

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post-Office, March 1, 1899, by Frank Tousey.

No. 507.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 9, 1908.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS AND THE MAGIC RING; OR, THE CASE OF THE HINDOO CONJURER.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.



As the conjurer waved his wand the smoke thickened. Then Harry saw a singular thing. A gigantic hand seemed to form in the vapor, and between the thumb and fore-finger it held a ring. Just then Old King Brady peered in.

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CHAPTER I.

THE MYSTERY OF THE MAGIC RING.

"Look out, old man! Don't tumble me into the ditch, for heaven's sake, whatever else you do!"

The speaker was a young man, named Ned Westlake, who sat alone in the tonneau of a big touring car, which was tearing down the Orange turnpike, Rockland County, State of New York, about a mile below Tuxedo gate.

There was but one other occupant of the car, a blond youth of nineteen or twenty, who, acting as his own chauffeur, was driving the automobile at a furious rate.

"Don't fret, Ned," he replied. "I know every inch of the road. There is not the least danger."

"That's all right, Homer; but, seeing that a fellow has only one life to lose, I do wish you would be careful. You can't take up a paper but you read of someone being put out of business by fast automobiling. Do have some regard for my nerves and slow down."

But Homer Sears only laughed and held to his reckless speed.

He was a young man who thought he could afford to laugh at the world and everything in it, for he was heir to millions, which would be his now in two years' time.

Tuxedo Park, as is generally known, is the mountain home of many of New York's multi-millionaires.

Among them was the wealthy banker, H. K. Van Horne, whose daughter, Lillian, his only child, had been the object of attraction for Homer Sears.

Ned Westlake had accompanied his chum, as he usually did, on his automobile trips.

It was a fad of young Sears's to have no chauffeur. He preferred to run his own machine, and if there was one thing above another which this gilded youth delighted in it was to arouse his companion's fears.

They whirled around a bend in the road, narrowly missing an auto going toward the Park.

The country was wild to a degree; dark, densely wooded hills rose on all sides.

They were running through the far-famed Ramapo Valley, the road being high up on the hillside.

Below them flowed the Ramapo River, and the Erie Railroad ran between that and the highway.

They dashed through a straggling village, which stretched along the road for about a mile, and then came into a still wilder country.

It was now eleven o'clock and the intention was to put it through to New York, a distance of about thirty-five miles.

The time was late October, and the night air decidedly cool.

Poor Ned Westlake felt his hair almost standing on end. Inwardly he vowed that even his affection for his chum, who he had known from his earliest youth, should not induce him to undertake another such expedition.

But he was in for it now and, being perfectly aware that any further remonstrance would be useless, he said no more, but resigned himself to his fate.

As they whirled around another bend in the road, where there was a hill on one side and a lake on the other, Ned's attention was suddenly attracted by a man who stood in the middle of the road, with his arms raised.

It was a bright, moonlight night and the moonbeams fell full upon the figure.

There he stood, facing the automobile, which was flying toward him at great speed.

"Look out!" shouted Ned. "A lunatic, sure! For heaven's sake, don't run him down, Homer! I should never get over it if we were to kill a man to-night!"

"He'll get run over if he don't get out of the way, then!" snapped Sears.

"Homer, stop! The fellow may intend to commit suicide! Even if you turn out, he may jump in front of us. Please stop!"

"Won't do it!" replied this spoiled child of fortune. "If the man wants to jump in front of us, that's his lookout."

That is what Homer Sears said, and badly enough it sounded.

And then he immediately slowed down and came to a standstill about a hundred feet away from the man, who had not altered his position by so much as a hair's breadth.

"Thought you weren't going to stop!" cried Ned. "You're not as bad as you make yourself out to be. I do wish you wouldn't say such things. You make my blood run cold."

There was no reply.

Homer Sears sat motionless, with his hand on the wheel.

He did not appear to have heard what was said.

He was staring at the man, who now lowered his hands and advanced toward the automobile.

The instant the hands came down young Sears spoke. "What in thunder! Did you stop the automobile?" he gasped out.

"I? No—certainly not! I haven't touched your old machine. What's the matter with you?" Ned Westlake returned.

"I—I don't know what is the matter with me, Ned!"

"What is it?"

"I feel so queer. But, there! It's gone. Strange!"

"What is it? Do explain."

"Why, it seems as if I had suddenly dropped asleep and waked up again. Did I stop the auto?"

"You certainly did. But, see, that fellow is coming toward us. He may be a holdup man. Get a move on!"

"Oh, come! First you want me to stop to suit the man's convenience, and now you are trying to make me run into him. Hold up! Let's see what he wants."

"Hold up is just what I am afraid of."

"Nonsense! He certainly is a peculiar looking guy. Let's see what he wants."

"The man was peculiar enough, so far as that went.

He was of medium height and exceedingly slim.

His face was as dark as a negro's: long, straight, black hair hung down upon his shoulders: He had a very prominent nose and little, beadlike eyes. The lower part of his face was concealed by a sparse, curly, black beard.

Both the young men took him to be colored, now that he drew nearer.

But when he came close up to the automobile Ned Westlake, who was several years older than his companion and much better informed, saw that they had to do with an Oriental of some sort, probably a Hindoo.

Sears sat staring at him, but did not speak.

There was something mysterious, even uncanny, in his silence, for he was a fellow who always had a good deal to say.

The Hindoo stared back at Sears for an instant.

And during that instant even practical Ned Westlake began to feel the spell.

A strange chill seemed creeping over him. But perhaps it was only imagination or the natural chilliness of the night.

At all events, it was gone on the instant.

As Ned said afterward, it seemed as if he had slipped out of himself for a second; dropped a cog, so to speak.

Then, like a flash, he was all right again, and he heard the Hindoo say:

"Good evening, young gentlemen! Pardon me for interfering with your journey, but I have missed my way. Can you tell me if this is the road to New York?"

"It is," replied Sears, more civilly than Ned had ever heard him speak to a person of this kind before.

"How far?"

"About thirty-five miles."

"And the nearest railway station?"

"Is just below here, but there are no trains for New York until morning. We are going directly to the city. Won't you get in and ride with us?"

Ned was amazed.

What spell had this Hindoo cast over his chum?

He knew Sears to be a purse-proud, young snob, although he would have been unwilling to admit this, even to himself.

Ned determined to put up a kick.

"Homer, what are you thinking about?" he whispered. "Drive on, for heaven's sake!"

But Homer Sears paid not the least heed.

Meanwhile the Hindoo was in the act of answering.

"I thank you, young gentlemen," he said. "I do not wish to intrude. I was at Tuxedo Park this evening giving an exhibition in conjuring. I missed my train and was told that I could get one at the town of Suffern,

three miles distant. I have walked a long way. I think I must have missed my road or have been misinformed."

"You were certainly misinformed as to the distance," replied Sears, "for it is over six miles, and you still have nearly half of it to go. But you will get no train there to-night, as I happen to know. Better get in and ride with us."

"You are very kind, but I see that your friend objects."

"I do object, because you are a stranger to us!" broke out Ned. "For heaven's sake, Homer, drive on!"

"Mind your own business!" snapped Sears. "Get in, sir. You may sit beside me."

The Hindoo—who, by the way, was dressed in a decent suit of plain black—at once climbed into the automobile, and Sears drove it ahead.

Poor Ned was terribly cut up.

Not since their boyhood days had he been thus spoken to by his chum.

But Ned was only a poor clerk, and, while he was in no way dependent upon Homer Sears, he naturally felt the difference in their social stations.

It was none of his business who his chum took into the automobile; that he was bound to admit.

So he pulled in and held his tongue.

The Hindoo immediately began talking to Sears.

He spoke in a low, peculiar tone, every word distinct and without a trace of foreign accent.

He asked about the road to New York; how they went, and when they were likely to get there.

Then he introduced himself as Mr. Runjeet Mokagee and went on to state that he was a professional conjurer.

"My native country is India," he went on to say. "I have exhibited my powers in the principal cities out there during many years. Lately I have been giving exhibitions in England and on the Continent. As yet I have only exhibited privately in New York to certain wealthy patrons. It was to accommodate one of these that I came to Tuxedo to-day."

Sears asked who, but the conjurer declined to state.

The talk continued for many miles.

Sears introduced himself and began to tell all about his private affairs.

