"OND FROM THE SKY"

The American Film Manufacturing Company's Picturized Romantic Novel In Chapters.

This contest is open to any man, woman or child who is not connected, directly or indirectly, with the Film Company or the newspapers publishing the continued story. No literary ability is necessary to qualify as a contestant.

You are advised to see the continued photo play in the theaters where it will be shown—to read the story as it runs every week, and then send in your suggestion. Contestants *must* confine their contributions for the sequel to *1,000 words or less.* It is the *idea* that is wanted.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

A feud has existed between Colonel Arthur Stanley and his cousin, Judge Lamar Stanley, ever an bitterness, the diamond from the sky, found in a fallen meteor in an obscure. Also, the economic in the Stanley estates in England may come to an American. When a daughter is born to the colonel and the mother dies, the colonel buys a gypsy boy and substitutes his. Three years later the gypsy mother, having had no part in this bargain, steals the girl, being crazed in secret, and leaves her son undetected as the heir. The gypsy has obtained possession of the diamond from the sky, and a document with the Stanley secret. When Esther is grown a beautiful young girl, Hagar, now gypsy queen, returns to Virginia with her. Dr. Lee, the late Colonel Stanley's friend, adopts Esther, but demands that Hagar turn over to him the diamond from the sky. Arthur Stanley, son of Hagar, falls in love with Esther and so does his cousin, Blair Stanley, rightful male heir of Stanley. In stealing the diamond Blair causes the death of the detective. Outside is Arthur surrounding Esther. Blair, escaping, infers that he has left Esther's room. Arthur forces him to fight a duel in which Blair is only stunned. He tries, with the aid of his mother, to place the blame for the murder of Dr. Lee upon Arthur, who now has the diamond. The sheriff attempts to take Arthur, but he eludes his pursuers and joins Hagar, who reveals his identity and upbraids him for his wild life. Needing money, he pawns the diamond in Richmond. Blair is in Richmond, and he, too, is forced to visit the pawnshop. At a ball, at which a supposed New York belle is the guest of honor, they are amazed to find the diamond on the visitor. She is an adventuress who has borrowed it. While Hagar is telling the "belle" fortune Luke Lovell, Hagar's gypsy guard, steals the diamond and to avoid detection drops it into a mail box. A sheriff tries to arrest Arthur on the murder charge. He escapes from Richmond on a freight train. The diamond passes into a mail bag, picked up by Quabba, organ grinder. Quabba's monkey steals the diamond and leaves it in a nest in a tree.

Arthur seeks work at a farm. Hagar takes Esther to live at Stanley hall. An old time tournament is held. Arthur attends in disguise, proves himself the best knight, defeating Blair, but is betrayed by the latter to the sheriff. By using daring horsemanship Arthur escapes. Later he leaves the farm. Tom Blake, a detective hired by Hagar, produces finger-prints proving Blair guilty of the death of Dr. Lee. Hagar proposes silence to Mrs. Stanley as the price of Hagar's and Esther's being received in Fairfax society. Blair strikes down Hagar and steals the documents and money from his mother. The diamond is found by a nurse her and is taken by a tramp. The latter is soon dead to Hong Kong. It is soon found in a pawning party enters Hong Kong and Hagar, unknown unknown to Blair's, is at once with Esther among the gypsies. Meanwhile Martin Servis, at-tempts to identify Arthur as heir to the deceased Earl of Stanley. Carrying Arthur as a fugitive we would find proof. To win Vivian, Blair steals the diamond. Later carrying her out hoping for the worst. Arthur tries in vain to warn them from impending robbery. Luke revolts against Hagar and is driven from camp. He leads tramps against the camp, and Quabba, to save Esther and Hagar, becomes an outlaw on the camp.

CHAPTER XIX.

Old Foes With New Faces.

AFFLICTED as he was with his deformity, Quabba, the hunchback—he of the sunny face and happy heart—was as agile and sinewy as the monkey Clarence, his companion on his way through the world. But now the hunchback is neither sunny of face nor happy of heart. A wild tremor of fear, anxiety and remorse shakes him in an ague of terror and confusion.

Reaching the rocking stone, pried from the perch where it had swayed for centuries, had only meant death for all below, thought Quabba.

Instead of saving his young and old mistress and his gypsy friends from the raid of desperate tramps led by Luke Lovell, Quabba now deemed that he had destroyed those he had loved, as well as their enemies.

