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UNION CLOTHING CO.

THE BLUE DIAMOND

BY ALICE AND CLAUDE ASKEW,

Authors of "The Shulamite," "Eve—and the Law," "Gilded London," "The Premier's Daughter," "The House Next Door," Etc.

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(Continued.)

"There was a terrible fuss and commotion over Lady Erline's supposed loss, and I must say she played her part to perfection. The strange part of it all is that Patience, when accused of being the thief, made a sort of wild confession, accusing herself of having taken the diamond. It is still not very clear to me why she did this, but from what she said subsequently I fancy it was to shield her sister, Vivienne. Anyway, as far as I am concerned, things have gone very well, and Patience has promised to marry me."

Spencer Stern did not, however, explain that Patience's promise to marry him had been exacted by a promise on his part to restore to her the stolen papers.

"I think we can both congratulate ourselves," chuckled the Jew, "for we have both succeeded, you and I, in winning what we wanted. Any way, I'm all right,"—his smile broadening as at a humorous recollection—"for Lady Erline has promised to bring back the diamond within three weeks or else to marry me. And I don't think she'll find the diamond."

He tapped meaningly upon the safe, which he had by now closed up, making use of what was evidently a hidden spring, as well as locking it with the keys in his possession.

"There, there, you darlings, you beauties!" he muttered. "You're quite safe till I come down and look at you, as I shall do tonight, as I do every night." His hoarse voice was lowered; he seemed for the moment to have forgotten the presence of Spencer Stern.

"And now let's go back to the study," he said after a pause, "for you've got to be paid over this little job, Stern, and my cheque book is in my desk."

He led the way from the strong-room, locking the door behind him, and the two men returned to the study.

Some half-an-hour later Spencer Stern took his departure from the house, grimly content with the rustle of a cheque which he had thrust loose in his pocket. He returned to the public-house which he had visited earlier in the afternoon, and here he found Fenton awaiting him.

Once more the two men seated themselves at the little table which they had previously occupied, once more they talked together earnestly and in low voices.

"I can do it easy enough," Fenton said. "I know the boss and his habits. Haven't I worked for him all these years, and don't I know his ways better than any man alive? There's no one but myself who can manage those safes, or who could get into that strong room. But I'll work it so quiet, he won't be none the wiser. And I ain't going to steal from him, no, not more than just those papers, for he's not a bad sort, after all, and has never been crook with me. Many and many a time I could have robbed him easy, but I've held my hand off in spite of what you and others have said."

"I don't want the jewels," replied the other, testily. "Shouldn't know what to do with them if I had them, for they are mostly stones which are known by the police to have been lost or stolen. I wouldn't find a fence to take them. So its quite understood, Fenton, all I want is just that bundle of papers I shewed you this afternoon, and which he's already paid me for handsomely enough. You can do as you like about the rest, it's no affair of mine."

"And it's to be halves—halves of what you've got there?" said the wizened little man, with some eagerness, pointing a misshapen finger at Stern's pocket, and his wrinkled face lit up with cupidity. "I'm broke to the world just now," he said. "Let's see it, let's look at your cheque."

With some reluctance Spencer Stern drew the cheque from his pocket and allowed the other man to note the amount.

"It's payment for more jobs than one," he muttered sulkily.

"That don't matter to me," was the reply. "Halves it must be, or I cry off."

"Very well, I've said halves, and I'll stick to it. What time do you expect to be through with the job?"

"Can't say for certain, but I'll meet you tomorrow night at the Charles street Club and then we can settle. You bring the cash and I'll bring the papers. Understood?"

Spencer Stern nodded, and soon after the two men separated.

The next morning all London rang with the report of the foul murder of Baron Gelderstein, most recent of millionaires, financier, and dealer in precious stones. Robbery had evidently been the motive of the crime for the unhappy man had been found in the strong-room which he had established in his Park-lane mansion, his head beaten in by a heavy blow, which he had evidently received in an attempt to defend himself against the attack of the thief, or thieves, who had been engaged in rifling the safe.

CHAPTER XXV.

