

THE DIAMOND FROM THE SKY

By ROY L. McCARDELL

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A novelization of the photo play selected as the best in over 19,000 submitted to the scenario department of the Chicago Tribune in a \$10,000 prize contest during December and January. The manuscripts in this competition came from many sections in the United States and Canada. Authors of note as well as thousands of amateurs took part.

\$10,000 For 1,000 Words or Less

For an Idea For a Sequel to

"THE DIAMOND FROM THE SKY"

The American Film Manufacturing Company's Picturized Romantic Novel in Chapters.

This contest is open to any man, woman or child who is not connected, directly or indirectly, with the Film Company or the newspapers publishing the continued story. No literary ability is necessary to qualify as a contestant.

You are advised to see the continued photo play in the theaters where it will be shown—to read the story as it runs every week, and then send in your suggestion. Contestants must confine their contributions for the sequel to 1,000 words or less. It is the idea that is wanted.

CHAPTER I.

A Heritage of Hate.

IT is June in Virginia, June in the year of our Lord 1882. The fields are green, the early blossoming of the honeysuckle gives a fragrance to the air. At such a time, in such a scene and such surroundings, two horsemen meet. Both are men of striking appearance and proud presence and are in the maturity of their middle manhood. They are Stanleys, cousins in blood. The one on the bay hunter, Judge Lamar Stanley, is smooth of face, that is marked with cruel and heavy lines. His face is harsh and set, and the grim lines of his countenance set the grimmer at the approach of his kinsman, Colonel Arthur Stanley. The latter rides his chestnut saddler like a soldier. Judge Stanley's seat is that of a huntsman. Even as they ride they differ. Colonel Stanley's face is kinder. A white mustache and imperial add to his soldierly appearance.

In Richmond during the war Judge Lamar Stanley had been high in the councils of the cabinet of President Jefferson Davis. In the field his cousin, Arthur Stanley, followed the fortunes of the Confederate army as a member of the staff of General Lee. Crossing each other in love, crossing each other in martial, civic and social ambitions, their mutual hatred grew with their growing years. There were deep causes for all this in the thwarted social ambitions of the judge. As the scion of the elder branch of the American Stanleys, springing from their common ancestor, Sir Arthur Stanley, a gentleman adventurer, who came to America in 1615, Colonel Stanley held possession of the precious family heirloom, the diamond from the sky.

The family tradition ran that this great gem had fallen in a blazing meteor at the feet of Sir Arthur Stanley three centuries ago just as he was about to be burned at the stake by the Indians, whom he had in some way affronted and aroused.

The legend was that the Indians had deemed the falling meteor an omen from the Great Spirit that the white man about to be tortured was under the favor of his protection. This legend further stated that Sir Arthur Stanley himself had so accepted the diamond from the sky as a token of supernatural favor, especially as the Indians had called it "the fallen star," and as "The Fallen Star" Sir Arthur Stanley himself had been called after his banishment from the court of King James of England for some wild escapade of gallantry when he was but turned of twenty-two.

In the age stained family archives kept in the strong box at Stanley hall, the great mansion home of Colonel Stanley, there was the will of the wild Sir Arthur, and at its end there was a strange prophetic clause. This clause read that when the noble line of Stanleys became extinct in England and an heir of the old Stanley earldom was sought among the elder sons of the American family of Stanleys in Virginia the diamond from the sky, the heritage of the elder son of this elder branch, should be borne and worn back to England by the American earl when he came into his English earldom.

At the time we write—that is, in June, 1882—the last of the earls of Stanley was a bachelor invalid and feeble, without hope or desire of an heir.

Colonel Stanley had no son to succeed to the earldom in England. He was married to a fair young wife, who expected shortly to become a mother.

Were this child a girl it could have no hope for the English great title in the family nor to ever possess the diamond from the sky.

On the other hand, Judge Lamar Stanley had a son, a sturdy boy of three. His proud wife, equally with himself, dreamed of a day when this boy should bear the honors and have the vast estates of the Stanley earldom and the wonderful, priceless diamond from the sky.

As the two horsemen, kinsmen and bitter enemies, rode down upon each other in a smiling Virginia lane neither would swerve his horse a hairsbreadth for the other. Into each other, full tilt, their blooded horses charged, and then the superior horsemanship of the soldier, skilled in cavalry encounters, told. Over went horse and judge into the dust of the road, and, with a mocking laugh and not deigning to look back at his fallen kinsman, who arose and cursed and shook his fist at him, Colonel Stanley rode on.

