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Harper's Bazaar.....	1.00	States).....	2.50
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He ripped open the case, and lifted from the cushions where it lay the priceless atom, resting it against some dark groundwork or other. We gathered round the table, and just at that instant the lamplight touched the jewel, making it blaze and flare of a sudden, and send off rays of dazzling brilliancy like a mimic sun.

There was a chorus of cries. "Wonderful!" said Eloise, with a long-drawn breath. "Beautiful!" murmured Mrs. Dacre. "A rare gem!" exclaimed Guy. It deserved all their commendations. The topaz was wonderfully large and brilliant. It lay there ceaselessly flickering, darkening and lightening, like a thing of life. It was as if sun and moon had blended floating atoms of their richness and mellowness into something tangible—something to shine and dazzle and bewilder.

"Where did you find such a treasure?" asked Eloise. Mr. Richard's swart cheeks flushed a little. "It belonged to one of the dignitaries over the water," he answered, evasively; "a fierce, fiery fellow, who loved it as he did his life, and whose blood has stained it more than once. Those natives worship such things as if they were gods. His breath was ebbing when he consented to give it up. But I had to force it from his clenched hand at last."

Eloise shuddered. A vague fear crossed her mind, perhaps, that there might be something darker and more disagreeable back of the story her uncle had told. "It must be of almost incalculable value," said Mrs. Dacre. "Very likely its equal is not in all the world. Such a rare, rare gem! It's a fortune in itself. Its price would purchase half the county. It would make millionaires of us all."

I saw Guy start suddenly. An eager, greedy look came into his hazel eyes. He evidently believed every word of this exaggerated declaration. Perhaps he was thinking of his own poverty, and what that jewel could do for him.

"What will you do with it?" asked Mrs. Dacre. "Keep it as an heirloom, perhaps—sell it, possibly. I have not determined."

Mrs. Dacre's sweet lips began to quiver all at once. "Are you not afraid to carry anything so valuable upon your person?" she cried, with a pretty air of concern. "You might be robbed and murdered." "Humph!" muttered the East Indian. "I shall return it to the bank within a day or two. Nobody knows it is in the house save ourselves. I shall sleep with it under my pillow to-night."

The topaz was returned to its case. After a little we fell into a constrained chat upon other topics. For my own part I was restless and uneasy. The more I reflected, the more restless did I become. The thought that anything so valuable was in the house unnerved me somehow. There was no telling what disreputable persons had seen Mr. Richard take the jewel from the bank. It would be an easy matter to follow him to Fair Oaks, and lie in wait until the house was quiet.

When bedtime came round my fears were active as ever. They beset me stronger and stronger, despite every effort to shake them off. Finally, when Mr. Richard went to light his bedroom candle by the hall-lamp, I went out to him. "You are sure," I said, "that nobody followed you here from the city?"

He turned upon me with a careless laugh. "Sure enough," he answered. "My mind is not at rest about that topaz. Take my advice and do not sleep with it under your pillow, as you intended. Thieves are sure to look there first, of all places. Deposit it somewhere else."

My earnestness was not without its effect. He did not "booh" at me as I had half expected. Instead, after a moment's reflection, he returned: "Your idea is a good one, Barton. I'll put my jewel in that escrow."

that stands in the anteroom just outside my door. I can sleep with the key of the escrow under my pillow if I wish."

He spoke lightly at the last. "I see no objection to that," was my answer.

Turning away, I caught a glimpse of Guy and Mrs. Dacre in an angle near the study. I could almost have sworn that he had snatched a kiss from the sweet pouting lips a moment previously. At any rate, he looked disconcerted at the sight of me, while our fair hostess blushed furiously.

"I wonder if they overheard what Mr. Richard was saying to me?" I thought. "They were near enough." It did not matter, as I knew. So, after going to say good-night to Eloise, and holding the dear girl's hand in mine a much longer time than was necessary, I went up-stairs, followed by Mr. Richard, and lingering long enough with him to be sure he deposited the topaz in the escrow. I then went along the corridor to my own chamber, which was situated in the other wing.

While I sat thoughtfully by an open window, puffing a cigar, Guy came in. He still looked flushed, restless, excited, and took half a dozen impatient turns backward and forward in the room before he could make up his mind to take a chair by my side.

"What ails you, Guy?" I asked. "Nothing," with a short, odd laugh. He took the cigar I offered and began to smoke furiously. His excitement did not seem to abate. After a long silence he broke out suddenly: "Hang it, Barton, but it's confounded inconvenient to be poor!" "Happiness does not depend upon riches."

"I don't believe that," said he, angrily. "Uncle Ben saw fit to make you heir to his thousands, and so you don't know the inconveniences of poverty. But I am in a different box. Don't tell me—I know better! A poor man can't be happy. It isn't in the bond. Now, if I were a rich man happiness would be ready made for me."

"What do you mean?" I asked, staring at him stupidly.

He rose up, dashing the cigar out of the window. "This is what I mean," he cried, vehemently. "I love Clarice with all my heart. She would marry me if I were not a poor man."

"Mrs. Dacre?" "Yes; why not? She is young enough, and pretty enough, goodness knows. And I don't imagine her grief for the old general is insupportable. If I were rich enough, and you didn't stand in the way, I could marry her to-morrow."

He spoke with singular impetuosity. "I stand in your way?" I echoed. "Aye," he sneered. "Haven't you seen what an admiration Clarice has for your handsome face? She likes the idea of your bank stock, and coupon bonds, too. The old general left nearly everything to Eloise, you know. She wouldn't object to an eligible *parti* like yourself. Oh, no!"

"Guy, what are you saying?" I exclaimed, more and more deeply amazed. "You shall not speak of Mrs. Dacre in that way. The innocent child! Why should she care for me or my money?"

His lip curled contemptuously. "We won't talk of her then, brother Barton. I'm not jealous of you. Pretty Eloise has snared you too thoroughly. But I would like to be a millionaire, though. Only to think, Barton, that topaz of Mr. Richard's, that precious sparkling atom you might easily hold under the ball of your thumb, would make my fortune! Only think of it!"

He was pacing the floor again, a dark, shifting look I did not like in his eyes. He paused every now and then, when something like a muttered imprecation would fall from his lips. My poor brother! What had come over him? "Go to bed, Guy," I said at last. "You are not yourself to-night. In the morning you will carry a cooler head on your shoulders."

He turned, going away without a word. But for more than an hour thereafter I heard the steady tramp, tramp as he moved backward and for-

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