

The Kokuro Vase

How It Established a Man's Good Name

By CLARISSA MACKIE

"It is understood that I purchase the house as it stands now, with all of its contents," warned John Day, as he sat in the office of the Japanese agent.

The Japanese bowed deferentially. "Yes, Mr. Day, it shall be as you desire. My clerk has made an inventory of the contents of the Tatsuyo house, and you will find that not even a shoji is out of place or a kakemono missing from the walls."

John Day nodded approval, and before the day closed he found himself the owner of the Tokyo residence of the late Henry Burdick, a self exiled American, whom he had known many years ago in the United States.

The house sat back from the street perhaps a hundred feet and was surrounded by a high stone wall without a door or any other sign of entrance to break its rough surface.

At the end of the wall was a red lacquered gate that led into a narrow lane bordered on either side by bamboos, whose feathery tops interlaced and formed a pale green roof overhead.

Halfway down this lane of bamboos was a door set in the wall leading straight into the garden of the house purchased by John Day. This was the main entrance and led up a flower bordered path to the veranda of the house.

Farther down the lane there was another door in the wall that gave entrance to the kitchen gardens and the servants' quarters.

The Tatsuyo house, as the place was called in reference to the original builder and owner of the pretty residence, was now the home of John Day.

On that first evening spent in his new home Day wandered from one room to another with the inventory in his hands, checking off the contents of each apartment, until he felt assured that since the day of Henry Burdick's death not one article had been disturbed.

Henry Burdick's will had been a brief one. It directed that the house he sold and the proceeds, together with certain securities, be given to his relatives in New England. To John Day's surprise, he found himself named as an executor of the will.

It was a surprise because he and Henry Burdick were bitter enemies and had been ever since Day had discovered that Henry Burdick had deeply wronged him in a business matter and fled to Japan. Day's appearance in Tokyo a few days before Burdick's death was purely accidental, and he did not know that Burdick was aware of his presence. But the hastily drawn will and naming of Day as an executor gave color to his suspicion that Burdick had known of his presence in the Japanese capital and for some reason had desired to bring him in close touch with his affairs.

In their youth these two men had both been employed by the same firm of jewelers. A magnificent diamond was missed from the safe, and suspicion was divided between John Day and Henry Burdick. Burdick managed to clear himself of blame, but John Day was judged guilty by his firm, but permitted to remain with it and repay the value of the missing gem.

By denying himself of everything, even the barest necessities, by remaining unmarried and devoting himself entirely to earning and saving money to pay back something which he had never taken, John Day had worked for twenty years. And now, forty-five years old, he found himself clear of debt to the jewelry firm of which he had been elected an honored member and was taking a well earned vacation and a trip around the world. It was a strange coincidence that landed him in Tokyo a few days before Henry Burdick's death, and that brought him into close touch with the affairs of the man who had deeply wronged him, for Day had always believed Burdick guilty.

"If Burdick had that diamond and never disposed of it, and I can find no trace of it in any of the markets of the world, then it is either untouched among his possessions or else he dropped it in midocean," mused John Day as he completed the inventory of the contents of the house.

He was strongly of the opinion that Burdick had concealed the diamond somewhere in the house, trusting to John Day to discover it and thus, in a fashion, right the great wrong that had been done.

The drawing room of the house was the most promising place, for it was furnished in a style that combined the rich simplicity of the orient with all the comforts of the occident.

John Day lingered long in this room before he went into the library adjoining. This room was a replica of the other, save that the walls were lined with bookshelves, which were burdened with curios.

Here Henry Burdick had spent many hours, and this was the room which must have witnessed his remorse if he had ever felt any for the dishonor he had brought upon John Day.

John Day touched a bell and summoned the house boy. It happened that he had been fortunate enough to engage the same faithful Japanese who had served Henry Burdick during his long residence in Tokyo.

"Hatsu," began John Day, looking

keenly at the impassive face of the oriental. "I wish to ask you a few questions concerning the last hours of your late master, Mr. Burdick."

"Yes, honorable," returned the man, but Day fancied that the impassivity of his face was broken by a quiver of surprise.

"Did Mr. Burdick appear to be particularly concerned about any matter? Was he troubled in mind?"

"He had that appearance," returned Hatsu cautiously, after long thought.

"In what way?" asked Day sharply.

"He talked much to himself, and he was usually a silent man," said Hatsu thoughtfully. "One day, the very day he passed out into the hands of the gods, I found him wandering about the rooms, looking into hole and corner, and he was muttering words."

"What words?"

"I could not make for sure, honorable," returned the man after another interval of thought, "but it seemed that he wished to hide something, for he said over and over that he must conceal it, yet it must be found. 'Hidden and found, hidden and found,' those were his words."

"I was alarmed at his behavior, and I ran out for help. When I returned he was stretched on the floor of this room senseless, and it was later in the day that he died without a word."

"And you found nothing in the room—the thing that he might have tried to conceal?" questioned Day.

