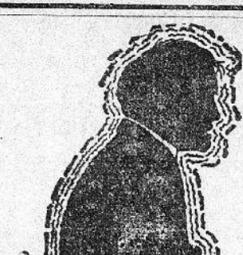


BRITZ HEADQUARTERS

By MARCIN BARBER
ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WATERS



SYNOPSIS.

The story opens with a scream from Dorothy Marche in the opera box of Mrs. Missioner, a wealthy widow. It is concluded when Mrs. Missioner's necklace breaks, scattering the diamonds all over the floor. Curtis Griswold and Brunton, society men in love with Mrs. Missioner, gather up the gems. Griswold, however, gathers up and crushes it. A Hindoo Maharane and crushes it. A Hindoo Maharane was not the genuine. An expert later pronounces all the stones exact replicas for the original. Detectives Donnelly and Carson investigate. They decide that the theft of the original gems was accomplished by some one in the company of Mrs. Missioner. In a subsequent chapter, Miss Elmor Holcomb, confidential agent, is seen. One of the missing diamonds is found in her room.

CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

"It is a diamond." A sweeping gesture from Sands as he sprang to his feet flung the telephone from the desk. He reached Donnelly in two strides and appeared on the point of gripping him by the throat. But the big detective, for all his bulk and mental slowness, could be quick enough on his feet when he must, and he readily sacrificed dignity to safety. With a single backward spring, he clutched a light chair and confronted Sands.

"I'll pay you to remember I'm an officer!" he shouted. "You ain't dealing with club stewards here, Mr. Sands. I know you and I know how much you think your money can do. But you can't put anything like that across with me."

Sands, breathing hard, took another step toward him. Donnelly gripped the chair for a defensive swing. "I don't care if you know a million Mannings," said the sleuth huskily. "If you can't behave like one gentleman to another, it'll be the worse for you. If you don't want to be run in, keep away."

Mr. Missioner's annoyance and Dorothy's fright, no less than Elmor's distress, restrained Sands again. "What does all this mean?" he said to Carson, ignoring the other. But Donnelly was not to be ignored. His successful defiance of a millionaire had heightened his desire for the center of the stage.

CHAPTER V.

The Brownstone House.

While Elmor, helpless in the reaction from her grief, was speeding to Mulberry street in a taxicab with Donnelly and Carson, a swart, slim man gilded out by the servants' door of the Missioner home. His modern garments, Oriental only by faint suggestion in the English looseness of their cut, caught the eye merely by contrast with the snowy turban that covered his head. He moved with the cat tread of one long accustomed to walking on his own soles. His shoes were conventional enough in appearance, but of softer leather than that of ordinary American make. It was evident that he relied on the silence of his footgear and, judging from the caution with which he let himself out of the house and looked up and down the street before quitting the threshold, he wished to get away without trumpeting his departure. Seeing no one in the block, he walked swiftly toward Fifth avenue and turned the corner so sharply that he bowed over a district messenger. A few words in a foreign tongue were his response to the select vernacular of the youngster curled at him—words so mysterious that a final "Ah, Sam!" was the utmost of which the astonished boy was capable by way of reply. To be flung to the sidewalk by a personage in a British tourist's suit with a headgear out of the Arabian Nights well may be disconcerting, even to No. 4722 of the A. D. T.

The dark man hailed a hansom, muttered "The park" to the driver, and sat east well back in the vehicle, closing the apron doors and lowering the upper curtain until he left only a narrow space for observation. In the superior gloom, laced by chance lanes of light from arc lamps, he sprinkled himself freely with many drops from a silver vial that smelled of the East. He readjusted the folds of his turban, smoothed his collar and scarf, and shook himself more closely into his clothes, which, despite their loose cut, seemingly were tighter than he liked.

North of the Casino, in the East drive of Central park, the Hindoo pulled the check strap and gave no directions to the cabman. The hansom turned out of the park at Seventy-second street and rolled on rubber tires in an easterly direction, crossing several avenues before it stopped in front of a brownstone house exactly like several others in the block. The Hindoo paid the cabman and stood on the sidewalk until the hansom turned the corner. Then he walked west a few yards, crossed the street, turned west, and darted into the vestibule of a house that was the twin of the one at which the cab had

stopped. He did not ring the bell, but scratched lightly on the ground glass pane of the inner door. The door swung inward and he entered a hall lighted only by a glimmer—that filtered through the glass from a gas lamp in the street. A voice in the dark asked a question in a language somewhat like that the Hindoo had flung over his shoulder at the messenger boy. The visitor answered by a single word, and a sunburst of light upon him from a cluster of incandescent bulbs above his head.