The judge, discomfited in the dust, saw the dark face of a gypsy grinning at him through a hedge near by. The hedge was on the property of Judge Stanley. Mounted on his horse again he now saw a gypsy van on the other side of the hedge. Judge Stanley, quivering with rage, rode into the gap of the hedge and hoarsely ordered off the intruders.

"But, yo' see, it is like this," expostulated the gypsy. "I am alone here with my wife, sir. Our people has gone on. My wife is very sick. We can't go on, sir."

"What do I care what ails your wretched 'fe!" snarled the judge. "Drive your horses off my land and get out. I am judge in this county."

"Mebbe you are president of the United States, too," grumbled the gypsy. "Do you think you own the roads because the gentleman that just rode by knocked you off your horse on the road?"

Roused to a burst of fury, the judge drove his horse at the gypsy and lashed him cruelly with the heavy riding whip he always carried. A van but handsome gypsy woman, clutching at her side as though in pain, tottered out from the van as though to protect the gypsy from the sheer brutality of the horseman. Stanley struck the gypsy woman across the face, leaving a livid welt. To his surprise she never flinched, but faced him dauntlessly.

"The bitterest disappointment of your life and a death that will be a buzzard's feast for you for that blow!" she said tensely, a light of prophecy in her courageous eyes.

The judge faltered and wheeled his horse, but turning to the gypsy man he cursed him again and bid him be off his land. Then he rode on.

Meanwhile Colonel Stanley had ridden to the village of Fairfax and had halted his horse at the gate of a pretty cottage. A sign by the gate bore the words, "Dr. Henry Lee."

The doctor was an amiable man of some sixty years, inclined to corpulence, a kinsman of General Robert E. Lee. The doctor had been a surgeon in the Confederate army. Some fifteen years older than the colonel, he had been the guardian of the other. During the war the colonel had saved the doctor's life by carrying him when wounded back to the Confederate lines under a galling fire. A further bond between them, if others were needed, was the mutual hatred they bore to Judge Lamar Stanley, who through some legal chicanery had impoverished the doctor in his old age, a breach of confidence if not of trust. "Yes, doctor, come at once. My wife will need you tonight," said the colonel.

As the colonel neared his estates and was within sight of the broad lawn of his colonial mansion, Stanley hall, a landmark of the countryside, he saw a gypsy van approaching. On the driving seat were two figures, a man and a woman. The man was bellowing hoarse curses at a disappearing horseman, whom even at the distance the colonel recognized as his hated cousin, the judge.

As he neared the approaching gypsy outfit the colonel noticed the woman had fainted from pain and weariness. He had just time to wheel his horse close beside the van and catch her as she was falling from the seat.

In a few words the gypsy man explained their miserable situation. The kindly heart of the colonel was touched. The fainting woman had now revived and was listening apathetically.

"So Judge Stanley has ordered you off the earth?" remarked the colonel. "Well, my good man, that little cove of woods right over there, not far from my house, belongs to me. Camp there as long as you wish and I will see your sick wife gets every attention. She expects a child, you say? Ah, the curse of Eve falls alike in hut and mansion. We expect this same momentous event at my house. You are doubly welcome. I will send Dr. Lee, our family physician, to attend your wife."

The gypsy woman now spoke for the first time. "For your kind heart I read your fortune. A bitter disappointment

and a bitter triumph over those you hate the most comes to you, sir." "Well, better fortune than that to the child you expect," said the colonel with a kindly smile. "And here is \$20 to buy christening clothes and found the fortune of my expected namesake—if he is a boy."

"It will be a boy, and you will be aware of him," said the gypsy woman, and again she closed her eyes and shivered as in great pain, not noticing the money.

"Take it, you fool woman, when the kind gentleman offers it!" snarled the man.

Seeing the colonel still offering the money, the gypsy woman muttered her thanks and took the money reluctantly, and the gypsy, loud in his protestations of gratitude, drove his caravan to the copse.

Arriving at the gateway of Stanley hall, the grand old mansion built by a great-grandson of the original forbear of the family in America, the colonel cantered his horse up the splendid wide-driveway. There on the lawn his flower faced young wife, Ethel, in a garden chair, swaddled in silken shawls and carefully attended by her old colored nurse, Mammy Lucy, awaited him.

The old negro manservant, Ned, chief factotum and butler of the establishment, appeared on the piazza and called loudly to a half grown colored lad to take the master's horse.

The colonel and the old nurse gently supported the flower faced young wife from the lawn to the portals of the great mansion.