Lady Erline sat in the boudoir of her London house, a pretty little maisonette in Sloane-street, her eyes fixed impatiently up on the clock that kept up a slow and monotonous ticking on the mantelpiece, a clock surrounded on each side by groups of Dresden figures and a choice specimen of Dresden china itself.

The boudoir was a luxuriously-furnished room—over-furnished, perhaps—and a little too florid in its scheme of decoration. For the furniture was upholstered in a vivid cherry-colored brocade, and there was an immense amount of ormulu about; also a good many mirrors, high silver mirrors standing on little tables and pieces of glass let into the wall and draped round with costly Eastern tissues.

The velvet carpet was of the same rich cherry color, and there were a number of frilly cushions about, countless small tables loaded with silver ornaments, whilst great masses of strong, heavy-scented flowers filled every vase and jar.

Cupids rioted on the painted ceiling, and panels were let in all round the walls, panels painted with allegorical subjects.

There were few books about, for Lady Erline was not a great reader, and the whole room had a voluutuous atmosphere of its own. A big fire blazed on the hearth and though it was quite early in the afternoon, the shutters had been closed and the cherry-colored curtains pulled across as though to exclude every gleam of daylight. Candles had been lit, for Lady Erline hated electric light. It aged a woman, she always used to say, with a fretful shrug of her shoulders, and perhaps she was right.

Certainly she was looking her very best this afternoon, dressed in a wonderful creamy tea-gown, a gown touched here and there with sable, and cut open at the throat. The creamy color of her robe suited Lady Erline's dark beauty, and she was wearing a wonderful opal comb in her hair, for she was not afraid of those beautiful, ill-omened stones; indeed, she affected rather a cult for them, and opal rings loaded her fingers today, and she wore a pair of opal and diamond earrings.

She was rouged a little and her eyes shone, and sparkled brilliantly, also her lips looked very red and moist. The lines of her tea-gown displayed her splendid figure to advantage, and there was no denying her very evident beauty.

"Thank Heaven, this is one of my good days," so the woman reflected as she turned her eyes from the clock to study herself in one of the large silver mirrors. She touched her hair, stroking back a stray curl.

"Oh, I am beautiful, beautiful in my own way," she murmured. "Why should I not able to make Jack love me? I ought to be able to ensnare and enslave him, for I understand men."

She rose to her feet as she spoke and stretched out her long body.

"What a fool I am to care so much," she murmured, "and to be so desperately keen on marrying Jack Braithwaite. What a madness this thing called love is."

She smiled at herself with dark contemptuous eyes, then kised her hand lightly to her own reflection.

"What a fool you are Erline"—she muttered the words aloud—"to want to marry. You, who have just got the two things you most wanted in life—freedom and money. You, from whose shoulders a burden has been lifted—a terrible fear."

She moved away from the mirror and made her way to the sofa again, flinging herself down on it full length, nestling back against the cushions with a lazy abandonment. Then, throwing her arms above her head, she gave herself up to her reflections, for she knew that there was another half-hour yet to pass before she could see Jack Braithwaite—Jack who had promised to take tea with her that afternoon, and whose advent she was waiting with so much impatience.

She had a great deal, this dark-eyed handsome woman, to occupy her thoughts with, for strange things had happened within the last few days. For one thing Lady Erline was no longer the hard-up woman she had been, the fine lady at her wits' end how to pay her creditors and meet her bills. The money she had so confidently expected would one day be left to her was her own now, or, at least, would be after some necessary legal formalities had been gone through, for the relative who had always promised to leave Lady Erline money had died suddenly, leaving a large fortune to the dark, unprincipled woman who had always contrived to hoodwink her old cousin as she hoodwinked most of the world.

Lady Erline would be wealthy now beyond her wildest dreams and hopes; and yet another, and still greater thing, had occurred. She was no longer pledged to marry Baron Gelderstein, a marriage from which she recoiled and shrank back with aversion, for the news of the Baron's ghastly murder had by now been bruited abroad, and the whole world was ringing with the story of how he had met his death. The papers were full of the hunt particulars, and everybody was talking about the crime with horror.

Lady Erline remembered the thrill of relief with which she had heard the news, realising at the same moment that she was free. No spark of womanly pity had warmed her cold breast, nor had she felt the least compassion for the unhappy man so brutally done to death in his own home. All she could grasp was the one great fact that she was her own mistress again, and she drew a deep breath of relief.

