

The Mazaroff Mystery

By J. S. FLETCHER
W. N. U. Service

Illustrations by IRWIN MYERS
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THE STORY

Mervyn Holt is engaged by a man calling himself Mazaroff as a traveling companion. After a short tour they put up at the Woodcock inn on Marzadale moor. They meet, casually, Mrs. Elphinstone and Sheila Merchison. Mazaroff tells Holt they are his wife and daughter and that his real name is Merchison. That night Mazaroff falls to return to the inn and his disappearance is unexplained. Holt meets Sheila and tells her of Mazaroff's disappearance. Holt is questioned by Police Sergeant Manners and a reporter, Bowman. Mazaroff's murdered body is found. Crole, Mazaroff's lawyer, and Maythorne, private detective, arrive. Valuable diamonds that Mazaroff usually carried are missing. A gun, stolen from Musgrave, is found at the scene of the murder. Evidence at the inquest proves Mazaroff was Merchison. His will leaves all to Holt. Herman Kloop, close friend of Mazaroff is in London. From him it is learned that Mazaroff possessed two remarkable diamonds.

CHAPTER V—Continued

"Well, about a month or five weeks ago, I was called to the telephone one afternoon, and found Sir Samuel speaking to me. He wanted me to go round to Park lane there and then, to look at and estimate the value of a diamond that had been offered to him. I found Sir Samuel and Lady Loeke in their library; they had with them a stranger whose appearance, as I recollect it, corresponds with the description of Mazaroff given in the newspapers—I particularly remember the cast in the left eye. He was not introduced to me by name. It appeared that the stranger was one who was interested in diamonds in a large way, had heard of Sir Samuel and his wife as possible buyers, and was willing to sell them something of very special value; to wit, a remarkable pair of blue diamonds, of which he had one in his pocket. It was this that I was asked to see. He told me that I was one of a pair—the other was equally fine. He further said that he had been in the diamond trade for some years, in South Africa, had now retired, and this would be his last deal. What the Loeokes wanted to get at was—what were the two diamonds worth? The would-be vendor and myself had a good deal of talk about the matter. He was very fair and reasonable, and he and I eventually came to a decision as to a proper price for the pair."

"And what might that be?" asked Crole, eagerly.

"Well," answered Frobenius, "we agreed that a fair price would be a hundred and sixty thousand pounds."

Crole let out an exclamation of astonishment.

"One hundred and sixty thousand pounds!—for a couple of diamonds!" he said. "Whew!—that's a bit exceptional, isn't it?"

"You have to bear in mind that the diamonds are exceptional," answered Frobenius. "The sum we agreed upon was a reasonable price—not an extravagant one."

"And what happened?" asked Maythorne. "Was the deal carried out?"

"That I do not know," replied Frobenius. "I perceived that after having agreed with the seller as to what would be a fair price, my part was played, and I left seller and buyer talking the matter over."

"You've heard nothing since?" inquired Crole.

"Nothing. I haven't seen Sir Samuel Loeke, nor Lady Loeke, since that afternoon," said the jeweler. "And of course I haven't seen the blue diamond man. But I feel sure that he was the man who is referred to in the newspapers as Mazaroff."

"I don't think there's much doubt about that," assented Crole. "Well, now, we'd better get in touch with these Loeke people," he continued, glancing at me and Maythorne. "Park lane, you said?"

Mr. Frobenius gave us the exact address of Sir Samuel Loeke and left us. Crole and I, as if by common impulse, looked at our companion.

"Well?" said Crole. "What's Maythorne asking himself?"

Maythorne looked up from a pattern which he was mechanically tracing on the tablecloth.

"Only one thing to ask—at present," he said. "Did Mazaroff sell those diamonds to Sir Samuel Loeke? If he didn't—"

"Well?" demanded Crole.

"Then, in that case, Armintrade's got them—in my opinion. And—the job will be to prove that he has! Where have we got the slightest clue to what we want to establish—that he and Mazaroff met up that first day after Mazaroff and Holt arrived at the Woodcock? But we're getting at something—and it all points to Armintrade. Now let's see this Sir Samuel man and get a step further."