It must not be thought that any overwhelming desire for title or exalted position for themselves or for their expected child actuated Colonel Stanley and his fair young wife. In fact, the colonel was not only contented but proud in his position as head of the Stanley family in America and master of Stanley hall. It was only the grasping snobbery of his cousin that had led the colonel to encourage the hope that his wife might bear a son to cheat his kinsman foe of his hopes.

For the proud elder branch of the Stanleys—the Lords Stanley of Warwickshire, England—only survived in the person of a testy old bachelor invalid. The next of kin and in direct line for the earldom of Stanley was Colonel Stanley of Virginia, and, failing his surviving or having a son, the earldom would go to his cousin, Judge Stanley or the judge's son, Blair, now a child of three.

It was a sore point with the last Lord Stanley that he had always hated women after a love disappointment in early manhood and had never married, and now the succession would go to what he denominated as his "Yankee relatives."

But the diamond from the sky was a comforting thought in a measure to



On the Porch of the Old Virginia Mansion.

the old earl. It gave these "Yankee relatives" a prestige that even an earl might envy.

For some time past the earl, through his solicitor, Marmaduke Smythe, had been in correspondence with the afore-said "Yankee relatives."

Marmaduke Smythe was a long, lean, lank, dry as dust British barrister. He, too, was versed in full knowledge of the fame and fabulous value of the diamond from the sky. He, too, knew the legends concerning it. But to his timid mind faroff America was still a wilderness, peopled by savages.

So it had been with much trepidation and much nervous caressing of his scanty black side-whiskers that Marmaduke Smythe, barrister at law, Temple chambers, London, had received orders from his distinguished patron, Cecil, eighth earl of Stanley, to depart for America and arrange for the accession.

CHAPTER II.

"I Will Cheat Lamar Stanley!"

IN the preliminary correspondence concerning this matter Lawyer Smythe had been gratified to note that one of the Stanleys near of kin in Virginia was a jurist. To Lawyer Smythe's insular British mind, standing being a jurist in the jungles of Virginia was to be an uncouth, to hacco eating, hoarse voiced, red faced individual.

The feud and its consequent bitter enmities between Colonel Stanley and Judge Lamar Stanley were hardly grasped by the testy old earl and his timid London lawyer. But the legal mind of Lawyer Smythe prompted him to rely mostly upon the far off Virginia judge.

So it was that to carry out his mission in what he deemed were the wilds of America Lawyer Smythe determined to place himself in contact with the Virginia judge rather than what he thought might be the more militant head of the American Stanleys, the ex-soldier, Colonel Arthur Stanley.

The lawyer had written to the judge and had upon the heels of his letter he had arrived at the little railroad station of Fairfax in the dusk of the evening upon the day in which the judge and the colonel had encountered the gypsies, Matt Harding and his wife Hagar.

All the barrister saw when he alighted from the slow local train that had brought him, and when his luggage



The Mother of the Gypsy Child.

had been deposited beside him by unceremonious hands, was a shuffling negro with a private mail pouch attached to a strap over his ragged shoulder. This negro was joined by several other messengers of his sort, who were busy receiving mail from the station agent, who was evidently also the local postmaster.

Lawyer Smythe looked up and down the platform, expecting to see cowboys or a prairie wagon, or some sort of backwoods person to greet him or vehicle to convey him to Judge Stanley's ranch. He finally summoned up courage to inquire of the station agent-postmaster, as that individual was licking up for the night.

"Judge Stanley?" repeated the station agent. "Why, his nigger, Zeke, just got the judge's mail and has gone. The judge couldn't have been expecting anybody, or he would have sent his carriage. But mebbe Zeke will tell him he saw you, and you will be sent for. You had better wait right here."

And he turned the key in the padlock on the station door and trudged away, leaving the bewildered lawyer wondering if wild beasts might be about.

In the somber living room that was part law office and chambers of Judge Stanley, the judge and his equally stern visaged spouse were awaiting the evening mail on the last train down from Richmond.

In a few minutes Zeke, the colored handy man of the household, entered with the judge's mail bag. The judge eagerly separated a large, formally addressed envelope bearing English stamps and sealed at the back.

The judge opened it, glanced at it hurriedly and handed it to his wife. "It is from the earl's lawyer, Marmaduke Smythe, you see. He says he may arrive at about the same time this letter reaches us." He turned to the slouchy negro. "Did you see a strange man get off the train—looked like an undertaker—all English lawyers do?"

