



(Continued from last week.)

SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I.—Winton Garrett, twenty-five and just out of college, calls by appointment on Archie Garrett, his New York cousin and executor, to receive his inheritance of \$100,000. Archie, honest, an easy mark, and a fool for luck, assures Winton that he is practically a millionaire, as he has invested all but \$10,000 in a rubber plantation in either the East or West Indies and in a controlling interest in the Big Malopo diamond mine, somewhere or other in South Africa, sold him as a special favor by a Dutch promoter named De Witt.

CHAPTER II.—Winton, en route to his mine, finds the town of Taungs wildly excited over a big strike at Malopo, including the \$5-carat "De Witt diamond." Two coach passengers are a disreputable old prospector, Daddy Seaton, and his daughter Sheila. On the journey a passenger, who turns out to be De Witt himself, insults Sheila. Winton fights De Witt and knocks him out. Sheila tells him to turn back. She says that her father is a broken English army officer, who has killed a man and is therefore in De Witt's power. That De Witt is all-powerful, being backed by Judge Davis, president of the diamond syndicate and also the resident magistrate and judge of the native protectorate.

CHAPTER III.—Winton finds Malopo in a turmoil, both over the strike and the theft of the De Witt diamond. Winton foolishly discloses his identity to Sam Simpson, a Jamaican negro, sub-editor of the local newspaper. He more wisely confides in Ned Burns, watchman at the Big Malopo, who tells him that the syndicate has planned to take control of the mine the next morning.

CHAPTER IV.—Winton finds that Sheila is cashier at the restaurant. He offers her friendship. She rebuffs him. Van Vorst, a notorious diamond thief, one of De Witt's men, slips the stolen De Witt diamond into Winton's pocket and two policemen club Winton and arrest him. He escapes them and when at his last gasp Sheila takes him into her house, but he is wounded and saves him from his pursuers.

CHAPTER V.—The next morning Sheila offers Winton help in escaping from Malopo. He convinces her with difficulty that he did not steal the De Witt diamond and that he is president of the Big Malopo company. Bruised and blood-stained he runs across town, breaks by force into the company meeting, and aided by a popular demonstration proves his identity, blocks the reorganization, and takes control. He asks Sheila to marry him. She laughs hysterically and refuses him.

He went back to find that the trap-door had been closed and bolted behind him. It was of hard oak, and resisted all his furious efforts to force it. There was nothing to do but to go back, and Winton reached the second flight just in time to prevent a second trap-door at the bottom of the wooden gallery being shut on him by one of the natives, who, seeing Winton, ran off as fast as he could go.

The ludicrousness of the incident might have tempered Winton's anger, but for the memory of Daddy Seaton, lying unconscious on the floor. He went back to Kash's store. The little storekeeper was standing where he had been behind the counter, and still blinking.

"I sell no drink!" he protested, flinging out his hands. "If you beat me I have you arrested. These men from the compound, sir, they get their drink from other mans."

"What do you have a trap-door for, Kash? And why did you shut it on me?"

"The trap-door lead to the cellar, sir, where I keep things cold. Those native mans make tunnels everywhere. I shut on you because I fear you beat me, sir."

"Your instinct was a sound one, Kash," said Winton grimly. "There are few things I should like better." He leaned across the counter and shook his fist very deliberately under Kash's nose. "Listen carefully," he said. "You'd better, because I don't speak twice. If ever I catch you selling liquor to any one from my claim, black or white, or yellow, I'll break every bone in your carcass."

Disregarding the little trader's voluble protests he went back to his claim, to find Seaton standing at the door of the cottage. The old man recognized him and came staggering toward him.

"I'll be going, Mr. Garrett," he said thickly. "Report work tomorrow. How much you going to pay me?"

He stood swaying backward and forward, smiling foolishly into Winton's face. Winton repressed his disgust with a strong effort.

"How about the drink, Seaton?" he asked.

"What's the matter with drink?" demanded Seaton.

"I'll have no drinking in my compound. What about your promise of an hour or so ago? Is this the way you intend to keep it?"

