The KING of DIAMONDS.

By Louis Tracy,

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

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CHAPTER XIII—(Continued).

He had no need to ask what it was. Carved in stone over the handsome arch which led to an interior covered court was its title, "The Mary Anson Home For Destitute Boys." A date followed, a date ten years old.

The observer was puzzled. He gazed up and down the wide thoroughfare with the manner of one who asked himself:

"Now, why was that built there?"

A policeman strolled leisurely along the pavement, but to him the man addressed no question. Apparently unconscious of the constable's observant glance, he still continued to scrutinize the great pile of brick and stone which thrust its splendid campanile into the warm sunshine of an April day.

Beneath the name was an inscription: "These are they which passed through great tribulation."

A queer smile did not improve the man's expression as he read the text.

"Tribulation! That's it," he continued. "I've had ten years of it. And it started somewhere about the end of that fine entrance too. I wonder where Sailor is, and that boy. He's a man now, mebbe twenty-six or so, if he's alive. Oh, I hope he's alive! I hope he's rich and healthy and engaged or married to a nice young woman! If I've managed to live in purgatory for ten long years, a youngster like him should be able to pull through with youth and strength and a bagful of diamonds."

Without turning his head he became aware that the policeman had halted at some little distance.

"Of course I've got the mark on me," said the man savagely to himself. "He's spotted me all right. Well, I'll let him see I don't care for him or any of his breed. I never did care, and it's too late to begin now."

He crossed the road, passed between two fine iron gates standing hospitably open and paused at the door of the porter's lodge, where a stalwart commissionnaire met him.

"Have you called to see one of the boys?" said the official cheerfully.

"No; I'm a stranger. It's a good many years since I was in these parts before. In those days there used to be a mews here and some warehouses at the back, with a few old shops"—

"Oh, I expect so, but that is long before my time. The Mary Anson home was founded ten years ago, and it took two years to build. It's one of the finest charities in London. Would you like to look round?"

"Is that allowed?"

"Certainly. Everybody is welcome. If you go in by that side door there, you'll find an old man who has nothing to do but take visitors to the chief departments. Bless your heart, we lose half our boarders that way. People come here, see the excellences of the training we give and offer situations to boys who are old enough."

The man appeared to be surprised by the commissionnaire's affability. He did not know that civility and kindness were essential there if any employee would retain an excellent post.

He passed on, measuring the tessellated court with a backward sweep of the eye. In the sunlit street beyond the arch stood the policeman. The visitor grinned again, an unamiable and sulky grin, and vanished.

The policeman crossed over.

"What is that chap after?" he inquired.

"Nothing special," was the answer. "Last time he was here the place was a mews, he said."

"Unless I am greatly mistaken, he has a ticket in his pocket."

"You don't say! Do you know him?"

"No. I'll look him up in the album in the station when I go off duty."

"Well, he can't do any harm here. O'Brien takes visitors over a regular round, and, in any case, the man seemed to be honest enough in his curiosity."

"You never can tell. They're up to all sorts of dodges."

"Thanks very much. I'll ring for O'Brien's relief and tell him to keep an eye on them, as the old man is blind as a bat."

Meanwhile the stranger was being conducted up a wide staircase by a somewhat tottering guide, who wore on the breast of his uniform the Crimean and Indian mutiny medals.

As he hobbled in front he told, with a strong Irish brogue, the familiar story of the Mary Anson home—how it fed, lodged and clothed 600 boys of British parentage born in the Whitechapel district; how it taught them trades and followed their careers with fostering care; how it never refused a meal or a warm sleeping place to any boy, no matter where he came from or what his nationality, provided he satisfied the superintendent that he was really destitute or needed his small capital for trading purposes next day.

The great central hall where the 600 regular inmates ate their meals, the dormitories, the playgrounds, the drill shed and gymnasium, the workshops, the library, the theater, were all pointed out, but the big man with the staring eyes was not interested one jot in any of these things.

"Who was Mary Anson?" he asked, when the well worn tale was ended, "and how did she come to build such a fine place here?"