He even went so far, foolish, light-headed chap that he was, as to boast of his wealth and to tell how in two years he would be twenty-one and would then come into his fortune.

Ned listened in silent disgust.

Not once did either of them address him.

As for Sears, he appeared to have forgotten all about his friend's presence.

The Hindoo never looked around.

They approached New York by the Fort Lee road, intending to cross the ferry at that point.

As they drew near to it, the Hindoo, who had been telling stories of life in India in the most fascinating fashion, suddenly produced a ring, which he held up, saying:

"And now, gentlemen, we are almost at our journey's end and I feel myself under deep obligations. Of course, I cannot offer to repay you; but I beg you will accept this ring as a slight token of my esteem. It came from

India, and I have every reason to believe the claim of my friend, who gave it to me, that it is many hundred years old. You will perceive that it represents two entwined serpents, with the heads facing each other. The eyes are tiny rubies. The ring is gold, of course; but it is of such slight value that I trust you will do me the pleasure of accepting it at my hand."

He looked! Sears full in the face as he said it, and extended the ring.

Ned saw his chum put out his hand, as if he was about to take the ring, and then suddenly draw back.

"It is too large for me," he heard Sears say. "It would drop off my finger. Give it to Ned."

That snakes possess powers of fascination many believe.

But can the gold representation of the reptile exert such powers?

It seems absurd to think it.

Yet we are forced to admit that at this moment Ned Westlake seemed to experience strange feelings when he looked at the ring.

It was the eyes—the ruby eyes!

Take his own off of them he could not.

Mechanically he extended his hand for the ring, and the Hindoc gave it to him.

Ned slipped it on the third finger of his left hand.

"Why, it just exactly fits!" he exclaimed.

The Hindoo made some answer, but it was in words all unintelligible to Ned.

And he sat gazing at those red eyes; gazing, gazing, gazing until all at once he seemed to float away out of the automobile and everything turned into nothing.

It was the last of Ned Westlake for the time being. He had gone—where?

CHAPTER II.

THE BRADYS TAKE HOLD.

Several weeks passed after the above events, and Christmas was near at hand.

On a certain morning in December we find Mr. Ned Westlake coming down on the west side of Union Square, looking up inquiringly at the signs.

At last he paused before one of the older buildings and, after studying the signs at the doorway, turned in.

Ned was rather a different-looking proposition from the poor clerk who lost himself in the automobile, so far as dress was concerned.

Not that he was ill-clad then, but now he was up-to-date in every particular, and carried himself with the air of a young gentleman of means.

And such, indeed, he was.

A windfall had come to Ned Westlake, and he was no longer a poor clerk.

A rich, old uncle, from whom Ned had never expected anything, died suddenly, leaving him a round million, and, what was better still, the old gentleman's will gave

instructions that \$25,000 of this should be immediately turned over to the young man, which was done.

So Ned found something else to think about besides Hindoo conjurers and magic rings, and it was well enough under the circumstances that he did so.

Just now he was thinking about detectives.

The sign he had lighted upon read:

"Brady Detective Bureau."

Floor and room numbers were given.

Ned traveled upstairs and presented himself at the rail in the outer office.

"I wanted to see Old King Brady," he said.

"He is in," replied the clerk, "but he is engaged just now."

"I will wait," said Ned. "Meanwhile give him my card."

Just then the inner door opened and a tall, elderly man walked out.

He was strikingly, not to say, peculiarly, dressed.

He wore a long, blue coat, with brass buttons; an old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar, and upon his head was a big, white felt hat, with an extraordinarily broad brim.

"This is Old King Brady," said the clerk.

"Did you wish to speak to me, sir?" demanded the world-famous, old detective.

"I do, and on very particular business," replied Ned. "But if you are going out——"

"I can wait. Step this way, please."

Old King Brady conducted young Westlake into his private office.

Ned produced his card.

"I wished to consult you about a case," he said.

"Indeed. And what sort of case?"

"A disappearance. You have probably read of the matter. It has been in all the papers—the Sears disappearance case."

"Oh, indeed! Yes; I have followed up the newspaper accounts. Do you represent the Sears family, may I ask?"

"No. Homer Sears was my most intimate friend. I——"

"Oh, yes. I remember your place in the case now, Mr. Westlake. You are the other man in the automobile."

"I am."

"What is your purpose in consulting me?"

The trustee of the Sears estate, Homer's guardian, does not appear to be taking any very active measures to find Homer. I am terribly stirred up over the affair, Mr. Brady. I have determined to take up the matter on my own account. Your bureau was highly recommended to me by a friend, so here I am."

"And I am glad you called," said Old King Brady. "The case, to say the least, seems to be a most peculiar one. I would very much like to hear your version of the mystery. Excuse me a moment. I will call my partners in."

Old King Brady touched a bell. Then he touched another.

The first brought a stylishly dressed, young fellow, who was introduced as Young King Brady, while in answer to the second appeared a strikingly handsome young lady, who was presented as Miss Montgomery.

These, with Old King Brady himself, constituted the "bureau," and to them Ned Westlake now addressed himself and told, with little enlargement, the facts which we have related in the preceding chapter.

When he reached the point where Ned lost consciousness Old King Brady cut his story short and began to question him.

"And you came to your senses where?" he demanded. "I read in the paper, but I forget."

"I was sitting in the automobile at the corner of Fifty-seventh street and Broadway," was the reply. "A policeman was shaking me up."

"Oh, yes. I remember. He accused you of being drunk."

"Yes."

"Had you been drinking anything that day?"

"Nothing but one glass of champagne, taken just before I left Mr. Van Horne's house at Tuxedo."

"Nevertheless, you were arrested and taken to the station?"

"Yes. It was an outrage. They kept me there all night."

"Such things will occur. I only want to get at facts. What did you do?"

"To get out?"

"Yes."

"Told my story to the police captain when he came in the morning. He took the trouble to verify my statements as to who I was, and he let me go at once."

"And since then you have had a lively time of it between reporters and detectives?"

"Indeed I have. But let me explain my present situation, Mr. Brady, and you will see just where I stand."

And, with some slight display of pride, Ned went on to tell of his good fortune.

"Personally you are to be congratulated," said Old King Brady. "But let us get back to the case again. Now, about this ring—did you find it on your finger when you came to yourself?"

"No, it was gone."

"And Homer Sears has not been seen since?"

"Not a trace of him can be discovered, so his guardian reports."

"Let me see. What is the guardian's name again?"

"He is J. Chauncey Sears."

"The noted Broadway lawyer?"

"Yes."

"He is one of the executors of the will of the elder Sears?"

"Sole surviving executor and Homer's guardian."

"What does the estate amount to?"

"Millions, I understand. Homer never told me the exact amount. In fact, he did not know himself."

"Sears kept him pretty well in the dark?"

"Very much so. Homer was always kicking about that."

"Who inherits all this great estate in case he never turns up?"

"That I don't know. I ventured to ask Mr. Sears on one occasion, and he practically told me it was none of my business."

"He did, eh? Therein he showed himself a fool, for it is easily ascertained at the Surrogate's office. Who has been working on the case?"

Ned mentioned, in addition to the police, one of the most noted detective bureaus in America.

"And what have these people learned?" asked Old King Brady. "Do you know?"

"Only that we were seen on the Fort Lee ferry. Homer was still handling the automobile and the Hindoo was with him."

"And you?"

"I was sitting in the tonneau."

"You have no recollection of crossing the ferry?"

"None whatever."

"Did those who saw you think you acted as if you were drunk?"

"The detectives say not. I am sure I don't know how I acted."

"Certainly a most peculiar case," remarked Old King Brady, after a few minutes' silence.

"Do you want to take it up for me?" demanded Ned.

"I am in shape to pay for it now. Homer was my dearest friend. I believe he still lives, and I am willing to spend the last penny of my inheritance to rescue him from the clutches of that man."

"It won't cost you that much, young man," said the old detective, dryly. "I see no reason why we should not take up the case. Do you, Harry?"

"No," replied Young King Brady. "We have nothing of importance on hand at the present time."

"Consider that settled," added the old detective. "We will get right down to it, Mr. Westlake."

"There is one question which I would like to ask," said Harry. "About this conjurer, did the detectives ascertain at whose house in Tuxedo Park he had been exhibiting that night?"

