

Diamonds of Malopo

by
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(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, a cool, cool, cool, 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 Taungas wildly excited over a big strike at Malopo, including the 25-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 mine, who tells 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 his 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, bathes his wounds 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. A crowd 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 organization and takes control. He asks Sheila to marry him. She laughs hysterically and refuses him.

CHAPTER VI.—Winton hires Seaton as compound manager and develops Big Malopo. Judge Davis, a philosophical old hypocrite of unknown path De Witt him the syndicate's co-operation. "Otherwise," he says, "we'll smash you, you d—d young fool."

CHAPTER VII.—Winton, infuriated by a scurrilous newspaper article about Sheila and himself, knocks Sam down and publicly threatens Judge Davis. He finds Sheila about to be married to De Witt. She again refuses to marry him and says she is going away, never to see him or her father again.

CHAPTER VIII.—Winton hires Sam as night watchman. Van Vorst's gang steal the De Witt diamond. Winton pursues Van Vorst, who escapes with the big stone.

CHAPTER IX.—Winton is rescued by Sheila, on her way to a native village. There she kisses an old woman, only partly white, and says, "This is my mother." He again asks her to marry him. She refuses him, because of the race bar. Heart sick, he sets out for Malopo with a native guide.

CHAPTER X

The Judge Wins the Race.

A horse was tied to a cactus tree in a small dry gully that ran along the edge of the desert. The native held the stirrup for Winton, who climbed painfully into the saddle, and they set off together.

The sun rose higher, sending down its scorching rays upon the sand, from which the reflected heat-waves beat upward, swathing the rider as if in a steaming shroud. Winton could hardly keep his seat. He felt dizzy and weak from the blow, from the long night ride, and from the shock of Sheila's revelation.

They had traveled perhaps a third of the distance to Malopo when he reined in his horse and slid from the saddle into the sand. He could go no further. And he lay down, staring up at the sky without any especial interest in anything.

He watched the Hottentot turn and come back toward him. The man's clicking interrogations had no meaning for him. The Hottentot drew off a few paces and seemed to be meditating.

Then he knelt down beside Winton and went through his pockets. He took his watch and purse, opened the latter, found several sovereigns in it, and transferred them to his own pocket. He stood over Winton swinging his knobkerrie meditatively.

Winton watched him, still without the least interest in what he was going to do. The native was evidently pondering whether to bring the knob of the heavy stick down upon his skull, and end his life, or to leave him to die in the desert. Presently prudence conquered. With a succession of grunts and clicks he mounted the horse, thrust his feet far into the stirrups, and set out across the desert.

Winton, lying on the sand, watched him until he was swallowed up in the dancing heat-waves. Once he reappeared, a gigantic figure, outlined in mirage upon the sky above the horizon. Then he vanished, and in place

of him appeared the corrugated iron roofs of a town.

Winton struggled into a sitting posture. Surely that was Malopo, and surely it was very near. He saw the busy market square, and the great white-capped ox-wagons, drawn by their spans of long horns, moving through the dust whirls.

He must reach Malopo. It could not be many miles away. And the awful thirst that was consuming him brought him to his feet and sent him staggering toward the pictured town.

He stumbled through the dust, his eyes taking in the scene avidly. He was searching for the location of the Continental across the busy square. All his material aims had dwindled to a pitcher of cold water and a dark place in which to sleep.

Suddenly he stopped in consternation. Across the scene he saw a train moving. Puffs of white smoke came from the engine. The train stopped, the engine, detached, went on alone puffing into the void, and disappeared. Then Winton recognized this vision. It was not Malopo, but Taungas.

And even as he looked it vanished and the scorched desert lay before him. And far away, against the horizon, he saw the tiny speck that was the Hottentot on his horse, riding away.

Winton looked wildly about him. Far away were the outlines of the hills that sheltered Sheila. A desperate longing came over him to return, seek her, gain her, and dwell there an outlaw, as Seaton had done. He turned.

Then, far across the sands, there sprang suddenly into view a lake, set among green pastures, with trees about it, and a farmhouse. A cool breath from the water seemed to reach him across the desert. He began to stagger toward this new vision, with his arms outstretched.

Although his brain told him that this, too, was a mirage, he could not but follow the lure.

And, believing against belief that he might actually be nearing it, he fought his way onward, as if the desert were a physical enemy to be overcome, stumbling and falling, and rising again. His tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and the blood in his veins seemed to have turned to vitriol.