"That's all right," mumbled Seaton. "Just a drop, ole man. Last time." Suddenly he took fright at Winton's look. "Gimme another chance," he begged. "For the Lord's sake, gimme another chance."

He laid his skinny, shaking fingers on the lapels of Winton's coat.

"Gimme chance for Sheila's sake," he begged. "You know Sheila. Fine girl. Best girl in Malopo. De Witt's been after her ever since he saw her last time. When he knew her before she was too little for him. Now he's taken fancy to her. Want save her from De

Witt. She dunno what I know. De Witt dunno. Some day I'll tell 'em. Won't tell 'em now. Girl might leave me. You like her, eh? Gimme chance on 'count of her."

The shrewd, old, odious face peered into Winton's.

"Gimme another chance. I want save her from De Witt. He's got wife down-country. Maybe two of 'em. Some day I tell 'em all joke about her. Open their eyes. You gimme another chance, Mr. Garrett, and I'll have joke on De Witt, and bring her here where he can't get at her."

"That's enough!" cried Winton, and he was surprised at the hoarseness of his voice. "I don't want to hear anything more from you about Miss Seaton. I'll give you one more chance, and only one. Report for work tomorrow morning, and we'll get the compound cleaned up."

He watched the old man stagger away along the road to Malopo, and his thoughts tortured him. So De Witt had a wife down-country, and it was known, and yet he could annoy Sheila! But whatever the nature of Seaton's slaying had been, however stringent the penalty, it was not right that the girl should submit to De Witt's insults to save her father.

Seaton was no guardian for her, rather a care, too heavy to bear. He dragged her down; it was to support him that she was forced into her work at the Continental.

Winton resolved to get her away from that life. He thought of her with a sudden rush of tenderness. Why had he not refused to accept his dismissal? He believed that he could win her love. And he loved her.

But was it love or fascination? What had they in common, he, of Harvard, and this frontier woman of the harried life?

As he pondered he saw a buggy, which had been traveling along the road, begin to turn in toward his claim. The occupant was Judge Davis. He saw Winton and shouted to him to come, indicating that he could not leave the horse.

He wrapped the reins about his right wrist and took both Winton's hands in his.

"Mr. Garrett, my friend, I am the happy bearer of a message of peace and fraternity," he began in his quavering voice.

Both these things were perfectly satisfactory to Winton, who said so. As he spoke the old man's hard gray eyes watched his face intently.

"I come from Mr. De Witt," said the judge. "He is sorry that there have been misunderstandings. He feels that he is to blame. We want every prop-



erty holder in Malopo to have friendly feelings toward all others in our great fraternity of labor."

"That's excellent," said Winton. "But how about Mr. De Witt's attempt to implicate me in the alleged diamond robbery?"

The judge clasped Winton's hands, which he still held, more tightly.

"My dear friend, you shock me inexpressibly," he answered. "I know what you mean. I should be more than human if I did not. I assure you that your suspicions wrong an honorable man. If Mr. De Witt were not a man of the highest integrity I should not permit my name to be associated with his. Mr. De Witt is a little hasty, but his mind is incapable of such a scheme. He has the loftiest views about humanity and fraternity."

"Who paid Van Vorst to put the diamond in my pocket and set the police on me?" demanded Winton bluntly.

The judge released Winton's hands and looked at him with an expression of the deepest sorrow.

"My very dear friend," he answered, "listen to the experience of a man of the world. Suspicion is a dreadful thing. It poisons the heart at the source. It dries up the noble fountain

of charity. You know what St. Paul said about charity? And it does not pay from a practical point of view," he went on in a natural tone.

Winton had begun to see that the judge's tremolo, in general, was used for moralizing; his second note, so to say, was eminently level, shrewd, and man-of-the-world.

"Believe in the goodness of every man, Mr. Garrett," quavered the judge, "and you will reap what you have sown." Then, sharply, "You are mistaken. I suppose Van Vorst, whom we mean to get by hook or crook some day, found himself hard pressed, and tried to divert suspicion from himself by casting it upon you, a stranger. And now, young man, will you accept Mr. De Witt's fraternal approaches?"

