

MAMBA'S DAUGHTERS

by Du Bose Heyward

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neally arranged bindings. There were several etchings, and odd bits of statuary. In a corner stood a glass case containing a small collection of fossils from the mines. His glance came back to Wentworth and rested on him questioningly. He had had him neatly catalogued. The boy had been hopelessly devoid of ability, personality, everything that could make for success. He had taken him on and buried him here because Kate Wentworth was one of the finest women God ever made, and he wanted to do what he could for her son. Now I gather that Baggart subpoenaed



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reinforced by this inexplicable background, the boy was emerging as a mystery, and he was suspicious of mysteries, especially in business. His employe had changed physically, too—filled out—and there was an ease and resilience about his carriage that denoted reserves of vigour.

Saint begged his guest to be seated and returned to the store for the box of cigars. When he re-entered the room Mr. Raymond was standing before the mantelpiece from which he was in the act of lifting a small curious object, holding it gingerly in his heavy, blunt fingers.

"What's this peculiar affair, Wentworth?" the inquired.
Saint took it and held it with a strange sort of deference. It was about six inches in height, made of some heavy, dark wood. Oddly out of proportion, it yet resembled a woman in a kneeling posture. The limbs were massive and primitively modelled, the eyes half closed, the nose broad and flat.

The answer came with diffidence. "Oh, that! Why that's a piece of primitive African sculpture. It was almost a duplicate of a piece in a collection at the museum, and when it was offered the other day by the British Museum for sale or exchange the director arranged for me to take it off their hands."

He hesitated a moment, while he studied the bit of wood, then he added impulsively: "Not often a fellow down here gets a chance like that I can tell you."

"Ahem! no—I suppose not," Raymond replied. Then, seizing the opportunity offered by the topic, he sat down, relighted his cigar, and said with some sententiousness: "Negro, eh! Well, that brings us to the matter in hand. I thought, Wentworth, that we had rather given you an idea of the policy toward Baggart and his men out here. It's not the sort of thing that we issue orders about, you understand, but there is a general feeling among the men that it is for the good of all concerned not to interfere with his administration of the law in this district. Perhaps you haven't quite realized this? And he looked at Saint with raised eyebrows.

"But I do not understand, Mr. Raymond, and God knows I've minded my own business. Why I even let that yellow skunk Bluton hang around the store, and keep my mouth shut while I wait on him."

"Oh, it's nothing about the store," said Mr. Raymond hastily. "It's this matter of Davy something-or-other

him for crap shooting Saturday night, and that you appeared for him and swore to his alibi."

"Oh, that!" exclaimed Saint, his face clearing. "Certainly, I see you don't understand. I had Davy here helping me take stock until midnight, then I saw him go home. When he told me about his summons; thought that there was some mistake, so I offered to go to the hearing and clear it up for him. That was all."

Raymond leaned forward with his elbows on the arms of the chair and regarded Saint intently. The boy was struck again, as he had been that first day by the kindness of his eyes, but when he spoke the bold, flexible voice had a decisive edge to it.

"I see that I have to be very plain-spoken with you, Wentworth. It is a hard matter to put into words, but I am going to try to get it over to you. We—that is the Company, the labour the magistrate you—have all shaken down into a system that works. It may look unjust, it certainly is faulty, but I am not sure that it is such a bad arrangement after all. To begin with the state-out a magistrate here and requires him to maintain an office, a constable and live like a white man on seventy-five dollars a month, and—here's the joker—such accessories as the office may yield. The incumbent holds his office at the pleasure of the voters—not the mining interests with their few white votes, but the rank and file of the poor-white, small farmers, workmen who fear the Negro in the mass worse than they do the devil. They give their man the job for what it is worth, requiring of

him two things: to keep the Negro as they say in his place, and, with almost no actual police at his command, to maintain order in the district. From their point of view Baggart is a success. He has absolute power to cause the arrest and fix the penalty of any man upon the knowledge and belief of his constable or the invaluable Pluton. Now you see

what will happen to the mining company if it interferes. If we stand with a Negro openly against the magistrate we are going back on our colour; according to his point of view, we are demoralising the Negroes and putting unsafe notions in their heads. In reprisal, then, the magistrate has only to flood the village

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