"If you are false, turn back," said the voice in one of the higher tones of India. "True though lowly follower of the Light am I," the Hindoo replied, with a profound salaam toward ink-black portieres at the far end of the hall. He moved slowly toward the curtains and stretched forth his hand. Again the voice spoke.

"If there be aught of doubting in your heart, turn back ere it be too late," it said. "There is no repentance this side of the screen. Beware! Turn back!" But the Hindoo, with another deep bow, parted the heavy curtains and stepped through the opening. Without a single glance at the sumptuous Eastern furnishings of the room, he bent his body forward with touching, outstretched hands until his fingers, well-nigh reached the floor. In that posture he remained until, in the tones of the voice that had sounded through the outer darkness, a man sitting cross-legged on a divan at the other end of the room murmured an acknowledgment of the salutation. Slowly the visitor straightened himself and looked at the divan, without raising his eyes to the face of the man upon it.

"The peace of the Immutable One be upon you," he said in his harsher dialect. "Your servant All comes to report upon his mission."

"Peace be to you, faithful one," answered the other. Not until then did All look his master in the face. The master seemingly did not wear the evening dress of the Occident in which he had appeared in the opera box adjoining Mrs. Missioner's. His slender, well-knit figure was swathed in the clinging garments of the East—garments of silken stuff that fluttered and rippled with every movement, that seemed to rustle in echo of his thoughts.

"What are your tidings, All?" asked the man on the divan. He gave little thoughtful tugs at a punkah string and the resultant breeze stirred the smoke wreaths from his narghleh.

"The jewel, O Swami!" The other's eyes glistened. "What of it?" he inquired. "Gone!" returned the humbler Hindoo. "Vanished!"

"And you did not get it?" "Swami, I did not. Your servant is a dog and the son of a dog, but he has done his best."

The man on the divan watched his servant through slitted eyes. "Where is the jewel?" he asked sternly.

"Who knows, holy man?" replied the visitor. "It has taken unto itself wings and in its place a false stone was left. The wit of your servant is completely at fault. I know not where the diamond is."

The swami did not tell him he had seen the destruction of the false Maharane by Griswold's heel in the Metropolitan Opera House. He smoked thoughtfully, his fingers knotting and unraveling the punkah-string in an absent way.

"And you have come straightway with the news?" he asked. "As the hawk flies, master," said the servant. There was trepidation in his eyes, but he answered unhesitatingly. "It is well," the Swami said, between rings of blue smoke. "Wait without, All, and I will have speech with you in a little while."

The visitor, with another low salaam, withdrew as he had entered, backing across the threshold. In the hall, his figure shot to its full height and he flashed a glance of uncertain meaning at the outer side of the portieres. He passed silently up the stairs and slipped into a room above that in which the Swami sat. His catlike tread carried him to a closet, into which he crept. Flattening himself on the floor, he applied his ear to a hole so small it scarcely widened the crack between two boards. He could not see, but he could hear the creak of the punkah as, after a violent tug by the man on the divan, it continued swinging to and fro.

Hardly had the Hindoo left the room when the Swami, like a mummer throwing off a mask, arose briskly from the divan and cast aside the black robe that enveloped him. The turban remained on his head, but in all other respects he was dressed like a Wall Street man. His feet, drawn beneath his robe as he sat on the broad couch, had not shown the patent leather shoes in which they were encased. He lighted a European cigarette and puffed as if he enjoyed the change from the pungent Eastern tobacco.

Up and down the room he walked springily, pausing from time to time with puckered forehead and thumbs resting on the edges of his coat pocket. Then he walked softly to a door at one side of the room, and opening it a little way, called softly: "Kananda."

A man of mature years came in quietly and looked inquiringly at the Swami. He was of portly build, but his vigor still showed traces of the athletic training he had followed in English schools and colleges. His Western manner and excellent English were not in surprising contrast to his Indian swarthinness among those who remembered the vogue a British education had among India's petty princes in the reign of Victoria, Queen and Empress. Prince Kananda had been one of the best batsmen on the Cambridge eleven. His popularity among the democratic young aristocrats of the period had sprung from the day when he remarked it was not his fault his father was a Maharajah, and that it shouldn't be treasured against him, even though he couldn't live it down. Nandy, as they called him on the banks of the Cam, was voted a good sort. The classification had stuck to him wherever men feregathered, from the Strangers' Club of the Straits Settlement to White's and the Union League.