"I'm ready," answered Winton, "provided I encounter no further hostility from Mr. De Witt. And now that the syndicate has acknowledged my rights there need be none."

"The Diamond Fields Syndicate would not now take your property as a gift, Mr. Garrett," answered the judge decisively. "We were prepared to burden ourselves with the responsibility of it only in order to prevent a financial crisis upon the fields. Shares were going up to five times their value, and we wanted to smother the boom, which was artificial and would, in the end, have proved injurious. The finding of one large stone signifies nothing. The public is beginning to realize this, too, for the rush is slackening. Mr. Garrett, how are you going to raise enough capital to work the property, unless you discover some large stones immediately? I presume that you are not a man of unlimited means?"

"I'll face that problem when I have to," said Winton.

"You will have to very soon," answered the judge. "You have enough working capital for less than three months at the outside, and the shareholders will not permit the development of the Big Malopo to be hampered by lack of means, when the syndicate stands ready to back you. I should myself issue a court order for a receiver-ship if I were confident that you contemplated holding up the work here. Malopo's interests are now yours, and yours are Malopo's. Having constituted yourself purser, in spite of your inexperience, you will find yourself compelled, at a very early date, to call upon the stockholders to put up further capital."

Winton reflected. He saw Judge Davis' point. His duty to the stockholders would compel him to keep adequate funds in the bank; under the laws controlling a cost claim company any necessary subscriptions could be called for, but four-fifths would have to come out of his own pocket.

"What is your proposition, Judge Davis?" asked Winton, after pondering over the situation for a few moments, and coming to realize that the judge held the trumps after all.

"My dear friend," answered Davis, "I have found, in the experience of a long life, that our material and moral ends are curiously and providentially interwoven. It is not from any material considerations that I wish to give you a piece of advice, though I confess that a suspicious man might misread my motive. You have cast doubt upon the good faith of the syndicate in the doubts that you have cast upon Mr. De Witt's good faith. Believe that we all, as fellow citizens of Malopo, are interested in the promotion of fraternal feelings."

"Yes, but your proposition, judge?" asked Winton, beginning to feel revolted by the old man's hypocrisy.

He came to the conclusion that this quality, which was so gross that Davis must have known it to be patent to everybody, had become so much a part of his nature that he could not help assuming it.

But Winton was quite startled by the swiftness of the judge's lapse into the business man.

"My very dear friend, Mr. De Witt's offer of fraternity is contingent upon your accepting the syndicate's co-operation," he said. "You will want capital. The syndicate will assist you without exacting onerous terms, and without demanding a controlling interest. It will not look with complaisance upon any attempt on your part to bring foreign interests into Malopo. It feels itself bound to take that attitude on account of its duty to Malopo. Otherwise—"

"Yes?" inquired Winton, feeling that the lid had at length been taken off.

"You will have to reckon on the hostility of the syndicate," purred the judge. "It has immense resources, Mr. Garrett, and powerful friends in the Colony legislature, who could make it very hard for any external interests that did get a footing on the fields."

"I see," said Winton. He liked the judge much better unmasked; at least, he disliked him considerably less.

"You threaten, then, that if I seek outside capital, the syndicate will use every means of thwarting the development of the claim?" he asked.

"Yes, my friend. Not in our individual capacities, but purely in the business sense."

"Suppose I came to you for a loan, offering the security of the diamond?" The judge waved the suggestion aside as incredibly trifling.

"The diamond means nothing at all to us," he answered.

"It has a monetary value."

"We are not in need of small profits, Mr. Garrett."

"Pardon me, but if you are so prosperous and influential, what is the purpose of your resolve to get the control of the Big Malopo by means outside the ordinary run of business?"

The judge smiled, looked thoughtful, and then, to Winton's surprise, showed a third phase of his nature—absolute frankness.

"The purpose of our resolve?" he

asked. "I suppose to gain power, Mr. Garrett. To please the stockholders and to gain power. There, sir, we touch upon the fringe of philosophy. What is the driving motive of human life? Each of us has some secret, ruling passion that he holds secure from the eyes of his fellow men."