But as he ran panting down the mountain side Quabba saw that some of the gypsies, warned by the clatter and roar of the landslide the massive, bounding, loosened rocking stone had start'd, had fled to safety.

He saw some half score of gypsy men and women toiling rapidly up the opposite slope of the valley from the destroyed gypsy camp. Through the dust that was settling in a cloud over the debris and rubble where the camp had stood the straining eyes of Quabba could mark the rugged figures of some of the assaulting tramps limping away from the scene of destruction as footloose as they had come.

Then as he neared the scene the affrighted Quabba could mark that the fleeing gypsies had paused halfway up the opposite slope and had nerved their attorney [illegible] With an aching [illegible] and a gre[illegible]orning sense of remorse for his rash deed that had worked such ill when he had meant but good, Quabba could see that Esther and Hagar were not among the hysterical gypsies returning to the scene of destruction.

When Quabba reached the heaps of stone and wreckage that had been the camp site he found the gypsies already gathered in a group to where the van of Hagar lay overturned and half covered by a mass of rocks and earth. Then his heart beat again with joy as he heard the voice of Esther, tremulous, yet brave for all that, issue from beneath the van. "If you are friends, save us," was Esther's cry. Strong and willing hands tore at the heaped up rock and rubble, and strained and lifted at the van.

Soon the van was raised from over the cavity its very overturning had made. There was Esther and Hagar, trembling but unhurt save for a few minor scratches and bruises, but in the bottom of the cavity lay the bulky form of Luke Lovell, stark and still.

Kindly hands drew Hagar and Esther out and Quabba fell at their feet, uttering incoherent self accusations mingled with equally incoherent thanksgivings. A kindly hand threw a coat across the inanimate face and form of the gypsy outlaw.

Then comedy succeeded tragedy. The shrill, chattering cries of Clarence, the monkey, were heard voicing his alarm, fright and indignation from within the van.

The universal gypsies turned from sighs to laughter, and even the wan lips of Esther were wreathed in a smile as Quabba cried excitedly, "I am coming, Clarence, my son!" and so saying he wrenched open the shattered window of the van and the frightened monkey leaped into his master's arms and began chattering his thanks and joy.

The saving of gypsy lives was due to the providential fact that the onslaught of the marauding tramps led by Lovell had driven the gypsies from the danger zone where the avalanche of stones and earth had struck the camp.

How many of the invaders lay buried beneath the settled landslide the philosophical gypsies neither cared nor sought to ascertain. It was later found that Luke Lovell evidently had been only stunned and not killed, as was at first supposed. For when the gypsies returned, after making rude shelter tents away from the rubble of the landslide for Esther, Hagar and their children and women folk, no trace of Lovell could be found.

He had recovered consciousness, it was evident, and had stolen away fearful of the vengeance of his former Romany associates.

Quabba deemed it best to keep secret the fact that he had been the genius of the landslide. It had been a fatal success. He affected the philosophy of the gypsies in the matter and agreed with them that somehow good had come out of the general destruction, even if it were only their rendance of the unscrupulous Luke Lovell and his ruffian rabble, the tramps.

Acknowledged as their princess and reigning queen over them as regent for the afflicted Hagar, Esther appointed a head man from the gypsies in the place of the deposed and banished Lovell and returned with Hagar and Quabba to Stanley hall, which was

Hagar and Esther In Their Overturned Van When the Gypsy Camp Is Annihilated.

still held by Hagar on the terms of lease she had taken from the receiver in bankruptcy for the fugitive Arthur Stanley, still fleeing from justice wrongfully under the guise of being the murderer of Dr. Lee.

Luke Lovell, when he recovered consciousness, drew himself from the [illegible] beneath the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of plundering [illegible] of the tramps who had [illegible] the camp with him and [illegible] [illegible] from [illegible] [illegible]

Luke [illegible] great [illegible] [illegible] thought was to [illegible] [illegible] from [illegible] knowledge of the Stanley secret—the knowledge he had gained from a glimpse at the documents in the gypsy's strong box. Luke Lovell realized at last the source of the dead Matt Harding's gypsy wealth that now was Hagar's, and which since Hagar's sudden affliction no one knew the hiding place of.

One thing Lovell felt sure of was that this wealth had not decreased under Hagar's stewardship while alone. Wherever the treasure was it was not in Hagar's brass bound chest. Only documents were in that chest, but they were treasures of themselves.