"What's the row, your reverence?" he asked. On the surface, he took the faith of his fathers lightly, Oriental though he was in the marrow. "The Maharane has disappeared," said the Swami.

"Whee-ee!" returned Kananda. "If that blessed stone isn't the Wandering Jew of jewels! How long has it been missing this time?" "Nobody knows, unless it be its present possessor. Moreover, prince you are, ruler you may be, but I cannot overlook your levity in connection

Not without influence on his ideals had he taken a post-graduate course among London's Gaiety girls. He was a connoisseur in the femininity of the "alls." Serious women bored him. Put surely a young person clever enough to get away with a diamond the size of the Maharane couldn't be stupid?

"Mrs. Missioner's secretary," the Swami told him. "A close friend of hers, too, says All." Kananda's whistle was expressive. "Is there evidence to convict?" he asked interestedly.

"A paste necklace was substituted for the one containing the Maharane," replied the Swami. "One of the real diamonds was found in the prisoner's room."

"Now, that's funny," said the Prince. "Devilish funny! And they took her in tow for that?" The priest nodded.

"What rotters those American policemen are!" snapped Kananda in the slang he had used as Nandy of Cambridge. "Fancy any self-respecting Oriental doing that! Why, the bulldoggiest little terrier in the Mikado's secret service wouldn't make such a break!"

The Swami nodded again. "All searched her room, of course, before the detectives got there," he continued. "Soon after Mrs. Missioner's return from the opera, he went straight from the hall outside the library to Miss Holcomb's apartment and investigated thoroughly."

"Look here, old man," jerked Kananda. "If All has the stone, it's all well enough to put it over on—"

"He hasn't it," the Swami answered. "The thing for us to do now is to find out who has it."

CHAPTER VI.

The Third Degree.

Police Headquarters—the old headquarters of Mulberry Street—was one of the architectural monstrosities of New York. Fronting Mulberry Street, its faded brick walls presented a formidable aspect to the ancient, tumble-down rookeries across the way. Its rear walls faced Mott Street, harmonizing with the squall tenements of that narrow, ill-smelling thoroughfare. It was a type of public building now happily obsolete, which an awakened artistic sense is rapidly relegating to the scrap heap. Its rigid lines were a monotony of ugliness, unrelieved by column or capital. One viewed its hideous bulk with a shuddering sense of apprehension, almost expecting to see it crumble on the unfortunates penned within.

Visitors to the Detective Bureau entered a dingy room, approached by a narrow hall, on the Mott Street side of the building. Its most conspicuous furnishings were several brass rails which crossed one another in bewildering fashion. Half-open doors led boldly into other offices, as if to dispel the atmosphere of secrecy that hovered perpetually over the place. Two uniformed lieutenants of police were constantly on guard at oaken desks backed against opposite walls. On the morning following the Missioner diamond robbery, the two guardians were busy sorting piles of documents scattered on their desks.

"Guess it's time for the line-up," remarked one of the lieutenants. He entered the adjoining room, a large, square chamber, in which the rays from clusters of electric bulbs mingled with the pale, shivery light of the sun.

"Here's the list," he called to the desk lieutenant, at the same time throwing a bundle of documents at him. Massed against the opposite wall in listless attitudes were fifty or sixty detectives, their faces covered by long masks. They shifted about uneasily while waiting for the hapless prisoners captured the night before to be lined up for inspection. This daily spectacle, terrifying to the innocent suspects, amusing to the old-time lawbreakers, marks the beginning of the morning's routine of the men detailed to prevent crime and hunt down criminals. Not a pleasing exhibition, but

"Hardly." "But All can't be spared from the Missioner place. Sands and Griswold can be watched by one man." "Oh, yes," replied the priest. "I wish the man were a little brighter than Ramsetjee, though."

"Can't be helped—what?" anglicized Nandy. "I'll have an eye to them in the clubs from time to time. You look after the social end." "Yes," The Swami smiled. "They'll hardly get away from me in society." "My word, but you're coming on!" chaffed the Prince. "Right in the social swim. See what it is to be a Swami. Dare say the Duchess of Drygoods and the Countess de Brewery are heard over heels in love with the newest Eastern mystic. Too bad they're not in Delhi!"