We chartered a taxicab and were driven to Park lane, where we pulled up in front of an imposing mansion, at the door of which we were encountered by footmen whose liveries were rather more gorgeous than the usual

run of things in that way. The room into which we were ushered after we had sent in our cards looked as if some very high-class upholsterer had been given carte blanche to wreak his own will and fancy on it. A little, apple-cheeked, rotund man, who wore mutton-chop whiskers and a ready smile came bustling in, a big half-smoked cigar in one pudgy hand.

"I know what you chaps have come for!" he exclaimed, beaming from one to the other of us. "This Mazaroff affair—I've read it all in the papers, and your names, too, same as what I see on your cards—just so. Now then, what's it all about, gentlemen? It's a queer business, I think—what?"

"You're aware of it, then, Sir Samuel?" suggested Crole. "Well up in things as far as they've gone?"

"Who isn't?" exclaimed Sir Samuel. "Been plenty in the papers, anyway. Of course me and her ladyship's read all we could set our eyes to. It was only this morning she says to me, 'Sam' she says, 'as sure as fate somebody'll be coming to us about this here affair!' And—there you are! But I'll tell you what—come this way, gentlemen, and then her ladyship can hear all you've got to say."

We followed Sir Samuel out of the cold grandeur of our first haven into the less formal and more comfortable harbor of another and smaller room, where we found Lady Loeke. She was as rotund as her husband; her dress was of the latest fashion, and she had many rings on her fingers, and it struck me that she was somewhat sharper of intellect than Sir Samuel, not quite so open, and infinitely more watchful.

"Of course I knew we should have inquiries made here," she observed, in a slightly affected tone. "I said so, this morning, to Sir Samuel."

"As I've just told 'em," said Sir Samuel. "Though, to be sure, I've no idea as yet as to how they got here. Nobody knows about our transactions with Mazaroff outside ourselves—so far as I know. Of course, Mazaroff may have talked. But now—how did you come to hear of us?"

"My dear Sir Samuel," replied Crole, solemnly, "there are mysteries within mysteries! A man of your position, and your knowledge of the world will understand me when I say that it is a big thing. You've already read a good deal about it—now, to be brief, what can you tell us?"

Sir Samuel settled himself in a chair.

"Well," he said, with a glance at Lady Loeke. This Mr. Mazaroff called here one day—just as you've done—and introduced himself as a man that had had big dealings in diamonds and the like in South Africa. He'd heard, so he told us, of Lady Loeke as a likely purchaser of something exceptional in diamonds, and he'd thought she'd like to see a particularly fine bit of property that he'd got in that line of goods. Then he told me it was a pair of very fine and rare blue diamonds, and he produced 'em."

"Only one?" inquired Maythorne.

"Only one. The other," continued Sir Samuel, "he said was in the possession of his agent, a Mr. Armintrade, of Courthope's bank, who was just then away holiday making in Northumberland. He said he should be seeing Mr. Armintrade very soon, and he would get the fellow diamond from him—"

"Unless!" interrupted Lady Loeke. "There was an 'unless' about it."

"So there was," admitted Sir Samuel. "Yes—unless Armintrade had got a definite offer from some other cus-

tom—Armintrade, he said, had had the first blue diamond in his possession for some months and might have found an advantageous customer for the pair."

"Then you didn't buy?" asked Maythorne.

"No—we didn't buy," replied Sir Samuel. "What we did was this—I telephoned our regular jeweler, Frobenius, and got him to come here and examine the diamond that Mazaroff had with him. They agreed that a reasonable price for such a pair of blue diamonds would be a hundred and sixty thousand pounds. After Frobenius had gone, Mazaroff and I came to this agreement—if his agent, Armintrade, hadn't got a better offer, or made some arrangement to which they were committed, Mazaroff was to get the second blue diamond from Armintrade, and, on his return to London,

or he could tell you himself. But I never heard him speak of meeting Mazaroff again—did you, Maria?"

"No—I never heard him say anything of that," replied Lady Loeke.

We had a little more conversation with this worthy couple, and then left them. I was anxious to get out of the house; I had an announcement to make which I could not make before.

"I say!" I exclaimed, seizing my companion's elbows. "You remember that—this morning—I spoke of seeing Mazaroff in conversation with a man who was a stranger to me, but whom Mazaroff evidently knew? Well—there's a photograph of that man—the very man!—on Lady Loeke's mantelpiece!"

The two men stopped, staring at me—Crole with an ordinary glare of surprise, but Maythorne with a sudden flash of the eye and an alertness that I had never noticed before in him; it was as if my remark had acted as an illumination.

