A 512596 DUPL

1817
ARTES VERITAS SCIENTIA
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
TUEBOR
SI QUAERIS PENINSULAM AMOENAM
CIRCUMSPICE

BEQUEST OF
ORMA FITCH BUTLER, PH.D., '07
PROFESSOR OF LATIN

nal from
OF MICHIGAN

828
G846c

THE CASE OF
THE MALVERNE DIAMONDS

In this unusual mystery tale, Mr. Gribble, one of the most successful writers in this field in England, tells the story of the theft at Steyning Towers of Lady Malverne's famous diamond necklace known as "Tears of Death." Before the case is solved by the ingenious Inspector Anthony Slade of Scotland Yard, several murders are committed, involving an American Olympic champion, Lady Malverne herself and several others.

Like all Mr. Gribble's stories, this novel is peopled with flesh-and-blood human beings, real situations, and abounds in humor and good writing. It is not the stilted, mechanical tale of puppets that is so often found in routine mystery stories.

eginald

LEONARD R. GRIBBLE

THE CASE OF THE MALVERNE DIAMONDS

NEW YORK
GREENBERG : PUBLISHER

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

5-25-40 Pot.

CHAPTER I

"I DON'T like it, Bill. I don't like it one little bit." Shadows veiled the brightness of the girl's dark eyes; a worried note crept into her pleasantly husky voice. "Think, Bill, it might mean your . . . going back *there*."

The young man's face went stiff, his lips compressed in a colourless line.

"Never, Tessa. They won't do that to me, not again." The smouldering cigarette between his lean fingers broke, and he tossed the crushed remnants into the grate. "There's a big debt owing me for last time. I was framed——"

"You were . . . unlucky, Bill."

"Framed, Tessa!" he all but shouted. His breathing was heavy and laboured, as that of a man struggling with some deep-born emotion. "Framed." He repeated the word slowly, slurring the vowel. "But not this time." He paused, took a fresh cigarette from the open packet on the table, and touched it with flame from a lighter. "This time things will be different." He laughed. "The very name fascinates me. The Tears of Death. If what the newspapers say is true plenty of men have died for that string of diamonds—plenty. They've changed hands a hundred times. Men have cheated and stolen and killed for them, but that has only increased their value. A hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Think of it, Tessa. A hundred and fifty thousand pounds. . . ."

His eyes were dreamy. A pulse throbbed wildly in the slim curve of his throat.

The girl shivered.

"I'm afraid, Bill," she murmured.

He didn't appear to hear.

"That means a certain thirty thousand for us. Thirty thousand pounds . . . perhaps fifty thousand. Some of those stones are big. They could be cut and cut again, and still fetch a big price. Think what we could do with thirty thousand pounds, Tessa; think what it would mean for us, for you. . . . And perhaps fifty thousand."

"Would we be happier, Bill?"

"Would we?" He sounded incredulous at her lack of faith. "Listen, Tessa, nobody can be happy without money. We know that. Think how your own mother had to screw and scrape. And mine . . . the fight killed her. Do you think I can ever forget that dirty little slum, the leaky roof and damp walls? It bred misery, Tessa. Romance! It sounds all right in books, on paper. But see how it works out on a few quid a week, and those never very sure. Romance and the opportunity to enjoy life comes with money. We've proved that——"

"We've been happy, Bill."

The protest was wrung from her. He was almost brutal in the way he flung that protest aside.

"We've tried to be, Tessa. My God, we've tried! And I got framed for a job I never did. Then you had to take that offer of old Reisenberg's, to keep things afloat. The old swine! I'd like to——"

"It's all right now, Bill. He hasn't been pawing me again. Don't dig that up. I had to do something, and the money was good."

"It was filthy. I'd sooner steal—d'you hear?—than go about life knowing my wife's got to——"