The KING of DIAMONDS.

By Louis Tracy,

Author of "Wings of the Morning," "The Pillar of Light," Etc.

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CHAPTER V—(Continued).

"Judging by the appearance of the accompanying scraps of iron ore, I should say that they have been quite recently in a state of flux from heat. The silicates seem to be almost eliminated."

The magistrate was unquestionably puzzled. Queer incidents happen in police courts daily, and the most unexpected scientific and technical points are elucidated in the effort to secure an accurate comprehension of matters in dispute. But never during his long tenancy of the court had he been called on to deal with a case of this nature. He smiled in his perplexity.

"We all remember the copybook maxim, 'Let justice be done though the heavens fall,'" he said, "but here it is clearly shown that the ideal is not easily reached."

Of course every one laughed, and the reporters plied pen and pencil with renewed activity. Here was a sensation with a vengeance—worth all the display it demanded in the evening papers. Headlines would whoop through a quarter of a column, and Philip's meteor again run through space.

The boy himself was apparently the most disinterested person present. While listening to Isaacstein, he again experienced the odd sensation of aloofness, of lofty domination, amid a commonplace and insignificant environment. The man was clever, of course, but his cleverness was that of the textbook, a dry record of fact which needed genius to illuminate the printed page. And these lawyers, reporters, policemen, with the vacuous background of loungers, the friends and bottle holders of thieves and drunkards—the magistrate, even, remote in his dignity and sense of power—what were they to him?—of no greater import than the paving stones of the streets to the pulsating life of London as it passed.

The magistrate glanced at Isaacstein and stroked his chin. Isaacstein gazed intently at the packet of diamonds and rubbed his sinuous nose. There was a deep silence in court, broken only by the occasional shuffle of feet among the audience at the back—a shuffle which stopped instantly when the steely glance of a policeman darted in that direction.

At last the magistrate seemed to make up his mind to a definite course of action.

"There is only one person present," he said, "who can throw light on this extraordinary case, and that is the boy himself."

He looked at Philip, and all eyes quickly turned toward the thin, ragged figure standing upright against the rail that shut him off from the well of the court. The professional people present noted that the magistrate did not allude to the strange looking youth as "the prisoner."

What was going to happen? Was this destitute urchin going to leave the court with diamonds in his pocket worth £50,000? Oddly enough, no one paid heed to Philip's boast that he owned far more than that amount. It was not he, but his packet of diamonds, that evoked wonder. And had not Isaacstein, the great merchant and expert, appraised them openly! Was it possible that those dirty white pebbles could be endowed with such potentiality! Fifty thousand pounds! There were men in the room, and not confined to the unwashed, whose palates dried and tongues swelled at the notion.

CHAPTER VI.

PHILIP knew that a fresh ordeal was at hand. How could he preserve his secret, how hope to prevail against the majesty of the British law as personified by the serene authority of the man whose penetrating glance now rested on him? His was a dour and stubborn nature, though hardly molded as yet in rigid lines. He threw back his head and tightened his lips. He would cling to his anonymity to the bitter end, no matter what the cost. But he would not lie. Never again would he condescend to adopt a subterfuge.

"Philip Morland," began the magistrate.

"My name is not Philip Morland," interrupted the boy.

"Then what is your name."

"I will not tell you, sir. I mean no disrespect, but the fact that I am treated as a criminal merely because I wish to dispose of my property warns me of what I may expect if I state publicly who I am and where I live."

For the first time the magistrate heard the correct and well modulated flow of Philip's speech. If anything, it made more dense the mist through which he was trying to grope his way.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean that if I state who I am I will be robbed and swindled by all with whom I come in contact. I have starved. I have been beaten for trying to earn a living. I was struck last night for saving a girl's life. I was arrested and dragged through the streets handcuffed this morning because I went openly to a dealer to sell a portion—to sell some of my diamonds. I will take no more risks. You may imprison me, but you cannot force me to speak. If you are a fair man you will give me back my diamonds and let me go free."

This outburst fairly electrified the court. Philip could not have adopted a more domineering tone were he the governor of the Bank of England charged with passing a counterfeit half crown. The magistrate was as surprised as any.