"That's the man I saw talking to Mazaroff at Huntingdon and again at York," I asserted. "I recognized the photograph instantly."

"The probability is that that's the nephew we heard about—Mallison," said Maythorne. "Let's see—he was referred to as Lady Loeke's nephew and Sir Samuel spoke of him as knowing his way about town pretty well. Now then, where are we? Mallison heard about, and saw, one of the blue diamonds. If the photograph is that of Mallison, as you assert, Holt, Mallison is the man to whom you saw Mazaroff talking first at Huntingdon and then at York. So—does Mallison know anything about this affair? That's to find out—when we can come across Mallison."

He paused for a moment in the middle of the sidewalk, hands plunged in his trousers pockets, eyes staring at the pavement. Suddenly he looked up, signaled to a passing taxicab, and motioned us to follow him into it.

"Come to my office," he said. "I've a chap there—my confidential clerk—who possesses one of the sharpest brains and most retentive memories in Europe. He'll know!"

Maythorne's office was in Conduit street, so we were there in a few minutes. At each end of the room we entered stood a table-desk; at that at the further end sat, when we walked in, a young man who would have attracted my attention wherever I had met him. He was a smallish-sized chap, and his thinish person was arrayed in a tweed suit of very large checks; he wore a hunting stock instead of an ordinary collar, and its folds were gathered together by a gold horseshoe pin; he might, indeed, have been a head stable boy as far as this sort of thing went. But he had the sharpest and queerest pair of blue eyes I have ever seen; the most inquisitive nose, and the straightest line of lip above the squarest and most obstinate of chins—and yet these things were not, severally or collectively, the most remarkable of his features. The thing that one's eye went to first was the fellow's red hair—absolutely, genuinely red, a veritable flame of color. I don't know what Crole thought of him—he had doubtless seen him before, perhaps often—but my own mind immediately crystallized its impressions into a word at sight of the vivid poll, the sharp nose, the general aspect of ready watchfulness. Ferret!

"Cottingley!" Maythorne said, going straight to the subject without preface. "Do we know the name Mallison?"

I saw a swift flash of light in the red-headed one's queer eyes—it was as if a lamp had suddenly been lighted somewhere behind them.

"We do! Mallison, James Mallison."

The creature's voice was as odd as his appearance. It was a sort of subdued falsetto—piping. Maythorne nodded.

"I thought you'd remember, Cottingley. In what connection, now?"

"Well—Mallison square affair. No direct connection—with him. One of our clients was in it, though. Mallison—his name was in the list. Memorized it. James Mallison—no occupation. Address—Park lane. Lady Loeke's nephew—that's who Mallison is."

"And that Wellminster square affair, Cottingley? Gambling business was it?"

"Police raid in a private gambling house in Wellminster square. About three or four months ago. Thirty or forty arrests. Mallison was one of the men on the premises. If you remember, one of our clients was there—came to you in a blue funk. Nothing! Like the scragbook?"

Maythorne nodded his head and held out a hand, and the clerk, turning to a big table that stood in the center of the room, took up a solidly bound volume which proved to contain newspaper cuttings, and with almost an angry celerity found a page unlanded the book over. Maythorne glanced at the extract, and then twisted the volume toward Crole and me.

"Eternal Light"

The illumination used in the "Eternal Light" in New York city is procured through the electric lights. These lights are attached to circuits connected in such a manner that if one falls another automatically will begin functioning.

"Buried With His Five Wives"

In a country town not more than ten miles from Springfield, Ill., is a cemetery near the roadside whose ancient stones, moss-covered and weather-beaten, attract the passerby who may be interested in curious epitaphs. In the center of one lot is a large monument on which is inscribed:

"Here lies John Jones, aged ninety-two. At rest." On the side of the monument are five small stones exactly alike, each bearing the name of a woman and date of death and each having this inscription: "Beloved wife of John Jones."—Springfield Republican.

Lessening Aversion to Formal Music Lessons

Children's aversion to music lessons, entailing long hours of practice for many months, can be overcome by making them familiar at an early age with musical toys, according to Frank H. Richardson, M. D., in Woman's Home Companion.

"Many families have found the approach to a real appreciation and love of music is made easier by having the simpler musical instruments around where they can be picked up and played casually even before formal lessons have begun," says Doctor Richardson. "Such simple things as the life, fagoleto and piccolo; the banjo, mandolin or even the humble ukulele; the xylophone or bells will often tempt not only the child but also the guest in the home."

