Diamond Cut Diamond

By JANE BUNKER

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CHAPTER XIII.—Continued.

—14—

"Billy, dear, do listen to reason for half a second. What are we going to tell the president? We haven't got the whole story even yet out of him"—I pointed in the direction of the dining room—"and there mustn't be any gap in it. We've got to see Mrs. Delario and get her evidence—we've got to see Claire—"

"He'll make her say anything."

"You and I can break her down under cross-examination. You see, we haven't a thing but his word—"

"And the diamonds," Billy interrupted. "I'm taking your word for those—you didn't see fit to show 'em to me."

His tone was a trifle sarcastic, indicating that there might still be some legitimate doubt as to the existence of the stones in question, in spite of all the adventure over them; but I ignored it and went on: "He made one slip—I saw it at the time, and now I can't remember what it was. It went slap out of my head and it was important—something about . . . No, I can't remember. It was a sort of key to something else—"

"Can't you think?" urged Billy. "Every little detail's important now. And lordy-lord—what a story, and my scoop!"

The reporter was romping around in Billy's inside, determined to push the story to a finish; while romping around in my insides was my natural caution. Why should we do anything to warn the Emperor William? He might deny everything and say he never even heard of the diamonds! Yes, one false step would make Billy and me the laughing-stock of diplomatic circles throughout the world. We must get all our proof before we divulged the secret on which the fate of our nation depended.

The net result of our hurried colloquy was that we returned to the dining room and silently relieved the still-sorrowing monsieur of his handcuffs. Which done, Billy presented him with leave of absence from our society in the words:

"Monsieur, you are free to go," and added a courtly bow.

I bowed also. Thus we signified with all the manners we possessed that the interview, pleasing as it had been, was at an end.

Our action—simple enough to us and in line with the plan we'd just mapped out for getting at the truth—left monsieur as dazed as anything we'd done; inexplicably, we had abruptly set him adrift, without threats or explanations and without—the diamonds. I smiled and said, quite as though he'd been drinking tea with me: "I'll say good night to you, monsieur." With that, I held out my hand.

Monsieur did not rise. He did not take my offered hand. He stared—a really frightened, childish stare, first at me, then at Billy. He had been dismissed—every second he longer remained marked him a trespasser. Yet he remained, glued to his chair and dumb. Speech seemed to have deserted him. Twice he essayed it, but the words stuck in his throat and he looked to us to help him out.

"Billy Dear, Do Listen to Reason."

The clock chimed the four-quarters to nine and then the hour. Monsieur spoke.

"I have place myself in your position as American and I appreciate your feeling," he began, and he went on to tell us as a man he grieved for us; how as a would-be friend he grieved for us; how as the emperor's messenger he grieved for us; and how I—in the innocent carrying off of a slipper from the customs house—one of a pair in which his daughter had, at his command, secreted a box of diamonds belonging to the emperor—had brought myself within the circle of implacable, all-seeing, all-avenging and never-ending wrath, whether the diamonds were lost, strayed, stolen from me, or drowned in the sea; wrath that would follow me and my name forever, world without end, amen.

"All right, let it," I replied curtly.

"But would it not be better to consider?" urged monsieur. "Ze wrass of ze emperor is terrible. Consider, madame, I beg you to consider. Zoze diamonds zat you have found in zat slipper you have ze misfortune to carry off. Consider to give zem back."

"They were not in the slipper I carried off."

Monsieur positively jumped. "Zey were not in zat slipper?"

"No—on my word of honor as a gentlewoman, monsieur, I tell you those diamonds were not in the slipper I carried off."

"Mon Dieu!" he said under his breath. "Madame Delario must have zem—in spite of her denial—in spite of zat I search ze entire house—and herself—and find also ze slipper in her wardrobe as she would not leave it if she find zoze diamonds."

"But she may not have found them—they may have fallen out and got lost—"

"Impossible—impossible," he interrupted. "I have examine bose zoze slippers—you see it is zis way: My daughter have glue ze box in one, safe, and on an evening you tell Madame Delario to wear zoze slippers and Claire have bui just time to remove ze box and she returns it to ze uzzer slipper. It is zat little accident—and some words from yourself—zat convince me it is yourself who has found zoze diamonds—"

"No, monsieur. When you accused me of robbing Claire of jewelry I hadn't the least idea what you meant. I suppose you accused Mrs. Delario of the same thing? Didn't you accuse her of taking jewels from Claire—just as you did me—without specifying what kind of jewels?"

