

# The Adventures of Kathlyn

By HAROLD MAC GRATH

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### SYNOPSIS

**CHAPTER I**—Kathlyn Hare, believing her father, Col. Hare, to be a murderer, leaves her home in California to go to him in Allah, India. Umballa, pretender to the throne, has imprisoned the colonel, named by the late king as his heir.

**CHAPTER II**—Arriving in Allah, Kathlyn is informed by Umballa that her father being dead she is to be queen, and must marry him. She refuses and is informed by the priests that no woman can rule unmarried. She is given seven days to think it over.

**CHAPTER III**—She still refuses and is told that she must undergo two ordeals with wild beasts. If she survives she will be permitted to rule.

**CHAPTER IV**—John Bruce, an American, saves her life.

**CHAPTER V**—The elephant which carries her from the scene of her trials runs away, separating her from Bruce and the rest of the party.

**CHAPTER VI**—She takes refuge in a ruined temple, but this haven is the abode of a lion and she is forced to flee from it.

**CHAPTER VII**—She finds a retreat in the jungle, only to fall into the hands of slave traders.

**CHAPTER VIII**—Kathlyn is brought to the public mart in Allah and sold to Umballa, who, finding her still inauspicious, throws her into the dungeon with her father.

### CHAPTER IX.

#### The Colonel in Chains.

The colonel and Umballa swayed back and forth. Umballa sank to his knees and then fought madly to rise; but the hands at his throat were the hands of a madman, steel, resistless. The colonel's chains clanked sharply. Lower and lower went Umballa's head; he saw death peering into the cell. His cry rattled in his throat.

Not a sound from Kathlyn. She watched the battle, unfeeling as marble. Let the wretch die; let him feel the fear of death; let him suffer as he had made others suffer. What new complications might follow Umballa's death did not alarm her. How could she be any worse off than she was? He had polluted her cheeks with his kisses. He had tortured and shamed her as few white women have been. Mercy? He had said that day that he knew not the word.

"Ah, you dog! Haven't I prayed God for days for this chance? You black chaf! Die!"

But Umballa was not to die that moment or in that fashion.

That nervous energy which had infused the colonel with the strength of a lion went out like a spark, and as quickly, Umballa rolled from his paralyzed fingers and lay on the floor, gasping and sobbing. Hare fell back against the pillar, groaning. The cessation of dynamic nerve force filled him with racking pains and a pitiable weakness. But for the pillar he would have hung by his chains.

Kathlyn, with continued apathy, stared down at her enemy. He was not dead. He would kill them both now. Why she asked with sudden passion, why this misery? What had she done in her young life to merit it? Underfed, dressed in grass, harassed by men and wild beasts—why?

Umballa edged out of danger and sat up, feeling tenderly of his throat. Next he picked up his turban and crawled to the open door. He pulled himself up and stood there, weakly. But there was venom enough in his eyes. The tableau lasted a minute or two; then slowly he closed the door, bolted it, and departed.

This ominous silence awoke the old terror in Kathlyn's heart far more than verbal threats would have done. There would be reprisal, something finished in cruelty.

"My dear, my dear!" She ran over to her father and flung her arms about him, supporting him and mothering him. An hour passed.

"All in, Kit; all in; haven't the strength of a cat. Ah, great God! If that strength had but lasted a moment longer! Well, he's still alive. But O, my Kit, my golden Kit, to see you here is to be tortured like the damned. And it is all my fault, all mine!" The man who had once been so strong sobbed hysterically.

"Hush, hush!"

"There were rare and wonderful jewels of which I alone knew the hiding place. But God knows that it was set greed; I wanted them for you and Winnie. I knew you were here. Trust that black devil to announce the fact to me. . . . God! what I haven't suffered in the way of suspense! Kit, Kit, what has he done to you?"

Briefly she recounted her adventures, and when she had done he bowed his head upon her bare shoulder and wept as only strong men, made weak, weep.

To Kathlyn it was terrible. "Father, don't, don't! You hurt me! I can't stand it!"

After a while he said: "What shall we do, Kit; what shall we do?"

"I will marry him, father," she answered quietly. "We can take our revenge afterward."

"What!"

"If it will save you."