"Nothing, excellency," returned Hatsu.

Day dismissed him, and later in the evening when all the servants had retired to their quarters John Day made an exhaustive search of the house. He left the library till the last, and it was long after midnight when he turned into that dimly lighted room.

He looked around. Where would he conceal a large diamond as big as a hazel nut if he had been minded to conceal such a gem? Under the rugs? Within the vases? In a niche of the carving? Within that grinning idol?

There were a score of places to choose from.

He began with the rugs, groping carefully over every inch of their surface for the missing stone.

The rugs refused to divulge the secret.

Then the innumerable curios. The grinning idol when shaken gave back a dust of sandalwood and a smell of joss sticks. The ivory elephant refused to offer any hiding place.

The Kokuro vase on the mantelpiece—

John Day looked at its graceful outlines. There was a gray surface traced with delicate cherry boughs and flying birds. The neck was very small. He took it down and examined it. The missing diamond would never have entered that tiny orifice, yet it must be somewhere.

Suddenly in the silent house there came a sound.

John Day extinguished the light, replaced the vase and stepped behind a carved screen.

Into the darkened room came a bent form holding a lighted lantern. The glow of the light showed the tense features of—Hatsu, the house boy.

He looked furtively around, and then his feet led him swiftly to the mantelpiece, where he took down the Kokuro vase. He glanced over his shoulder into the dusky corners, turned the vase upside down and shook it vigorously. Just as he replaced it there came the sound of another step in the room, and there was the evil countenance of the gardener peering in.

Hatsu turned, saw him, and instantly the two men leaped for each other's throat.

They wrestled silently, each one struggling for a death hold. John Day, standing there behind the screen, marveled at the deadly struggle.

What was it that each one desired—the Kokuro vase?

He stepped forward, removed the vase from its place and slipped it in his pocket. Then as the forms remained silent on the floor he glanced once at them, and, convinced that they would fight it out between them, he went upstairs to his own bedroom and locked every door and window.

He wrapped the vase in a cloth and then shattered it against the edge of his trunk. When he unwrapped the broken pieces there fell into his hands an envelope rolled into a tube. In one end was something round and hard. The envelope was sealed with Burdick's private seal, and on the outside it was addressed to the firm of jewelers in New York of which John Day was now a member.

He slipped the sealed envelope into his inner pocket, and then, his search ended, he went to the library to discover that the fighting servants had vanished. He never saw either of them again.

John Day's trip around the world ended there and then. He took the next steamer for San Francisco, and six weeks later he stepped into the private office of his firm with Henry Burdick's confession and the missing diamond.

Why the guilty man had deferred his confession until the day of his death and why he had never had the courage to use his ill gotten gains no one ever knew. The great diamond had been a curse to him, and its possession had undoubtedly shortened his miserable life.

Now that he was vindicated in the eyes of his fellow men John Day married the girl he loved and retired from business. But he directed that the house in Tokyo be sold, and so the lovely house in the garden by the lane of bamboos has passed into other hands.

As for the shattered Kokuro vase, John Day treasures it highly. He has had it repaired, and it occupies the place of honor in his library.

NEWS BRIEFS

A Soldiers' monument will be erected at Denison.

Mrs. Peter Riersen, aged 90, of Roland, is dead.

Davenport will build a \$30,196 armory for Battery B.

Ackley's renowned Sauer Kraut Day will be held August 31.

A new Methodist Episcopal church is being erected at Randolph.

Ashabel Jones, brakeman at Council Bluffs, committed suicide.

Mrs. Phillip Williams, of Onslow, is dead from a stroke of paralysis.

Mrs. Jacob F. Bird, aged 74, prominent teacher at Keokuk, is dead.

Colonel Bartley, of Tipton, was presented with a horse by his friends.

Walter Lingenfelder, of Charles City, was killed in an auto accident.

Half the men in Iowa's only cavalry squadron refused to take the new oath.

The corner-stone of Sioux City's new \$500,000 court-house will be laid soon.

Joseph Heathcote, serving a term for wife murder at Ft. Madison, went insane.

Cedar Valley Seminary, at Osage, is reorganized and now becomes a junior college.

W. B. McBurney, one of Tipton's oldest merchants, is retiring from business.

The general store at Ladoga was destroyed by fire after being struck by lightning.

Charles Rak, of Solon, was injured when his leg came in contact with a buzz saw.

A three-span concrete bridge will be constructed near Clarinda at a cost of \$25,000.

Mrs. T. F. Clark, aged 81, of Traer, fell from an auto and sustained a broken hip.

Harold Klingel, of Sheffield, after a delicate operation, had his club-foot made straight.

Isalah Waddington, aged 3, of Charter Oak, died from choking on a kernel of corn.

Mrs. Phil Getcher, of Missouri Valley, was badly injured when her auto ran into a ditch.

Mrs. F. J. Stevenson, near Lore, was probably fatally injured when her auto turned turtle.