"Improvised ensembles prove delightful ways of teaching children

First Fireplaces Were Wooden

Many of the first fireplaces were built of wood, and plastered over on the inside with a sort of mud mortar. These early crude fireplaces were huge things, and unquestionably it was from them we got our story of Santa Claus and the chimney. Certainly he would have had no difficulty coming down those early flues. In fact, they were provided with steps on the inside in order that the man of the house could patch the cracks in the plaster with new mud.—Successful Farming.

OREGON STATE NEWS OF GENERAL INTEREST

Principal Events of the Week Assembled for Information of Our Readers.

William Nichols, founder of Milton, was buried there recently. He was 82 years old.

Waterfront mill plant No. 5 of the Port Orford Cedar Products company opened recently at Marshfield with a small crew.

Married in North Bend in May, 1873, Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Simpson celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary there May 21.

At the final session of the P. E. O. state convention held in Klamath Falls recently, Mrs. Grace Kent Magruder of Clatskanie was elected president.

Polk county paid approximately 55 cents for each vote cast at the primary election. The total vote was 3278 and the cost of the election was \$1800.

The \$60,000 armory to be built in Cottage Grove, voted by the last Oregon legislature, will be erected on North Eighth street between Gibbs and Whiteaker avenues.

George H. Brown, 67, known as the potato king of Clatskanie county, was fatally injured when he was struck by the fender of a truck driven by Wilson Wilde, Clackamas.

No hope is held out for the rebuilding of the business section of Bonanza, recently destroyed by fire. Six main buildings, including the bank, supposedly fireproof, were burned.

A boulder dislodged from the hillside by heavy rain demolished Oscar Kelly's new automobile when he struck the rock on the highway two miles west of Clatskanie recently.

The Stoddard Lumber company of Baker has obtained a lease on the abandoned Baker Molding company plant on the west side of town and reopened it June 1 as a cut-up plant.

The Pendleton city council recently passed a milk ordinance for regulation and inspection of dairies providing milk for Pendleton. C. W. Daley, Pendleton, will be employed as milk inspector.

While the fruit crop in the vicinity of Corvallis does not look as promising as growers would like, it is indicated that there will be more than an average yield. Cherries and prunes have been damaged.

A serious situation in Douglas county is in connection with fire blight infestation of apple and pear orchards. Under present weather conditions the blight is apt to make rapid headway until hot weather comes.

Traffic accidents on Oregon highways took a total of 16 lives and resulted in the injury of 376 others during April. A total of 2436 accidents were reported during the month, four of those killed being pedestrians.

Further proof that an ocean long ages ago rolled over central Oregon was obtained recently when there was discovered on hilltops near Mitchell, at an elevation of 3000 feet, numerous marine shells, including a huge coiled ammonite.

An airplane will be used to dust clover with sulphur on the Henry Strixner ranch near Redmond. Sulphur dusting appears to be the only method of preventing mildew, which has been known to reduce crops by 50 per cent.

J. H. Billingslea, supervisor of the Siskiyou national forest, has announced that the United States forest service this summer will reconstruct the suspension bridge across Rogue river at Agnes. Work on the structure will be started soon. The bridge, which was built several years ago at a cost of approximately \$25,000, was wrecked when a flood washed out one of the main piers.

Someone concludes that the experiment proves great reputations to be "all ballyhoo."

It proves only that reputations are real, but hearers are ignorant.

In London a man in a crowded street offered genuine gold sovereigns, worth \$5, for sixpence each. He didn't sell any. The sovereigns were good, the crowd was skeptical.

Our intellectual Senators refuse dial telephones. The old fashioned, inferior system will be restored. Will Rogers says the Senators lack intelligence to work the dials. Carter Glass, says Rogers, thought his dial was a rat trap and baited it with cheese.

That is exaggeration. But the dial system is far better than the old system. Any Senator is capable of the mental effort necessary. And every Senator should encourage all substitutes for needless human labor. An intelligent New York doctor said: "I would have the dial system if it cost \$100 a year extra."

This will interest ten million farmers more than the tariff fight.

The grand champion bull is dead. He lived and died in the Argentine and was sold for \$64,539, his name was Faithful 20, and he was a short horn.

No other bull ever brought such a price.