"He was not known in the Park at all," replied Ned. "The gatekeepers are positive that he never went either in or out."

"And your statement rests upon that of the gatekeepers?" inquired Old King Brady.

"Not mine; the statement of the detectives."

"That is what I mean."

"So far as I know—yes."

"That will be all, I think, Mr. Westlake."

"Do I pay you a retainer? I will write you a check—"

"It is not necessary."

"When shall I see you?"

"You can look in any time to-morrow. If there is any report for you we will leave it here in case we are out."

And then, after some further talk, Ned Westlake departed, deeply impressed that he had placed his case in the proper hands.

"Well, we have got a job at last," remarked Harry, as soon as the young man had gone.

"It is about time," growled Old King Brady. "It is fully two months since we have had a case of any importance."

"A long time for us," remarked Miss Montgomery.

"Indeed, yes, Alice. I began to think that our lucky star was on the wane. But, no matter. This promises to be a case full of mystery. Harry, you get down to the Surrogate's office and look at the will of old man Sears. Find out who will benefit under it in case Homer Sears is proved dead."

"Easy done," replied Young King Brady. "And you?"

"I am going down to Carlisle street, in the Syrian quarter. You know there are a few boarding houses there where Hindoos tie up."

"So? Captain Hemstreet?"

"Exactly."

"I thought he pulled out long ago?"

"Did. But he is back again. I saw him on Broadway only yesterday."

"Were you speaking to him?"

"Oh, yes. We had quite a talk. He has been living in New Orleans, but he grew tired of it there and came back to New York. He has opened up in his old quarters again."

"He is certainly just the man for us in this case."

"Indeed, yes," replied Old King Brady, and he went his way.

He was right.

"Captain" Hemstreet was a unique character.

For a number of years this man kept a sailors' boarding house on Carlisle street, which runs from Greenwich street to the Hudson River, almost down to the Battery.

His place was frequented by Lascars and other species of Hindoo sailors, many of whom came to New York on the English tramp steamers.

Few remain longer than time enough to reship, and Captain Hemstreet's house, as we have said, was long their principal abiding place.

The man himself was, on his mother's side, a Hindoo—Bengalese—while, according to his claim, his father was a British officer, in command of a native regiment, to which he himself succeeded.

The man spoke excellent English and any number of East Indian dialects.

Old King Brady always doubted if the elder Hemstreet had been anything more than a corporal or drill sergeant of natives, but this was nothing to the point.

So the old detective took himself down to Carlisle street.

He struck it at Greenwich and, walking down on the right hand side, turned in at a low doorway, above which was a sign in red and gilt fly tracks.

In the store window, which was cut off by a red half-curtain, was a plain board sign, inscribed with the proprietor's name:

"Captain Hemstreet."

CHAPTER III.

CAPTAIN HEMSTREET.

Old King Brady passed into a low-ceilinged, stuffy room, which was so blue with smoke that he could scarcely see anything.

Here there was a little bar, with a dirty display of glass and bottles behind it.

Lounging about were several Lascar sailors, as black as negros, but distinguishable for what they were by their small, regular features; long, straight hair and glittering, white teeth.

The man behind the bar was Captain Hemstreet himself.

He was neither black nor white, but rather yellower than the average mulatto.

About forty years old, his face was bright and intelligent.

"Ah, Mr. Brady!" he exclaimed. "So soon? Glad to see you! What is in the wind now?"

"Much," replied the old detective. "I find that I need your help much sooner than I anticipated, Captain."

"So? That's all right, Mr. Brady. As I said before, what's in the wind?"

Old King Brady glanced at the lounging Lascars.

"You needn't be afraid," said Captain Hemstreet. "Not one of them can speak a word of English. Go right ahead."

"Well, then, Cap," said the old detective, leaning confidentially over the bar, "it is this way. I am just starting in on a new case. Before I have gone ten steps into it glides a Hindoo conjurer, or fakir, or whatever you call him. He called himself a conjurer and gave his name as Runjeet Mokagee."

"Don't know him," said Captain Hemstreet, shaking his head. "But, then, you see I have only been back here in New York a few weeks. As I told you, I was lucky enough to get a chance to buy the lease and license of my old place, and here I am. I have not been about town at all. This conjurer is not the sort of man to come here. Doubtless he belongs to a high caste. He would not even look at such dogs as I take in."

"I thought it likely you would say that, Captain," replied the old detective; "but surely you who know all the Hindoos in New York——"

"Knew them five years ago. I'm not in it now, Mr. Brady."

"Wait. Hear me out. Don't you know some one who would be likely to put me on the right track?"

Captain Hemstreet hesitated.

"I used to know a man who might help," he said. "He is a high caste Hindoo. He lived on Bleecker street, near Carmine, for a good many years. How he supported himself I never knew, but he always appeared to be in comfortable circumstances. Whether he is there now or not, I don't know."

"His name?"

"It is a mile long. He was known as Mr. Ram."

"And you think he would be apt to know any high caste Hindoo who was in New York?"

"Almost certain. Of course, I am assuming that this Runjeet Mokagee of yours is a high caste man."

"Can it be arranged so that Mr. Ram will give me the information, if he possesses it?"

"Only by me going there with you. I am not in his caste, of course. He would pay no attention if I wrote him; but if I could see and talk to him he might."

"And when can you see him for me?"

"I might as well do it now as any other time. I will go right up there with you, if you wish."

This, of course, was all that could be asked for.

Captain Hemstreet called in a young man, who took his place behind the bar, and having fixed himself up a bit was ready to start.

With Old King Brady, he went up to the Bleecker street station on the Sixth avenue elevated and they struck down through that crowded thoroughfare to Carmine street.

The captain stopped before a house which would have attracted attention anywhere.

It was four stories high, and built of white marble.

The doorway and lintels were exquisitely carved—works of art, in fact.

Once this house had been the residence of some very wealthy family in the days when Bleecker street was the home of New York's rich.

But now it was a swarming tenement.

From the looks of those who passed in and out, Old King Brady judged that a dozen different nations might be represented on the rent roll of this house.

In the basement was a little grocery, which Captain Hemstreet informed the old detective was kept by a Hindoo, although the name over the door read, "John Smith."

"Ram lived in the back room on the second floor when I saw him last," said Captain Hemstreet. "We will go up and see if he is there still."

They climbed the dirty stairs and knocked on the door.

It was presently opened by a man, unmistakably a Hindoo.

He was a person of uncertain age, very dark, and with prominent features.

Old King Brady saw that there was considerable resemblance here to the Hindoo conjurer, as described by Ned Westlake.

But, he said nothing, leaving Captain Hemstreet to attend to the talking.

The man appeared not to recognize the captain, for he neither bowed nor spoke.

The captain, on the contrary, bowed almost to the floor, and accompanied the act by an outward movement of the hands.

He then straightened up and spoke a few rapid words.

The Hindoo replied and Captain Hemstreet told Old King Brady to enter.

The room was bare and cheerless.

There was not a chair in it, but instead were mats thrown down upon the floor.

Over in one corner were a few cushions, evidently serving for the Hindoo's bed.

There was a cookstove, upon which some savory mess was being prepared.

Upon shelves were a few books, also various bottles and jars.

A water pipe, with long, flexible stems, stood on the floor near the divan.

This was all.

"He is not our man. He speaks no English; but I

think I can learn something from him, if you are willing to pay for it," said Captain Hemstreet, hurriedly. "You stand where you are. I will translate."

Meanwhile the Hindoo had seated himself on one of the mats, where he folded his arms and crossed his legs.

He looked like some ebony statue.

His little eyes winked and blinked, but he did not speak.

Captain Hemstreet dropped upon the other mat and assumed a similar position. Then he began to talk.

The Hindoo answered him.

Presently he turned to Old King Brady and said:

"He says his name is Sutlej Dowee. He is a fakir, as we say; holy man. Fortune teller you would call him. He says he can find Runjeet Mokagee for you. He wants twenty-five dollars in advance."

"Well! Moderate! Does he know such a man?"

"No. But he can find him."

"How? By his magic arts?"

"Yes. You don't believe in it, Mr. Brady, but that makes no difference. His kind can do wonderful things."

"I know, I know; but the price, captain. It is absurd."

Captain Hemstreet shrugged his shoulders.