His voice shook as he spoke, but this time it was not the quaver of hypocrisy. Judge Davis seemed on the verge of some intimate disclosure. Then the mood passed, the eyes grew hard again.

"The syndicate will assist you to the full extent of the company's needs, in so far as these have a legitimate existence," he said. "It will guarantee its co-operation. But it must be assured that no competitive interest shall be brought into Malopo, or admitted from Malopo. Therefore the terms are these: you will transfer thirty-three shares to me in blank, on which the syndicate will advance you four-fifths of their par value for three months. At the end of that term, if the money is repaid, you resume possession of your shares. If, on the other hand, the claim has not proved remunerative, the syndicate will reimburse to you personally all portion of this money spent on development, and the shares will become its property. In the latter event you will hold forty-seven shares, which will make the independent shareholders the decisive voters, and all interests will be protected. In the former event you will continue to hold your eighty shares. And I think, Mr. Garrett, that no fairer offer could be made. It gives you an opportunity to make a success of the company, and if you fail, protects us against external interests taking up the control to our detriment."

Winton thought hurriedly over the proposal. If he agreed, he would still hold forty-seven shares at worst, while the syndicate and its men would hold an equivalent amount. The balance of power would lie with the independent shareholders; but these, of course, were in Davis' power. If the claim proved to be what he and Ned Burns believed it was, the repayment within the period would be a mere trifle.

But why should he consider the proposal when he could realize working capital on the sale of the diamond?

"It seems to me," said Winton, "that I am not compelled to face the problem you raise. The diamond can be legitimately sold in the interests of the company. When the time comes for considering your proposition I may come to you, or I may go elsewhere, according to where I can get the best terms—in the interests of the company."

Judge Davis whistled softly and gathered in the reins; then he turned to Winton.

"My dear friend," he said, "in these days capital cannot be raised, except in America, upon a diamond claim that has only produced a single diamond. As for the sale of the De Witt stone—"

"Hardly an appropriate name," said Winton hotly.

"The Garrett stone, I mean," purred Judge Davis. "Of course so long as you retain your controlling interest, you are at liberty to sell it. You misunderstand me, my young friend. I did not come here to discuss your ability to avoid fraternal co-operation with us, but to offer you the choice between that co-operation, with fraternity, and the syndicate's hostility—of course in a purely business sense. Till your decision is made, that fraternity must be withheld. Give faith and trust, dear sir, and they shall return to you a hundredfold. Give enmity, and—"

he leaned out of the buggy—"we'll smash you, you damned young fool, and you'll richly deserve it."

CHAPTER VII

For Sheila's Sake.

"What's your opinion, Ned?" asked Winton, two or three evenings later.

Much had transpired during the brief interval. The gangs of natives had arrived at the compound and started operations, under the immediate charge of Seaton, who had turned up sober at the appointed time. The old man worked diligently and showed that he knew his business. He had not touched a drop of liquor. But Sheila had not accompanied him to the cottage, and Winton had asked no questions.

What surprised Winton was the fact that the natives seemed to regard old Seaton with an exaggerated deference which they did not extend to him. Old Seaton, staggering under his load of liquor, was very different from Seaton, standing erect in the center of the compound, shouting commands to his obsequious workers, who flew to obey him.

"You couldn't have got a better man than old 'King' Seaton, if he'll stay sober," said Ned. "But it's hard on his girl—"

"Why do you call him that?" asked Winton, interrupting because he could not endure any reference to Sheila.

There was something in his tone that checked Burns on the threshold of his disclosures.

"Why, I supposed you knew, Mr. Garrett. The old man used to be a sort of chief among these Kafirs. Lived among 'em for years, they say. I suppose there ain't much to that story, though," he added reflectively.

Winton realized that there was probably more behind the story than Ned wished to disclose. And it came to him with a sudden shock that Ned knew of his episode in Sheila's house on the night of the chase, and was unwilling, on that account, to be as frank as he might have been.