This Week

by ARTHUR BRISBANE

Mr. Ford's Recipe
India Is Tired
Desperate China
Mussolini's Warning

Henry Ford says people must keep up their spirits, American farmers must develop mass production as American factories do, wages must not be cut, and everybody must be cheerful.

Sound advice for everybody except the man out of a job, and the farmer, who doesn't know how to get mass production out of fifty acres.

Mr. Ford lets the workmen stand still while their work passes in front of them. The farmer can't stand still and make the rows of corn or cows pass in front of him.

But Henry Ford is a genius and may find a way.

Bombay predicts an early end to the fight between Gandhi, sincere courageous, shriveled up little Hindu, locked in a British prison, and the power of the British empire.

Compromises and concessions that the wise British understand thoroughly, are expected to end India's latest struggle for home rule and absolute self-government.

Thus far in history no country has won freedom unless it was willing to fight for it. Individually the Hindus are brave. Collectively they are not combative.

China is in a desperate situation, according to "the established government." Unless that government can soon win a decisive victory in the civil war now raging, China will collapse, economically and otherwise. Banditry on a gigantic scale makes the situation unbearable.

Imagine this country in our civil war, the North fighting the South, with tens of thousands of bandits on both sides of the line, preying on Northerners and Southerners.

China accuses Russia of instigating and financing bandit kidnaping operations.

Talking to a crowd of 100,000 in the Plaza del Euomo at Milan, Mussolini heard savage cries of "Down with France." He told his audience he knew what other nations were doing, how they felt toward Italy, and did not intend that Italy "should be suddenly awakened with a start by some tragic turn of the wheel of history."

France and other European countries will keep out of war, if they can. But war comes like a flash of lightning. It could come tomorrow, with its hatreds, blinding patriotism, clergy calling for recruits, promising God's support, profiteers calling for bond issues, etc.

New York becomes the center of all kinds of high finance. Secret Service uncovers the biggest counterfeiting scheme in history. One million dollars in counterfeit gold certificates were seized. The plant raided would turn out \$6,000,000 such bills in a week, a simple way of combating hard times.

Commissioner Mulrooney's New York police having arrested thieves with hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of stolen jewelry in a New York hotel, picking up some of the \$1,000 bills thrown out of the window, now find in their safe deposit boxes \$1,000,000 worth of stolen jewelry.

Cyrus H. K. Curtis, on the alert for interesting things, tells you that in Chicago last week Jacques Gordon, famous violinist, carrying a \$40,000 Stradivarius, once owned by Paganini, dressed himself in threadbare clothes and played on the sidewalks of Michigan avenue with a little cigar box to collect coins. He got a few one, five and ten-cent pieces, very few, for a concert for which he would ordinarily be paid \$1,000.

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Teen-A-Mint
The Chewing Gum
LAXATIVE
No Taste But the Mint
Like Gum
For Constipation
Non habit forming
Safe Scientific

USE GLENN'S SULPHUR SOAP
Contains 33 1/2% Pure Sulphur
Soft, Clear Skin
Rohland's Styptic Cotton, 3c

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Her Need
Little Betsy, who was ill, and with the privilege of an invalid, demanded so much of her mother's time and attention that her older brother, Fred, was a trifle annoyed. One day when Betsy had kept her devoted parent reading aloud to her until she was almost hoarse, Fred remarked succinctly: "Well, mom, I think what Betsy needs is a 'talking picture of you.'"

for Stomach and LIVER TROUBLES
Coated tongue, bad breath, constipation, biliousness, nausea, indigestion, dizziness, insomnia result from acid stomach. Avoid serious illness by taking August Flower at once. Get at any good drugist. Relieves promptly—sweetens stomach, livens liver, aids digestion, clears out poisons. You feel fine, eat anything with

Or a Press Agent
A fourteen-year-old school boy has been expelled because his teachers claim that he is incapable of telling the truth. If this young man doesn't mend his ways he will likely end up in the weather bureau.—Life.



"I Feel Like a New Person"

"I took Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound when I was tired, nervous and run-down. I saw the advertisement and decided to try it because I was hardly able to do my housework. It has helped me in every way. My nerves are better, I have a good appetite, I sleep well and I do not tire so easily. I recommend the Vegetable Compound to other women for it gives me so much strength and makes me feel like a new person."—Mrs. Lena Young, R. # 1, Ellsworth, Maine.

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound