

The New Arabian Nights

By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON



The RAJAH'S DIAMOND

PART I

Story of the Bandbox

UP to the age of sixteen at a private school and afterward at one of those great institutions for which England is justly famous Mr. Harry Hartley had received the ordinary education of a gentleman. At that period he manifested a remarkable distaste for study, and his only surviving parent being both weak and ignorant, he was permitted thenceforward to spend his time in the attainment of petty and purely elegant accomplishments. Two years later he was left an orphan and almost a beggar. For all active and industrious pursuits Harry was unfitted alike by nature and training. He could sing romantic ditties and accompany himself with discretion on the piano; he was a graceful although a timid cavalier; he had a pronounced taste for chess, and nature had sent him into the world with one of the most engaging exteriors that can well be fancied. Blond and pink, with dove's eyes and a gentle smile, he had an air of agreeable tenderness and melancholy and the most submissive and caressing manners. But, when all is said, he was not the man to lead armaments of war or direct the councils of a state.

A fortunate chance and some influence obtained for Harry at the time of his bereavement the position of private secretary to Major General Sir Thomas Vandeleur, C. B. Sir Thomas was a man of sixty, loud spoken, boisterous and domineering. For some reason, some service the nature of which had been often whispered and repeatedly denied, the rajah of Kashgar had presented this officer with the sixth known diamond of the world. The gift transformed General Vandeleur from a poor into a wealthy man, from an obscure and unpopular soldier into one of the lions of London society. The possessor of the rajah's diamond was welcome in the most exclusive circles, and he had found a lady, young, beautiful and well born, who was willing to call the diamond hers even at the price of marriage with Sir Thomas Vandeleur. It was commonly said at the time that, as like draws to like, one jewel had attracted another. Certainly Lady Vandeleur was not only a gem of the finest water in her own person, but she showed herself to the world in a very costly setting, and she was considered by many respectable authorities as one among the three or four best dressed women in England.

Harry's duty as secretary was not particularly onerous, but he had a dislike for all prolonged work. It gave him pain to ink his fingers, and the ebarns of Lady Vandeleur and her toilettes drew him often from the library to the boudoir. He had the prettiest ways among women, could talk fashions with enjoyment and was never more happy than when criticising a shade of ribbon or running on an errand to the milliner's. In short, Sir Thomas' correspondence fell into pitiful arrears, and my lady had another lady's maid.

At last the general, who was one of the least patient of military commanders, arose from his place in a violent access of passion and indicated to his secretary that he had no further need for his services, with one of those explanatory gestures which are most rarely employed between gentlemen. The door being unfortunately open, Mr. Hartley fell downstairs headforemost.

He arose somewhat hurt and very deeply aggrieved. The life in the general's house precisely suited him. He moved, on a more or less doubtful footing, in very genteel company. He did little, he ate of the best, and he had a lukewarm satisfaction in the presence of Lady Vandeleur which, in his own heart, he dubbed by a more emphatic name.

Immediately after he had been outraged by the military foot he hurried to the boudoir and recounted his sorrows.

"You know very well, my dear Harry," replied Lady Vandeleur, for she called him by name like a child or a domestic servant, "that you never by any chance do what the general tells you. No more do I, you may say, but that is different. A woman can earn her pardon for a year of disobedience by a single devout submission, and, besides, no one is married to his private secretary. I shall be sorry to lose you, but since you cannot stay longer in a house where you have been insulted I shall wish you goodbye, and I promise you to make the general smart for his behavior."

Harry's countenance fell, tears came into his eyes, and he seized on Lady Vandeleur with a tender embrace.

"My lady," said he, "what is an insult? I should think little indeed of any one who could not forgive them by the score. But to leave one's

friends, to tear up the bonds of affection—

He was unable to continue, for his emotion choked him, and he began to weep.

Lady Vandeleur looked at him with a curious expression.

"This little fool," she thought, "imagines himself to be in love with me. Why should he not become my servant instead of the general's? He is good natured, obliging, and understands dress, and, besides, it will keep him out of mischief. He is positively too pretty to be unattached."