"Oui—yes. Naturally, I do not specify, for ze reason if she find ze diamonds, she know to what I refer; but if you have find zem, I do not tell for what I seek."

"Well, that's it, I do believe!" I exclaimed in the tone of having discovered the key to the whole difficulty. "You said jewels and she thought you meant what we should mean by it—as we use the word, we think of pins, bracelets, pendants, made-up articles, you understand."

"Ah, so zat is ze way of it!" he cried, popping off his chair in a hurry. "I see it is some error of idiom of ze language zat cause all ze trouble. I go immediately to ze estimable Madame Delario and explain all to her."

He took up his hat, which Billy had picked up off the floor after the scrimmage and laid on the dining-room table.

"Oh, monsieur—you a diplomat!" I flipped off. "And you think you can go to an American citizen after such accusations as you've made and say: 'It was all a mistake,' and settle everything?"

"But I apologize for ze mistake," he urged, as though his sweet apology paid for everything he'd done and brought forth a box of diamonds on a salver, here-they-are-thank-you-for-taking-them.

I laughed. "Suppose she won't accept your apology?" I asked, and before he got a reply, I added: "She probably won't even see you—not after the way you treated her."

"I bet she doesn't even see you," Billy supported, seeing my drive. "What are you going to do?" He was anxious to make monsieur commit himself.

Monsieur twisted his hands nervously and I kept the ball rolling by observing slyly: "You have just told us that the most profound secrecy must be maintained, so you cannot call in the police. But there is one thing you can do—" I paused.

He asked breathlessly, "And zat is—?"

"Go straight to the president and lay the whole case before him."

Monsieur looked as if he'd fall in a faint at my feet.

"Ze president—mon Dieu!" He used his handkerchief over his face. "Madame—in pity—out of ze kindness of your so kind heart—I srow myself on your mercy—I, De Ravenol—and I ask you to help me in ze recovery of zoze diamonds in secret. I ask it for ze sake of Claire. I ask on my knee—"

And the man was actually preparing to do it, too! But I, not being used to that sort of demonstration and seeing it as anything but a compliment that he felt he had to go such lengths to propitiate me—for I like to think myself at least decently approachable on common humane grounds—responded to his near-kneel with a peremptory, "Don't do it!" and a look and gesture that showed him he could save the histrionics. "How can I help you?" I questioned.

"It is a case for—diplomacy—in dealing wiz ze lady; and I ask—as a so great favor—zat you see Madame Delario and discover ze truse from her, if she have find ze little box—and persuade her to her duty to return it."

The net result of the remainder of the interview was that monsieur promised to relieve both Mrs. Delario and me of all espionage immediately—dismiss his solitary detective who was shadowing me—bring Claire to the house the next evening for a full confession of her part of the smuggling; while I promised to see Mrs. Delario the first thing in the morning and use all my influence with her.

"I think that is all—this evening," said I sweetly, giving him the hint to go.

I at once got Billy's coat and hat from my wardrobe, where they were hidden, and coming through the hall I managed to signal him to go along with monsieur.

They left together—apparently on the best of terms.

"Tomorrow I'll decide about going to the president," thought I, turning out the lights. "I've got everything all my own way now and nothing is going to happen tonight—that's one thing to be thankful for." And with these and similar fatuous maunderings and self-congratulations I tumbled into bed without even bothering to lock the kitchen door.

They Left Together.

CHAPTER XIV.

"The Jewels Are Mine."

To this day I've never quite recovered from the astonishment and chagrin when on waking up in the morning I reviewed the case with a refreshed mind and realized with what ease De Ravenol had imprisoned both Mrs. Delario and me in our own homes and had us quaking in our boots in fear of our very lives!

Monsieur had managed Mrs. Delario even better than he had me—he had merely left a detective in her house to watch her by day and lock her up by night. In fact, she'd actually invited the detective in proof of her innocence; for when monsieur had accused her of stealing jewels she saw in her mind's eye—just as I did—trinkets, jewelry; and the idea that he was referring to seven unset diamonds caged in her slipper never entered her head.

