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Bank of England.
 London, Dec. 16.—The weekly statement of the Bank of England shows the following changes: Total reserve, decreased, £203,000; circulation, increased, £111,000; bullion, increased, £84,241; other securities, increased, £3,955,000; other deposits, increased, £4,150,000; public deposits decreased, £307,000; notes, reserve, decreased, £101,000; government securities unchanged. The proportion of the bank's reserve to liability this week is 23.55 per cent.; last week it

was 24.27 per cent. Rate of discount 5 per cent.
Refuge in Italy.
 By Special Wire to the Courier.
 Paris, Dec. 16.—It is reported from Rome that King Peter of Serbia, driven from his country by the Teutonic invasion, will take refuge in Italy. A Rome despatch to the Matin says the king has accepted Italy's offer of the palace at Caserta, near Naples, which is now being prepared for his use.

The Diamond From the Sky

By ROY L. MCCARDELL

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"But Blair does not want it for himself; he wants it for that fair friend of yours from New York, Miss Vivian Marston. Blair is crazy about that dame and she is crazy to get the diamond. We'll find them at Mrs. Randolph's if we are not too late."
 But they were too late. Their insistence forced the presence of Mrs. Randolph herself, and just when she was dropping off in a sweet sleep after having enjoyed her nerves with all the comforts of home. Thus aroused, Mrs. Randolph was quite indignant at the detective and also at the presence of Mr. Abe Bloom, Richmond's notorious gambling house keeper.

"The idea," she murmured indignantly, "the idea." But when the cynical Mr. Bloom intimated that Mrs. Randolph's guest, the vivacious Miss Marston, was a friend of his, Mrs. Randolph sensed another impending scandal and "came down off her perch," as Mr. Bloom afterward described it. She led the way to Miss Marston's chamber. But the bird had flown and the detective and gambler hurried away leaving Mrs. Randolph inwardly reproaching herself that she had "taken up" an adventuress and had her as a guest on the strength of a Palm Beach intimacy. Suppose this came out in the papers?

CHAPTER XVIII.
A Runaway Marriage.
 W HILE Mrs. Randolph was indulging in another luxurious nervous collapse at this crowning contretemps the detective and gambler were on their way to the railroad station to head off the fugitives. Half way to the depot the front tire on the taxicab blew out with a loud explosion.

Tom Blake looked at his watch. "Blair Stanley and the lady and the diamond can't get a train out of Richmond for over an hour yet," said the detective. "I have a hunch that they know this and I bet two to one they have improved the shining hour by waking up Parson Gray, the marrying minister, and getting spliced. I have a wedding present, a pair of bracelets—for the groom."

Mr. Abe Bloom did not ask any questions. He realized there might be several reasons that such a piece of punitive jewelry could be clasped about the wrists of Blair Stanley. At the preacher's house, which was near by, neither Blake nor Bloom were surprised to see a waiting taxicab. Blake questioned the driver briefly and mounted the steps of the parsonage. The front door was unfastened and he and Bloom glided silently into the lighted hallway.

They could hear the voice of the Rev. John Gray droning, "I now pronounce you man and wife!" Blair Stanley and Vivian—Vivian Marston no more—were facing the minister and Blair was extending to his eager eyed bride the jewel with which he had won her, the diamond from the sky.
 Blake stepped forward and with a deftness acquired by long practice, snapped his handcuffs on the wrists of Blair, exclaiming, "We want the diamond, and I arrest you for the murder of Dr. Lee."

Vivian did not scream, she clutched the diamond and drew it to her breast. Blair, roused to a frenzy of fright and rage at the thought of losing Vivian and of being hailed off as a murderer, swung his manacled hands with all his strength.

For once Tom Blake was caught napping. He was knocked back over a chair and lay a moment stunned. Abe Bloom was next to feel the heavy swinging double blow of the infuriated Blair.

Vivian, quick as thought, pressed the button of the electric light switch near the door, and she and Blair rushed from the room, Blair pausing just inside the hall to draw back the sliding door. They dashed from the place and were in their taxicab and away before the excited and irresolute minister had thought to turn on the light. The detective, still dizzy from his stunning fall, roused himself and hurried after the fugitives from the house, followed by the astounded Mr. Bloom.

The taxicab of the newly married pair was gone. The detective and the gambler ran to their vehicle in the next street and, finding the burst tire had been replaced, ordered the driver to make for the depot.

On their part, the fugitives had not proceeded to the depot. It was the more subtle Vivian who suggested a daring scheme of escape from the city. Dismissing their taxi near Mr. Ike Bloom's pawnshop, they roused that nervously dozing lender of money on portable property. He was not loath to admit the fair Vivian for, awakened now, he was horribly frightened at the idea of being alone.

(To be continued.)

Children Cry FOR FLETCHER'S CASTORIA

In accordance with custom an ox was roasted on the street at Stratford-on-Avon on the occasion of the "Mop Fair," the ancient hiring fair of the district.

THE RESIGNATION

Is Announced of Premier McBride of British Columbia.

Victoria, B. C., Dec. 16.—It is officially announced that J. H. Turner, the aged agent-general for British Columbia in London, has resigned and will leave that office on December 31. He will be succeeded by Sir Richard McBride, who is being appointed to that position.

Sir Richard is resigning his seat in the Legislature and will be succeeded in the premiership by Hon. W. J. Bowser. Hon. Mr. Young, provincial secretary, is also resigning from the Cabinet.

The new administration will be composed as follows:
 Premier and attorney-general—W. J. Bowser.
 Minister of finance—A. C. Flumme.
 Minister of public works—C. F. Tingle.
 Minister of lands—W. R. Ross.
 Provincial secretary—Thos. Taylor.
 Minister of Mines—Lorne A. Campbell.

There will be no election until the spring, after a session of the Legislature.

It is understood that Mr. Turner's resignation as agent-general in London reached Victoria some days ago. Early last evening the resignation of Sir Richard was announced. Then followed the formal call on Mr. Bowser to name a Cabinet, the presentation of the new premier's slate of ministers, their acceptance by his honor, and finally the appointment of the late premier to take the vacant office in London. Yesterday happened to be the 49th birthday of Sir Richard McBride. Last night Sir Richard and Dr. Young were the guests of honor at a banquet given by the lieutenant governor. Several members of the new Cabinet were present.

The L. C. C. proposes to convert \$2,675,000 invested in the first 3 1/2 per cent. war loan into the second war loan.

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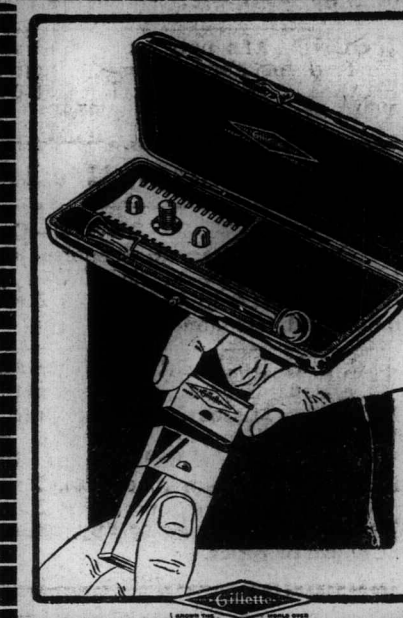
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