"Yes, sah, a strange gennan did get off de train," replied the negro, "but he didn't say nuffin to me, and I didn't say nuffin to him!"

"You black scoundrel!" roared the judge. "That gentleman has come all the way from England to see me on an important matter. Get my horse and put a saddle on the black mare. I will go to the station for him myself!" At Stanley hall, in the old colonial bedroom of the mistress of the house, the colored nurse, Lucy, was ministering to her flower faced mistress, while Colonel Stanley stood by solicitously confirming the old colored mammy's words with affirmative nods.

"Yes, my honey, de doctor will be here any minute, de old nurse was saying. 'Ain't the colonel jest back from goin' after him? Bless my soul, honey, dere come Dr. Lee, himself drivin' up wid dat ole red boss, Stonewall, of his."

The colonel's wife lifted her fair face

as the colonel bent over to kiss it. The old nurse softly bustled to the door and admitted the doctor.

In the copse of woods, hardly farther than a stone's throw from the mansion, night was falling darkly with the mutterings of an approaching storm. Over a smoldering fire crouched Matt Harding, the gypsy, puffing at his short black pipe. A cry of pain from the weather stained tent near by roused the man, and he arose and suddenly walked over and entered the shabby shelter.

In a few moments he emerged and hurried rapidly in the direction of Stanley Hall.

As he rapped at the great door of the mansion Ned, the colored butler, opened it, throwing a glare of yellow light upon the sinister face of the gypsy.

"You can't see nobody in this house, Mr. Man," said Ned.

"But I tell you Colonel Stanley promised me his doctor would be here tonight and that he would attend my wife. She needs the doctor now. It's a matter of life and death. And it's bad luck when a gypsy dies without being able to face the rising sun."

"De colonel's ails don't foolish kindnesses fo' poo' white trash," grumbled the darky as he shut the door on the strange caller and went reluctantly to bear his message.

But the good old physician was positive that no harm would come from his absence for an hour or so and hastened away on his errand of mercy.

At the little station of Fairfax meanwhile the now frightened London lawyer was wondering whether he should load the elephant rifle with which he had provided himself and fortify himself behind his luggage. As the beat of horse hoofs drew nearer the English lawyer rose with leveled rifle and cried: "Halt! Who goes there, friend or foe?"

The approaching horseman, Judge Lamar Stanley, laughed grimly as he called out: "It's a friend! Don't shoot!" And then he rode up to the platform and introduced himself to the Englishman and explained matters to the latter's satisfaction. Then the judge fastened the luggage of his visitor to the two saddle horses, and they rode off together.

In the copse of wood the pattering night rain fell upon the gypsy tent. The storm passed as quickly as it had come, and the moon shone out resplendently. The flap of the tent opened, and the bulky form of the good doctor was seen in the moonlight. He held a small swaddled object in his arms.

"Matt Harding," said Dr. Lee impressively, "the storm has passed with the miracle of birth, and you may say, as was said of old, 'Unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given.'"

"Then's fine words for rich folk," grumbled the gypsy gruffly. "To me it don't mean nothing but another mouth to feed."

The doctor regarded the man with such a look of sternness that the gypsy took the child from the doctor and entered the tent with it after promising the physician to take good care of it and its mother.

The good doctor hurried back to Stanley hall, where all were impatiently awaiting him. He smiled reassuringly at the colonel's wife, the colonel and the nurse.

"A fine boy has been born to the gypsy woman," he said. "It seems an omen of like good luck to Stanley hall. We may expect a little earl to be born here this night," he added gently.

The colonel's flower faced wife shook her head and smiled back at the old doctor, and the colonel spoke quickly. "I have no ambitions for any title for a son of mine," he said. "But I wish a boy if but to thwart my cousin, Lamar Stanley."

A bitter expression crept into the face of the negro woman at the mention of Judge Stanley's name.

"Don't you worry, honey," she said softly to her mistress, "an' don't you worry either, colonel. De good Lord don't intend no luck for Judge Lamar Stanley. I was a slave girl on his father's place when de judge was a young man. He killed my brother Hagar, an' he had me beat insensible when I called him 'Cain.'"

A girl child was born at Stanley hall at midnight. The colonel blanched at the news, but the flower faced mother smiled and called her husband to bring the diamond from the sky. With trembling hands he brought the precious heirloom, and the mother with her own weak hands placed the chain and the locket that contained the jewel around the neck of her newborn daughter.

"She is heir to Stanley hall, at least," murmured the mother, "and until you die," she added, turning to the colonel, "she may wear it as a 'charm against harm,' as the Stanleys of our branch have always done."