He was down again and could not rise. He looked up at the vision on the horizon and shook his fist furiously. He knew that he was beaten, that death awaited him; but he would die fighting. Everything that had happened to him since he reached Malopo seemed like this: illusion, golden prospects, prospects in love, in business, toward which he had groped in blind trustfulness, while in reality staggering through an arid desert of failure.

He sank down, but in his delirium he was still running across the sands, seeking an unattainable haven; then absolute unconsciousness enveloped him.

It seemed centuries later when he opened his eyes, to discover himself in his own room in the cottage upon the claim.

He thought he was dreaming; and when at last he convinced himself of the reality of the four walls he imagined that he had dreamed everything, from the assault to Sheila.

Then the honest face of Sam appeared before him, like a dusky half-moon; and Winton had never seen Sam with so much pleasure in his life before.

"What's happened?" he asked.

"It's all right—it's all right, Mr. Garrett," said Sam, putting a cup of water to his lips. Winton drank gratefully and, too weak to make inquiries, went to sleep again.

Later in the day he awoke, feeling more like himself. Sam was still at his bedside, in exactly the same position that he had occupied before.

"Sam, tell me what's happened," said Winton in perplexity. "Did I dream about the burglary?"

"No, indeed, Mr. Garrett. But that's all over and done with. If you'll go to sleep, sir."

"Did I ride out into the desert?"

"Well—yes, Mr. Garrett. But you're back home now, and that's all—"

"Tell me how I got here at once, Sam."

"Well, Mr. Garrett," said Sam reluctantly. "I happened to find you in the desert—"

"How far out?"

"About ten miles, sir. You were lost and you'd fainted, and your head was cracked open. You wanted to fight me, sir. I had quite a little difficulty getting you home, sir. And you fell off the horse twice. You gave me this, Mr. Garrett," he continued, pointing to one optic, which Winton noticed was discolored. "But that's all over and—"

"When, Sam?"

"Two days ago, Mr. Winton. You see, your head had been cracked open,

and you weren't altogether responsible. I don't think I'd have got you home, Mr. Garrett, if you hadn't suddenly collapsed. The doctor was quite doubtful until this morning."

"Sam," said Winton humbly, "may I shake hands with you?"

Sam's black hand went out and met Winton's white one. After that Win-



ton lay very still, thinking of Sheila. It was not until the following day that he learned what had happened.

The police had discovered from the evidence of natives in the adjoining compound that Kash had been engaged for weeks in the excavation of the tunnel. The expectation at the start seemed to have been that Winton would make his headquarters in Malopo.

His presence on the claim proved disconcerting; and since murder would have meant the certainty of ultimate arrest, and the prescribed penalty, Van Vorst had resorted to the chloroform outrage to avoid the commission of a capital crime.

However, Burns had heard the mer in the cottage, and had exchanged shots with Kash, killing the Armenian, but suffering a serious head injury from a blow by Van Vorst's revolver butt. It was believed that a piece of bone was pressing on the speech center, for, though fully conscious and considered out of danger, Ned could only utter meaningless sounds, and was consequently unable to describe what had occurred.

They had tried to get his evidence in writing, but the marks that he made upon the paper were meaningless.

An inquest had been held promptly. Burns had been exonerated, and a verdict of justifiable homicide returned. Winton's evidence was taken at his bedside for the information of the Bechuanaland police, who hoped to round up the fugitive.

Van Vorst's action was the most inexplicable part of the affair. The general opinion in Malopo was that the man, known for years as the most crafty and cautious purchaser of stolen stones in the country, had suddenly developed a streak of viciousness and adventure. There had been talk of sending a body of police into the native territories in pursuit of him, but ultimately it was decided to telegraph all the border posts to watch for him. Through one of these Van Vorst must eventually pass on his way back to civilization.

What surprised Malopo most, perhaps, was the fact that Van Vorst had gone to such pains in order to secure a single stone of no extraordinary value—at least, not of enough to make its possession worth outlawry. Winton puzzled over this for some time until Sheila's explanation suddenly came back into his memory.

If Davis and De Witt had plotted the robbery, in order to get him into their power, they would stop at nothing; and they must have some knowledge of the claim's value which he lacked.