That night she talked over the general, who was already somewhat ashamed of his vivacity, and Harry was transferred to the feminine department, where his life was little short of heavenly. He was always dressed with uncommon nicety, wore delicate flowers in his buttonhole and could entertain a visitor with tact and pleasantry. He took a pride in servility to a beautiful woman, received Lady Vandeleur's commands as so many marks of favor and was pleased to exhibit himself before other men, who derided and despised him in his character of male lady's maid and man milliner. Nor could he think enough of his existence from a moral point of view. Wickedness seemed to him an essentially male attribute, and to pass one's days with a delicate woman, and principally occupied about trimmings, was to inhabit an enchanted isle among the storms of life.

One fine morning he came into the drawing room and began to arrange some music on the top of the piano. Lady Vandeleur, at the other end of the apartment, was speaking somewhat eagerly with her brother, Charlie Pendragon, an elderly young man, much broken with dissipation and very lame of one foot. The private secretary, to whose entrance they paid no regard, could not avoid overhearing a part of their conversation.

"Today or never," said the lady. "Once and for all, it shall be done today."

"Today, if it must be," replied the brother, with a sigh. "But it is a false step, a ruinous step, Clara, and we shall live to repent it dismally."

Lady Vandeleur looked her brother steadily and somewhat strangely in the face.

"You forget," she said. "The man must die at last."

"Upon my word, Clara," said Pendragon, "I believe you are the most heartless rascal in England."

"You men," she returned, "are so coarsely built that you can never appreciate a shade of meaning. You are yourselves rapacious, violent, immodest, careless of distinction, and yet the least thought for the future shocks you in a woman. I have no patience with such stuff. You would despise in a common banker the imbecility that you expect in me."

"You are very likely right," replied her brother. "You were always cleverer than I. And, anyway, you know my motto, 'The family before all.'"

"Yes, Charlie," she returned, taking his hand in hers, "I know your motto better than you know it yourself. And Clara before the family? Is not that the second part of it? Indeed you are the best of brothers, and I love you dearly."

Mr. Pendragon got up, looking a little confused by these family endearments.

"I had better not be seen," said he. "I understand my part to a miracle, and I'll keep an eye on the Tame Cat."

"Do," she replied. "He is an abject creature and might ruin all."

She kissed the tips of her fingers to him daintily, and the brother withdrew by the boudoir and the back stair.

"Harry," said Lady Vandeleur, turning toward the secretary as soon as they were alone, "I have a commission for you this morning. But you shall take a cab. I cannot have my secretary freckled."

She spoke the last words with emphasis and a look of half motherly pride that caused great contentment to poor Harry, and he professed himself charmed to find an opportunity of serving her.

"It is another of our great secrets," she went on archly, "and no one must know of it but my secretary and me. Sir Thomas would make the saddest disturbance, and if you only knew how weary I am of these scenes! Oh, Harry, Harry, can you explain to me what makes you men so violent and unjust? But, indeed, I know you cannot. You are the only man in the world who knows nothing of these shameful passions. You are so good, Harry, and so kind! You, at least, can be a woman's friend. And, do you know, I think you make the others more ugly by comparison."

"You are so good," said Harry gallantly, "that I will do my best to treat you like a mother."

"Like a mother," interposed Lady Vandeleur. "I try to be a mother to you, or at least," she corrected herself with a smile, "almost as much as I am afraid I can be to you. I shall be glad to see you again, and I shall be glad to see you again."

She paused long enough to let her words take effect in Harry's sentimental quarters, but not long enough to allow him a reply.

"But all this is beside our purpose."



HARRY GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR LOST.

she resumed. "You will find a bandbox in the left hand side of the oak wardrobe. It is underneath the pink slip that I wore on Wednesday with my meehlin. You will take it immediately to this address," and she gave him a paper, "but do not on any account let it out of your hands until you have received a receipt written by myself. Do you understand? Answer, if you please—answer! This is extremely important, and I must ask you to pay some attention."

Harry pacified her by repeating her instructions perfectly, and she was just going to tell him more when General Vandeleur flung into the apartment, scarlet with anger and holding a long and elaborate milliner's bill in his hand.

"Will you look at this, madame?" cried he. "Will you have the goodness to look at this document? I know well enough you married me for my money, and I hope I can make as great allowances as any other man in the service; but, as sure as God made me, I mean to put a period to this disgraceful prodigality!"