"Child, let me not here. What! Would you trust him, knowing his false heart as you do? The moment you married him would be my death warrant. No, no! If you weaken now I shall curse you, curse you, my Kit! There has been horror enough. I can die."

"Well, and so can I, father."

Silence. A far cockatoo shrieked; a laugh came faintly through the window, and later the tinkle of music. Up above the world was going on the same as usual. Trains were burrying to and fro, the street signs were going

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down the sapphire seas; children were at play, and the world wide marts were busy with the daily affairs of men.

"Jewels!" she murmured, gazing at the sky beyond the grilled window. Was there ever a precious stone that lay not in the shadow of blood and misery? Poor, poor, foolish father! As if jewels were in beauty a tithe of the misery they begot!

"Ay, Kit, jewels; sapphires and rubies and emeralds, diamonds and pearls and moonstones. And I wanted them for my pretty cubs! Umballa knew that I would return for them and laid his plans. But were they not mine?"

"Yes, if you intended to rule these people; no, if you thought to take them away. Do you not know that to Winnie and me a hair of your head is more precious than the Koh-i-noor? We must put our heads together and plan some way to get out."

She dropped her arms from his shoulders and walked about the cell, searching every stone. Their only hope lay in the window, and that appeared impossible since she had no means of filing through her father's chains and the bars of the window. She returned and sat down beside her father and rested her aching head on her knees, thinking, thinking.

Bruce, struggling with the soldiers (and long since their fat flesh had been stung into such activity), saw Umballa appear in the corridor.

"Durga Ram," he cried, with a furious effort to free his arms, "Durga Ram, you damnable scoundrel, it would be wise for you to kill me, here and now, for if I ever get free, God help you! O, I shan't kill you; that would be too merciful. But I'll break your bones, one by one, and never more shall you stand and walk. Do you hear me? Where is Kathlyn Hare? She is mine!"

Umballa showed his teeth in what was an attempt to smile. He still saw flashes of fire before his eyes, and it was yet difficult to breathe naturally. Still, he could twist this white man's heart, play with him.

"Take him away. Put him outside the city gates and let him go."

Bruce was greatly astonished at this sign of clemency.

"But," added Umballa, crossing his lips with his tongue, "place him against a wall and shoot him if he is caught within the city. He is mad, and therefore I am lenient. There is no white woman in the palace or in the royal zenana. Off with him!"

"You lie, Durga Ram! You found her in the slave mart today."

Umballa shrugged and waved his hand. He could have had Bruce shot at once, but it pleased him to dangle death before the eyes of his rival. He was no fool; he saw the trend of affairs. This young white man loved Kathlyn Hare. All the better, in view of what was to come.

Bruce was conducted to the gate and rudely pushed outside. He turned savagely, but a dozen black officers convinced him that this time he would meet death. Ah, where was Allah, and Ahmed, and the man Lal Singh, who was to notify the English? He found all at camp, the chief mahout having been conducted there in an improvised litter. He recounted his experiences.

"I was helpless, sahib."

"No more than I am, Ali. But be of good cheer; Umballa and I shall meet soon, man to man."

"Allah in Allah; there is no God but God."

"And sometimes," said Bruce, moodily, "he watches over the innocent."

"Ahmed is at Hare Sahib's camp."

"Thanks, Ali; that's the best news I have heard yet. Ahmed will find a way. Take care of yourself. I'm off!"

When Umballa appeared before the Council their astonishment knew no bounds. The clay tinted skin, the shaking hands, the disheveled garments—what had happened to this schemer whom ill luck had made their master!

He explained. "I went too near our prisoner. A flash of strength was enough. They shall be flogged."

"But the woman!"

"Woman? She is a tiger-cat, and tiger-cats must sometimes be flogged. It is my will. Now I have news for you. There is another sister, younger and weaker. Our queen, and he saluted ironically, "our queen did not know that her father lived, and there I made my first mistake."

"But she will now submit to save him!"

"Ah! would indeed that were the case. But tiger-cats are always tiger-cats, and nothing will bend this maid; she must be broken, broken. It is my will, with a flash of fire in his eyes."

The Council salaamed. Umballa's will must of necessity be theirs, hate him darkly as they might.

The bungalow of Colonel Hare was something on the order of an armed camp. Native animal keepers, armed with rifles, patrolled the menagerie. No one was to pass the cordons without explaining frankly his business, whence he came, and whether he was bound.