The school board at Mason City has purchased over \$1,300 worth of playground apparatus.

T. D. Haskill, marshal at Montour, was killed when struck by a passenger train at Marshalltown.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Baumgardner, of Charles City, were injured when thrown from a buggy.

Thirty engineers, at Highland Park college, Des Moines, enlisted in the Guards at Camp Dodge.

A children's playground is being installed on an empty lot at Osage, by Congregational boosters.

Mrs. Isabel Gates, widow of the former president of Grinnell college, is dead at Cambridge, Mass.

Arthur Higby, of Ft. Dodge, filed suit against the Craig & Dawson Coal company, for \$1,175 for injury.

Mahlon Gore, formerly of Sioux City, and first homesteader in the United States, is dead at Orlando, Fla.

Marshall Haskill, near Marshalltown, was killed when a passenger train hit his auto, throwing him 180 feet.

Sergeant O. E. Kidoo is the third member of the Glenwood company to be married since the mobilization order.

McGregor, Monona and Luana will soon be receiving electric power from the big dams on the Iowa river near Decorah.

Edward Veemene, a chauffeur at Davenport, was accidentally shot when he put his hand in his pocket containing a gun.

Members of the two companies from Ft. Dodge will receive a total of \$197.84 a day from the government while in service.

Mrs. Olaf M. Anenson, of Roland, was painfully injured in an auto driven by her husband, when she was thrown to the top.

F. H. Cummings, an insurance agent at Marshalltown, became crazed with liquor, ran amuck, and injured three persons with a gun.

The first automobile tire ever manufactured at Ft. Madison was taken out of the molds at the new factory there a few days ago.

Fireworks on display in a window at Guttenberg were exploded when the sun's rays concentrated through a plate glass window.

Advice comes from Iowa State college at Ames that young stock to be shown at fall fairs should be given special attention now.

The Bethlehem Steel Company's Offer to Serve the United States

Bulletin No. 5

At a time when the expenses of the Government are so enormous—

Isn't it worth while finding out the actual facts before plunging ahead into an expenditure of \$11,000,000 of the people's money for a Government armor plant?

To clear up the whole situation, and to put it on a basis as fair and business-like as we know how to express it, we now make this offer to the Government:

The Bethlehem Steel Company will manufacture armor plate for the Government of the United States at actual cost of operation plus such charges for overhead expenses, interest and depreciation as the Federal Trade Commission may fix. We will agree to this for such period as the Government may designate.

The House of Representatives voted down a proposal to empower the Federal Trade Commission to determine a fair price for armor, and allow private manufacturers opportunity to meet that price before the Government built its plant.

Isn't our proposition fair and ought it not to be accepted?

The measure is now before the United States Senate.

CHAR. M. SCHWAB, Chairman
EUGENE G. GRACE, President

Bethlehem Steel Company

STAMP, WHISTLE, SING AND PLAY DURING TEST

High School Girl Adds Figures in One Minute and Twenty-eight Sec. onds Despite Noises.

Philadelphia.—Miss Frances Snyderman of the William Penn high school added a column of figures recently in a room where there was a piano playing, a band of girls marching around blowing whistles and pounding on dishes. Other girls sang "Yankee Doodle," stamped their feet and clapped their hands.

In spite of the din Miss Frances finished her sum in one minute and twenty-eight seconds, thereby winning the "distraction race," one of the events

in a mathematical sports contest conducted at the high school. There were 338 entries for seven events in the contest.

Another event was a relay race, in which teams of four girls made extensions on a bill, totaled it, discounted it, applied several credits on it and then raced for the platform. It was a test of physical quickness as well as mental, and several times girls who finished the problem at the same time had a hot race for position. The event was won by the team headed by Rose Dinitman of the Stevens school.

For Sale.

A good 4-year-old Hereford bull. Registered and well built.

JOHN REYNOLDS,
Route 1, Bonair, Iowa.

COURT REWARDS BRAVE ACT.

Suspends Sentence on Youth Who Stopped a Runaway.

Yonkers, N. Y.—City Judge Beall on his way to court saw a young man dash into the street, grasp the bridle of a runaway horse and bring it to a standstill after being dragged halfway across Getty square.

The judge ran out to shake hands and compliment the youth for his bravery.

"Thanks, judge," the man said. Then he laughed. "I hope you will remember this when you get me in court."

He explained he was Frank O'Neill of 139 Vineyard avenue and was on his way to appear for fighting in the street. Judge Beall later suspended sentence.

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Motor en block, overhead valves, bore 2 13-16 in., stroke 4 3-4 in., Remy ignition, starting and lighting, Marvel carburetor, Oakland-Stewart vacuum gasoline feed. Cone clutch, one bearing full floating rear axle, wheel base 110 inches. 32x3 1-2 in. tires, non-skid rear.

FINISH—Deep Royal Blue. Bodies—Touring, 5-passenger, roomy Marine body. Roadster—2-passenger, covered luggage compartment. Price \$795, f. o. b. factory

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