On the night of the natives' arrival, when there was confusion and something of an uproar over the allocation of quarters, Winton was a little surprised to perceive the Hottentot Botlejohn in conversation with his compound manager. There was a rule for-

bidding the presence of strange natives in the compounds. Winton did not feel in a position to be a stickler for the present, but the manner in which the Hottentot passed him without recognition struck him as odd.

Blue ground had been struck, the matrix of the diamond. The news spread all along the reef, and crowds flocked out from Malopo to see. Ned was hopeful that the main pipe would be found on the Malopo claim. Everything depended on its location. As the Big Malopo was in the center of the fields, Winton shared Ned's enthusiasm.

The capital of the claim had been largely exhausted in the outlay for machinery, construction material, and laborers. Davis had given Winton three months, but Winton realized that he would have to choose between two things. He could work in a small way, discharging the greater part of his men, and hope to meet expenses by the finding of stones; or he must throw himself heart and soul into the development of the claim, and call for more capital in a month's time. Of this he himself would have to furnish 50 per cent, unless he accepted Davis' proposal.

Outside capital could not be raised quickly. There was the big diamond. He had it valued by a local man. It was not of a pure white, but, being free from flaws, would fetch a considerable sum in the market. The expert announced that in his opinion any of the jobbers would be willing to advance fifteen thousand on it.

Another fifteen thousand would go far toward solving the difficulty of obtaining immediate capital for development, and would make it unnecessary for Winton to call on the shareholders for an assessment—and subscribe five times as much himself as the rest put together. The great problem, whether the claim was the mouth of a volcanic pipe, filled with diamonds, or merely a diamond ground, having its origin elsewhere, could only be solved by working. This meant a large expenditure. Winton took his troubles to Burns, telling him of the judge's offer.

"I've seen the other shareholders," he said, "and I'm satisfied that they are all in the syndicate's pocket. They are all tenants, or bound in one way or another. If I accept Davis' proposition it may mean parting with my majority share, in which case De Witt will come back as pursuer and you'll lose your job."

"Let's see what the Book has to say," suggested Burns. He opened his Bible and began to read:

"Ezekiel, thirty, sixteen. 'And I will set a fire in Egypt; Sin shall be in great anguish, and No shall be broken up; and Noph shall have adversaries in the daytime.'"

He closed the Book and looked at Winton in great dejection. "Did you get that, Mr. Garrett?" he asked. "It refers to the diamond. You can't raise the money by selling it. The decision's against us there. Whether or no you ought to go to Judge Davis isn't given to us to know."

"But how do you make out that it has reference to the diamond?" asked Winton.

"It's easy, sir. And unmistakable. Egypt's Malopo. Sin is yourself, who's to be in great anguish."

"I should think that Sin might be meant for Mr. De Witt," suggested Winton.

"No, sir. Sin is yourself in this case. And No's the diamond, which is going to be broken up. That may mean that it's going to be cut into smaller stones, or maybe it's going to pass out of your hands, sir. But you can't sell it."

"And Noph?" asked Winton.

"Noph is Judge Davis, Mr. Garrett. He's to have adversaries in the daytime, and I guess he's got all the adversaries that he wants already."

"Ned," said Winton, "I don't know how you arrive at your interpretations. Of course I don't deny that they may be correct, but I'm going to try to sell the diamond before I go to the syndicate or elsewhere."

"Aye, sir, and you'll be in great anguish over it," responded Ned.

He looked at Winton in a hesitating way, and added:

"Mr. Garrett, would you take it amiss from an older man if I was to offer you some advice, sir?"

"No. Go ahead," said Winton.

"It's—well, sir, it's this. If you are out to fight the syndicate you'll want to give your whole heart to it. There's a lot of women in Malopo, Mr. Garrett, whom a man ought to steer clear of. And now I'm going on duty. Good night to you, sir."

He left Winton fuming. The young man knew that Ned had referred to Sheila. He could not understand how her position at the Continental should make her an outcast. He was more than ever resolved to take her away from her surroundings, to make her his wife and save her father, too.

He had hoped and believed that she would keep house for "daddy" at the cottage. She was staying away, he thought, because of the ambiguity of their relationship. He had been prudent, but now he resolved to cast prudence to the winds; he felt that he would lose her unless he went to her at once.