By the knees of one of the sentries a little native child was playing. From time to time the happy father would stoop and pat her head.

Presently there was a stir about camp. An elephant shuffled into the clearing. He was being made to kneel, and Ahmed stepped out of the howdah.

The little girl ran up to Ahmed joyfully and begged to be put into the

howdah. Smiling, Ahmed set her in the howdah, and the mahout bade the elephant to rise, but, interested in some orders by Ahmed, left the beast to his own devices. The child called and the elephant walked off quietly. So long as he remained within range of vision no one paid any attention to him. Finally he paused under a tree near the cages and reached up for some leaves. The child caught hold of a limb and gleefully crawled upon it some distance beyond the elephant's reach. Once more, she became frightened, not daring to crawl back.

She prattled "elephant talk," but the old fellow could not reach her. The baboon in the nearby cage set up a chattering. The child ordered the elephant to rise on his hind legs. He placed his fore legs on the roof of the



The Baboon Receiving Kathlyn's Message.

baboon's cage, which caved in, rather disturbing the elephant's calm. He sank to the ground.

The baboon leaped through the opening and made off to test his unexpected liberty. He was friendly and tame, but freedom was just then paramount.

The elephant remained under the tree, as if pondering, while the child began to cry loudly. One of the natives saw her predicament and hastened away for assistance.

Ahmed was greatly alarmed over the loss of the baboon. It was a camp pet of Colonel Hare's and ran free in camp whenever the colonel was there. He had captured it when a mere baby in British East Africa. The troglodyte, with that strange reasoning yet untranslatable, loved the colonel devotedly and followed him about like a dog and with a scent far keener. So Ahmed and some of the keepers set off in search of the colonel's pet.

He went about the search with only half a heart. Only a little while before he had received the news of what had happened in the slave mart that afternoon. It seemed incredible. To have her fall into Umballa's hands thus easily, when he and Bruce Sahib had searched the jungle far and wide! Well, she was alive; praise Allah for that; and where there was life there was hope.

Later Kathlyn was standing under the cell window gazing at the yellow sunset. Two hours had gone, and no sign of Umballa yet. She shuddered. Had she been alone she would have hunted for something sharp and deadly. But her father; not before him. She must wait. One thing was positive and absolute: Umballa should never embrace her; she was too strong and desperate.

"Kit!"

"Yes, father."

"I have a sharp piece of metal in my pocket. Could you . . . My God, by my hand! . . . when he comes?"

"Yes, father; I am not afraid to die, and death seems all that remains. I should like you. He will be a tiger now."

"My child, God was good to give me a daughter like you."

She turned to him this time and pressed him to her heart.

"It grows dark suddenly," he said. Kathlyn glanced over her shoulder at the window.

"Why, it's a baboon!" she explained.

"Jock, Jock!" cried her father excitedly.

The baboon chattered.

"Kit, it's Jock I used to tell you about. He is tame and follows me about like a dog. Jock, poor Jock!"

"Father, have you a pencil?"

"A pencil?" blankly.

"Yes, yes! I can write a note and attach it to Jock. It's a chance."

"Good Lord! and you're cool enough to think like that!" The colonel went through his pockets feverishly. "Thank God, here's an old stub! But paper!" Kathlyn tore off a broad blade of grass from her dress and wrote carefully upon it. If it fell into the hands of the natives they would not understand. If the baboon returned to cage,

it made her weak to realize how slender the chance was. She took the tabaret and placed it beneath the window and stood upon it.

"Jock, here, Jock!"

The baboon gave her his paw. Doffly she tied the blade of grass round his neck. Then she struck her hands together violently. The baboon vanished, frightened at this unexpected treatment.

"He is gone."

The colonel did not reply, but began to examine his chains minutely.

"Kit, there's no getting me out of here without files. If there is any rescue you go and return. Promise."

"I promise."

Then they sat down to wait.

And Ahmed in his search came to the river. Some natives were swimming and sporting in the water. Ahmed put a question. O, yes, they had seen the strange looking ape (for baboons were not usual in this part of the world); he had gone up one of the trees near by. Colonel Hare had always used a peculiar whistle to bring Jock, and Ahmed resorted to this device. Half an hour's perseverance rewarded him; and then he found the blade of grass.