"Mr. Hartley," said Lady Vandeleur, "I think you understand what you have to do. May I ask you to see to it at once?"

"Stop," said the general, addressing Harry. "One word before you go. And then, turning again to Lady Vandeleur, "What is this precious fellow's grand?" he demanded. "I trust him no further than I do myself, let me tell you. If he had as much as the rudiments of honesty, he would scorn to stay in this house, and what he does for his wages is a mystery to all the world. What is his errand, madam, and why are you hurrying him away?"

"I supposed you had something to say to me in private," replied the lady. "You spoke about an errand," insisted the general. "Do not attempt to deceive me in my present state of temper. You certainly spoke about an errand."

"If you insist on making your servants privy to our humiliating dissensions," replied Lady Vandeleur, "perhaps I had better ask Mr. Hartley to sit down. No?" she continued. "Then you may go, Mr. Hartley. I trust you may remember all that you have heard in this room. It may be useful to you."

Harry at once made his escape from the drawing room, and as he ran upstairs he could hear the general's voice upraised in declamation and the thin tones of Lady Vandeleur planting icy repartees at every opening. How cordially she admired the wife! How skillfully she could evade an awkward question! And with what secure effort she repeated her instructions under the very guns of the enemy! And, on the other hand, how he detested the husband!

There had been nothing unfamiliar in the morning's events, for he was continually in the habit of serving Lady Vandeleur on secret missions, principally connected with the millinery. There was a skeleton in the house, as he well knew. The bottomless extravagance and the unknown liabilities of the wife had long since swallowed her own fortune and threatened day by day to engulf that of the husband. Once or twice in every year exposure and ruin seemed imminent, and Harry kept trotting round to all sorts of furnisners' shops telling small bills and paying small advances on the gross amount until another term was tied over, and the lady and her faithful secretary breathed again.

For Harry, in a double capacity, was heart and soul upon that side of the war. Not only did he adore Lady Vandeleur and fear to offend her husband, but he had a natural sympathy with the love of the lady and his own single extravagance was at the tailors.

He found the bandbox where it had been described, arranged his jacket with care and left the house. The sun shone brightly. The distance he had to travel was considerable, and he remembered with dismay that the general's sudden irruption had prevented Lady Vandeleur from giving him money for a cab. On this sultry day there was every chance that his complexion would suffer severely, and to walk through so much of London with a bandbox on his arm was a humiliation almost insupportable to a youth of his character. He paused and took counsel with himself. The Vandeleurs lived in Eaton place. His destination was near Notting Hill. Plainly he might cross the park by keeping well in the open and avoiding populous alleys, and he thanked his stars when he reflected that it was still comparatively early in the day.

Anxious to be rid of his incubus, he walked somewhat faster than his ordinary, and he was already some way through Kensington gardens when in a solitary spot among trees he found himself confronted by the general.

"I beg your pardon, Sir Thomas," observed Harry politely, falling on one side, for the other stood directly in his path.

"Where are you going, sir?" asked the general.

"I am taking a little walk among the trees," replied the lad.

The general struck the bandbox with his cane.

"With that thing?" he cried. "You lie, sir, and you know you lie!"

"Indeed, Sir Thomas," returned Harry, "I am not accustomed to be questioned in so high a key."

"You do not understand your position," said the general. "You are my servant, and a servant of whom I have conceived the most serious suspicions. How do I know but that your box is full of teapoons?"

"It contains a silk hat belonging to a friend," said Harry.

"Very well," replied General Vandeleur. "Then I want to see your friend's silk hat. I have," he added grimly, "a singular curiosity for hats, and I believe you know me to be somewhat positive."

"I beg your pardon, Sir Thomas, I am exceedingly grieved," Harry apologized, "but indeed this is a private affair."

The general caught him roughly by the shoulder with one hand while he raised his cane in the most menacing manner with the other. Harry gave himself up for lost, but at the same moment heaven vouchsafed him an unexpected defender in the person of Charlie Pendragon, who now strode forward from behind the trees.

"Come, come, general; hold your hand," said he. "This is neither courteous nor manly."