She read the long account of the tragedy with keen avidity, and she felt an extraordinary sense of gratitude towards Baron Gelderstein's murderers, for they had done a deed which she would have attempted herself had she been less a coward at heart.

"He deserved to die, for he was a bad man," so Lady Erline reflected as she stretched herself out on the sofa. "It was he who deceived me about the Blue Diamond. I am sure of it—sure. It was an imitation star all the time. But let it go—the Blue Diamond—I care nothing for it now."

Four o'clock struck. Lady Erline stirred impatiently. "When will he come—oh! when will he come?" she murmured. "Every minute will seem like an hour now."

She twisted her shining opal rings up and down her thin fingers, wondering now how she had had the courage to write to Jack and beg him to come and see her. She had written the letter directly she knew of his arrival in town, and had despatched it with fear and trembling; but the young man had written back to say he would call. And now Lady Erline felt that the wame was in her own hands, that is, if she played her part well.

"For surely it ought not to be so hard to make Jack love me," she thought, "now that I have succeeded in parting him from Patience. Hearts are often caught on the rebound, they say, and Jack may prove no exception to the rule. For what is the good of my wealth and my freedom"—she tapped her cool cheek impatiently with her finger—"if I can't win the man I love?"

As the thought went through her brain she started and blushed through her rouge, for her quick ear had caught the sound of footsteps ascending the staircase, and a second later the butler had thrown open the door and announced, in clear, sonorous tones:

"Mr. Jack Braithwaite."

Jack looked pale and ill, so much Lady Erline noticed at once. Also there was an expression of restless misery in his eyes which cut her to the heart, for she realised this was her work—hers—and she guessed that he was grieving over his late love affair.

"But I will soon make him forget Patience and be quite happy again," she promised herself triumphantly; then she smiled up at Jack, and motioned him to a seat by the fire.

"I am so glad to see you—so glad," she said, speaking in her sweetest voice, and gazing at him with swimming, seductive eyes; then she sat down close to him.

But the young man was unmoved by all her fascination. He had come there that afternoon because of a vague idea that Lady Erline might possibly refer to Patience, and throw some light over the other's behaviour, and he hated this bold lovemaking on his hostess's part, and scorned her in his heart. It was women like this one, he thought, who disgraced their sex, and were responsible for so much of the misery and shame at work in the world—women like this who used their Circe wiles to turn men into brute beasts.

(To be continued.)

Daily Fashion Hint for Times Readers.

YOKE EFFECTS ARE POPULAR.

Yokes and yoke effects are seen in almost every dressy blouse. Where there is not a yoke of the same material, laces or embroidery, the effect is given with medallions in this instance in shamrock design, inset in the collar and down the front of this sheer lawn blouse and their outlines followed by val. insertions forming the deep pointed yoke. These insertions extend over the shoulders, and take the form of a round yoke in the back. The sleeves are inserted with lace in a deep point, reaching almost to the elbow, and are gathered into a rather deep cuff of alternate rows of lace and lawn, a single medallion being set on the top of the arm.

WEAK HEART SYSTEM WAS RUN DOWN

When the heart is healthy and performing its fuctions naturally, it should beat regularly seventy-two times a minute without causing its owner the slightest inconvenience or distress.

When it begins to beat irregularly or intermittently, palpitate and throb, skip beats, beat fast for a time, then so slow as to seem almost to stop, it causes great anxiety and alarm.

The least excitement or exertion seems to affect it.

Many people are kept in a state of morbid fear of death, become weak, worn and miserable, and are unable to attend to either social or business duties, through unnatural action of their heart.

To all such sufferers

MILBURN'S HEART AND NERVE PILLS

can give prompt and permanent relief. Mrs. F. Fletcher, Sault Ste. Marie, West, Ont., says: "I have been troubled for four or five years with weakness, and run down system. My feet were always cold and I felt almost dead. My heart was weak and I was so nervous I could hardly walk across the street. I started taking Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills, and after using three boxes I felt much better. I continued their use until I had taken twelve boxes and I am now well."