"Dungeon window by tree. Kathlyn."

That was sufficient for Ahmed. He turned the baboon over to the care of one of his subordinates and hurried away to Bruce's camp, only to find that he had gone to the colonel's. Away went Ahmed again, tireless. He found Bruce pacing the bungalow frontage.

"Ahmed!"

"Yes, sahib. Listen." He told his tale quickly.

"The guards at all the gates have orders to shoot me if they catch me within the walls of the city. I must disguise myself in some way."

"I'll find you an Arab burnoose, sahib, and that will hide you. It will be dark by the time we reach the city, and we'll enter by one of the other gates. That will ally suspicion. First we must seek the house of Ramabai. I need money for bribery."

Bruce searched his wallet. It was empty. He had given all he had to the Brahmin.

"You lead, Ahmed. I am dazed."

In the city few knew anything about Ahmed, not even the keenest of Umballa's spies. Umballa had his suspicions, but as yet he could prove nothing. To the populace he was a harmless animal trainer who was only too glad not in any way to be implicated with his master. So they let him alone: Day by day he waited for the report from Lal Singh, but so far he had heard nothing except that the British raj was very busy killing the followers of the Mahdi in the Sudan. It was a subtle inference that for the present all aliens in Allah must look out for themselves.

"Sahib," he whispered, "I have learned something. Day after day I have been waiting, hoping, Colonel Sahib lives, but where I know not."

"Live!"

"All! In your prison where later we go. He lives. That is enough for my servant. He is my father and my mother, and I would die for him and his. Ah! Here is the north gate. Bend your head, sahib, when we pass."

They entered the city without mishap. No one questioned them. Indeed, they were but two in a dozen who passed in at the same time. They threaded the narrow streets quickly, skirting the glow of many dung fires for fear that Bruce's leggings might be revealed under the burnoose.

When at length they came to the house of Ramabai they did not seek to enter the front, but chose the gate in the rear of the garden. The moon was up and the garden was almost as light as day.

"Ramabai!" called Bruce in a whisper.

The dreaming man seated at a table came out of his dream with a start. A servant ran to the gate.

"Who calls?" demanded Ramabai. A suspicious as all conspirators ever are.

"It is I, Bruce," was the reply in English, ringing aside his burnoose.

"Bruce Sahib? Open!" cried Ramabai. "What do you here? Have you found her?"

Ramabai's wife, Pundita, came from the house. She recognized Bruce immediately.

"The memsahib! Have you found her?"

"Just a moment. Kathlyn Memsahib is in one of the palace dungeons. She must be liberated tonight. We need money to bribe what sentries are about." Bruce went on to relate the incident of the baboon. "This proves

that the note was written not more than three hours ago. She probably will be held there till morning. This time we'll place her far beyond the reach of Umballa."

"Either my money or my life. In a month from now . . ."

"What?" asked Ahmed.

"Ah, I must not tell." Pundita stole close to Ramabai.

Ahmed smiled.

"We have elephants but a little way outside the city. We have pulling chains. Let us be off at once. It is not necessary to enter the city, for this window, Ahmed says, is on the outside. We can easily approach the wall in a roundabout way without being seen. Have you money?"

From his belt Ramabai produced some gold.

"That will be sufficient. To you, then, the bribing. The men, should there be any, will hark to you. Come!" concluded Bruce, impatient to be off.

"And I?" timidly asked Pundita.

"You will seek Hare Sahib's camp," said Ramabai. "This is a good opportunity to get you away also."

Ahmed nodded approvingly.

Pundita kissed her husband; for these two loved each other, a circumstance almost unknown in this dark, mysterious land of many gods.

"Pundita, you will remain at the camp in readiness to receive us. At dawn we shall leave for the frontier. And when we return it will be with might and reprisal. Umballa shall die the death of a dog." Ramabai clenched his hands.

"But first," cooed Ahmed, "he shall wear out the soles of his pig's feet in the treadmill. It is written. I am a Mohammedan. Yet sometimes these vile fakirs have the gift of seeing into the future. And one has seen . . ."

He paused.

"Seen what?" demanded Bruce.