Being strictly forbidden to leave his bed for some days, on account of the fever induced by his wound and sunstroke, Winton fumed and fretted in his bed. He was sure everything in the compound was going wrong, in spite of Sam's assurances that he was personally supervising things.

Seaton had disappeared, and everybody suspected him of having betrayed the whereabouts of the stone to the conspirators. His defection was a serious loss; Winton would almost have forgiven the old man if he had returned.

"You are sure everything is going right, Sam?" inquired Winton for the tenth time.

"Indeed, yes, sir. I believe, Mr. Garrett, that you will have an agreeable shock when you discover the success of my new methods," answered the negro.

"What's that? What methods?" Winton demanded.

"I have introduced a few changes in management, sir, based upon the theory that the Bantu is essentially a human. I am endeavoring to introduce the idea of social co-operation among our laborers."

"All right," groaned Winton, feeling that remonstrance was hopeless. "Don't go too strong, though, and watch the devils carefully for stolen stones."

"That, Mr. Garrett, is where my plan enters," replied Sam with dignity. "It is my belief, sir, that the so-called primal instincts of the Bantu race, which is erroneously supposed to disregard the distinction, in its finer shades, between meum and tuum, are as mythical as the legend which falsely ascribes to it an abnormal taste for the galleonaceous avian of the edible domesticated species."

"Well, Sam?"

"And so, sir, I believe that by treating the Bantu as a man and a brother, he can be aroused to ethical idealism."

"Well, we'll see," answered Winton. "For Heaven's sake go slow, and above all don't let them leave the compound without the most careful searching."

When at last Winton was able to leave the cottage, he went at once to the compound, to discover that discipline was practically in abeyance. The negroes stared at him insolently as they dawdled over their tasks. Winton could not reprove Sam very sharply in view of his obligations to him. He did, however, put him back in his old position as night watchman.

Sam was almost tearful, asserting that his plan was just on the verge of success, and Winton, to comfort him, left the sphere of his duties a little undefined, a situation of which Sam was to take the fullest advantage.

Winton realized that to put a negro in charge of negroes was a hopeless proposition. The natives would not obey one of their own color. He engaged a new compound manager to take Seaton's place, a little man named Josephs, tough and wiry, who had been favorably recommended to him some time before, and was known to be efficient and honest.

Josephs was one of those little men who are inspired with volcanic energy and passions. Like the late Barney Barnato, of South African fame, he was a great fighter. Winton watched him tackle the biggest Bechuana of the gang and put him to sleep in the first round, and felt that Sam's work bade fair to be undone. He went away satisfied that his affairs were in good hands.

The news of the washing was most discouraging. The water supply was consistently meager, and nothing had been found in the small amount of rock that had been pulverized except a few tiny stones, of practically no value for jewelers' purposes. Malopo no longer believed in the claim, the rush had stopped, and there was a considerable exodus in the coaches that left for Taungas.

And yet Winton was positive that the claim was a bonanza, and that the syndicate knew it. He began to look about him for a loan.

He soon discovered that it was impossible to raise capital in Malopo in the face of the syndicate's opposition. Besides, the value of the Big Malopo claim was consistently decried. In the reaction following the extravagant faith that had been placed in it, men used the name of the property as a synonym for anything worthless.

Even the kafirs called each other Malopo as a term of scorn. Winton overheard that, and knew that the syndicate's antagonism stooped to the least weapon that could be used against him.

He would have to swallow his pride and go to Davis for a loan. One of the independent shareholders had hinted pointedly at court action unless the development of the claim proceeded with greater energy.

Before taking this step, however, Winton, as soon as he was well, went to see Ned in the hospital. He found the old man propped up in bed, reading the Bible, which he was able to do as well as ever. Ned knew him at once and nodded and gurgled.

"Well, Ned, how are you feeling?" inquired Winton, sitting down by the bedside.

Burns understood perfectly, but the flood of meaningless syllables that poured from his throat conveyed no sense whatever. It was evident that Burns was desperately anxious to tell something, and that he felt his position keenly.

Winton saw, too, that the old man was not quite certain whether his remarks conveyed any meaning or not, and he looked at him so hopefully when he had finished speaking that Winton could hardly bear to let him realize the truth. But Burns did realize it, and two tears trickled down his cheeks upon the open book.

Winton produced a sheet of paper and a pencil, and handed them to Ned, who, resting the Bible on his knee, began to scribble with this as a backing for the sheet.

