

The Diamond Derelict---Being the Record of a



Young Man Who Finally Won Out---By Edward Marshall

(Copyright, 1903, All Rights Reserved, by F. L. Marshall.)
CHAPTER XXI.

PARTON'S face relaxed. MacFarren's face was cause enough. The young man looked at it and laughed. He rose and started toward the door. Norah touched his arm.

"No," she said, sweetly, "you'll not be goin' yet, I hope. Please stay here and amuse my husband while I'm gone. I've some one that I want to have you talk a bit to before you say goodby to us entirely."

And she added, quickly:

"And that will be right soon, I'm thinkin'."

Parton was as plainly puzzled by this new move of the extraordinary young woman as the rest were, but that he felt an abiding faith in her good judgment was shown by the fact that he promptly stepped between MacFarren and the door, just as Norah passed out of it into the hall, followed by the hall boy.

With Parton there before the exit, MacFarren lost all longing to pass out of it and retreated rapidly to the embrasure of a window, from which he gazed with stimulated interest on the scant traffic of the side street, occasionally turning about with some anxiety to see if Parton's disconcerting bulk was still between him and the door.

The humor of the situation seemed to strike Parton and Mrs. Burgee at the same moment, for they laughed aloud so exactly in concert that the outburst might have been prearranged.

MacFarren's anxious glance revealed nothing to him of the cause of this hilarity. It certainly gave him no new confidence in his position. It is even probable that he contemplated raising the window and calling for help, for he placed nervous fingers on the fastenings which held it.

This fed the flame of Mrs. Burgee's mirth, and she was constrained to cover her head with her white apron and rock back and forth with half stifled chuckling.

When Norah returned, perhaps fifteen minutes later, she was accompanied by the small lawyer with the bald head to whom the ship's doctor had telephoned. He was a most affable little gentleman, full of smiles, and greeted Parton and Mrs. Burgee with much enthusiasm as they were, in turn, presented to him by Norah.

"And is the—the other gentleman the—the—" the small man began, with an insinuating smile.

"Yes," said Norah.

"Ah, Mr. MacFarren," said the lawyer pleasantly, approaching the astonished figure in the window recess. "I am very glad to see you. From what your charming daughter has told me, I have learned that we are professional—professional—shall I say professional brethren? Both being in the law, you know?"

MacFarren looked at him dully.

"Yes," said the small man. "My name is Kammer. Max Kammer. I am a humble practitioner before our courts here. I am very glad to see you, I am sure."

MacFarren automatically took the hand that the small man extended toward him.

"I am very glad," said the small man, "that I have to deal with a man versed in the principles and practice of the law in arranging this matter for—Mrs. Parton. It is always so much easier for a lawyer to explain matters and discuss them with another man of trained mind than it is when he—when he comes into contact with the—with the crude intellect of the—the of the laity."

MacFarren seemed completely mystified. The small man drew a chair up to the round table with the marble top and busily pulled from his pocket a number of papers folded formally. He laid them down beside his hat, and asked for a pen and ink, which Norah brought from the mantel shelf.

"Now," said the small man, "we are all ready, I think. I suppose, Mr. MacFarren, that you are quite prepared to meet the conditions of your first wife's will at once." He did not wait for MacFarren's puzzled face to assume an expression of intelligent understanding, but continued: "But, of course, I need not ask the question. Certainly not. Absurd, I'm sure. Being in the law yourself, you will, of course, have provided for all these matters so that there need be none of that annoying delay and none of those detailed explanations which

might be necessary were I dealing with an—untrained mind."

"I don't believe that I understand you, sir," said MacFarren, with such an attempt at dignity as was possible after his recent disturbance.

"Ah," said the small man. "Is it possible? Well, well. But perhaps I should have expected that the—the excitement of travel and—the recent loss of your—second wife, Mr. MacFarren, might have—caused some slight—forgetfulness on your part which—would not have otherwise occurred.

bowed to Norah and to Parton, "came of age. Am I quite right?"