"I must not put false hopes in your hearts. But this I may say: Trials will come, bitter and heart burning; a storm, a whirlwind, a fire; but peace is after that. But Allah uses us as his tools. Let us haste!"

"And I?" said Ramabai, sending a piercing glance at Ahmed.

But Ahmed smiled and shook his head. "Wait and see Ramabai. Some day they will call you the Fortunate. Let us hurry. My memsahib waits."

"What did this fakir see?" whispered Bruce as he donned his burnoose again.

"Many wonderful things; but perhaps the fakir lied. They all lie. Yet Hurry!"

The quartet passed out of the city unobserved. Ramabai's house was supposed to be under strict surveillance; but the soldiers, due to largesse, were junketing in the bazaars. Shortly they came up to two elephants with howdahs. They were the best mannered of the half dozen owned or rented by Colonel Hare. Mahouts sat astride. Rifles reposed in the side sheaths. This was to be no light adventure. There might be a small warfare.

Pundita flung her arms round Ramabai, and he consoled her. She was then led away to the colonel's camp.

"Remember," Ramabai said at parting, "she saved both our lives. We owe a debt."

"Go, my lord; and may all the gods—nay, the Christian God—watch over you!"

"Forward!" growled Ahmed. First, though, he saw to it that the pulling chains were well wrapped in cotton blankets. There must be no sound to warn others of their approach.

"Ahmed," began Bruce.

"Leave all things to me, sahib," interrupted Ahmed, who assumed a strange authority at times that confused and puzzled Bruce. "It is my memsahib, and I am one of the fingers of the long arm of the British raj. And there are books in Calcutta in which my name is written high. No more!"

Through the moon-frosted jungle a drove of wild pigs scampered across the path and the wild peacock hissed from the underbrush stealthily. All silence again. Several times Ahmed halted, straining his ears. It seemed incredible to Bruce that the enormous beasts could move so soundlessly. It was a part of their business; they were hunters of their kind.

At length they came out into the open at the rear of the prison walls. Here Ramabai got down and went in search of any sentries. He returned almost at once with the good news that there was none.

The marble walls shimmered like clusters of dull opals. What misery had been known behind their crumbling beauty!

Ahmed marked the tree and raised his hand as a sign.

"Bruce Sahib!" he called.

"Yes, Ahmed. I'll risk it first."

Bruce moved the elephant to the barred window. His heart beat wildly. He leaned down from his howdah and strove to peer within.

"Kathlyn Hare!" he whispered.

"Who is it?"

"Bruce."

"Father, father!" Bruce heard her cry; "they have found us!"

Ahmed heard the call; and he sighed as one who had Allah to thank. Together! God was great and Mahomet was his prophet.

"Listen," said Bruce. "We shall hook chains to the bars and pull them out, without noise if possible. The moment they give . . . Have you something to stand on?"

"That will serve. You stand on it and I'll pull you up and through. Then your father."

"Father is in chains."

"Ahmed, he is in chains. What in God's name shall we do?"

"Return for me later," said Hare. "Don't bother about me. Get Kit away, and quickly. Umballa may return at any moment. To work, to work. Bruce, and God bless you!"

They flew to the task. Round the books Ahmed had wrapped cloths to ward against the clink of metal against metal. The hooks were deftly engaged. Bruce gave the signal and the elephants started forward. The

chains grew taut. So far there was but little noise. The elephants leaned against the chains; the bars bent and sprang suddenly from their ancient sockets.

Kathlyn was free!

CHAPTER X.

The Escape.

Kathlyn flung herself into her father's arms.

"Dad, dad! To leave you alone!"

"Kit, you are wasting time. Be off. Trust me, I wasn't meant to die in this dog's kennel, curse or no curse. Kiss me and go!"

"Curse? What do you mean, father?"

"Ahmed will tell you. In God's name, go, child!"

"Come, Miss Kathlyn," Bruce called anxiously.

Kathlyn then climbed up to the window, and Bruce lifted her into his howdah, bidding her to lie low. How strong he was, she thought. Ah, something had whispered to her day by day that he would come when she needed him. Suddenly she felt her cheeks grow hot with shame. She snuggled her bare legs under her grass dress. Till this moment she had never given her appearance a single thought. There had been things so much more vital. But youth, and there is ever the way of a man with a maid.