For one of these old papers especially had set forth plainly the fact that Hagar's long dead husband, the greedy Matt Harding, had trafficked with the great folks of Fairfax in his own flesh and blood. Here was a fortune to be obtained by himself, as it had been obtained by Matt Harding, Luke Lovell thought. And he limped away unseen from the destroyed gypsy camp and trudged resolutely to Fairfax, some eight or ten miles away.

"If you have any secret to sell take it to some other market!"

There was no one at Stanley hall to pay him for keeping or telling the Stanley secret, but Luke Lovell knew enough of the Stanleys and their feuds to realize his best market would be with Blair Stanley's mother. If Arthur Stanley, so called, was Hagar's son, a gypsy changeling, then Blair Stanley was the real heir to the Stanley estates, to which, according to the old family tradition, the heir was commanded to carry the diamond from the sky.

But at the portals of the home of Blair Stanley's mother the proud, cold widow would hold no traffic with the sinister gypsy who clamored at her threshold with a secret to sell. She ordered him to be gone and professed no interest in the ware he stated he had for sale.

Ellen Stanley was, in her austere way, as unscrupulous in her family ambition as even her husband, the grim, cold Judge Lamar Stanley, had been. But she would have no traffic with such as Luke Lovell. She realized only too well that once such a creature had her in its power, even as a confident, its dominion would be, as is always the dominion of the ignorant, brutal and intolerable.

So Blair's mother dismissed the disgruntled gypsy in cold disdain. She would be no confederate and yet the victim of the shameless that she instinctively knew would follow any association with any secret with him.

"If you have any secret to sell take it to some other market," said the Widow Stanley with cold hauteur. "Unless you leave my premises this instant I shall have you arrested and committed for attempted blackmail! Shout your secret from the housetops if you please. I am not concerned."

But Luke Lovell, thwarted and discouraged though he was in his first bold bid for the fortune he had believed was within his grasp, had no intention of shouting his secret from the housetops. He realized its only value was in his keeping it and being paid, and heavily, to keep it.

He must find some one who would pay—this some one would be Blair Stanley, he did not doubt.

But if Blair Stanley's mother had refused to traffic with the sinister gypsy she was shrewd enough to surmise the secret that had become a living thing again after lying dormant for eighteen years.

Why had her husband set off alone to meet his death in the mountains the day after Colonel Stanley had died, eighteen years ago? Why had Dr. Lee adopted the gypsy woman's daughter a few months since? Why had this gypsy woman returned after all these years, in the guise of a woman of means, and taken Stanley hall?

Why had she come with proofs of Blair's guilt of the murder of Dr. Lee and proffered her silence in exchange for social recognition by the proud families of Fairfax for this girl?

And now that this gypsy woman was ousted and all fear of her son's guilt being known had vanished for the time being at least, Mrs. Stanley resolved to take advantage of these situations as she supposed them. If this girl was the real heir, the missing heir of Stanley hall, of which there had been vague whispers for years, why not prepare for and mollify against any possible decrees that might threaten through her son's vain and dreadful deed—the murder of Dr. Lee?

CHAPTER XX.

Wealth From the Desert.

MRS. STANLEY resolved to make friends with Hagar's supposed daughter. If Arthur Stanley, so called, was not the rightful heir, Blair Stanley was. But this left the girl heir to Stanley hall, and all could be conserved and all be well if Blair might return and marry Esther.

Even though Hagar recovered her faculties, she must remain silent as to Blair's guilt were he Esther's husband, thought Mrs. Stanley. As for Arthur Stanley, so called, there was slight fear of his returning.

The shrewd mother of Blair Stanley guessed now the true cause of Arthur's flight and continued absence. It was because he also had learned the Stanley secret.

At Stanley hall Esther, made a woman and reunite by all the tragic occurrences that of late had befallen her, resolved it was her duty to institute further into the documents in Hagar's brass bound box. Esther had so devoured vainly to lift the cloud from Hagar's mind by earnest inquiries and kindly beseechings. But Hagar would only moan, "My son, give me back my son, my little babe."

Then Esther read the documents. The proof was plain. She was in her rightful place at Stanley hall, for she was Esther Stanley. But she resolved, through the love she bore for him she had known as Arthur Stanley, that she would take the secret to the grave. She would spare Arthur the shame she knew his proud spirit would feel.

What to her were place and position here in Fairfax among a proud people who, so far as their women folk were concerned had ignored her?

Yet when we are young we have our hopes and dreams. Esther's hope and dream was the return of Arthur, the sharing of the secret with him, and his love. Then all would be well. So it was that Esther was not wholly surprised when Blair Stanley's mother called at Stanley hall and proffered her friendship and assistance.