"I do not wish to argue with you," he said quietly, "nor do I expect you to commit yourself in any way, but you must surely see that for a poverty stricken boy to be found in possession of gems of great marketable value is a circumstance that demands inquiry, however honest and—er—well bred you may be."

"The only witness against me has said that the diamonds could not have been stolen!" cried Philip, now thoroughly aroused and ready for any war of wits.

"Quite true. The inference is that you have discovered a meteoric deposit of diamonds."

"I have. Some—not all—are before you."

A tremor shook the court. Isaacstein swallowed something, and his head sank more deeply below his shoulders.

"Then I take it that you will not inform me of the locality of this deposit?"

"Yes."

"And you think that by disclosing your name and address you will reveal that locality?"

Philip grew red.

"Is it fair," he said, with a curious keenness in his tone, "that a man of your age should use his position and knowledge to try to trip a boy who is brought before you on a false charge?"

It was the magistrate's turn to look slightly confused. There was some asperity in his reply.

"I am not endeavoring to trip you, but rather to help you to free yourself from a difficult position. However, do I understand that you refuse to answer my questions?"

"I do!" The young voice rang through the building with amazing fierceness.

Mr. Abingdon bent over the big book in front of him and scribbled something.

"Remanded for a week," he muttered.

"Downstairs," growled the court jailer, and Philip disappeared from sight. The magistrate was left gazing at the packet of diamonds, and he called Isaacstein, the clerk of the court and two police inspectors into his private office for a consultation.

Meanwhile London was placarded with Philip's adventures that Saturday evening. Contents bills howled in their blackest and biggest type, news venders bawled themselves hoarse over this latest sensation, journalistic ferrets combined theory and imagination in the effort to spin out more "copy," Scotland Yard set its keenest detectives at work to reveal the secret of Philip's identity, while Isaacstein, acting on the magistrate's instructions, wrote to every possible source of information in the effort to obtain some clew as to recent meteoric showers.

No one thought of connecting the great storm with the "diamond mystery." Meteors usually fall from a clear sky and are in no way affected by atmospheric disturbances, their normal habitat being far beyond the influence of the earth's envelope of air.

And so the "hunt for the meteor" commenced and was kept up with zest for many days. "Have you found it?" became the stock question of the humorist and might be addressed with impunity to any stranger, particularly if the stranger were a nice looking girl. No one answered "What?" because of the weird replies that were forthcoming.

The police failed utterly in their efforts to discover Philip's identity or residence. Johnson's Mews, Mile End road, might as well be in Timbuktu for all the relation it bore to Ludgate Hill or Hatton Garden. An East End policeman might have recognized Philip had he seen him, but the official description of his clothing and personal appearance applied to thousands of bobbiedehoys in every district in London.

Two persons among the 6,000,000 of the metropolis alone possessed the knowledge that would have led the inquirers along the right track. The doctor who attended Mrs. Anson in her last illness, had he read the newspaper comment on the boy's speech and mannerisms, might have seen the coincidence supplied by the Christian name and thus been led to make some further investigation. But his hands were full of trouble of his own account. A dispenser mixed a prescription wrongly and dosed a patient with half an ounce of arsenic instead of half an ounce of cream of tartar. The subsequent inquest gave the doctor enough to do, and the first paper he had leisure to peruse contained a bare reference to the "diamond mystery" as revealing no further developments. He passed the paragraph unread.

The remaining uncertain element centered in old O'Brien, the pensioner. Now it chanced that the treasury had discovered that by a clerical mistake in a warrant the old man had been drawing twopence a day in excess of his rightful pension for thirty-three years. Some humorist in Whitehall thereupon sent him a demand for £103 and 15 shillings, and the member of the Whitechapel division was compelled to adopt stern tactics in the house before the matter was adjusted. and O'Brien was allowed to receive the reduced quarterly stipend then due. During that awful crisis the poor old fellow hardly ate or slept. Even when it had ended the notion remained firmly fixed in his mind that the "murdherin' government had robbed him of a hundred gowlden sovereigns an' more."

As for newspapers, the only item he read during many days was the question addressed by his "minther" to the chancellor of the exchequer and the brief reply thereto, both of which were fixed beforehand by mutual arrangement.