Now, Kathlyn did not love this quiet, resourceful young man; at least if she did she was not yet aware of it; but the touch of his hand and the sound of his voice sent a shiver over her that was not due to the chill of the night. She heard him give his orders, low voiced.

"Do not lift your head above the howdah rim, Miss Kathlyn, till we are in the jungle. And don't worry about your father. He's alive, and that's enough for Ahmed and me. What a strange world it is, and how fate shuffles us about! Forward!"

The curse: what did her father mean by that? It seemed to Kathlyn that hours passed before Bruce spoke again.

"Now you may sit up. What in the world have you got on? Good heavens, grass! You poor girl!" He took off his coat and threw it across her shoulders, and was startled by the contact of her warm flesh.

"I cannot thank you in words," she said, faintly.

"Don't Pahaw, it was nothing. I would have gone—" He stopped embarrassedly.

"Well?" Perhaps it was coquetry which impelled the query; perhaps it was something deeper.

He laughed. "I was going to say that I would have gone into the depths of hell to serve you. We'll be at your father's bungalow in a minute or so, and then the final stroke. Umballa is not dependable. He may or may not pay a visit to the cell tonight. I can only pray that he will come down the moment I arrive."

But he was not to meet Umballa that night. Umballa had von his point in regard to having his prisoners flogged; but, oriental that he was, he went about the matter leisurely. He ate his supper, changed his clothes, and dalled in the zenana for an hour. The rascal had made a thorough study of the word "suspense"; he knew the exquisite torture of making one's victim wait. For the time being his passion for Kathlyn had subsided. He desired above all things just then revenge for the humiliating experience in the cell; he wanted to put pain and terror into her heart. Ah, she would be on her knees, begging, begging, and her father would struggle in vain at his shackles. Spurred, so be it. She should have a taste of his hate, the black man's hate.

And always there would remain the little dark-haired sister. She would marry him; she would do it to save her father and sister. Then the ill-greedy basket heaped with rubies and pearls and emeralds and sapphires! As for the other, what cared he if he rotted? It gave him the whip hand over the doddering Council. Master he would be; he would blot out all things which stood in his path. A king, till he had gathered what fortune he needed. Then let the jackals howl.

Accompanied by torch bearers, servants, and the professional flogger, he led the way to the cell and flung open the door triumphantly. For a moment he could not believe his eyes. She was gone, and through yonder window! Hell of all hells of Hind! She was gone, and he was robbed!

"Out of your reach this time, you black devil!" cried the colonel. "Go on. Do what you please with me. I'm ready."

Umballa ran to the tabaret and jumped upon it. He saw the trampled grass. Elephants. And these doubtless had come from the colonel's camp. He jumped off the tabaret and dashed to the door.

"Follow me!" he cried. "Later, Colonel Hare, later!" He threatened.

The colonel remained silent.

Up above, in the palace, Umballa summoned a dozen troopers and gave them explicit orders. He was quite confident that Kathlyn would be carried at once to her father's bungalow, if only for a change of clothes. It was a shrewd guess.

As the iron door clanged upon the all Colonel Hare leaned against the pillar and closed his eyes, praying silently.

At the bungalow Pundita fell at Kathlyn's feet and kissed them.

"Memsahib!" she cried brokenly.

"Pundita!" Kathlyn stooped and gathered her up in her arms.

"After that Ramabai would have died for her under any torture."

"Now, Ahmed, what did my father mean when he said 'curse or no curse'?"

"It's a long story, memsahib," said Ahmed earnestly.

"Tell it."

"It was in a temple in the south. The Colonel Sahib took a sapphire from an idol's eye. The guru, a very wise and ancient priest, demanded the return of it. The Colonel Sahib, being a young man, refused. The guru cursed him. That is all."

"No, Ahmed; there must be more. Did not the guru curse my father's children and their children's children?"

"Ah, memsahib, what does the curse of a Hindu amount to?"

"Perhaps it is stronger than we know," glancing down at her dress.

Further discussion was interrupted by one of the armed keepers, who came rushing up with the news that armed soldiers were approaching. Bruce swore frankly. This Umballa was supernaturally keen. What to do now?

"Quick!" cried Ahmed. "Get the howdahs off the elephants." It was done. "Hobble them." It was immediately accomplished. "Into the bungalow, all of you. Memsahib, follow me!"