Price 50 cents per box or 3 boxes for $1.25 at all dealers or mailed direct on receipt of price by The T. Milburn Co., Limited, Toronto, Ont.

MILK DEALERS MAY FIGHT

The Board of Health Regulation As To Licenses is Strongly Opposed.

It is understood that some of the milk dealers intend to fight the matter of taking out licenses, with the board of health. The board some time ago decided that all vendors of milk should be licensed and at a recent meeting of the board it was agreed that as the majority of the dealers had not complied with the new law that an extension of time of ten days be allowed. The ten days will be up on Friday the 28th.

Secretary Burns said Thursday that some of the dealers had signified their intention of taking out licenses and were waiting only for the veterinary to make an inspection. He had heard, he said, that some were opposed to the new regulation and intended to fight it.

The board is determined, however, to compel compliance with the regulations, and it is not unlikely that some of the cases will be aired in court.

W. I. Gear, of the Robert Reford Company, returned Thursday to Montreal. He called on Mayor Sears Thursday and asked as to the city's plans for the coming winter. Mr. Gear said he had visited Carleton and looked over the work being done there. He would like to see greater progress and said he thought the contractors would have their hands full to get the 50 foot wharf completed for the opening of navigation. He did not seem to consider the 600 foot wharf as among the possibilities. He also talked about the city's labor tax and took much the same ground taken by Mr. McNicoll, of the C. P. R.

A vote of thanks was passed to the chief commissioner for the information he had given the superintendents.

Rheumatism

I have found a tried and tested cure for Rheumatism! Not a remedy that will straighten the distorted limbs of chronic cripples, nor turn bony growths back to flesh again. That is impossible, but I can now surely kill the pains and pangs of this deplorable disease.

In Germany—with a Chemist in the City of Darmstadt—I found the last ingredient with which Dr. Shoop's Rheumatic Remedy was made a perfected, dependable prescription. Without that last ingredient, I successfully treated many, many cases of Rheumatism; but now, at last, it uniformly cures all curable cases of this heretofore much dreaded disease. Those sand-like granular wastes, found in Rheumatic Blood seem to dissolve and pass away under the action of this remedy as freely as does sugar when added to pure water. And then, when dissolved, these poisonous wastes freely pass from the system, and the cause of Rheumatism is gone forever. There is now no real need—no actual excuse to suffer longer without help. We sell, and in confidence recommend

Dr. Shoop's Rheumatic Remedy

SOLD BY ALL DRUGGISTS.

The Biggest Kind of a Change that Ever Happened to Any Magazine Has Happened This Month to

THE SCRAP BOOK

THE SCRAP BOOK for July is issued in two sections—two complete magazines, each with its own cover and its own table of contents. One of these sections is an ALL-ILLUSTRATED magazine; the other is an ALL-FICTION magazine. Each is a mammoth magazine in itself. The one presents an overwhelming array of human interest articles and illustrations; the other an enormous tonnage of fiction—160 pages of absorbing stories.

Ten years ago I created a new type of magazine—the ALL-FICTION magazine. Now I am creating another distinct type—the ALL-ILLUSTRATED magazine. This is the age of specialization. The conventional magazine, with its smattering of illustrations and its smattering of fiction and its smattering of special articles, doesn't contain enough of any one thing to make it satisfying. The ALL-FICTION magazine and the ALL-ILLUSTRATED magazine, joined together as a unit, strengthen each other, and make something really big and forceful and convincing.

The Only Way to Know a Thing is to Try It

The two-section magazine idea is brand-new to the world. It is not quite new with me, however, as I have given it, at odd times, four or five years of thought. It first came into my mind in response to a desire to couple, in some way, the strength of the all-fiction magazine with the illustrated features of the conventional magazine. It has been a difficult problem to work out. Now that the idea is perfected, I wish to see what there is in it. It looks to me to be very good, but the only way to know a thing is to try it.

Two Magazines for a Quarter—Easy Money

The price of this two-part magazine is twenty-five cents, which is equal to twelve and one-half cents a magazine. Most magazines which were selling at ten cents have been advanced to fifteen cents. THE SCRAP BOOK in two parts means two magazines for twenty-five cents against thirty cents for two fifteen cent magazines.

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