In one instance the name given and afterward repudiated by the boy did attract some attention. On the Monday following the remand a lady sat at breakfast in a select West End hotel and languidly perused the record of the case until her eye caught the words "Philip Morland." Then her air of delicate hauteur vanished, and she left her breakfast untouched until, with hawklike curving of neck and nervous clutching of hands, she had read every line of the police court romance. She was a tall, thin, aristocratic looking woman, with eyes set too closely together, a curved nose like the beak of a bird of prey and hands covered with a leathery skin suggesting talons. Her attire and pose were elegant, but she did not seem to be a pleasant sort of person. Her lips parted in a vinegary smile as she read. She evidently did not believe one word of the newspaper report in so far as the diamonds were concerned.

"A vulgar swindle!" she murmured to herself. "How is it possible for a police magistrate to be taken in in such a manner? I suppose Isaacstein knows more about it than appears on the surface. But how came the boy to give that name? It is sufficiently uncommon to be remarkable. How stupid it was of Julie to mislay my dressing case! It would be really interesting to know what has become of those people, and now I may have to leave town before I can find out."

How much further her disjointed comments might have gone it is impossible to say, but at that moment a French maid entered the room and gazed inquiringly around the various small tables with which it was filled. At last she found the lady, who was breakfasting alone, and sped swiftly toward her.

"I am so glad, miladv," she said, speaking in French. "The bag has found itself at the police station. The cabman brought it there, and, if you please, milady, as the value was given as £8, he claimed a reward of £1."

"Which you will pay yourself. You lost the bag," was the curt reply. "Where is it?"

The maid's voice was somewhat tearful as she answered:

"In milady's room. I paid the sovereign."

Her ladyship rose and glided gracefully toward the door, followed by the maid, who whispered to a French waiter—bowing most deferentially to the guest as he held the door open—that her mistress was a cat. He confided his own opinion that her ladyship was a holy pig, and the two passed along a corridor.

Lady Morland hastily tore open the recovered dressing case and consulted an address book.

"Oh, here it is!" she cried triumphantly. "No. 3 Johnson's Mews, Mile End road, E. What a horrid smelling place. However, Messrs. Sharpe & Smith will now be able to obtain some definite intelligence for me. Julie! My carriage in ten minutes."

Thus it happened that during the afternoon a dapper little clerk descended from an omnibus in the neighborhood of Johnson's Mews and began his inquiries, as all Londoners do, by consulting a policeman. Certain facts were forthcoming.

"A Mrs. Anson, a widow, who lived in Johnson's Mews? Yes, I think a woman of that name died a few weeks ago. I remember seeing a funeral leave the mews. I don't know anything about the boy. Sometimes when I pass through there at night I have seen a light in the house. However, here it is. Let's have a look at it."

The pair entered the mews and approached the deserted house. The solicitor's clerk knocked and then tried the door. It was locked. They both went to the window and looked in. Had Philip hanged himself, as he intended, they would have been somewhat surprised by the spectacle that would have met their eyes. As it was, they only saw a small room of utmost wretchedness, with a mattress lying on the floor in front of the fireplace. An empty tin and a bundle of old letters rested on a rickety chair, and a piece of sacking was thrust through two broken panes in the small window opposite.

"Not much there, eh?" laughed the policeman.

"Not much, indeed. The floor is all covered with dirt, and if it were not for the bed one would imagine that the house was entirely deserted. Are you sure Mrs. Anson is dead?"

"Oh, quite sure. Hers was rather a hard case, some one told me. I remember now. It was the undertaker. He lives near here."

"And the boy. Has he gone away?"

"I don't know. I haven't seen him lately."

Each of these men had read all the reports concerning Philip and his diamonds. Large numbers of tiny, white pebbles were lying on the floor beneath their eyes, but the window was not clean, and the light was far from good, as the sky was clouded. Yet they were visible enough. The clerk noticed them at once, but neither he nor the policeman paid more heed to the treasures almost at their feet than was given by generations of men to the outcrop of the main reef at Johannesburg. At last they turned away. The clerk gave the policeman a cigar with the remark:

"I will just ask the undertaker to give me a letter, stating the facts about Mrs. Anson's death. I suppose the boy is in the workhouse?"

