

bureau drawer 'stead of lockin' it up in yo' trunk when you washes, it's gwine be stold jes' sho's hell's a fishpond."

"Huh! You is been sayin' that for a yeah. Tain't been stold twell yet."

"They's folks dyin' ev'y day, Elzevir, which aint never died befo'!"

He turned away and was safely within the house before a fitting retort came to her lips. He made his way once more to the bureau drawer and took therefrom a diamond ring of scintillant brilliance.

For sixty-three weeks Urias Nesbit had paid on that ring. One hundred and twenty-five dollars had been expended for the stone in instalments of two dollars each Saturday afternoon. That had been in the days when the elusive coyness of the regal Elzevir bade fair to put Urias permanently into the matrimonial discard. The ring had won her. And so they were married.

That diamond ring was the guarantee of Elzevir's social eminence. At first there had been skeptics — numbering legion — who questioned the genuineness of the stone, but they had been effectively squelched by the triumphant Elzevir who invariably convoyed them to a jeweller of unimpeachable integrity for an appraisalment. And as there wasn't a jeweller in the city who did not instantly value the ring at anywhere from a hundred and twenty-five to a hundred and fifty dollars, its reputation quickly spread and by her diamond Elzevir became known.

But the diamond was the lone sign of affluence about the Nesbit ménage. Somehow work and Urias didn't get along very well together. The