He allowed that Old King Brady knew better than he did how much it was worth to him to find Runjeet Mokagee.

"Would you pay it if you were in my place?" demanded the old detective.

"I certainly would."

"Where is Mr. Ram?"

"He doesn't know. He has lived here over a year. He has heard of Mr. Ram, but he doesn't know where he is."

"Well, let him go ahead," said Old King Brady, for it was either that or give up.

So he counted out \$25 and passed it to the fakir.

The man did not even nod to express his thanks.

He stowed the bills away in his loose-fitting garment and began talking to Captain Hemstreet.

The situation was becoming annoying.

The room was shut up tight and smelled vilely.

The stew in the pot on the stove, which had seemed savory at first, now appeared only to add to the general disagreeable odor.

Old King Brady felt anxious to bring the business to an end.

Still he did not see his way clear to interfere.

He felt that he was in the hands of Captain Hemstreet, and could only wait for what was to come.

Presently the captain got up, and taking the old detective by the arm, led him over to the window.

"He is now going to try to find your man," he said in a low tone. "You watch. I don't think you will be disappointed. He is a very holy man. He belongs to one of the highest castes in India. His kind can do wonderful things."

Old King Brady knew this without being told.

These Hindoo conjurers certainly do perform very wonderful things, and the singular part of it is that although the feats they perform are nothing more than tricks, that no conjuror in the western world has ever been able to explain more than a very few.

Mr. Sutlej Dowee still sat on his mat with his arms folded and his head bowed.

His eyes were closed as if asleep.

He was dressed in loose breeches, which came down only about to the knees, his thin brown shanks being bare.

The breeches were of dark blue cloth; his bare feet were thrust into yellow slippers.

He had neither coat nor vest, but wore just a plain white shirt, with a red serge sash about his waist.

His head was bare, and his glossy black hair fell loosely about his shoulders.

Altogether the conjuror presented a peculiar and picturesque figure.

Thus he sat for several minutes.

Old King Brady's patience began to be exhausted.

"If he is going to do anything, why don't he do it?" he asked.

"Hush!" whispered the captain.

"Every holy man does business in his own way. No two alike. You must be patient, Mr. Brady, if you want to get results."

Another wait followed.

At last at the end of perhaps five minutes more Sutlej Dowee roused up and got on his feet.

He came rapidly toward the watchers and motioned them aside with an imperious wave of the hand.

Touching some spring, a thick black curtain dropped down over the window, practically excluding all light.

Old King Brady almost began to fear that he was going to have trouble. But he had confidence in Captain Hemstreet and remained quiet.

His eyes quickly accustomed themselves to the gloom, for some light strayed in on either side of the curtain.

Then he saw the man back away and glide into what appeared to be another room, but which he afterwards learned was only a large closet.

From this he presently emerged naked, save for white breech cloth about his waist and a large Oriental turban of the same color upon his head.

After him he dragged a long narrow chest, which reminded Old King Brady of a coffin.

Kicking aside the cushions, he placed this box in the angle of the two walls, raised the lid and stepped in.

Then turning to Captain Hemstreet he spoke a few rapid sentences, and lying down, pulled the cover shut after him.

"He is going away now in search for your man," said the captain. "He says that we can have all the light we want until he sounds the bell, when we must drop the curtain again. He has told me how to raise it, and I am going to do it now."

The captain turned, fumbled about, found the spring, gave it a push, and the black curtain flew up with a snap. "Now we can examine everything," said the captain. "We can even look into the magic chest, but we will not find him there."

"No, I dare say not," thought Old King Brady. "This is only the old Hindoo box trick. I'd like to see the fellow do it off his ground."

But this was not a time to pry closely into things.

Old King Brady contented himself with a general survey.

This is what he found:

The outer door, which had not been locked before, was locked now, and there was no key visible.

Yet he had not seen the conjurer approach the door.

The closet into which the Hindoo had retired was an unusually large one.

But it was entirely empty.

The man had surely disrobed in there.

But what had become of his clothes?

Old King Brady searched the room as well as he could, but was unable to discover any trace of them.

Except for the box or chest in the corner everything else remained unchanged.

Captain Hemstreet went strutting about, evidently very proud of his countryman's wonderful powers.

"He is the real thing, Mr. Brady," he said several times. "Genuine holy man. I have seen them do all sorts of wonderful things out in India; this is nothing at all."

"Quite so," replied Old King Brady. "He has not done anything yet which I have not seen done on the stage."

"He said look in the magic chest," continued Hemstreet. "Aren't you going to do it? I want to see, but as this is your business and you are putting up for it, you ought to have first chance."

"Well, all right then," replied the old detective. "Let's look in the chest, but I don't suppose we shall find him there."

"Sure not. He isn't there."

"Where is he? Hiding in some hole under the floor?"

Captain Hemstreet gave Old King Brady a pained look.

"It is very useless to try to make people in this part of the world believe what we in India know to be true," he said. "But that's all right, too. It makes no difference to me so long as you get your money's worth. I don't care."

"Nor I under those circumstances," chuckled Old King Brady; adding:

"But come, Captain. Let us look in the magic chest."

And Old King Brady advanced to the corner and raised the lid.

It was just as he expected.

The chest was empty.

Not a trace of the Hindoo conjurer was to be seen.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MYSTERY OF THE MARBLE HOUSE.

Harry and Alice went directly to the surrogate's office. Here, as is not so generally known, anybody by paying a small fee, can see any will which has been filed for probate in the county of New York.

Old Homer Sears's will had been probated three years before, so Harry had not the least trouble in getting at it.

It proved to be a very lengthy document.

Its first provision was the simplest part.

Under it Homer, the younger, inherited his father's entire fortune when he came of age, J. Chauncey Sears, named as a cousin, being appointed guardian of the young man until that time.

In case of the death of the young man the entire estate was to be devoted to a very elaborate scheme of charities, with J. Chauncey Sears in full charge.

Libraries were to be founded, schools to be established. There was to be a home for young working women, another a model lodging house for men, and so on.

Harry spent a long time studying the document in order that he might miss no important point.

So far as he could find, J. Chauncey Sears could benefit in but one way by young Homer's death.

This was that he would in that case remain in control of the vast estate for an indefinite period, whereas if Homer lived he, the lawyer, would be obliged to turn the property over to the young man when he reached his majority, two years hence.

All this Harry explained to Alice, and she also spent some time in studying the will.

After they came out of the building they crossed over to Broadway, and Harry, having business in the neighborhood of Prince street, they determined to walk there, it being one of those mild smoky days which are so common in December in New York.

Harry went into the store alone and was gone some little time, while Alice remained pacing up and down the block waiting for him.

These two go about a great deal together, and it may as well be mentioned that Young King Brady is devotedly attached to his fair partner.

It is not exactly an engagement yet, but only for the reason that Alice is devoted to her profession and will not let go.

But the near future will probably see her Harry's bride.

It was while thus engaged that a person brushed past Alice who attracted her attention at once.

He was much such a looking man as Captain Hemstreet's conjurer—as the mysterious Hindoo whom Ned Westlake was anxious to find.

The man, who need not otherwise be described, was dressed entirely in black.

He wore a tight-fitting coat, buttoned close under the chin. Upon his head was a white turban.

Thus his dress was that of a high caste Hindoo, as Alice happened to know.

"Mercy! can that be the man we want?" she thought, and at the same instant Harry was at her side.

"Did you see him?" he said.

"The Hindoo?"

"Yes."

"Sure! I was just wondering if he can possibly be our man."

"So hard to tell. At the present moment there are probably fifty just such persons in New York."

"Hardly that number, Harry, but others than our man, of course."

"Shall we follow him? I say yes."

"Why, Harry, we are following him! You are walking me so fast that——"

"That I'll quit if you say so."

"No, no! I don't mean that. Yes, let us see where he goes. We have nothing special to do, so I don't see why not."

And they followed.

The Hindoo steered right up Broadway and never once looked behind him.

Indeed, as far as Harry could observe, he looked neither to the right nor the left.

When he got to Bleecker street he crossed it and turned west.

"Come on, Alice!" said Harry excitedly. "He is going down into this nest of foreigners of all nations. By Jove! I begin to believe that he may be our man!"

"Possibly, but for mercy sake don't look so wild about it. People will notice us."

"Nonsense!"