On the morrow, he planned. But on the morrow trouble developed with the water company. The flow dwindled; yet the adjacent claim, owned by the syndicate, and supplied by a separate pipe, had a full discharge. Winton went up to the company's offices.

He knew that the syndicate controlled the water company. He was sure this was Davis' work. He saw nobody of consequence, but the timid clerk received his vigorous objections and promised to speak to the manager. Winton departed with threats, to discover, on arriving at the claim, that the water was running again. The

incident disturbed him a good deal, and made him realize that the syndicate had a good many cards to play. On the next morning he started down town with the intention of catching Sheila on her way to the Continental. At the corner of the market square he came upon Sam Simpson, making his rounds. The



negro had a great heap of papers under his arm.

"Good morning, Sam!" called Winton. "Got a paper for me?"

"Good morning, Mr. Garrett. I must supply my regular customers first," responded Sam evasively.

"No spare copies, eh?"

"I'm afraid not, sir," said Sam, looking about him uneasily.

"All right. I'll get one somewhere else," said Winton, wondering a little at Sam's appearance, which was that of a man extremely anxious to get into other company.

He strolled over to a small general store with a pile of papers in front of it, and picked up a Chronicle. He scanned the cable and telegraphic news, and turned to the personal column. This was a feature of the paper. It began with authentic news, and records of arrivals and departures, gradually tailing into gossip and reflections upon the enemies of the syndicate, which afforded intense amusement to those acquainted with what was going on in town. Near the end of the column Winton read:

"Rumor reports that one of the fairest of the employees of the Continental, whose home was formerly open to a certain would-be financial light from overseas long beyond the conventional hours, has now transferred her interests to another. Those in the know declare that the self-constituted magnate in question, being mistaken on one occasion for a certain notorious law-breaker, was hidden by the lady in question in her own home, under circumstances that furnish both amusement and chagrin to those formerly among her friends."

Winton stood perfectly still, staring at the paragraph. Then he looked up. The busy market square swam before his eyes. The cruelty of life here, the selfishness and self-absorption of the crowds, the absence of any public opinion working toward good came to him with vivid realization. Then he felt a pulse hammering in his temple, and a mad rage in his heart that concentrated all his thoughts, with terrific energy, upon the desire for vengeance.

Across the square, presented to him with vivid delineation, as if a finger had picked it out, he saw through the crowds the figure of Sam Simpson entering the Chronicle office.

He pushed his way through the mob and made for the building. It was a single story brick edifice, consisting of two rooms, the pressroom and the editorial office. Through the one window of the former Winton saw the single linotype at work, under the charge of Malopo's single operator.

Through the doorway he saw the editor, Hanson, seated at a table, bent over a pile of proofs, and Sam Simpson standing beside him. Winton entered and slammed down the paper upon the table.

"I'm looking for the man who wrote that," he said.

Hanson looked up, saw his face, and sprang to his feet quickly. "Now, now, Mr. Garrett, it was only a joke," he protested. "You must not take it seriously."

"Did you write that?" inquired Winton with ominous calm.

"No!" shouted Hanson with timid ferocity.

"Did you write that?" asked Winton, wheeling upon Sam.

"Mr. Garrett," responded the negro with dignity, "the Chronicle is an entity, not an agglomeration of personalities. It claims and exercises the privileges of anonymity as—"

Winton's fist smashed into Sam's face, and he toppled over.

He picked himself up and ran into the street, screaming at the top of his voice. A crowd collected quickly. Winton found himself the center of it, with Sam facing him accusingly, blood streaming from his lip. Then Judge Davis came bustling through the throng.

"This is your doing, you miserable old scamp!" raved Winton, holding out the paper. "Is this what you call fraternity, attacking a woman who earns her living in a decent way? You infernal old hypocrite, thank your stars you are too old to be thrashed!"

"Hooray for the judge! How about it, judge?" yelled one of the bystanders. Judge Davis took the newspaper from Winton's hand, put on his glasses, and read the passage aloud.

(Continued next week.)