"Ah, ye may well ax that," said old O'Brien. "Sure, she didn't build it at all at all. She was a poor widdy livin' alone-st wid one son, Mr. Philip that is now. She was a born lady, but she kem down in the worruld and died, forlorn an' forgotten, in a little shanty in Johnson's Mews, as it was called in those days."

"I remember it well."

"Ye do, eh? Mebbe ye know my ould shop, the marine store near the entrance to the court?"

"Yes."

"Arrah, ye don't tell me so. Me eyes are gettin' wake, an' I can't make out yer face. What's yer name?"

"Oh, I'm afraid we didn't know one another. I can't recall your name though I recollect the shop well enough. But, if Mrs. Anson died so poor, how was her son able to set this great house on its legs? It must have cost a mint of money."

"Faix, ye're right. Quarter of a million wint afore there was a boy under its roof. And they say it costs £50,000 a year to keep it goin'. But Mr. Philip would find that and more to delight the soul of the mother that's dead. Sure it's alsy for him, in a way. Isn't he the Diamond King!"

"The Diamond King! Why is he called that?"

"D'ye mane to say you nivver— Man alive, what part of creation did ye live in that ye didn't hear tell of Mr. Philip Anson, the boy who discovered an extra spishul diamond mine of his own, no one knows where? Sure, now, what's wrong wid ye?"

For the visitor was softly using words which to O'Brien's dull ears sounded very like a string of curses.

"I'm sorry," growled the other with an effort. "I've been to Africa, an' I get such a spasm now an' then in my liver that I can hardly stand."

"That's no way to cure yourself—profanin' the name of the Almighty," cried O'Brien.

"No. I'm sorry, I tell you. But about this boy"—

"There's no more to see now, if ye plaze. That's the way out."

O'Brien was deeply offended by the language used beneath a roof hallowed by the name of Mary Anson. The sightseer had to go, and quickly. Another commissionnaire, who was observing them from a distance, came up and asked O'Brien what the stranger was talking about.

"Ye nivver heard sich a blaggard," said the old man indignantly. "I was in the middle of tellin' him about Mr. Philip, when he began to curse like ould Nick himself."

In the Mile End road the rawboned person who betrayed such excitement found the policeman awaiting him. He sprang on to a 'bus and purposely glared at the officer in a way to attract his attention. When at a safe distance he put his fingers to his nose. The constable smiled.

"I knew I was right," he said. "I don't need to look twice at that sort of customer."

And he entered the Mary Anson home again to ask the porter what had taken place.

It was an easy matter for Jocky Mason, released from Portland prison on ticket of leave, after serving the major portion of a sentence of fourteen years' penal servitude—the man he assaulted had died, and the ex-convict narrowly escaped being hanged—to ascertain the salient facts of Philip Anson's later career.

It was known to most men. He was biographed briefly in "Who's Who" and had often supplied material for a column of gossip in the newspapers. Every free library held books containing references to him.

It was quite impossible that the source of his great wealth should remain hidden for all time. In one way and another it leaked out, and he became identified with the ragged youth who created a sensation in the dock of the Clerkenwell police station.

But this was years later, and the clever manipulation of Mr. Abingdon, as his estate agent, and of Mr. Isaacstein, as his representative in the diamond trade, completely frustrated all attempts to measure the true extent of the meteor's value.

For now Philip owned a real diamond mine in South Africa, he had a fine estate in Sussex, a house in Park lane, a superb seagoing yacht, a colliery in Yorkshire and vast sums invested in land and railways. The latent value of his gems had been converted into money earning capital.

Mr. Abingdon proved himself to be a very able business man. When the administration of Philip's revenue became too heavy a task for his unaided shoulders he organized a capital estate office, with well trained lawyers, engineers and accountants to conduct its various departments, while he kept up an active supervision of the whole until Philip quitted his university and was old enough to begin to bear some portion of the burden.

They agreed to differ on this important question. Philip was fond of travel and adventure. With great difficulty his "guardian" kept him out of the army, but compromised the matter by allowing the young millionaire to roam about the odd corners of the world in his yacht for eight months of the year, provided he spent four months of the season in London and Sussex attending to affairs.

In this month of April he was living in his town house. In July he would go to Fairfax Hall, in August to Scotland and a month later would joyfully fly to the Forth, where the Sea Maiden awaited him.