"No it isn't nonsense. The fact is, Harry, you do better alone than when I am tagging after you. I have a great mind to go on to the office and let you shadow that man alone."

"No, no! Come, let's stick it out. I'll be good."

They hurried on.

When they came to a certain marble house, just this side of Carmine street, the man turned in, and hurrying up the steps, disappeared.

"There," exclaimed Alice, "now you know where he lives."

"Yes, and we must find out who he is," said Harry, but Alice checked him.

"Don't," she said. "Better not butt in until we are sure it isn't going to interfere with Old King Brady's operations."

"What I'm going to do won't."

"Well?"

"Come across the street to that Italian barber. I happen to know the man."

"Raffaele?"

"You read the sign. He was one of the witnesses in the Cerveri case. I saved him from the House of Detention. It can do no possible harm to ask him if he knows such a man as we saw go into that house."

"Oh, very well. Come on then."

They went over to the barber shop, where Harry got a warm welcome, and put his question.

"Oh, data fella," said Raffaele. "He Hindoo fortune tell. He what you calla him, trick maker. He play in teayer. He live over dere."

"What is his name?" persisted Harry.

"Oh, don't aska me," replied the Italian. "Gooda fortune. I go to him one time. He tella me alla bout myself."

"Can anybody go to him? Is he a public fortune teller, I mean?"

"Sure! Whata matter? He do someting? You wanta him?"

"I want a man who looks like him," admitted Harry, "but I don't know whether he is the same one or not."

There was some further talk from which it appeared certain that the Hindoo had lived in the house across

the street for some time, and that he was in the habit of exhibiting his powers in cheap vaudeville, but the barber found it impossible to remember what name he traveled under.

"Come on, Alice, let's go in there and get our fortune told," said Harry, after they got outside. "It can't do any harm."

"I still fear that we may be interfering with Old King Brady if we do, Harry."

"Oh, pshaw! I don't think so. Let's bust ahead."

And Alice yielding, they crossed the street again and were just about to enter the marble house when out came Old King Brady and Captain Hemstreet.

The old detective saw them, and instantly gave them a secret sign, of which the Bradys have a regular code.

"Don't recognize me, but follow," it said.

"There! What did I tell you, young man?" whispered Alice, triumphantly.

"You are right," replied Harry. "Really, Alice, it is remarkable how many times you are right."

"Well I just felt it. I suppose that is Captain Hemstreet."

"Yes."

"Don't you know the man?"

"I have seen him, but I never spoke to him. For some reason the Governor does not seem to want us to butt in now."

Old King Brady and the captain walked on to West Broadway, talking earnestly.

They parted at the elevated station, the captain going up the steps to take a train.

Harry and Alice walked on towards Washington Square and in a few minutes the old detective joined them.

"Well!" he exclaimed, "whatever brought you two in this part of the town?"

"Might ask you the same question," replied Harry. "My answer is that we were following up a Hindoo conjurer."

"Then so was I. Singular! You seemed to be in the act of entering that marble house when I caught sight of you. Did your man go in there?"

"Yes."

"When? Just then?"

"No. About fifteen minutes ago, I should say. Shouldn't you, Alice?"

"That was about the time."

"Describe him. Tell me all about it. I wish now I had introduced you to Hemstreet."

"And why didn't you?"

"Oh, for no special reason. He was in a hurry to get back to his place, and full of a certain subject he wants to talk to me about. But go on."

Harry told of their adventure with the Hindoo.

Old King Brady was particular in his questioning about the man's personal appearance and dress.

"Singular," he said. "You have described the man I have been dealing with accurately in every particular except his clothes. Those seem to have been entirely different. It is very strange."

"But if there is one Hindoo living in that house may there not be another?" demanded Alice.

"There is another, as it happens. He is a grocer, and keeps the store in the basement."

"Did you see him?"

"No. However, I daresay I can ascertain all this. Now hear what I have been about."

And Old King Brady went on and told his story.

But he paused when he came to the point where he looked in the box and found the Hindoo missing.

"That's old business," said Harry. "I have seen the same trick performed on the stage several times."

"Exactly, on the stage where there is every mechanical appliance to help it out. But as far as I could discover the bottom of that box was solid, and there was no trap-door in the floor or opening in the wall."

"Oh, do go on and tell us how it ended, Mr. Brady," cried Alice.

"Why it ended in the simplest possible fashion," replied the old detective.

"We waited a considerable time, and then somewhere up in the air, as it seemed, we heard a little silvery tinkle as if from a tiny bell."

"That was the signal he told Captain Hemstreet to look out for?" said Harry.

"Yes. The captain pulled down the curtain again, and no sooner was it drawn than we saw, or thought we saw, a dim, phosphorescent light hovering over the casket.

"The thing bobbed about for a moment, and then vanished.

"In one second, it seemed to me, Sutlej Dowee threw up the lid of the chest and stepped out. He dragged the chest into the closet and closed the door. In a few minutes he came out again and told Hemstreet to raise the curtain, which was done. I looked at my watch and saw it was ten minutes past eleven, just thirty-six minutes from the time the man pulled down the curtain in the first place and left us in the dark."

"It is certainly very remarkable," observed Alice; "but those tricks are performed right along in the East. They do the same things out in China."

Alice, it must be explained, was born in China, and lived there during the earlier part of her life.

And among the other accomplishments of this remarkable young woman is a very accurate knowledge of the Chinese language, which she can both speak and read.

"What time, should you say, was it that your Hindoo entered that house, Harry?" demanded Old King Brady. "Be accurate now. We don't want to make a mistake."

"Well, I should say it was about eleven," replied Harry.

"How long was the man in the closet?" Alice asked.

"About ten minutes," replied the old detective.

"Then just about the time our Hindoo went into the house Sutlej Dowee reappeared in the chest?" said Harry.

"It looks that way."

"How about the outer door?" inquired Alice. "You said that you didn't see him lock it, and that afterward it was locked and there was no key."

"Exactly," replied Old King Brady, "and this is strange. When we started to go out the door was unlocked and the Hindoo positively never went near it. But listen now to the story he had to tell upon his return."

"Ah!" cried Harry, "that's the point. Let her come,

Governor! I am most anxious to hear what the fellow had to say."

CHAPTER V.

WORKING UP THE SUTLEJ DOWEE CLEW.

The Bradys had been walking through Washington Square.

Both they and Alice live in the immediate neighborhood, the Bradys occupying an old brownstone house facing the square, where they have kept bachelors' hall for a number of years, while Alice has a suite of rooms on Waverley place.

"Let us sit down here," said Old King Brady. "We can talk it out under the trees."

They accordingly seated themselves on a bench and Old King Brady began.

"After he came out of the closet Sutlej Dowee seated himself on his mat as before. If the man is a professional fortune teller and conjurer of course he must be able to talk English, but he would not speak to me. He told Hemstreet to tell me that he had found my man, but to tell me in so many words where he lived.

"He described a certain city block, and said that if I would go to a house on the south side, so many doors from the corner of the avenue, I would get a clew to the place where the man I wanted lived.

"He then began to describe this place. It seemed to be an old mansion situated on a hill among trees. I won't go into the whole of what he said, but he spoke of the mansion as overlooking the water. It struck me that he might have been referring to Staten Island or to the north shore of Long Island. It was hard to tell.

"Then he went on to say that we must go there only at night, and that he would try to meet us and act as our guide. It was all most indefinite, as this sort of thing usually is, and I am free to say that I took little stock in it. But when I came to run into you and hear what you had to say, I didn't know what to think."

"Probably all humbug," said Harry.

"Very likely."

"But at the same time I don't see any objection to following it up."

"Oh, I intend to follow it up."

"Did the description of the city block seem definite enough for you to locate it?" demanded Alice.

"Yes."

"Hello!" cried Harry. "You didn't mention that."

"No; I know I didn't, but I was going to. It seemed to me that it was the block on West Twenty-second street, between Ninth and Tenth avenues."

"You feel sure of that?" demanded Harry.

"So sure that I am going over there to try and locate the house," was the reply.

"But what are you to do when you get there? Were you given any directions by your conjurer?"

"None at all. I was simply to go to this house and get a clew."

"Beautifully indefinite," observed Harry.

"Of course," replied the old detective, "all the same

there is no reason why we should not go over there and see what we can pick up."