"Who knows? It often beats me to tell what becomes of the kids who are left alone in London. Poor little devils, they mostly go to the bad. There should be some means of looking after them, I think."

Thus did Philip, bravely sustaining his heart in the solitude of a prison, escape the greatest danger that threatened the preservation of his secret, and all because a scheming woman was too clever to tell her solicitors the exact reason for her anxiety concerning the whereabouts of Mrs. Anson and her son.

The boy passed a dolorous Saturday night and Sunday. Nevertheless the order, the cleanliness, the comparative comfort of a prison were not wholly ungrateful to him. His meals, though crude, were wholesome, luxurious even, compared with the privations he had endured during the precious fortnight. The enforced rest, too, did him good, and, being under remand, he had nothing to do but eat, take exercise, read a few books provided for him and sleep.

With Monday came a remarkable change in his fare. A pint of first rate cocoa and some excellent bread and butter for breakfast evoked no comment on his part, but a dinner of roast beef, potatoes, cabbage and rice pudding was so extremely unlike prison diet that he questioned the turnkey.

"It's all right, kid," came the brief answer. "It's paid for. Eat while you can and ask no questions."

"But"—

The door slammed, and at the next meal Philip received in silence a cup of tea and a nice tea cake. This went on during three days. The good food and rest had already worked a marvelous change in his appearance. He entered the prison looking like a starved dog. When he rose on the Thursday morning and washed himself, no one would have recognized him as the same boy were it not for his clothes.

After dinner he was tidying his cell and replacing the plates and the rest on a tin tray when the door was suddenly flung open, and a warder cried:

"Come along, Morland. You're wanted at the court."

"At the court!" he could not help saying. "This is only Thursday."

"What a boy you are for arguing! Pick up your hat and come. Your carriage waits, my lord. I hope you will like your quarters as well when you come back. A pretty stir you have made in the papers the last five days."

Philip glanced at the man, who seemed to be in a good humor.

"I will not come back," he said quietly, "but I wish you would tell me who supplied me with food while I have been here."

They were passing along a lofty corridor, and there was no superior officer in sight. The warder laughed.

"I don't know, my lord," he said, "but the menoo came from the Royal Star hotel, opposite."

Philip obtained no further news. He passed through an office, a voucher was signed for him, and he emerged into the prison yard, where the huge prison van awaited him. He was the only occupant, just as on the first memorable ride in that conveyance. When he came to the prison from the police court he had several companions in misery, but they were "stretched." His case was the only "remand."

During the long drive Philip endeavored to guess the cause of this unexpected demand for his presence. Naturally, he assumed that Johnson's Mews no longer held safe the secret of his meteor. Such few sensational romances as he had read credited detectives with superhuman sagacity. In his mind, Johnson's Mews was the center of the world. It enshrined the marvelous—how could it escape the thousands of prying eyes that daily passed through the great thoroughfare of the East End but a few yards away? Judging from the remark dropped by the warder, all London was talking about him. A puzzling feature was the abundant supply of good food sent to him in prison. Who was his unknown friend—and what explanation was attached to the incident?

Philip's emotions were no more capable of analysis than a display of rockets. Immured in this cage, rattling over the pavements, he seemed to be advancing through a tunnel into an unknown world.

At last the van stopped, and he was led forth into the yard of the police court. He followed the same route as on the previous Saturday, but when he ascended into the court itself he discovered a change. The magistrate, a couple of clerks and some policemen alone were present. The general public and the representatives of the press were not visible.

He had scarcely faced the bench when the magistrate said:

"You are set at liberty. The police withdraw the charge against you."

Philip's eyes sparkled, and his breast heaved tumultuously. For the life of him he could utter no word, but Mr. Abingdon helped him by quietly directing the usher to permit the lad to leave the dock and take a seat at the solicitors' table.

Then, speaking slowly and with some gravity, he said:

"Philip Morland—that is the only name by which I know you—the authorities have come to the conclusion that your story is right. You have unquestionably found a deposit of diamonds, and, although this necessarily exists on some person's property, there is no evidence to show whose property it is. It may be your own. It may be situated beyond the confines of this kingdom. There are many hypotheses, each of which may be true; but, in any event, if others lay claim to this treasure trove—and I warn you that the crown has a right in such a matter—the issue is a civil and not a criminal one. Therefore you are discharged and your property is now handed back to you intact."