There were no confidences exchanged between them. Esther suspected that Blair's mother cruelly knew, for in her loneliness and having no friend save the humble though devoted Quabba, Esther was glad to accept the proffered friendship of her austere kinswoman, though neither spoke of the life.

Mrs. Stanley suggested that Hagar be taken to Richmond for treatment for her mental affliction. She also hinted that Esther should go to Richmond and be introduced into the best circles there by Mrs. Burton Randolph.

It may have been that Mrs. Burton Randolph stood in fear of her austere kinswoman, Mrs. Judge Stanley—fear that was augmented by the fact that Blair's mother knew the true character of Virginia Marston.

It also may have been that the sweet nature and beauty of Esther and her gentle breeding appealed to Mrs. Randolph more than her fears of Blair's mother. It always had been Mrs. Randolph's pet diversion to have a protegee.

At any rate, Mrs. Randolph made Esther a welcome guest and protegee and assisted Blair's mother in securing the leading specialist of Richmond to treat Hagar for her mental infirmity.

Quabba had been left behind at Stanley hall, but Quabba suspicioned that Blair's mother was an ally for with a new face of friendship. As always, he resolved to guard Esther and he followed her to Richmond.

Mrs. Randolph had suggested to Blair's mother, when she found Mrs. Stanley desired her son's return, to consult with that astute private detective, Tom Blake, in setting the claims that were against the reckless Blair in Richmond.

Blake effected a conference between Blair's mother and Abe Bloom, the

Hagar and Esther Arrive Again at Stanley Hall With the Brass Bound Box.

gambling house keeper, who held the bad check for $2,000 he had cashed for Blair, and who was the most pressing claimant against him.

At this conference, although the accusation was not made, Mrs. Stanley soon surmised that Blake and Bloom knew of Blair's guilt of the murder of Dr. Lee. It was from Blake and Bloom, through the agency of the lady through print on the bad check, that the [illegible] had been established, his motive inferred. She also surmised that it was from this source Hagar had obtained her proofs.

In her present condition Hagar was oblivious of such matters now. The only two, there in all the world who knew were the detective and the gambling house keeper.

It was not necessary to enter into any detailed arrangements. Mr. Bloom was solicitous and explicit.

"You make good this bum check of your son's," he said, "and me and Blake won't say nothing or cause your son any trouble. But there's one thing else. I've got to have this big stone which you aristocrats of Fairfax county call the diamond from the sky. My brother

Vivian Stanley Leaves Her Husband.

advanced money on it, and even if he knows that's my price for keeping my mouth shut," he added, "and I'll see that Blake here says nothing neither."

"But the diamond has disappeared. We don't know where it is," said Mrs. Stanley coldly, though in her heart she raged at the presumption.

"It'll turn up—them big stones always do. It's one of the finest in the world, but that's my price!" retorted Mr. Abe Bloom. "If it ever turns up you Stanleys can replevin it. No one can dispute your title to it. There ain't another one like it in the world. But when you Stanleys get it it comes to me! That's understood and agreed, eh Blake?"

There was a strange, impertinentable gleam in the keen eyes of the detective, who had maintained his usual taciturnity during this strange conference, but he nodded his head and answered quietly, "Yes, that's understood and agreed."

Reaching Richmond, it had been no trouble for Quabba, at his old occupation of organ grinder, to find the house of Mrs. Burton Randolph, where he knew Esther was stopping in Richmond. He had just reached the house and had just been ordered to move on by a passing policeman when a taxicab drove up and Blake and Bloom alighted and entered the Randolph residence.

This citation was such a surprise to the policeman that he readily vouched the information as to who these individuals were when Quabba inquired.

"These?" said the policeman. "These? two of the wisest guys in Richmond—Tom Blake, who runs the Blake detective agency, and Abe Bloom, the biggest gambler in this burg. Maybe they are going into society."

Thus, ordering Quabba to move on again, he moved on himself.

Quabba with his monkey and organ retired on but only to the side of the house. A detective and a gambling house keeper? These were strange visitors indeed, and, suspecting the motives of Mrs. Stanley's sudden patronage of Esther as he did, Quabba squatted close by the low window of the reception room and listened. He overheard enough to realize that Blair Stanley's return was being arranged, and he knew this boded no good to his fair young mistress.

After the detective and gambler had departed, Quabba sent his ambassador and collector of external revenue, Clarence, the monkey, up the wistaria vines to the upper chamber, which he surmised might be Esther's.