"None at all; and by all means let us go," said Alice.

"But in the meantime," added Old King Brady, "I am going back to that house to see if there is another Hindoo tenant besides the grocer and Sutlej Dowee."

"Going to strike in on your conjurer again?" inquired Harry.

"No, I think not. Alice, what a pity you can't speak Hindoostanee."

"Thank you," laughed Alice. "That is not one of my accomplishments. My head is full of different languages as it is."

"Well, go on to the office, you two," said the old detective, "and I'll chase back there. I'll be with you pretty soon."

He joined them in half an hour.

During that time he had seen the agent of the building and learned positively that there were only the two Hindoos in the house.

He had also seen the grocer and found him a totally different sort of man from the conjurer.

Thus the mystery of the marble house remained unsolved.

Immediately after lunch the Bradys went over on West Twenty-second street.

Alice did not accompany them.

We do not care to accurately locate the house in question.

Enough to say that Old King Brady, when he came to look along the block, could not but admit that the conjurer had very accurately described it.

But then the description came secondhand through Captain Hemstreet, who very likely knew it well, so it seemed hard to tell how much reliance to place upon it all.

Old King Brady counted off the houses as directed.

This brought him up against an old-fashioned four-story brick and English apartment which looked respectable enough.

It was let out in lodgings, as a little notice posted near the door stated.

Ringing the bell, the detectives came up against a little gray-headed man, who wore his hat cocked on one side of his head.

"Well, what's wanted?" he demanded in no very civil tone.

"I want to see the head of this house," replied the old detective, displaying his shield.

"That's me," growled the man. "What's the trouble now? I chased them spiritualists, or whatever they were, out of here. Nothing doing if it's them you are after—see?"

"Spiritualists, eh?" replied Old King Brady. "well, perhaps. But what is your name?"

"My name is Furgerson."

"You hire this house and let it out in rooms?"

"Yes."

"Who owns the house?"

"It belongs to the Sears estate," replied the man, each answer coming in a more uncivil fashion than the one which preceded it, "but what is it you want here?"

"I'll step inside and tell you," replied the old detective. "I don't care to talk here on the steps."

Mr. Furgerson led the way into a dirty little reception room.

He looked nervous and troubled.

Old King Brady, considerably impressed by learning the ownership of the house, began to think that something might be coming out of the interview after all.

"Mr. Furgerson," he said, "I am in search of a man who at one time at least called himself Mr. Runjeet Mokagee."

"Don't know any such person."

"Hear me out, please. The man is a Hindoo, of medium height, small eyes, prominent nose, very dark skinned, and wears long black hair. Do I describe anyone you know?"

"Why, here you have described Dr. Chunda, who was my tenant here up to about two weeks ago."

"And now?"

"I chased him out like I told you."

"Oh! He was one of the spiritualists then?"

"The head one. I couldn't stand it any longer. The queer people who kept calling me to the door was something fierce. They almost pulled the bell out by the roots. Then the singing and the music they kept playing. The people on both sides and upstairs were kicking. I had to do something, even if I did lose my house."

"Lose your house—what do you mean?"

"Well, you see, I am only here on a month's notice, and Mr. Chauncey Sears recommended the man."

"Oh, I see. You refer to the agent for the Sears estate?"

"Yes."

"Did he attend these seances or whatever you call them?"

"I don't know what they called their meetings. I called the bunch spiritualists, but the doctor declared that he was nothing of the sort. The greatest racket you ever heard they kept up, blowing trumpets, beating drums, singing and howling. Why, man, it was something fierce."

"So you gave him notice to quit."

"Yes."

"When was this?"

"About three weeks ago."

"And he went right away?"

"Well, say, that's the funny part of it. When I knocked on the doctor's door to give him notice, he opened it on the instant. There he stood with two big grips.

"I know what you have come for, Mr. Furgerson," he says.

"I've come to tell you to get out," I says.

"Certainly," he says. "I understand, and I am going now. Good-day!" and that was the end of it. Why, it had bothered the life out of me for a week to think how I was going to get rid of the man."

"You were certainly fortunate. Did he go away owing you anything?"

"No. He paid in advance. I looked out for that, you bet."

"And have you had any trouble with Mr. Sears in connection with the matter?"

"No. I hain't see him since."

"Did Sears attend these meetings?"

"He was here often, but he came alone."

"Did you ever attend?"

"You bet your life I didn't."

"Did the doctor advertise?"

"I don't know. I suppose so. How else would the people come?"

"And you don't know where he is located now?"

"No."

"How about his mail? Has none been forwarded to him?"

"Well, that's another queer thing. There used to be a big bunch of letters for him every day, and since he went away there hasn't a single one come."

"Probably he told the postman when he was going or left word at the office."

"You are wrong. The letter carrier says he didn't do either."

"Strange enough in that case. Did Dr. Chunda live all alone then?"

"Yes. He had no one with him."

Old King Brady reflected for a moment.

He could think of no good reason why he should not take Mr. Furgerson into his confidence in part at least.

So he told him the whole story, omitting only to name young Homer Sears.

"You see now what I am after," he said. "Try and think if on the night I name Dr. Chunda brought anyone home with him?"

"No. He never brought anyone home with him to my knowledge," replied Furgerson. "I can't help you out a bit."

"What room did he have?" asked Old King Brady.

"He had the whole of this lower floor," was the reply, "and it has been vacant ever since."

"May we see the rooms?"

"Sure. I'm not hiding anything here. Come along."

The rooms were neatly furnished and appeared to have been cleaned up since Dr. Chunda decamped.

There was an old-fashioned grate in the back room, and in it were many scraps of paper.

Old King Brady pointed to them and asked if they had been emptied out of Dr. Chunda's waste basket.

Mr. Furgerson informed him that they had.

"Get busy, Harry," said the old detective.

He drew up a table and began pulling the papers out of the grate.

"I don't believe you will find anything if you want to get his address," said Furgerson, "they are only a lot of scraps."

"No better place to look for a clue in a case like this than a waste basket," replied the old detective. "We can only try our luck."

"It was well that they did, for they won out.

It was Harry who drew the prize.

It was the fragment of a letter, on which was written the words:

"Can let you have the house."

This was enough to start the Bradys at it in earnest.

"The rest of that letter simply has to be found," Old King Brady declared.

And it was found, but not until every scrap of paper had been taken from the grate.

Pasted together, the scraps read as follows:

"Dr. Chunda, New York.

"Dear Sir:—I have consulted the owner, and he can let you have the house for \$20 per month, payable strictly in advance. He will do no repairs of any description, nor give any lease, as he wishes to sell as soon as possible. Very truly yours,
J. LEVERIDGE."

At the head of the sheet was printed:

J. LEVERIDGE,
Real Estate and Insurance.
20 Clifton Avenue, Stapleton, S. I.

"This is what we want, Mr. Furgerson," said Old King Brady after he had read the letter aloud.

"You are luckier than I supposed you would be then," said the man. "Glad of it. The next time I rent to a nigger you bet I'll know it. I don't care whether he calls himself a Hindoo or not."

And with that the Bradys pulled out, well satisfied with their find.

CHAPTER VI.

ALICE GETS THE MAGIC RING.

"And for this we have to thank Mr. Sutlej Dowee," remarked Harry as they walked towards the avenue.

"We have to thank Captain Hemstreet," corrected Old King Brady. "That Hindoo never spoke one word to me. He was well paid for what he did."

"It is certainly very remarkable, Governor, that what he said should have come out true."

"Ha! And are you becoming a convert to the supernatural view of it?"

"Not at all. But——"

"The but is enough. Now I am rather given that way, as you know, but in this case I see no necessity for taking any such view of the matter. How do we know that Mr. Sutlej Dowee is not Dr. Chunda himself?"

"True. That, of course, may be so. But the man Alice and I saw in the street!"

"I shall not even attempt to explain it. Probably a mere coincidence."

"Do we go right down to Staten Island and follow this up?"

"Suppose we go to the office and telephone?"

"Well?"

"Why do you speak in that tone? Well what?"

"I see your game. You are going to stick close to Sutlej Dowee's directions."

"Exactly. And they were to follow up the clew I should find at night."

"It strikes me that it is you who is running into superstition."

Old King Brady laughed.

"Call it that if you wish," he said. "I propose to stick to the orders. I have succeeded too well to do otherwise."