"Aha!" cried the general, wheeling round upon his new antagonist. "Mr. Pendragon! And do you suppose, Mr. Pendragon, that because I have had the misfortune to marry your sister I shall suffer myself to be dogged and thwarted by a discredited and bankrupt libertine like you? My acquaintance with Lady Vandeleur, sir, has taken away all my appetite for the other members of her family."

"And do you fancy, General Vandeleur," retorted Charlie, "that because my sister has had the misfortune to marry you she there and then forfeited her rights and privileges as a lady? I own, sir, that by that action she did as much as anybody could to derogate from her position, but to me she is still a Pendragon. I make it my business to protect her from ungentlemanly outrage, and if you were ten times her husband I would not permit her liberty to be restrained nor her delicate messengers to be violently arrested."

"How is that, Mr. Hartley?" interposed the general. "Mr. Pendragon is of my opinion, it appears. He, too, suspects that Lady Vandeleur has something to do with your friend's silk hat."

Charlie saw that he had committed an unperdonable blunder, which he hastened to repair.

"How, sir?" he cried. "I suspect, do you say? I suspect nothing. Only where I find strength abused and a man brutalizing his inferiors I take the liberty to interfere."

As he said these words he made a sign to Harry, which the latter was too dull or too much troubled to understand.

"In what way am I to construe your attitude, sir?" demanded Vandeleur.

"Why, sir, as you please," returned Pendragon.

The general once more raised his cane and made a cut for Charlie's head, but the latter, lame foot and all, evaded the blow with his umbrella, ran in and immediately closed with his formidable adversary.

"Run, Harry; run!" he cried. "Run, you dolt!"

Harry stood petrified for a moment, watching the two men sway together in this fierce embrace; then he turned and took to his heels. When he cast a glance over his shoulder, he saw the general prostrate under Charlie's knee, but still making desperate efforts to reverse the situation, and the gardens seemed to have filled with people, who were running from all directions toward the scene of fight. This spectacle lent the secretary wings, and he did not relax his pace until he had gained the Bayswater road and plunged at random into an unfrequented bystreet.

To see two gentlemen of his acquaintance thus brutally mauling each other was deeply shocking to Harry. He desired to forget the sight; he desired, above all, to put as great a distance as possible between himself and General Vandeleur, and in his earnestness for this he forgot everything about his destination and hurried before him heading and trembling. When he remembered that Lady Vandeleur was the wife of one and the sister of the other of these gladiators, his heart was touched with sympathy for a woman so distressingly misplaced in life. Even his own situation in the general's household looked hardly so pleasing as usual in the light of these violent transactions.

He had walked some little distance, bused with these meditations, before a slight collision with another passenger reminded him of the bandbox on his arm.

"Heavens!" cried he. "Where was my head, and whither have I wandered?"

Thereupon he consulted the envelope which Lady Vandeleur had given him. The address was there, but without a name. Harry was simply directed to ask for "the gentleman who expected a parcel from Lady Vandeleur," and if he were not at home to await his return. The gentleman, added the note, should present a receipt in the handwriting of the lady herself. All this seemed mightily mysterious, and Harry was above all astonished at the omission of the name and the formality of the receipt. He had thought little of this last when he heard it dropped in conversation; but, reading it in cold blood and taking it in connection with the other strange particulars, he became convinced that he was engaged in perilous affairs. For half a moment he had a doubt of Lady Vandeleur herself, for he found these obscure proceedings somewhat unworthy of so high a lady, and became more critical when her secrets were preserved against himself. But her empire over his spirit was too complete; he dismissed his suspicions and blamed himself roundly for having so much as entertained them.

In one thing, however, his duty and interest, his generosity and his terrors, coincided—to get rid of the bandbox with the greatest possible dispatch.

He accosted the first policeman and courteously inquired his way. It turned out that he was already not far from his destination, and a walk of a few minutes brought him to a small house in a lane, freshly painted and kept with the most scrupulous attention. The knocker and bell pull were highly polished, flowering pot herbs garnished the sills of the different windows, and curtains of some rich material concealed the interior from the eyes of curious passers-by. The place had an air of repose and secrecy, and Harry was so far caught with this spirit that he knocked with more than usual discretion and was more than usually careful to remove all impurity from his boots.