He was right in his surmise. Esther, who, like Mrs. Randolph, had withdrawn when visitors on private business had been announced for Mrs. Stanley, was in her room.

The chattering of the monkey on her window sill roused Esther from a reverie of Arthur, and with a glad cry she ran to the window and hugged the affectionate little beast and waved a welcome to the smiling Quabba below. Then Quabba laid his finger to his lips as a sign of secrecy, yanked the string to recall his ambassador and departed.

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Beside the track in the glaring California desert, Arthur Stanley, or, as he calls himself, John Powell, lay stunned after being thrown from the Overland limited, which he had boarded from horseback as the train had passed on the grade in the desert.

He had meant to warn the trainmen of the robbers lying in wait for them, but they had imagined him a desperado single handedly attempting a hold up and had thrown him off.

His horse, as all horses he handled loved him. The faithful and affectionate creature roused him by nosing at him. Arthur half stunned, recalled his affectionate four footed friend and galloped after the train. At the top of the grade the ambushed robbers halted the express with an obstruction on the track too great to be risked by the engineer endeavoring to pass through it.

When Arthur arrived upon the scene two robbers were in the express car and two were going through the Pullmans. Another had compelled the fireman to uncouple the locomotive and, covering the engineer, had made him drive the detached machine up the track some distance from the standing train.

Hence knowing what he did, Arthur galloped by and, mounting the engine at the end of the tender from his horse's back, grappled with the lone robber covering the engineer.

A desperate struggle followed by the furnace door. Seizing a large wrench the engineer aimed a blow at the robber struggling with Arthur, but the blow missed for and hit friend and Arthur was stretched senseless on the firing board. The robber, with a curse jumped from the engine and ran, rejoining his companions.

In one of the Pullmans Vivian Marston, who was now Mrs. Blair Stanley—the two traveling as "Mr. and Mrs. Guy Peyton"—were among those held at pistol's point. An envious woman passenger to whom Vivian had shown the diamond from the sky had betrayed the fact she possessed it. Despite her pleadings, expostulations and even curses—curses that were chorused by the chagrined Blair—the chuckling robbers tore off the great gem with their other booty. Laden with a sack of valuables, and, taking over $100,000 in bank notes from the express messenger, the robbers decamped.

Within a few hours the sheriff and his posse of deputies and railroad detectives were hot on the trail, and "John Powell," sheep herder, after being hounded a few brief moments, was back at his lonely occupation.

Vivian, despoiled of the jewel for which she would have risked her soul reproached herself and her recreant bridegroom that they did not die gloriously in defending it. In her bitter rage Vivian taunts Blair by telling him she only married him to gain the diamond, and, now that it is gone, he must go and regain it or see her no more.

In vain he protests. She threatens to give him over to the police and deserts him at Los Angeles and wires to Abe Bloom in Richmond telling of the loss of the diamond and asking for funds. The deserted and raging Blair pawns what possessions the train robbers have left him, and under his assumed name of Peyton hides in a mean hotel after writing to his relative, Mrs Burton Randolph, to intercede for him with his mother.

Far off in the desert fastnesses the pursuit of the posse after the train robbers is hotly on. A shot and the rearmost saddle of the fleeing outlaws is empty. But as the outlaw falls the diamond from the sky that he has clawed out from the sack of valuables flies from his now nerveless hand and lies glittering but unnoticed by a clump of cacti as the posse thunders by.

Another shot goes home, and the foremost outlaw drops from his saddle. Another shot and his riderless

Like Edmond Dantes He Cries, "The World Is Mine!"

horse drops dead in its tracks. As this horse falls the treasure sack with the banknotes falls half under the dying animal.

The bulk of its prostrate body masks the treasure sack of banknotes and hides it from view of the posse that gallops almost over the dead horse's hoofs as the pursuit of the three surviving desperadoes goes on.

A month later John Powell, sheep herder, is sent to the desert to find a strayed flock. Beneath the skeleton of a buzzards' feast, a dead horse, he finds the stolen treasure. In a wild frenzy of hysterical delight John Powell remembers "Monte Cristo," which as the wild young master of Stanley hall, he had read with greedy eagerness. And so, like Edmond Dantes he stands erect and cries in the burning desert waste, "The world is mine!"

The diamond is lying near. It gleams in the sun on the desert sand among rattlesnakes and cacti, but John Powell, blinded with the treasure that he grasps from the bones of a moldering horse, sees it not. And there it lies! Who will get it next?