MacFarren was evidently taken by surprise at this turn of affairs.

"Ye-es," he stammered, turning white a bit. It was plain that this attack was a complete surprise. Then, suddenly realizing that he was permitting himself so to speak, to be interrogated as a witness for the opposition without proper authority of court, he began again to sputter and declared that such inquiries were an insufferable impertinence and that he would not

Parton not to have you arrested. I do not say, you know, that she has a bad case. Indeed—I may say that she has, in my humble opinion, a good case. But, I beg you to believe me, when I assure you that I have urged her to take no criminal proceedings, when I am sure that she can recover through civil process the amounts which you—which you have embezzled."

MacFarren rose with an almost threatening gesture.

The small man raised his hand sooth-



"WHY," SAID SHE, SMILING BRIGHTLY, "IT'S JUST AS EASY! BUT WAIT; WATCH FOR ALL THE GOODIES THAT I'LL SEND TO YOU IN JAIL."

No," he added, contemplatively, "which I am sure might not have otherwise occurred."

By this time MacFarren was beginning to bristle again a bit.

"We will save time, sir," he said, "if you will explain yourself to me at once."

"Quite so," said the small man. "Yes, indeed, you're quite right. I will explain myself."

He unfolded one of the papers which he had laid upon the table.

"This," he said, with some deliberation, "is a certified copy of the will left by Mrs. Parton's mother." He bowed to Norah. "She was your first wife, I believe," he added to MacFarren. "You married her, I think, when Miss Mullaney was 12 years old."

That MacFarren was beginning to understand was shown by a slightly nervous look which came into his face.

He nodded.

"In this will," the small lawyer went on, "you were made trustee of the property—let me see, there was quite a pleasant little property. A matter of £3,000 or £4,000 was it not? In cash, I understand. Yes, I am sure that I am right. You were to be the trustee of this property until—until Miss Mullaney—now Mrs. Parton," he

tolerate them.

"Ah," said the small man, "that is most unfortunate. It will necessitate an action which I have strongly urged Mrs.—Mrs. Parton, not to take, except in case of absolute extremity. Criminal proceedings within the family circle should be—should be, in my opinion—avoided. It was only yesterday that I—that I urged a young woman named Flynn—Irish, too, you see—not to—not to have her mother arrested for having stolen \$7 out of a cracked teapot which sat on the—on the mantelpiece in their—humble home. It always indicates a—lack of harmony, it seems to me, for members of a family to—invoke the aid of—criminal law in arranging such affairs. Yes, indeed. It always does to me. Always."

MacFarren had paled suddenly and lividly.

"You—you are impertinent, sir!" he exclaimed.

"Quite so, quite so," said the small lawyer. "That is a disagreeable point in our profession. You have doubtless encountered it in your own—practice. But we must take the bitter—take the bitter with the sweet. We must take the bitter with the sweet. I regret the necessity, but we must take the bitter with the sweet."

ingly, and continued:

"Oh, this is all among—friends, Mr. MacFarren. I disliked to use that word, of course, but we all know what the circumstances really are and that it is the only word which will really exactly describe what you have done. We, being all friends here, may, I am sure—talk frankly. Among us, I think that it will be unnecessary for me to change the word. Of course, I might say misappropriated, which would, perhaps, sound a—little more genteel, but then—but then, stolen is really more expressive and—correct. I have urged her not to resort to criminal procedure in order to regain the amounts which you have stolen."

There was such a sudden cessation of suavity in the small man's tone as he said the ugly word this time that it made every person in the room wince. It made MacFarren shrink backward in his chair and open his lips slightly, leaving them open, while the small man went on. And the latter's voice did not return to its smooth propitiatory intonation.

His manner, too, became aggressive and accusatory. His hesitations ended. He no longer repeated words in the middle of his sentences, and there were no more deprecating pauses in his talk. He looked at MacFarren with a stern eye which