This lady, whose waist measured eighteen feet across and whose length was seventy feet, with a fine spread of canvas and auxiliary steam, was the only siren able to charm him.

He was tall now and strongly built, with something of the naval officer in his handsome, resolute face and well set up figure. As a hobby he had taken out a master mariner's certificate, and he could navigate his own ship in the teeth of an Atlantic gale. He loved to surround himself with friends, mostly Oxford men of his year, but he seldom entertained ladies, either on board the Sea Maiden or in either of his two fine mansions.

He avoided society in its general acceptance, refused all overtures to mix in politics, took a keen delight in using his great wealth to alleviate distress anonymously and earned a deserved reputation as a "bear" among the few match making mammas who managed to make his acquaintance.

In other respects as the boy was so was the man—the same downright character, the same steadfast devotion to his mother's memory, the same relentless adherence to a course already decided on and the same whole hearted reciprocity of friendship.

As he stood in his drawing room before dinner on the evening of the day Jocky Mason revisited the locality, if not the surroundings, of his capture Philip's strong face wore an unwonted expression of annoyance. He walked to and fro from end to end of the beautiful room, pausing each time he reached the window to gaze out over the park.

A servant, who entered for the purpose of turning on the electric lights and lowering the blinds, was bidden almost impatiently to wait until Philip and his guests were at dinner.

A telegram came. Anson opened it and read:

Was dressing to come to your place when Grainger telegraphed for me to act as substitute Lincoln quarter sessions. Must go down at once. FOX.

"No answer," he said, adding to himself:

"That's better. Fox's caustic humor would have worried me tonight. I wish Abingdon would come. I am eager to tell him what has happened."

Now, punctuality was one of Mr. Abingdon's many virtues. At half past 7 to the tick his brougham deposited him at the door.

The two met with a cordial greeting that showed the close ties of mutual good fellowship and respect which bound them together.

"Fox won't be here," said Philip. "Grainger has broken down—ill health, I suppose—and wired for him to go to Lincoln."

"Ah, that's a lift for Fox. He is a clever fellow, and if he manages to tell the jury a joke or two he will influence a verdict as unfairly as any man I know."

"Does it not seem to you to be rather an anomaly that justice, which in the abstract is impeccable, too often depends on other issues which have no possible bearing on the merits of the dispute itself?"

"My dear boy, that defect will continue until the crack of doom. Pascal laid it bare in an epigram, 'It all depends on which side the Pyrenees Fox happens to be.'"

"Unfortunately I am straddling the water shed at this moment. I have made a very important discovery, Abingdon, and I am glad we are alone tonight; we can speak freely. Some people named Sharpe & Smith wrote to me yesterday."

"I know them—an old established firm of solicitors."

"Well, they urged me to give them an appointment on a private matter,

"I know them—an old established firm of solicitors."

and I did so. They began by trying to cross examine me, but that was an abject failure. Seeing that whatever they had to say must stand on its own legs, they told me an extraordinary story. It appears that at a place called the Hall, Beltham, Devon, lives an elderly baronet named Sir Philip Morland."

"Morland! Philip Morland!"

"Ah, you remember the name! It was given to a young derelict who once figured in the dock before you on a charge of being in unlawful possession"—

"The matter is not serious, then?"

"It is very serious. The real Philip Morland is my uncle."

"Do you mean to say that you learned this fact for the first time today from Sharpe & Smith?"

Philip laughed. By this time they were seated at the table, and their talk depended to a certain extent on the comings and goings of servants. At a dinner en famille, the presence of a ponderous butler and solemn lackeys was dispensed with.

"Oh, you lawyers!" he cried. "That's a nice sort of leading question. But, marvelous as it may seem to you, I must answer 'Yes.' My mother's maiden name was Morland. Her brother was much older than she, and it appears the dear woman married to please herself, thereby mortally offending the baronet."

"Why the 'offense?'"

