness as to the inevitable results of corruption and injustice, are baleful beyond measure; and yet they are characteristic of a great many Americans who consider themselves perfectly respectable, and who are considered thriving, prosperous men by their easy-going fellow citizens.

THE FERTILIZER COMBINE--A meeting of the fertilizer interests of the Southern States is being held in Savannah, Ga., to consider means to lessen competition and reduce the output. A meeting with this end in view was held a year ago and the object of the present meeting is to consider a renewal of the old agreement.

The girl with a new hat is the first to discover an early spring.

EVANS RED HOT.

The Governor Issues a Fiery Manifesto to the People.

The following address from Governor Evans to the people of the State appeared in the daily papers of last Wednesday:

Fellow Citizens: In 1865, after the most bloody struggle for principle in the history of the world, South Carolinians laid down their arms and accepted in good faith the results of the war. The State was put under martial law, and under the Reconstruction act, the ignorant slaves whose fetters had just been broken, manipulated by carpet-baggers from the four quarters of the earth, were placed in entire control of our State government. After a farce of an election for delegates to a constitutional convention, the constitution which has been our organic law since 1868 was adopted at the dictate of General Canby. The conditions which followed and the results of placing ignorance and vice in the control of the government are known to all men. This condition lasted until 1876, when the oppression and misgovernment had rendered our people so desperate that with one impulse they asserted their manhood and overthrew the despotism of the carpet-baggers and resumed control of the State's affairs.

While the constitutionality of the Reconstruction act was never questioned by us, because we were powerless to resist, the question of State sovereignty, within the limits prescribed in the constitution, in accordance with Southern interpretation, has since been affirmed by repeated decisions of the supreme court of the United States. That court even asserted that the States had never been out of the Union, thereby indirectly declaring invalid the acts of congress, readmitting them after reconstruction. The right of a State to manage and direct its internal affairs without national interference is recognized throughout the Union, and it is no peculiar or special claim on the part of South Carolina to exercise that right so long as her State officers and her general assembly obey the constitution of the United States and the laws of congress. This is so well recognized that I do not propose to discuss it further; but feel that we can safely rely upon the integrity and patriotism of the supreme judges to reaffirm and maintain it.

The people of South Carolina have always been law-abiding and respect the constitution and the courts of the United States; but when the judges of these courts wantonly invade and trample under foot the recognized rights of our people guaranteed by the Federal constitution, they have a right to assert themselves and maintain their sovereignty and independence. This they have ever done and will continue to do, and will resist with all the means within their power, usurpation and tyranny of partisan politicians in high places, who disgrace the judicial ermine. We cannot, nor have we the desire to, resort to arms to resist his unjust decree, but we can and will exert the united efforts of a liberty-loving people to thwart the conspirators who are plotting to overthrow our civilization. In this struggle we confidently rely on the sympathy and moral support of all lovers of good government and State's rights throughout the Union. The sovereignty of the States, within their proper spheres, is as dear to Massachusetts and Ohio as it is to South Carolina, and the principle cannot be struck down here without receiving a mortal blow everywhere.

It is unfortunate that the passions and prejudices excited by the war in regard to the Negro should influence the opinions and feelings of judges in dealing with this vital principle; but it will follow inevitably that if this principle is once destroyed, this country will be convulsed with a revolution for the restoration of the liberties of white men, that will far eclipse that other fatal struggle for the emancipation of the blacks.

The restoration of white supremacy in 1876 placed in office and in leadership of the affairs of the State, Wade Hampton as governor, and afterwards United States senator; M. C. Butler, United States senator; Charles H. Simonton, chairman of the judiciary committee and leader of the house of representatives, later district and circuit judges of the United States court, and Jno. C. Sheppard, speaker of the house of representatives, lieutenant governor and afterwards governor. In 1882, under the leadership of these men, the legislature passed the laws known as "The Election and Registration Acts," designed to preserve white supremacy and a white man's government. These laws worked admirably, and up to this proceeding no complaint has ever been heard of their injustice, oppression or criminality. The citizen who dared raise his voice against them was denounced as an enemy of his State. Those who were too young to hold office and take part in such affairs, were taught to respect these men as patriots and their handiwork as the palladium of our liberties. This regime, becoming arrogant and distasteful to a majority of our people and repugnant in their policy to our institutions, was overthrown, and the people, in 1890, by the election of B. R. Tillman as governor, declared that it was not their intention to create an oligarchy, when in 1876 they threw off the yoke of the Negro and carpet-bagger. Two appeals have been made to reverse this verdict of the sovereign people; but it has been sustained each time with vehement determination.