"You have accused me of a shocking crime—a crime that offends every principle of decency as well as morals," she told him with spirit, "and I now insist that you convince yourself of my innocence before you leave the house. Here is the key to my bedroom—here is the passkey to all the other rooms. Have your man watch me while you examine everything—everything—and then you must get a woman to search me."

This unsolicited action, her flat denial and his finding the slipper where she'd carelessly dropped it in her wardrobe threw the scent on me. In two hours monsieur convinced himself that she did not have the diamonds and knew nothing about them, and he then requested her—as the proof of her noncomplicity—to let him lock her in her room and send for me! And she didn't dare to refuse!

And there you have, simple as simple could be, the whole of it. I had her side of the story when I saw her Sunday morning as monsieur's messenger. But I had enough of the story before I went to her to feel pretty well chagrined; yet sad, too, as I thought of the disappointment I had in store for her when I told her that Emperor William owned her "find" and how the diamonds came to be in her slipper.

I confess I didn't like very much the way she'd lied to me about the uncle abroad who had left them to her. Still—it was an understandable lie: since she'd found the diamonds and didn't know who owned them she felt they belonged to her as much as if they'd been left her in a will.

Mrs. Delario herself admitted me; gave a gasp when she saw who it was, and whirled me into the seance room and locked the door on us before we exchanged a syllable.

We sank into chairs. I felt as if a tidal wave had swept from under me and left me not even hanging up in a coconut tree but sitting still in peaceful security. It was she who got us down from the high peaks to the levels where conversation can go afoot without falling off, by asking, "And how are you—after it all?" to which I replied, "But how are you—after it all?" and we both laughed.

Her laugh died away into an indignant frown. "You never heard anything like it," she cried. "He came here with a detective—and it wasn't five minutes after you got out of the house, Monday—and accused me—me!—of stealing Claire's bracelets!"

"Bracelets?" I echoed.

"Yes—me."

I said "Oh," slowly. I hadn't expected she'd grind the word jewels quite so fine.

"Did you ever hear anything quite so outrageous?" she rushed on. "To come here and say I robbed his child of jewelry! I don't believe she had any jewelry, anyway—it was all a trumped-up story to get something out of me; but I was so indignant—" and she poured out the whole tale.

"Well, it's all over," she concluded. "I didn't care how much monsieur searched—I knew I hadn't robbed Claire, and I knew that so long as you had my diamonds they were safe I didn't worry after the first day or so."

She said "my diamonds," and now I had to tell her!

"Mrs. Delario there seems to be a misunderstanding about those diamonds," I began suavely.

She gave a start and asked, "How, misunderstanding? You mean they're not worth all you said? Well—you didn't tell me positively they were worth—that." She seemed to hesitate at "a million dollars," which is what I said.

"Oh, yes—I still stick to that—that's the worst of it: they are worth it—that's what made them shining targets for that thief."

"Thief!" she cried. "You say 'thief,' too! Then he was, after all!" She was very much excited, and repeated the word several times with a kind of joy and ran on rapidly: "I wouldn't tell you what I thought about him, but I knew he was a thief. I knew it in Paris—I knew it in Antwerp—it was in Antwerp—after I'd made all the arrangements to bring Claire over—that I heard it clairaudiently, 'De Ravenol is a thief.' I knew it here—in this very room—the first time he came." And then she smiled at me benignantly: "And thanks to you he didn't get my diamonds, so we're safe—Claire's safe—she'll never know the truth about her father from me.

"Claire never had any jewelry—the whole accusation was trumped up to get the chance to rob me. But how under the sun did he know I had those diamonds?"

"He says he put them there—or at least Claire did—in your slipper," I blurted.

Her hands flew to her heart. "Never!" she cried. "Never in the world!"

"And he says they're his," I persisted, feeling I'd got my opening at last. I put it that way partly to disabuse her mind of the idea that monsieur was a thief; partly to save her from the too sudden shock of the Emperor William. I saw I'd have to let her down gradually.

"They're mine," she returned vehemently. "I swore to you they were mine. I swear to you again—now—here—in the sight of God—they are mine. Consider—" her tone was an appeal now, "if they had not been mine—if I had stolen them from Claire—would I have shown them to you? Would I have asked you to help me dispose of them?"