A clerk placed before Philip his parcel of diamonds, his key, the rusty knife, the pieces of string and the two buttons—truly a motley collection. The boy was pale and his voice somewhat tremulous as he asked:

"May I go now, sir?"

Mr. Abingdon leaned back in his chair and passed his hand over his face to conceal a smile.

"I have something more to say to you," he answered. "It is an offense against the law to withhold your name and address. I admit the powerful motives which actuated you, so I make the very great concession that your earlier refusal will be overlooked if you privately tell me that which you were unwilling to state publicly."

Philip instantly decided that it would be foolish in the extreme to refuse this offer. He pocketed his diamonds, looked the magistrate straight in the face and said:

"I will do that, sir. As the information is to be given to you alone, may I write it?"

The policemen and other officials sniggered at this display of caution, but the magistrate nodded, and Philip wrote his name and address on a sheet of foolscap, which he folded before handing it to the usher.

To his great surprise, Mr. Abingdon placed the paper in a pocketbook without opening it.

"I will make no use of this document unless the matter comes before me again officially. I wish to point out to you that I have brought you from prison at the earliest possible moment and have spared you the publicity which your movements would attract were your case settled in open court. You are not aware perhaps that you figure largely in the eyes of the public at this moment. There are newspapers which would give a hundred pounds to get hold of you. There are thieves who would shadow your every movement, waiting for a chance to waylay and rob you—murder you if necessary. I have taken precautions, therefore, to safeguard you, at least within the precincts of this court, but I cannot be responsible beyond its limits. May I ask what you intend to do?"

Philip, proud in the knowledge that he was cleared of all dishonor, was at no loss for words now.

"First I wish to thank you, sir," he said. "You have acted most kindly toward me, and when I am older I hope to be permitted to acknowledge your thoughtfulness better than is possible today. I will endeavor to take care of myself. I am going now to see Mr. Isaacstein. I do not expect that he will send for a policeman again. If he does, I will bring him before you."

The magistrate himself laughed at this sally.

"You are a strange boy," he said. "I think you are acting wisely. But—er—you have no money—that is, in a sense. Hatton Garden is some distance from here. Let me—er—lend you a cab fare."

"Thank you, sir," said Philip. And Mr. Abingdon, unable to account for the interest he felt in the boy, quite apart from his inexplicable story, gave him 5 shillings and shook hands with him.

CHAPTER VII.

OUTSIDE the police court Philip drew as invigorating a breath of fresh air as the atmosphere of Clerkenwell permitted. He knew that an inspector of police and a couple of constables were gazing at him curiously through an office window, and the knowledge quickened his wits.

It was worth even more than his liberty to realize that in all reasonable probability his meteor was safe as yet. The police had failed in their quest. Whom else had he to fear? The company had informed his mother that her

"Gow on," he cried. "I'll make yer a present of that trip."

tenancy of Johnson's Mews would not be disturbed before the 31st. Of course her death was known to the firm, but their written promise to her was verbally confirmed to Philip by the manager. It was now the 25th. He had five clear days, perhaps six, in which to make all his arrangements. The forced seclusion of the prison had helped him in one way—it gave him a programme, a detailed plan. Each step had been carefully thought out, and Isaacstein's office was the first stage in the campaign.

A prowling hansom passed. Philip whistled.

"Where's the fare?" demanded the cabman angrily, looking up and down the street.

"Drive me to Holborn viaduct, quick," said the boy, with his foot on the step.

Cabby eyed him with scorn.

"What's the game?" he growled. "D'yer tyke me for a mug, or what?"

"Oh, don't talk so much!" cried Philip impatiently. "Are you afraid I won't pay you? See! If you lose no more time, I will give you this," and he held up a two shilling piece for the cabman's edification.

It is difficult to surprise your true Cockney whip. The man carefully folded the evening paper he had been reading, stuffed it under the strap which held his rug and cape and chirruped to his horse:

"Kim up, lazy bone! We've got a millionaire crossin' sweeper inside. What, ho! Any bloomin' perfession is better 'n drivin' a keb."