"Because my father's social position was not equal to that of the aristocratic Morlands. Moreover, her brother had an accident in his youth which rendered him irritable and morose. From being a pleasant sort of man—which, indeed, he must have been did he share aught of my mother's nature—he grew into a misanthrope and gave his life to the classification of Exmoor beetles. He treated my mother very badly, so vilely that even she, dear soul, during her married life held no further communication with him and never mentioned him to me by name. Now, one day on Exmoor he found a lady who also was devoted to beetles—at least she knew all that the Encyclopaedia Britannica could teach her. She was a poor but handsome widow."

"Ah!"

"It is delightful to talk with you, Abingdon. Your monosyllables help the narrative along. Sir Philip married the widow. She brought him a son, aged five. There were no children born of my uncle's marriage."

"Oh!"

"When poverty overtook my dear one, she so far obliterated a cruel memory as to appeal, not once, but many times, to the human coleopterus of Exmoor, but she was invariably frozen off either by Lady Louisa Morland or by Messrs. Sharpe & Smith."

"Did they admit this?"

"By no means. I am telling you the facts. I am still on top of the Pyrenees."

"Then how did you ascertain the facts?"

"I have in my possession ever since my mother's death the letters they wrote to her. They were fresh in my memory when you and I first met in the Clerkenwell police court. That is why the name of Philip Morland was glib on my tongue."

"So I have only heard historical events—events prior to the last ten years?"

"Exactly. My uncle is now sixty years of age. Lady Louisa Morland's son is twenty-four. Her ladyship's whole aim in life has been to secure him as the baronet's heir. The title, of course, he cannot obtain. But, most unfortunately, he has no penchant for beetles. Indeed, Lady Louisa's researches have long since diminished in ardor. Her son's interests are divided between the Sports club and the coryphees of the latest musical comedy. Moths are more in his line apparently. My uncle, who is preparing a monograph on the fleas which patronize Exmoor wild ponies, came to town last week to visit the British museum. Unhappily he heard something about his stepson which disturbed his researches. There was a row."

"Why do you say 'unhappily?'"

"Because I am dragged into the wretched business on account of it. After a lapse of more than twenty-five years he remembered his sister, went to his solicitors, made a fearful hubbub when he heard of letters received from her and answered without his knowledge and ascertained that she was dead and had a son living. At any cost, they must find that son. They have guessed at my identity for some time. Now they want to make sure of it."

"And what did you say?"

"I told them I would think over the situation and communicate with them further."

"Were they satisfied?"

"By no means. They are exceedingly anxious to placate the old man. They probably control a good deal of his money."

"Um!"

"Of course! You see the delicacy of their position. After playing into the hands of Lady Louisa for nearly a quarter of a century they suddenly find the whole situation changed by the baronet's belated discovery that he once had a sister."

"You have not told me all this without a purpose. Do you want my advice?"

Philip's face was clouded, his eyes downcast.

"You understand," he said after a long pause, "that some one, either the man or the woman—the woman, I think—is morally responsible for my mother's death. She was poor—wretchedly, horribly poor—the poverty of thin clothing and insufficient food. She was ill, confined to a miserable hovel for weary months and was so utterly unprovided with the barest necessities that the parish doctor was on the point of compelling her to go to the workhouse infirmary when death came. Am I to be the instrument of God's vengeance on this woman?"

Mr. Abingdon, who had risen to light a cigar, placed a kindly hand on the young man's shoulder.

"Philip," he said, with some emotion, "I have never yet heard you utter a hasty judgment. You have prudence far beyond your years. It seems to me, speaking with all the reverence of a man in face of the decrees of Providence, that God has already provided a terrible punishment for Lady Louisa Morland. What is the name of her son?"

"I do not know. I forgot to ask."

"I have a wide experience of the jeunesse doree of London. Hardly a week passed during many years of my life that one of his type did not appear before me in the dock. What is he—a roue, a gambler, probably a drunkard?"

"All these, I gathered from the solicitors."

"And if your mother were living, what would she say to Lady Morland?"

"She would pity her from the depths of her heart. Yes, Abingdon, you are right. My uncle's wife has chosen her own path. She must follow it, let it lead where it will. I will write to Messrs. Sharpe & Smith now. But step into my dressing room with me for a moment, will you?"

In a corner of the spacious apartment to which he led his guest stood a large safe. Philip opened it. Within were a number of books and documents, but in a large compartment at the bottom stood a peculiar object for such a repository—an ordinary leather portmanteau. He lifted it on to a couch and took a key from a drawer in the safe.