I was forced to admit, "No—of course not"—I had already taken that into consideration.

"Yes—I grant you that you honestly believe they're yours," I admitted. "But what I've got to know is, how they came to be yours."

She told me then, hesitating no longer, the unbelievable story—unbelievable by every modern standard and from every scientific point of view, explaining why she'd prevaricated in the first instance about her uncle. It wasn't, after all, quite what you'd call by so harsh a name as lying.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Best Preparation for Writer.

"Read the Bible for illumination, knowledge and power," said Dana; "'Gulliver's Travels' for detail, and Robert Louis Stevenson for style." Any man or woman who will make a study of the Bible, and who will analyze "Gulliver's Travels" and sing Robert Louis Stevenson into his heart, will become a good writer, provided there is also natural talent to start with.

A railroad in England supplies toys for children taking long journeys, to relieve the monotony of riding.

A CHANGE OF HEART

By CAROLINE LOCKHART

(Copyright.)

"I hates kids; I despises kids," said Dad Walker querulously, as he rubbed a clean place on the window-pane and looked at the household goods of Doody, the squawman, going into the log shack across the street. "There's eight of them Doody young uns, if I got the right count on them. They mill round so fast it's like countin' sheep."

"Some folks is all-same pigeons," observed Bacon-Rind Dick, who was mixing baking-powder biscuit in the dish-pan.

"Er Belgian hares, er French Canadians, er field-mice, er—"

"He's come up off the reservation to put his kids in school, I reckon."

"He furnishes the school and we furnish the teacher. Personally myself," declared Dad, sourly "I don't aim to educate eight Doodys after this year. I've paid school taxes and packed schoolmarms back and forth from the railroad as long as I'm goin' to."

"Still, them Doodys ought to be company for us this winter, with everybody movin' out of the camp."

"Company! I won't have nothin' to do with 'em. I hates half-breeds worse nor p'izen, and I don't want them kids to git in the habit of runnin' over here. They're liable to pick up something."

"That's so," Bacon-Rind replied dryly. "They might steal the stove, or the bunk, or that thirty-pound bear-trap."

"Makes no diff'rence; and if they start visitin' here, I'll tell 'em where to get off at."

By dwelling upon the Doodys and the manner in which they would overrun him during the winter, Dad became a kind of monomaniac upon the subject, and each morning when he looked through the window-pane he demanded with the same regularity with which some people comment upon the weather:

"Whatever kin a man think of hisself to marry a blanket squaw?"

To his surprise, he was not molested by the Doodys.

When the days grew short and the towering mountains surrounding the abandoned copper-camp of Swift Water made them even shorter, the long evenings seemed interminable. Bacon-Rind thought wistfully of the Doody family, whose shrieks of exuberant laughter frequently penetrated the silence which lay between the two partners, long since talked out.

"These snows ought to have brought the sheep down," he said one day, regarding the white mountains speculatively. "I b'leeve I'll get Billy Upton and take a hunt. I hankers for sheep-meat. You won't be lonesome?"

"Lonesome! Me?" Dad snorted. "I was seven months alone onct, whar the timber was so thick you had to lay on your back to see the sun."

So Bacon-Rind packed his camp outfit on a cayuse and started with Billy Upton for the hills.

Bacon-Rind was a pinhead—Dad never had thought of him as anything else; yet he missed his partner uncommonly. He had to admit that.

Late one afternoon he washed a place on the window, lower down, where he could sit and look at the "injun outfit" across the way. He was lonely; he had to admit that, too, and it looked kind of sociable to see the black heads bobbing behind the windows of the log house opposite.

Dad oiled his boots with bear grease and darned his socks; then, when he could think of nothing else to do which would enable him to kill time, he took his ax out to the grindstone, although it was already so sharp he could almost cut hair with it.

"If Bacon-Rind ain't back pretty soon," he said peevishly, "I'll git worse nor the wild man I knowed in Wisconsin, who lived in a holler tree and et a deer at a sittin'."

II.

"Gee, but you're a nawful big man!"

Startled, Dad dropped the can and turned to look at the owner of the shrill but friendly voice.

Recovering from the slight embarrassment caused by the steady gaze of a pair of black eyes, he replied: "And I'm the runt of the family. Father was twenty-two inches between the eyes, and they fed him with a shovel. What might your name be?"