The Reform movement had nothing to do with the election and registration laws. We received them as a legacy from the administration of 1882. We have upheld them as the acts of the people, and as constitutional means of self-preservation. Some of these men who are responsible for and who have enjoyed the benefits and honors of office under these laws have turned upon their State since their retirement. By an appeal to one of the bitterest enemies of Southern civilization, a politician who disgraces the judicial ermine of the United States court and masquerading as a judge, they have succeeded in having the registration law declared unconstitutional, null and void. The chief argument made before him was the 'defamation of your State, and insult, if insult could come from such a source, to your State officers. Under this decree, the doors have been thrown open and the ballot again placed in the hands of every man, white and black, of the age of 21 years. The abuse and slander heaped upon the State by the counsel for the plaintiffs was only surpassed by that of the judge in his document styled a decree in equity.

But the pity of it, the humiliation, and the shame of it, is yet to be told. Besides this Jefferies on the bench sat an old man, whose head was gray, who had fought on the field of battle for State's rights, who had been speaker of the house of representatives of South Carolina, and in whose handwriting part of your registration laws exist in our archives. There he sat, wearing alike the judicial ermine, hearing his State defamed, his comrades in arms denounced as rebels, and his own handiwork adjudged as a crime. If the law was a crime, was he not the criminal? Should his head have not been bent and his eyes moist with the tears of humiliation? Alas, they were not! With a Mephistophelean grin on his wrinkled face, he nodded assent to the most infamous document ever emanating from a court in equity, while the black audience exclaimed: "A Daniel has come to judgment; yea, a Daniel."

The ex-senator who has been holding caucuses in Columbia at private houses, having the ear of the court and holding the "foot of the chancellor," returned to his home, feeling that his movements had not been detected; but the responsibility shall rest where it belongs. Let the people not blame the poor, lean and hungry counsel, who are barking merely for a bone, but visit the sin upon the heads of the arch conspirators.

A crisis confronts us, and has been thrust upon us without our will or consent at a time when peace was hovering over the State. South Carolina is enjoying an era of industrial improvement, factories are being built in greater number than elsewhere in the South. The credit of the State ranks higher than ever in its history, our bonds not being purchasable at a premium of less than 10 per cent. The march of progress is about to be stopped; the black pall of Negro domination hovers over us; we must meet the issue like South Carolinians. There are only two flags, the white and the black, under which will you enlist? The one, the white, peaceful flag of Anglo-Saxon civilization and progress; or the other, the black flag of the debased and ignorant African, with the white traitors, who are seeking to marshal the Negroes, in order to regain political power. It is fortunate that the issue comes at this time, when a constitution is to be made guaranteeing white supremacy once and forever.

The constitutional convention must be controlled by white men, not white men with black hearts, nor Negroes. The world must be shown that we are capable of governing ourselves and that constitution or no constitution, law or no law, court or no court, the intelligent white men of South Carolina intend to govern her. Let the man who undertakes to lead the ignorant blacks against you suffer as he did in 1876, and remember that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. I will not call the legislature together. They could do nothing. An appeal will be taken to the supreme court of the United States, but under the red tape and technicalities surrounding it, a decision cannot be had in time to affect the election of delegates. It must be a free open fight. I appeal to the sovereign people of South Carolina, the wisest and safest and purest tribunal, to protect their homes and liberties. They have never failed to respond to duty. The government of the people must and shall be perpetuated, and we are ready to lead the fight under the white man's flag. Your obedient servant.

JOHN GARY EVANS, Governor.

HISTORY OF THE PEA.--The word "pea" is derived from Pisa, a Greek city of Elis, which seems to have been the center of the pea-growing industry for years before the time of Christ. The antiquarians aver that the "mess pottage," for which Esau sold his birthright, was a dish of peas. In those times they were called "lentils," and even at the present day the English common people of several of the English shires, notably Middlesex and Oxfordshire, still call them "tills," dropping the "len." In the time of Mary they were called "peasens," and in the time of Charles I., "pease." Prof. L. H. Bailey is authority for the statement that pease have been in cultivation in Europe for more than 2,000 years.