A servant maid of some personal attractions immediately opened the door and seemed to regard the secretary with no unkind eyes.

"This is the parcel from Lady Vandeleur," said Harry.

"I know," replied the maid, with a nod. "But the gentleman is from home. Will you leave it with me?"

"I cannot," answered Harry. "I am directed not to part with it but upon a certain condition, and I must ask you, I am afraid, to let me wait."

"Well," said she, "I suppose I may let you wait. I am lonely enough, I can tell you, and you do not look as though you would eat a girl. But be sure and do not ask the gentleman's name, for that I am not to tell you."

"Do you say so?" cried Harry. "Why, how strange! But indeed for some time back I walk among surprises. One question I think I may surely ask without indiscretion—Is he the master of this house?"

"He is a lodger and not eight days old at that," returned the maid. "And now a question for a question—Do you know Lady Vandeleur?"

"I am her private secretary," replied Harry, with a glow of modest pride.

"She is pretty, is she not?" pursued the servant.

"Oh, beautiful!" cried Harry. "Wonderfully lovely and not less good and kind!"

"You look kind enough yourself," she retorted, "and I wager you are worth a dozen Lady Vandeleurs."

(To be continued.)

DELINQUENT TAX LIST

A List of Real Property for the County of Morrison, Minn., on which taxes remained delinquent on the first Monday in January, 1903.

STATE OF MINNE-SOTA
COUNTY OF MORRISON.

District Court, 7th Judicial District.
The State of Minnesota, to all persons, companies or corporations who have or claim any estate, right, title or interest in, claim to, or lien upon, any of the several pieces or parcels of land in the list hereto attached described:

The list of taxes and penalties on real property for the county of Morrison, remaining delinquent on the first Monday in January, 1903, has been filed in the office of the clerk of the district court of the county of Morrison, of which that hereto attached is a copy. Therefore you, and each of you, are hereby required to file in the office of said clerk, on or before the twentieth day after the publication of this notice and list, your answer in writing, setting forth any objection or defense you may have to the taxes, or any part thereof, upon any piece or parcel of land described in said list, in, to, or on which you have or claim any estate, right, title, interest, claim or lien, and in default thereof judgment will be entered against such piece or parcel of land for the taxes on said list appearing against it, and for all penalties, interest and costs.

S. P. BRICK,
Clerk of District Court of the County of Morrison.

Returned and filed the 27th day of January, A. D. 1903.

WILLIAM A. BUTLER,
County Auditor.

Name of Owner Description subdivision of section Yrs. for which taxes became delinquent Total Tax and Penalty \$ Cts

Town of Two Rivers, Township 127, Range 29.

St. Paul & N. P. Ry. Lot 1 4 1901 \$ 3.47
F. H. Williams Pt. of lot 3 8 1901 2.95
R. Korntved 1/2 of 1/2 of 28 1901 1.08
Kasper Gamroth 1/2 of 1/2 of 30 1901 1.68

Range 30.
G. Wallman 1/2 of 1/2 of 1 1901 3.42
Henry Kaseila 1/2 of 1/2 of 1 1901 8.14
J. Wallman 1/2 of 1/2 of 1 1901 12.46
F. Schneider 1/2 of 1/2 of 3 1901 18.86
J. Marzak 1/2 of 1/2 of 13 1901 3.51
And. Osak Pt. of 1/2 of 14 1901 1.31
And. Osak Pt. of 1/2 of 15 1901 .54

Village of North Prairie.
Lot Blk. Chas. Burgraf 4 B 1901 \$.11
Geo. Geissel 16 B 1901 .11
J. Tristwin 17 B 1901 .11

Town of Elm Dale, Township 127, Range 30.
Mrs. Mary Rudek 1/2 of 6 1901 \$ 9.78
W. Davies 1/2 of 6 1901 4.46
V. Wistrack 1/2 of 16 1901 5.47
do 1/2 of 21 1901 4.72