"Maudie Doody. I got a nawful splinter in my foot, an' ma's washin' and won't take it out, so I runned away." Miss Doody stood like a chicken on a cold day, holding up a bare foot which she had thrust into an old moccasin. "I brung a pin for you to get it out with," she added.

"Do you want to p'izen yourself, usin' pins?" demanded Dad sternly.

"Gee, you got awful blue eyes!" observed Miss Doody, quite unmoved.

She followed Dad into the house, and, pulling up a chair, thrust her bare foot into his lap. She was so entranced and fascinated by Dad's unconscious grimaces as he pulled at the splinter with a needle that she forgot the pain of it, and said flatteringly when he had finished:

"You don't hurt half as much as ma. You don't like to hurt me, nuther, do you?"

"I hates cryin' and yellin'."

"You don't like Injuns, nuther, do you?"

"Some Injuns," Dad [illegible] ly—"good Injuns."

"I'm good. I never [illegible] My brother, he's bad. [illegible] tored out fightin' [illegible] bad and talked Injun [illegible] sing?"

"Like a markin'-[illegible] grimly.

"What can you sing?" [illegible] Doody pointedly.

"Well, I can sing 'Wh[illegible] Colorady Wends Its W[illegible] sing 'Bury Me Not on the [illegible] an' I can sing 'Away to [illegible] boo-boo,' an' I can sing-[illegible]

"Sing 'Baraboo-boo-boo.'"

Dad hesitated.

"It ain't hardly a song," [illegible] "It's more like words set [illegible]

"Sing 'Baraboo,'" [illegible] Doody.

Dad cleared his throat [illegible] his voice in a key which [illegible] and delighted his visitor.

"Away to the Baraboo-[illegible] Dad lustily. "To the Ba[illegible] away! Away to the Ba[illegible] To the Baraboo, away, [illegible]

Almost any disinterested [illegible] would have agreed that he [illegible] scribed his song rather wel[illegible] ed like a hungry coyote [illegible] bunch of willows.

"Sing it again, and tre[illegible] manded Miss Doody, sliding [illegible] chair to climb into Dad's [illegible]

She came the next day [illegible] hours, and the next day, [illegible] after that, always bursting [illegible] room in a manner which [illegible] flight; and each time the [illegible] took place between them.

"Sing 'Baraboo,'"

"Aw—you don't want to [illegible] boo,'"

"'Baraboo.' Make a lap[illegible] tons on your coat hurt my e[illegible]

"Away to the Baraboo-[illegible]

"Trot me!"

"To the Baraboo, away, [illegible] to the Baraboo-boo-boo!"

It was a ravishing song!

III.

"When the snow lays deep [illegible] and it comes off cold and [illegible] blow, I feel like bitin' myself," [illegible] tered irritably.

It was lonely! Even as Dad [illegible] the door of the squawman's [illegible] opened, and Maudie Doody [illegible] over her shoulder like some [illegible] ture, to see if she was [illegible] stepped into the street.

Dad's heart leaped joyously [illegible] again as she turned and began [illegible] dering through the snow to [illegible] pole bridge.

Yes, she was wading through [illegible] drifts to the pole bridge!

She always stopped there [illegible] way to school to see if that [illegible] trout was still lying motionless [illegible] pool below.

She reached the bridge and [illegible] the edge, peering into the water [illegible]

Dad reached for his sheepskin [illegible]

In the second that he took [illegible] from the swaying little figure [illegible] bridge, it disappeared! His [illegible] late cry was like a bellow as [illegible] open the door and covered the [illegible] vening drifts in leaps and bounds [illegible]

When Doody, the squawman, [illegible] Harrison, from the other side [illegible] reached the bridge, the icy water [illegible] the pool already had closed over [illegible] head. The widening circles told [illegible] he had sunk, and the tense [illegible] were minute-long before he rose [illegible] face was livid with the terrible [illegible] cold which numbed like a [illegible] shock.

"She's ketched to something," [illegible] gasped.

"Come out!" yelled Harrison.