"This is one of my treasures which you have never seen," he said, with a sorrowful smile. "It has not been in the light for many years."

He revealed to his friend's wondering eyes the tattered suit, the slipshod boots, the ragged shirt and cap, the rusty doorkey, associated with that wonderful month of March of a decade earlier. He reverently unfolded some of his mother's garments, and his eyes were misty as he surveyed them.

But from the pocket of the portmanteau he produced a packet of soiled letters. One by one he read them aloud, though he winced at the remembrance of the agony his mother must have endured as she experienced each rebuff from Lady Morland and her husband's solicitors.

Yet he persevered to the end.

"I wanted a model for a brief communication to Messrs. Sharpe & Smith," he said bitterly. "I think the general purport of their correspondence will serve my needs admirably."

As he closed the Gladstone bag his stern mood vanished.

"Do you know," he said, "that this odd looking portmanteau, always locked and always reposing in a safe, has puzzled my valets considerably? One man got it out and tried to open it. I caught him in the act. I honestly believe both he and the others were under the impression that I kept my diamonds in it."

"By the way, that reminds me of a request from Isaacstein. As all the smaller diamonds have now been disposed of and there remain only the large stones, he thinks that some of them might be cut into sections. They are unmarketable at present."

"Very well. Let us appoint a day next week and overhaul the entire collection. I intend to keep the big ones to form the center ornaments of a tiara, a necklace and gewgaws of that sort."

"I am glad to hear it."

"My dear fellow, I suppose there will be a Mrs. Anson some day, but I have not found her yet.

"Whoe'er she be,
That not impossible she,
That shall command my heart and me."

And a ripple of laughter chased away the last shadows from his face.

(Continued Next Saturday.)

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Any person wishing to investigate his or her assessment for 1907 for the purpose of correcting any errors or omissions will please call at the assessor's office within the next ten days, that the matter may be attended to before commencing to write the roll.

Persons who have loaned money and have taken deeds as security and who have not reported such loans to the assessor, are hereby notified that the same are taxable credits and if not reported immediately they will have to bear the consequences of assessments made from the best information obtainable.

B. F. KEENEY,
County Assessor.

a14-6t

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NOTICE OF FINAL SETTLEMENT

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned has filed his final account in the matter of the estate of Emma A. Christner, deceased, and the County Court of Lane County, Oregon, has by an order dated July 24th, 1907, set Monday, the 26th day of August, 1907, at the hour of 10 o'clock, in the forenoon of said day, as the time for the hearing of objections to said account.

All persons interested are hereby notified to appear in said court at said time, and file their objections thereto and show cause, if any, why said account should not be allowed and said administrator discharged from his trust.

NOAH CHRISTNER,
Administrator of the estate of Emma Christner, deceased

Notice of Final Settlement.

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned has filed his final account in the matter of the estate of Abraham Spurgeon, deceased, and the county court of Lane county, Oregon, has by an order of July 16, 1907, set Monday, the 19th day of August, 1907, at the hour of 10 o'clock, in the forenoon of said day, as the time for hearing of objections to said account.

All persons interested are hereby notified to appear in said court at said time and file their objections thereto and show cause, if any, why said account should not be allowed and said administrator discharged from his trust.

(Signed) DARWIN BRISTOW,
Administrator of the Estate of Abraham Spurgeon, deceased.

WILLIAMS & BEAN,
Attorneys for Estate.

Notice of Final Settlement.

Notice is hereby given to all whom it may concern that the undersigned, executor of the estate of John Logan, deceased, has filed his final account in the county court of the state of Oregon, for Lane county, in said estate, and the court has appointed Monday, the 9th day of September, 1907, at the hour of 10 o'clock in the forenoon, as the time for the hearing of objections to such final account, and the settlement thereof. All persons interested in the said estate are hereby notified to file any objections to the said final account with the clerk of said court on or before the said day and date.

Dated August 10, 1907.

E. A. CHILD,
Executor of the last will and testament of John Logan, deceased.

C. A. WINTERMEIER,
Attorney.

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