Range 31.
J. Larson 1/2 of 1/2 of 2 1901 2.23
And. Bloom 1/2 of 1/2 of 4 1901 10.24
John Swedbeck 1/2 of 5 1901 10.89
Otto Anderson 1/2 of 10 1901 2.37
Aug. Randquist 1/2 of 11 1901 2.76
Otto Anderson 1/2 of 11 1901 5.11
And. Anderson 1/2 of 13 1901 4.15
J. Kunder 1/2 of 14 1901 7.48
A. J. Peterson 1/2 of 14 1901 3.14
And. Anderson 1/2 of 14 1901 3.94
Chas. E. Johnson 1/2 of 15 1901 1.84
Chas. E. Johnson 1/2 of 15 1901 2.79
Chas. E. Johnson 1/2 of 15 1901 2.24
J. S. Bergstrom 1a of 15 1901 .40

St. Paul M. & N. Ry. lots 5-8
St. Paul M. & N. Ry. lot 9 19 1901 10.66
P. Gau 1/2 of 20 1901 6.26
Peter Johnson 1/2 of 20 1901 4.15
Peter Johnson 1/2 of 23 1901 1.53
Nelle Wechnick 1/2 of 24 1901 5.59
Peter Peterson 1/2 of 24 1901 5.59
Peter Peterson 1/2 of 24 1901 4.92

Town of Swan River, Township 128, Range 29.
Albert Laspurek 1/2 of 19 1901 1.00
L. B. Cash 1/2 of 1/2 of 20 1901 3.97
L. B. Cash lots 2, 3, 4, 5 20 1901 8.82
Ed. Cash 1/2 of 1/2 of 20 1901 2.43
M. N. Young 1/2 of 1/2 of 30 1901 2.43

Range 30.
C. Ligman Jr. 1/2 of 1 1901 5.38
W. F. Kay 1/2 of 1/2 of 2 1901 19.78
Wm. F. Kay 1/2 of 1/2 of 3 1901 7.73
Nelle Burton 1/2 of 1/2 of 3 1901 4.23
S. Zeck Pt. of 1/2 of 4 1901 .06
Nelle Wechnick 1/2 of 5 1901 9.80
John Kowalski 1/2 of 9 1901 8.25

J. Kowalski 1/2 of 11 1901 5.38
M. Watrowski 1/2 of 11 1901 6.51
A. Jarcos 1/2 of 12 1901 13.71
A. Sobolek 1/2 of 16 1901 2.24
S. Setora 1/2 of 17 1901 8.76
L. Larson 1/2 of 18 1901 4.38
J. S. Setora 1/2 of 20 1901 1.17

Costmer Stroucek 1/2 of 21 1901 6.76
O. O. Searie 1/2 of 21 1901 4.60
Martin Pascer 1/2 of 21 1901 4.03
Mat. Pikuia 1/2 of 25 1901 9.48
M. Williams 1/2 of 27 1901 4.81
R. J. Smith 1/2 of 29 1901 11.13
W. Davies 1/2 of 31 1901 9.98
Kaseila & Prokut 1/2 of 36 1901 2.67
Mary Kaseila 1/2 of 36 1901 5.34

Village of Swanville.
Lot Blk. J. A. Berkey lots 1-2 1 1901 .52
A. F. McRae 11 and 12 3 1901 1.08
J. A. Berkey 2 8 1901 .54
do 3 8 1901 .54
do 4 8 1901 .54
do 5 8 1901 .54
do 6 8 1901 .54
do 7 8 1901 .54
do 8 8 1901 .54
do 9 8 1901 .54
do 10 8 1901 .54
Belle Flood 12 8 1901 1.47
J. A. Berkey 5 9 1901 1.06
do 6 9 1901 1.06
do 7 9 1901 1.06
Amelia Rahl 1 10 1901 1.32
J. A. Berkey 2 10 1901 1.32
C. C. McRae 3 10 1901 1.32
Bridget E. Connelly 10 10 1901 1.32
do 11 10 1901 1.32
Julius Kruger 1/2 11 1901 1.32
F. C. Maske 2 14 1901 .52
do 3 14 1901 .52
do 4 14 1901 .52
do 5 14 1901 .52
do 6 14 1901 .52
do 1 and 1/2 15 1901 30.60
do 1/2 15 1901 4.40
Fred Maske 4 15 1901 .52
B. C. Maske 6 15 1901 1.38
do 7 15 1901 1.18