For reply, Dad sank once more [illegible] when he rose again a calico skirt [illegible] gripped in his stiffened fingers. [illegible] the last desperate stroke of which [illegible] was capable, he dragged Maudie [illegible] to the water's edge. The north [illegible] froze his clothes into an icy shell [illegible] half unconscious, he staggered with [illegible] child in his arms to his own cabin.

"It's no use," said Harrison, [illegible] looked at Maudie Doody lying [illegible] the torn red quilt on Dad's bunk. [illegible] was under too long."

"She's dead!" The squaw crouched [illegible] little in the corner of her shawl [illegible] went home.

Doody and the seven little Doodys [illegible] followed her, sniffling.

It was hours later that Bacon-Rind [illegible] approached the cabin, a hind-quarter [illegible] of sheep-meat upon his back, a [illegible] ing smile of anticipation upon his [illegible] Some sound from within caused him [illegible] listen.

"Away to the Baraboo-boo-boo, [illegible] the Baraboo—away—away!"

Bacon-Rind grinned and scraped [illegible] feet on the step.

"He's got lonesome and desp[illegible] thought. "Dad's drunk."

"Hi, old man!" he yelled.

The door flew open; and Dad, [illegible] stick of stovewood in one hand and [illegible] expression upon his face not unlike that of a she-bear with cubs, towered above him, shouting threatening[illegible] he pointed to the bunk:

"What you comin' in like a [illegible] for? Can't you see she's asleep?"

Snake's Fascination a Myth.

Those who have had much experience with snakes and have had their business to observe carefully their habits and ways, both in the natural condition in the wild state and in captivity, state that in no instance have they known a snake to fascinate an animal in the manner in which it is alleged to do. One authority speaks of two species many a time in [illegible] surrounded by a crowd of [illegible] chattering, excited birds. But the birds were not, he says, fascinated by the snake; they were endeavoring to intimidate it in order to frighten it from their haunts.

15 Fluid D[illegible]
DROP[illegible]
A SPECIAL—3 PER C[illegible] Preparation[illegible] Food by Re[illegible] Stomachs and Bo[illegible]
CHILD[illegible] Promoting Dig[illegible] Cheerfulness and Rest C[illegible] Opium, Morphi[illegible] NOT NARC[illegible]
A Delightful Remedy f[illegible] Constipation and Diarr[illegible] Feverishness a[illegible] LOSS OF SLEE[illegible] Guarantee Signature of Chas. H. Fletcher
THE CENTAUR COMPANY, NEW YORK.
At 6 months old [illegible] DOSES—40 CE[illegible]
Exact Copy of Wrapper.

[illegible]ED THE LIGHT ON

[illegible] Illumination That W[illegible] Pleasing to the Cen[illegible] tral Figure.

[illegible] few years ago we drove [illegible] and camped along the way [illegible] first night's camp was [illegible] field along a side road, far [illegible] the main road to avoid [illegible] ersby.

However, in the midst of our [illegible] preparations a car with [illegible] turned off the main roa[illegible] toward us. My wife, wh[illegible] the rear seat of our car f[illegible] foir, gathered her kimono [illegible] and ran around in front [illegible] shine in case the spotlight fr[illegible] car should be turned in [illegible] tion.

[illegible] the same time another m[illegible] party reached for the [illegible] to extinguish one small [illegible] we were using. Imagin[illegible] consternation, my wife's horro[illegible] shouts of laughter from the [illegible] as he pushed the wrong [illegible] through the powerful lights [illegible] full on my wife's thinly clad [illegible]

A New One.

[illegible] were still out in the con[illegible] and Tom had just asked Sa[illegible] She had said, "I don' [illegible] do," and thus they were en[illegible] Tom, dear," she began, "am [illegible] girl—"

"Now, look here, Sally," he [illegible] "don't ask me if you a[illegible] girl I ever loved. You kn[illegible] I am I do—"

"Oh, that wasn't the question [illegible] she answered. "I was just [illegible] if I was the only girl that [illegible] you?"

[illegible] how little a man be[illegible] he detests irreverence [illegible]

[illegible] that all the world lo[illegible] the proof is missing.

Sleep[illegible]
—so[illegible]
plays [illegible]
your [illegible]
breaks[illegible]
INS[illegible]
POS[illegible]
This econ[illegible] age has [illegible] like flav[illegible] satisfies
Postum Cerea[illegible]
Sold by Grocers