Then as all turned away to hide their tears at the pathos of her words the young mother, with trembling hands, drew a slip of folded paper from beneath her pillow and, opening the secret catch at the back of the locket, placed a mother's last message unnoticed beneath the diamond from the sky, murmuring as she did so:

"A charm against harm, my little daughter; 'charm against harm.'" And then she sank back upon her pillow, her babe upon her breast.

The old nurse turned and gazed fixedly at her mistress; then, with a scream of grief and terror, she threw herself beside the babe and mother.

"She is dead!" shrieked the nurse. "My sweet mistress is dead!" It was but too true; this gentle soul had passed.

In the library an hour later Dr. Lee stood over the shattered colonel. "Listen to the truth," said the doctor. "It

is idle for you to rave. I have told you, you have meekness of the heart, and another attack like this may be your death. You cannot hope to live to marry a wife who may yet bear you a son."

"I will never marry again!" cried Colonel Stanley in anguish. "I have loved but one woman, could love but one woman, and she is dead! But, by heavens, I will cheat Lamar Stanley and all his brood! I have \$5,000 in yonder safe. I will buy the male child born to the gypsy woman. I will hide away my own flesh and blood, my little daughter, and have her reared tenderly, yet in secret. And the gypsy's brat at my death shall be the Earl of Stanley in England and possess the diamond from the sky. That will be fine for Lamar Stanley and his vermin offspring!" And he laughed and shook his hands in bitter rage.

"I mean it, and you must help me. You hate Lamar Stanley, for he ruined you, Mammy Lucy hates him. He killed her twin brother in cold blood. Come!"

In the glow of his campfire Matt Harding gazed greedily at the wealth beyond his wildest dreams that Colonel Stanley had roused him from his fitful slumber to pour into his lap.

Hagar, roused from her fevered dreams, felt her babe being lifted from her bosom. The rural gypsy husband and father seized her by the throat as she feebly struggled. He gagged and bound her hastily as he might and emerged panting from the tent, carrying the swaddled babe which he handed to the colonel and the doctor.

"Does my wife object?" he asked the doctor's question. "Say, governor, she would sell every child she expects to have for half the money. We'll be twenty miles away by sunrise and fifty miles more by another day. We'll be gypsy kings and queens and you'll never hear of us again!"

Back at Stanley hall the doctor and the colonel entered secretly by the library window and bore the babe upstairs to the waiting nurse. Reluctantly and yet resolved like all the rest, the faithful colored nurse arrayed the gypsy child in fine linen and hung about its neck "the diamond from the sky," while the little daughter, born to Stanley hall, whimpered beside its fair dead mother.

In answer to the summons to Stanley hall came Judge Stanley, the kinsman enemy and the English barrister.

It was a strange group that gathered in the colonel's library, the English barrister, the grim, bitterly disappointed judge, silently facing Dr. Lee and Colonel Stanley.

A pull at the bell rope and the weeping colored nurse entered the library bearing the black haired, dark eyed babe, a male child in Stanley hall, presumptive heir to an English earldom, and blazing on its breast was the diamond from the sky.

Over the gypsy campfire within the sound of a human call from Stanley hall a bereft and frenzied mother tore herself loose from her bonds. Like a tigress, she threw herself upon her husband and demanded her child. When he told her of the bargain and showed her the money that came from it she cursed him and the gold and, seizing a jagged burning billet from the fire, she struck Matt Harding down and, leaving him prone on the ground, she rushed to Stanley hall to regain her firstborn.

The gypsy roused himself from the stunning blow and hastened after her ere she could spoil all his greedy



Matt Harding, the Gypsy.

schemes. The great door of Stanley hall stood ajar. For a moment Hagar swayed faintly at the portal. The she staggered in and down the spacious hall to the door of the library, guided by the sound of men's voices and the cries of a child—her child! Her hands seized the knob and soft and silently she threw open the door just as her gypsy husband seized her from behind.

The backs of the judge, the English lawyer, the doctor and the nurse were to the door, but Colonel Stanley stood behind the library table facing the door.

"Yes," he was saying, "there is the newborn baby, a son, do you hear, a son!" And then his eyes opened wide with horror, for there, struggling at the open door, were the gypsy woman and her husband. The man's hand was over the woman's mouth, and with every effort he sought to strangle her to silence and closed the door.

Colonel Stanley clutched at his breast and fell senseless forward across the library table!

(Continued next week)