He handed the result to Winton, but, hopelessly, for he could read that he had written nonsense. It consisted of a number of words and syllables, strung together, but without the smallest intelligent significance. Suddenly Ned snatched away the paper and tore it into pieces, and flung himself back moodily upon his pillow.

The doctor, a young graduate from Edinburgh, had seen the incident. He drew Winton away.

"His mind's clear," said Winton.

"As clear as yours or mine."

"And he understands what is said to him."

"Every word."

"What's the trouble then?"

"The speech and writing centers in the brain are affected," answered the doctor. "We have them marked out very accurately, you know. I expected this before Burns recovered consciousness, as soon as I saw the location of the wound."

"Bone pressing on them?"

"No. If there were I should have operated. The blow on the head ruptured an artery, and the rush of blood destroyed some of the brain tissues."

"Will he get well?"

The doctor's expression answered Winton before his words.

"You see," he explained, "every acquired human faculty has its area in the brain. Not the moral character, as the laity are apt to think. A man isn't truthful, or brave, or generous because he has 'bumps,' as the phrenologists suppose. But what we learn in life is stored up and reproduced when needed in certain definite quarters. In rare cases one of these

storehouses may be destroyed, say by a blow strong enough to rupture the brain tissue without destroying the vital centers. Then the corresponding faculty is unable to express itself.

"Now the speech center is one of the most interesting of all, because it is the most important, and we have it mapped out exactly. Every human being speaks by means of a little tract called Broca's convolution. There's a reading center and a writing center, a music-reading center, a fiddle-playing center—probably; and so on. It's just like putting a series of telephones into a street of houses. There's even a French center and a German center, and a Hottentot center, formed in the brain of the linguist. And if you smash one particular telephone, of course nothing can come through."

"Burns has had his speaking and writing centers smashed. In the case of a very young person there would be hope of recovery, because we use only half of our brains. Most of us use the left half. A child, whose left speaking center had been destroyed, could construct a new center in the unused right half of its brain. That's because its brain is so plastic. But that can hardly be done after thirty, and practically never after reaching middle life. Why, you know yourself that it is impossible for a middle-aged person to pick up a new language as a child can. Well, Burns must be sixty. His case is hopeless, though he will be as well as ever physically in a little while."

That seemed to be the case. Burns was recovering rapidly, but there was no sign of any return of the faculty of speech. Winton was greatly worried about the old man; he went constantly to the hospital, and sent him all sorts of dainties. But he seldom stayed long at Ned's bedside. The pathetic look in his eyes, the constant effort to convey some meaning, and the Bible passages, of which Winton could make neither head nor tail, were too distressing.

It had now become inevitable that Winton should approach Judge Davis on the subject of a loan. He braced himself to the invidious task and went to the judge's office.

He found Davis alone at his desk. The old man looked up, nodded in a friendly way, as if nothing had passed, and offered Winton a seat, which was, however, declined.

"Well, my dear friend, I have thought that I should see you soon," he said. "I am humiliated and ashamed of Malopo when I think that you should have been subjected to such an outrage. The loss of the stone, the material loss, is far less than the moral indignity."

"Judge, there is no need to commiserate with me," said Winton angrily. "You can guess why I have come to you. I am ready to accept the proposal you made me. Kindly deal with me on a business basis, for we understand each other very well."

"Dear me, are you quite sure you know me, Mr. Garrett?" inquired the judge blandly.

"It's immaterial."

"Quite so," responded Davis nodding his head briskly. "Then we will conduct our business on a business basis, as you wish. So you couldn't raise that capital in Malopo?"

"No, and you knew it all the time."

"I suspected it," the judge admitted. "You and I, my friend, know what a valuable property we own. But Malopo doesn't know it. A little—just a little more development, and I shouldn't be surprised if we scoop up the stones by the pallful. Kindly fill out this transfer for thirty-three shares, and I'll write you a check for two thousand six hundred and forty pounds, representing four-fifths of their par value. I'll waive the broker's fees. The money to be repaid in one month, or the shares to become the property of the syndicate."

"Three months," corrected Winton.

"One month," answered the judge courteously. "My fraternal offer was made some time ago, Mr. Garrett."

Winton sat down at last and looked at the judge's shrewd old face. That meant the certain loss of his controlling interest. All the rock that had been brought up had already been picked over. With only a month's grace, it was practically impossible to hope to make repayment, unless a stone of great value should be discovered.