The Swami frowned. He refused to laugh at a jest bordering on lack of respect for the faith. Even the Maharane's son feared to try him too far in that direction. "Omitting personally for the moment," said the priest pointedly, "I will participate in the gregarious numming of those barbarians for the sake of our purpose. It is not well to concern ourselves with the frivolous affairs of life. We may have to do much more serious things than we are doing now to get the Maharane. If it should come to the last resort, we would not hesitate, you and I. Remember the brethren!" "I shall remember," said Kananda bravely.



SHAKE?

Oxidine is not only the quickest, safest, and surest remedy for Chills and Fever, but a most dependable tonic in all malarial diseases.

A liver tonic—a kidney tonic—a stomach tonic. If a system-cleansing tonic is needed, just try

OXIDINE

—a bottle proves.

The specific for Malaria, Chills and Fever and all diseases due to disordered kidneys, liver, stomach and bowels. 50c. At Your Druggists and Dealers.

THE BUREAU DRUG CO., WACO, TEXAS.

PREROGATIVE OF HER SEX

Bride Had but Exercised Recognized Privilege That is Universally Granted.

A young couple had been courting for several years and the young man seemed to be in no hurry to marry. Finally, one day, he said: "Sal, I canna marry thee."

"How's that?" asked she. "I've changed my mind," he said. "Well, I'll tell thee what we'll do."

"If folks know that it's thee as has given be up I shanna be able to get another chap; but if they think I've given thee up I can get all I want. So we'll have banna published and when the wedding day comes the parson will say to thee: 'Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband?' I shall say: 'I winna.'"

The day came, and when the minister asked the important question the man answered: "I will." Then the parson said to the woman: "Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband?" and she said: "I will."

"Why," said the young man furiously, "you said you would say 'I winna.'"

"I know what," said the young woman, "but I've changed my mind since."—Mack's National Monthly.

Unexpected. Suddenly the umpire called time. "Aw, what's the matter?" demanded the catcher.

"Somebody in the grand stand applauded me," he said, wiping the blinding tears from his eyes, "and I wasn't prepared for that. . . . Play ball!"

Happiness, at least, is not solitary; it joys to communicate; it loves others, for it depends on them for its existence.—Stevenson.

"That's Good"

Is often said of Post Toasties

when eaten with cream or rich milk and a sprinkle of sugar if desired.

That's the cue for housekeepers who want to please the whole family. Post Toasties are ready to serve direct from the package—

Convenient Economical Delicious

"The Memory Lingers" Sold by Grocers

POSTUM CEREAL CO. Ltd., Battle Creek, Mich.



Flashed a Glance of Uncertain Meaning

with so sacred a gem. Besides, my friend, remember the brethren."

Nandy's face became serious immediately. "I wasn't exactly poking fun at the Maharane," he apologized, "and they who suffer are never long absent from my thoughts. It's a Western habit, this flippancy—comes from trying to graft a Hindoo sprig on a British oak, you know."

"We are of the Orient," said the Swami, still rebukingly. "We should not copy the barbarisms of the Occident."

Nandy's eyes twinkled with the humor of such an observation in the heart of Manhattan flashed upon him. In a moment, he was grave again, however. He swung himself to a table, lightly for one of his bulk, and sat kicking his heels as he awaited the Hindoo priest's narrative.

"There's little to tell," the Swami went on, himself dropping into the easier speech of the West as his great passion stopped smiling. "The great diamond is gone and All has no idea of its whereabouts. Night and day on the watch in the woman's home, he has nothing to tell further than that the jewel has disappeared and an arrest has been made."

"So they've caught the thief?" "Perhaps. The bunglers of this uncouth country may have stumbled upon her by chance. She's in custody, anyway."

Flashed a Glance of Uncertain Meaning

"Good old guesser!" grinned the Prince. "Well, All knows his business."

The Swami strolled back to the divan and lay at full length, his hands pillowing his head. He blew smoke rings at the punkah.

"I'm not so sure of that," he retorted. "I don't like his failure to keep better watch on the stone."

Nandy swung himself back to the table. "How long's it been gone?" he asked. "I tell you nobody knows. Its absence was discovered to-night."

"You've just learned of it?" "No and yes. I knew about the Maharane before All came." He sketched the incident of the opera house in crisp sentences. Kananda listened eagerly.

"So there's nothing left of the bogus Maharane," he observed. "Nothing but this splinter I palmed," returned the priest. "It was easy—elementary kindergarten."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)