So the Bradys returned to their office, and there the old detective got busy at the telephone.

He soon had Mr. Leveridge on the wire.

The following conversation took place:

"Hello! Is this Mr. Leveridge?"

"Yes. Who are you?"

"This is the Brady Detective Bureau of Union Square. Old King Brady talking."

"Yes; well?"

"Mr. Leveridge, I am looking for one, Dr. Chunda, a Hindoo. I understand that he hired a house of you a few weeks ago."

"He did."

"Can you give me the address?"

"It is on the New Dorp road, down by the shore. You get out at New Dorp and walk towards the water. It is the old Van Doren place. Anyone will tell you where it is, but I don't think you will find the man there."

"How is that?"

"That's the singular part of it. He hired the house and paid a month's rent in advance. He told me he was going to move right in, but I understand he hasn't done so, and I have never seen him since."

"That is strange indeed. But I understand the doctor is a very peculiar character. Has he the keys?"

"Yes."

"What makes you think he does not go there at times?"

"I only judge by what the neighbors say. They tell me there is nobody living in the house."

"Is the house furnished?"

"Yes, after a fashion. It is a very old place. It has been shut up a long time."

"So? May I ask if it has the reputation of being haunted?"

"Well, I see you know the place."

"Pardon me, but I don't. I merely ask."

"Well, it has. I may as well admit it. Of course I don't believe in any such nonsense, but it is a fact that no one will stay in the house. Whether it's rats or what I don't know, but there is often a great racket there at night."

"Ever heard it yourself?"

"Well, no, I never have. The property hasn't been in my hands long."

"Who is the owner?"

"It belongs to an estate."

"The Sears estate?"

"Yes. You must know the place. What's the matter anyway? What has this doctor been doing?"

"Don't know that he has been doing anything; he has disappeared, and we want to find him. But one question more, Mr. Leveridge. How did you happen to strike Dr. Chunda?"

"He walked into my office and asked about the house. Said he had heard it was haunted, and that he had long

wanted to live in a haunted house. I told him I didn't think the owners would care to rent, they had had so much trouble with former tenants. He urged me to find out, and the result was they consented; he paid his rent and took the keys, and that is the last I have seen of him."

"When you say 'they,' do you mean Mr. J. Chauncey Sears?"

"Yes. He has charge of the estate."

"You put it up to him?"

"Yes."

"Did he make any objection?"

"None at all. He told me to go ahead."

Old King Brady rang off, and communicated the result of his conversation to Harry.

"Still J. Chauncey," remarked Harry. "He seems to crop up everywhere. He is certainly in the case with both feet."

"It looks very much as if he was at the bottom of the business."

"Going to tackle him?"

"Oh no. It would be simple nonsense at this stage of the game. He is a big man, and before we think of descending upon him we must have something to go by. No, Harry, I fall back on Sutlej Dowce. We will obey orders and go to-night to this haunted mansion."

Alice came in just as Old King Brady said it.

The ground was gone over with her.

"You see it is as I told you," she said. "These Hindoo conjurers do wonderful things, and now, Mr. Brady, I have a suggestion to make."

"Well?"

"Let Harry and I go to that man. He is said to be a public fortune teller. Let us go there and see what he has to say."

Old King Brady reflected for some minutes before replying.

"I don't see that it can do any harm," he finally said. "Go on and try your luck."

"I am glad to hear you say so," said Harry. "It is just what I have wanted to do right along."

And so this trip was taken.

Both Young King Brady and Alice altered their appearance slightly.

"Not that it makes the least difference," declared Alice. "If he is a real Hindoo fakir he is a perfect mind reader; they all are, however they do it. He will surely know who we are."

"Nonsense!" said Harry. "You allow your imagination to run away with you, Alice."

"That's all right," replied Alice. "Have it your own way."

"If you had lived in the Far East you would know better; but come, let us go."

They went.

Reaching the marble house, Harry led the way upstairs to the conjurer's room, the location of which Old King Brady had carefully described.

Here he knocked, but received no answer.

He knocked several times and at length an Italian woman looked out of the next room, one in front, for the conjurer's room was in the extreme rear.

"Do you want the fortune teller?" she asked in her own language.

"Yes," replied Alice in Italian, which she speaks fluently. "Has he gone out?"

"You never can tell whether he is in or out," said the woman. "Sometimes he don't show himself for days. It is no use knocking any more if he won't answer. Even if he is in there he won't open the door."

And the woman drew back into the room.

Harry also understands Italian, and knew what had been said.

"By Jove! if he is in there I'll find it out then," he said. "Hold on where you are, Alice. I'm going out on the fire escape to have a look in through his window."

There was a window at the end of the hall which opened on an ordinary balcony fire escape.

Harry climbed out that and looked at Mr. Sutlej Dowce's window.

There was a black curtain drawn across it which reached almost to the top.

Here the upper sash was down about two inches, and the curtain ended at this point.

"This can't be the curtain the Governor saw," thought Harry. "That was dropped down from above, I am sure he told me."

He saw that by climbing up on the balcony he would be able to look over the curtain.

For a moment he hesitated to do this, and then determining to satisfy his curiosity, he climbed up.

His glance into the room was but a hasty one, for he was afraid of attracting attention, as indeed he knew he must be doing as it was.

He saw just such a room as Old King Brady had told of.

Lying upon the cushions was the conjurer, just as the old detective had described him when he went into the box, naked save for a breech cloth about his waist.

He seemed to be in a profound sleep.

Just then Alice called at the other window.

"Oh, Harry! Look here."

Young King Brady dropped down and hurried to her. Alice looked excited. She held in her hand a peculiar ring.

It represented two serpents entwined with the heads facing each other.

The eyes were made of tiny rubies, which were of excellent color and seemed to shine with unusual lustre.

"Great Scott! The serpent ring!" gasped Harry. "Wherever on earth did you get it, Alice?"

"Why he gave it to me," replied Alice.

At the time Harry noticed nothing peculiar in her manner of speaking, but when he came to think of it later it seemed to him that there had been a certain dreaminess about her voice and her looks.

"He! The conjurer do you mean?" returned Harry.

"Yes. He opened the door and looked out, handing me this ring. He never said a word, but just shut the door or rather it seemed to me that he came through the door and went back the same way. I don't think I saw it actually open. But what am I talking about? I must be crazy. I——"

Alice's speech trailed off into silence.

But even then Harry in the excitement of the moment did not observe.

"Why the man is asleep in there!" he exclaimed. "He is almost naked. Did you see him that way?"

"Not at all. He was dressed in black with his white turban on his head just as we saw him in the street."

"By Jove! then there must be two of them. I'm going to have another look in there."

Harry climbed upon the fire escape ladder this time, and by leaning far over was able to get a better look in over the window.

But he saw nothing more than he had already seen.

The conjurer lay curled up on the cushions, to all appearances sound asleep.

There was no other person in the room unless, indeed, he was in the closet, the door of which was closed.

Harry took his time, determining to make sure.

Then coming down he turned to the other window.

Alice was not there.

He looked through and saw that she was not in the hall either.

He was startled but not really alarmed then.

"Probably she felt oppressed and has gone outside," he said to himself. "It smells terribly here, so no wonder!"

He ran downstairs and looked up and down Bleecker street.

And he was just in time to see Alice turning down Carmine street.

She was walking very fast, with all the air of a person having some definite end in view.

"What on earth has come to her?" thought Harry.

He lost no time in following, but he contented himself with walking rapidly, for to have run would have brought a crowd at his heels perhaps.

He had scarcely started when a fire engine came tearing down Carmine street, and people began running.

Harry ran too then and wished he had done so in the first place.

The fire proved to be on the next block.

Harry elbowed his way through the crowd looking for Alice on all sides.

But he could see her nowhere.

The street was now swarming with people.

Harry pushed about here, there and everywhere.

It was all no use.

In the hurry and confusion Alice had lost herself.

But what did it mean?

Why had she gone away thus suddenly?

And what other answer could Young King Brady find to the question that she had again seen the conjurer and had followed him.

This was the natural reflection.

"Perhaps he hypnotized her," thought Harry. "But that isn't so easy. I'll get back to the house and wait. She may return."

But Alice did not return.

His patience worn out at last, Harry went upstairs and again looked over the conjurer's window.