That was the least likely thing in the world. The diamonds, if diamonds there were, were distributed at a deeper level, and it would mean months before the diggers could reach the matrix of the pipe in which they lay.

Then it required weeks of disintegration under sunlight before the rock could be thoroughly broken up and tested.

"You might as well buy my shares outright," said Winton angrily.

"I am willing," answered the judge.

"No, I'll accept your terms and make a fight," said Winton. "It's a sort of cat and mouse game, Judge Davis. If I go ahead and develop I have to borrow from you; if I don't you'll issue a court injunction or whatever you call it, to compel me to."

"You think I am unjust, Mr. Garrett?"

"Let's call it greedy, judge."

"Has it occurred to you, Mr. Garrett, that the syndicate was the original holder of the claim? We are only taking back what should never have passed out of our hands. You can sell to us, or you can have a run for your money—my friend—a month's run."

"I'll run," said Winton, putting his name to the blank transfer.

The judge put it back in his desk. "Mr. Garrett, you interest me very much," he said.

"Well, you interest me," said Win-

ton. "You are the most extraordinarily brazen hypocrite that I have ever met."

"Now do you think that?" inquired Judge Davis, apparently in surprise. "I have heard that said about me before."

"It didn't worry you, did it?"

"Not in the least, my friend. Hypocrisy, young man, is a mere tribute to the forces that rule the world."

"What are they?"

"Greed, selfishness, and injustice."

"You think there are no higher motives?" asked Winton, amazed at the judge's frankness.

"Undoubtedly, my dear sir. Every quality has its opposite, of course. But note this: the good qualities are those of the fools and failures."

"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

"What shall it profit a man if, having lost all that makes life dear, he loses the rest? Listen, young man!



Twenty-five years ago I was an idealistic, middle-aged fool. Look!"

(Continued next week.)

THIS MAN A BRAVE "SUCKER"

Texan Spent Four Years Running Down the Crooks Who Had Swindled Him.

A medal should be struck in honor of the Texan man who spent four years running down a gang of crooks who had defrauded him. Besides showing unusual bravery—unusual for the man who has been a sucker—he rendered conspicuous public service, says the Milwaukee Journal.

Estimates say that the American public pays a toll of \$1,000,000,000 a year to swindlers who use the mails to defraud. Then there are the fake stock schemes, the fake bond selling and all other ways of separating a man from his money. The tribute to the thieves goes on despite the best efforts of the post office and the better business bureaus. For the lure of the chain letter, the offer of loan employment in a field where the victim has had no training, and the chance to get wealth in the oil fields seems about as strong as the lure of the bait for an inquisitive muskellunge.

The confidence man is aided by that trait in human nature which makes a victim loath to admit that he has been a sucker. He is more likely to promise himself that he will be wiser next time and pocket his loss. Many swindlers aim at collecting small sums only, on the theory that the loser will not make a row. But there is sense in the request of the Post Office department that every sum lost by such schemes be reported, even though it be but 10 cents. If all who were defrauded went after the confidence man resolutely enough he would find things too lively for his prosperity.

FINLAND A BILINGUAL LAND

Both Swedish and Finnish Tongues Used, the Latter Being in Ascendant.

To the average traveler the matter of language is apt to be the most vital aspect of any foreign country. Trilingual Switzerland is familiar even to the impoverished continental visitor, but bilingual Finland may be more of a surprise. Nor will the fact that the choice of languages is confined to Swedish and Finnish make the trip any easier.

Formerly the Swedish tongue was in the ascendant among the cultivated classes, having been the vehicle of expression of the famous poet, Runeberg. Now, however, the pendulum is swinging the other way, and you will find even Swedish people adopting Finnish names.

Of course, all educated persons speak both languages interchangeably, even at the family dinner table. In the rural districts, however, it is different. Groups of Swedish peasants in the south and west parts of the country and in the Aaland islands speak only their native tongue, and the rest of the peasants confine themselves to Finnish.

The writers who used Swedish were the first ones who extolled Finland as a nation. Runeberg was followed by Topelius, another poet and story writer, a particular favorite with children, and Fredrik Cyrenaeus devoted himself to history. This activity met with a response from literary men who preferred Finnish, so that now equal bodies of characteristically Finnish work have sprung up in both languages.—Living Age.

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