The run was shorter than Philip anticipated, but, true to his promise, he proffered the two shillings.

The cabman looked at him. Something in the boy's face seemed to strike him as curious, and, notwithstanding Philip's rags, his skin was scrupulously clean.

"Gow on," he cried. "I'll make yer a present of that trip. 'Ope it'll giv yer a fresh start in the world. Kim up, will yer!" And the hansom swung away into the traffic, leaving the boy standing on the pavement on the north side of the viaduct. He made a mental note of the cab's number. It was easy to remember—three 8's and a 9—and walked on toward Hatton Garden.

Meanwhile the cabman after varying luck drove to his yard, changed horses, secured a fare to a theater and joined the Haymarket rank while he took a meal in the cabmen's shelter.

"What's today's bettin' on the National?" he asked a friend.

The evening paper was passed, and he cast an eye over its columns. Suddenly he ripped out a string of expressions that amazed his companions.

"What's the matter, Jimmie? Missed a 20 to 1 chance at Lincoln?"

"Great Scott, I thought he'd lift the roof off!"

"Go easy, mate. There's lydies outside."

But the cabman still swore and gazed round eyed at the sheet. And this is what he read:

The boy, Philip Morland, whose possession of a collection of meteoric diamonds of great value has created so much sensation, was brought up on remand today at the Clerkenwell police court and released. Mr. Abingdon thought fit to hear the case in camera, so this ragged urchin is wandering about London again with a pocketful of gems. He was last seen entering a cab in the neighborhood of the police court, and inquiry by our representative at the Hatton Garden offices of Mr. Isaacstein, the diamond merchant, whose name has figured in connection with the case, elicited the information that Morland called there about 3 p. m. Mr. Isaacstein positively refused to make any further statement for publication, but it is probable that developments in this peculiar and exciting affair will take place at any moment.

(Continued Next Saturday.)

Eugene Bakery for hot coffee and lunch at all hours. Opposite theatre.

CONTEST NOTICE.

Department of the Interior, United States Land Office, Roseburg, Oregon, June 13 1907.

A sufficient contest affidavit having been filed in this office by Chipear Wilcut, contestant, against homestead entry No. 10237, made October 4, 1900, for the S. W.¼ of sec. 24, tp. 17 S., Range 8 W., by Ernest Tabor contestee, in which it is alleged that said Ernest Tabor never made settlement on said land, he made no improvements of any kind, and he has entirely abandoned said land and living at Mapleton; that said absence was not due to employment in the military or naval service of the United States in time of war, said parties are hereby notified to appear, respond and offer evidence touching said allegation at 10 o'clock a. m. on August 16, 1907, before W. W. Calkins, U. S. Commissioner at his office at Eugene, Oregon, and that final hearing will be held at 10 o'clock a. m. on August 30, 1907, before the Register and Receiver at the United States Land Office in Roseburg, Oregon.

The said contestant having, in a proper affidavit, filed June 17, 1907, set forth facts which show that after due diligence personal service of this notice can not be made, it is hereby ordered and directed that such notice be given by due and proper publication.

BENJAMIN L. EDDY,
Register.

Administrator's Notice.

Estate of A. J. Campbell, deceased.

Notice is hereby given that E. L. Campbell has been duly appointed administrator of the above named estate by the county court of Lane county, Oregon, and all persons having claims against said estate are hereby notified to present the same with the proper vouchers to said administrator at hos place of business in Eugene, Oregon, within six months from the date of this notice.

Dated this 25th day of May, 1907.

E. L. CAMPBELL,
Administrator of said estate.
L. BILYEU, Attorney.

Administrator's Notice.

Estate of M. A. Bunsaker, deceased.

Notice is hereby given that E. L. Campbell has been duly appointed administrator of the above-named estate by the county court of Lane county, Oregon, and all persons having claims against said estate are hereby notified to present the same with the proper vouchers to said administrator at his place of business, in Eugene, Oregon, within six months from the date of this notice.

Dated this 25th day of May, 1907.

E. L. CAMPBELL,
Administrator of said estate.
L. BILYEU, Attorney.

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