"What are you going to do?" asked Bruce.

"Hide her where none will dare look," answered Ahmed.

He seized Kathlyn by the hand and urged her to run. She had implicit faith in this old friend, who had once dangled her on his knees. They disappeared behind the bungalow and ran toward the animal cages. He stopped abruptly before one of the cages.

"A leopard, but harmless. You'll know how to soothe him if he becomes nervous. Enter."

Kathlyn obeyed.

This cage was not a movable one, and had a cavity underneath. The heavy teak flooring was not nailed.

The soldiers arrived at the bungalow, bolsterously threatening the arrest of the entire camp if Durga Ram's slave was not produced forthwith.

"You are mistaken," said Bruce. "There is no slave here. Search."

"You stand in extreme danger, sahib. You have meddled with what does not concern you," replied the captain, who had thrown his fortunes with Umballa, sensing that here was a man who was bound to win and would be liberal to those who stood by him during the struggle.

"Search," repeated Bruce.

The captain and his men ran about, but not without a certain system of thoroughness. They examined the elephants, but were baffled there, owing to Ahmed's foresight. They entered the native quarters, looked under the canvases into the empty cages, from cellar to roof in the bungalow, when suddenly the captain missed Ahmed.

"Where is the Colonel Sahib's man?" he asked, brusquely.

"Possibly he is going the rounds of the animal cages," said Bruce, outwardly calm, but shaking within.

"And thou, Ramabai, beware!"

"Of what, captain?" coolly.

"Thou, too, hast meddled; and meddlers burn their fingers."

"I am innocent of any crime," said Ramabai. "I am watched, I know; but there is still some justice in Allah."

"Bully for you!" said Bruce in English.

The captain eyed him malevolently. "Search the animal cages," he ordered.

Bruce, Ramabai, and Pundita followed the captain. He peered into the cages, one by one, and at length came to the leopard's cage. And there was the crafty Ahmed, calmly stroking the leopard, which snarled suddenly. Ahmed stood up with a fine imitation of surprise. The captain, greatly mystified, turned about; he was partially convinced that he had had his work for nothing. Still he had his tongue.

"Thou, Ramabai, hast broken thy parole. Thou wert not to leave thy house. It shall be reported." Then he took a shot at Bruce: "And thou wilt enter the city on the path of death."

With this he ordered the soldiers right about and proceeded the way he had come.

"Ahmed, where is she?" cried Bruce, who was as mystified as the captain.

Smiling, Ahmed raised one of the broad teak boards, and the golden head of Kathlyn appeared.

"Ahmed," said Bruce, delighted, "hereafter you shall be chief of this expedition. Now, what next?"

"Secure files and return for my master."

"Wait," interposed Kathlyn, emerging. "I have a plan. It will be useless to return tonight. He will be too well guarded. Are you brave, Pundita?"

"I would die for the memsahib."

"And I, too," added Ramabai.

Ahmed and Bruce gazed at each other.

"What is your plan, memsahib?" and helping Kathlyn out of the cage, the door of which he closed quickly, as the leopard was evincing a temper at all this nocturnal disturbance.

"It is a trap for Umballa."

"He is as wise as the cobra and as suspicious as the jackal," said Ahmed, doubtfully.

"Reason forbids that we return tonight. Umballa will wait, knowing me. Listen. Pundita, you shall return to the city. Two men will accompany you to the gate. You will enter alone in the early morning."

Pundita drew close to her husband.

"You will seek Umballa and play traitor. You will pretend to betray me."

"No, no, memsahib!"

"Listen. You will demand to see him alone. You will say that you are jealous of me. You will tell him that you are ready to lead him to my hiding place."

"No, Miss Kathlyn; that will not do at all," declared Bruce emphatically. "To this Ahmed agreed with a shake of the head."

"Let me finish," said Kathlyn. "You will tell him, Pundita, that he must come alone. He will promise, but by some sign or other he will signify to his men to follow. Well, the guard may follow. Once Umballa steps inside the bungalow we will seize and bind him. His life will depend upon his writing a note to the Council to liberate my father. If he refuses, the leopard!"

"The leopard?"

"Yes; why not? A leopard was the

(Continued on page 8.)