The man still lay as he had seen him.

"It is impossible that Alice could have seen him," he thought. "There must be two of them. I'll get

back to the office as quick as I can and report to Old King Brady," Harry thought.

And it is needless to say that by this time he was thoroughly alarmed.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

Old King Brady was quite as much disturbed as Harry himself over the singular conduct of Alice.

He made Harry go over the ground again and again.

"It's the ring," he said. "However she got it, that ring carries with it some subtle drug which has taken a hold on the poor girl's mind. Probably there are two of these Hindoos, as you say, though where the other can keep himself it is hard to imagine. The agent positively assured me that there is no such person in the house."

"What shall we do?" demanded Harry. "Go to Sutlej Dowee? Force our way in?"

"Only to be told that he had nothing to do with the business. That is what it will amount to, but we will go just the same."

They went.

The result was disappointment.

Knocking brought no response.

Harry went out on the fire escape.

The curtain was no longer in place.

He could look right in the window.

The room was unoccupied.

They tackled the Italian woman in the front room.

She assured them that she had not seen Mr. Dowee leave the house.

But she also repeated what she had said before, that the man was often absent for days together.

The Bradys left the house and walked toward Broadway.

"Come, brace up, Harry," said the old detective. "It may not be so bad as we think. Alice may have seen, or thought she saw, a chance to make a scoop in the case. She has given us these scares before, you know, and has turned up all right. She will this time, I am sure."

"No; it's the ring," said Harry. "You are quite right. She was half dozey when she spoke to me. I ought to have been sharper. It is all my fault."

He felt terribly, but he said no more about it.

Such things will occur in connection with detective work, and at times of trouble Old King Brady likes to keep a still tongue.

It was not until after supper that Harry gave up hope.

Then he called up Alice's house and found she had not returned.

When he informed Old King Brady, the old detective merely nodded and said:

"Oh, she'll turn up all right.

"And now for our Staten Island trip," he added. "I have determined to follow up Sutlej Dowee's directions. We will start now."

They went directly to the Staten Island ferry and ran down to St. George.

Here they got a train for New Dorp and were soon on the south shore of Staten Island.

Harry went into a grocery store and inquired about the Van Doren place.

The grocer was obliging, and directed him as to the road.

"There's no one living down there, I suppose you know," he added.

"So I understand," replied Harry. "I represent the agent. I have business at the house."

The grocer followed him to the door and saw the old detective.

"Isn't that Old King Brady?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Harry.

"You are with him?"

"He is my partner. Yes."

"Say," said the grocer, mysteriously, "are you going to try to lay the ghosts down there? Of course I don't believe in anything of the sort, but folks do say that the old house is haunted."

"Nonsense!" said Harry. "Just somebody trying to give it a bad name."

He joined the old detective, and they walked away.

"More ghost talk," said Old King Brady.

"That's what. I had a good mind to inquire if he had seen anyone answering Alice's description about here."

"It is just as well not. Of course there is a bare possibility that she has been attracted to that course in some singular way. If so we shall find it out."

They walked on down an avenue shaded by huge spreading elms.

"This is a beautiful road," remarked Harry.

"Yes, for those who like the country."

"You seem to forget that we are still within the limits of New York City."

"Greater New York. Yes. But the city will have to do a great deal of growing before it gets as far as here."

They walked on, and presently came in sight of the bay.

Nearby on their left stood an old frame mansion with high pillars in front.

"That's the house," remarked Harry. "It is just as the grocer described it."

The grounds ran back to the edge of the bluff in the rear, and here there was a large summer house overlooking the bay.

In front the garden and lawn were about a hundred feet in width, and fully as deep.

Thus it will be seen that the old Van Doren place was a pretty valuable piece of property.

But it was winter, and everything was desolate.

The house looked neglected and much out of repair, but it was not ruinous by any means.

The lower windows were concealed behind dingy green shutters.

There were blinds above, and all were open.

"Well, here we are," remarked Harry. "Now what to do?"

"Reconnoiter," said Old King Brady. "Needless to say I propose to go into that house if I can get in, and I guess we can."

They approached the high iron fence which partly surrounded the place, and must have cost a great deal of money, for it ran down to the edge of the bluff on both sides.

There were many noble old trees inside the fence.

The detectives went around in front and stood looking in through the palings.

"Don't look as if anyone had lived there in fifty years," remarked Harry.

"That corresponds with what the agent said. - But look, Harry; over there by that tree which has the green seat around it. Do my eyes deceive me or do I really see something white alongside the tree trunk?"

"I see nothing, Governor."

Old King Brady took off his glasses and cleared them with his handkerchief.

"No. I guess you are right. I don't see anything," he said when he put them on again. "It did seem to me that I saw a face peer around the tree. It looked like a man with a white turban on his head. I suppose I was thinking of the description you gave me of the Hindoo you and Alice saw, and it was only imagination."

"Let us watch a minute," said Harry. "It might not have been."

And both stood with their eyes fixed on the tree.

Then suddenly they saw a man dressed in black with a white turban upon his head, glide out from behind the tree.

"That's the fellow!" breathed Harry. "That's the very man we saw!"

"You see him now then," said Old King Brady. "It is no delusion on my part, this time."

"No, indeed! There he is. He seems to be coming this way."

"Yes."

"Does he look like your Sutlej Dowee?"

"Very much as near as I can make out, which is not very well."

The arms of the figure were folded and his head was slightly bent.

He looked like a man in deep contemplation.

"He's coming here all right," said Old King Brady. "Speak him fair, Harry, if you find it necessary to speak at all."

"I'll leave the talking to you, Governor," Harry replied.

The man continued to advance.

He was indeed coming to speak with the Bradys, but not in the way they thought.

For as they continued to watch him he suddenly vanished.

The disappearance was quick beyond all conception.

Stranger still at this point there was no tree behind which the man might have darted.

"Why he's gone!" exclaimed Harry.

"He certainly is!" said the old detective. "Here's a puzzle. I don't understand it. He seemed to vanish all in an instant."

"Why, he went like a flash."

They watched, but could see the Hindoo nowhere.

"It beats the band!" exclaimed Harry. "How do you account for it, Governor?"

"I am not accounting for it, Harry. I don't know any more about it than you do."

"Hush! By Jove, there he is again!"

The Hindoo had suddenly reappeared within twenty feet of them on the other side of the fence.

His head was bent as before, and his arms were folded across his breast.

As far as the Bradys could perceive, he was not moving when they first caught sight of him, but on the contrary standing perfectly still.

"Speak to him!" breathed Harry.

"No; wait," whispered the old detective. "It is up to him to make the first move."

And in a minute the Hindoo made it.

Raising his head, but still keeping his arms folded, he said in perfect English:

"You are the man."

His eyes were fixed upon the old detective as he spoke.

"Yes; I am the man you talked with if you are Sutlej Dowee," replied Old King Brady.

"I am Sutlej Dowee. You have come."

"Yes; thanks to your instructions, I am here."

"You have made no mistake. This is your place. Here you will find what you seek. Advance boldly and win."

And with that the figure vanished.

"Great Scott! Have we seen a ghost?" exclaimed Harry.

"Hardly," replied the old detective. "Look behind that same tree."

And sure enough Harry was just in time to see a white turban pulled in behind the tree.

"You see," said Old King Brady, "he is there. He seems to have some way of projecting his image or reflection which we Westerners don't understand."

"Which is as mysterious to us as a modern talking machine would be to a band of Hindoos who had never seen one."

"Exactly. There is no such thing as a mystery which cannot be explained."

"Going to follow his advice?"

"Sure. We must get that gate open and bust ahead."

The big gate in the fence which faced the main drive leading up to the old mansion had been tried by the Bradys and found locked.

There was also a smaller gate, which was also locked, so it had not been altogether clear how they were going to get into the grounds, as the fence was pretty high.

But now when Harry tried the smaller gate he found it unfastened.

"Singular!" remarked Old King Brady. "This gate was certainly locked before."

He threw it back and they walked in.

Harry closed the gate, and they started up the gravelled walk.

Just at that instant they saw the Hindoo glide into view from behind the same tree.

He walked in the same fashion, but now his back was turned towards them.

He ascended the steps and advanced to the front door of the mansion.

Here a second later he again vanished.

And the Bradys, who were closely watching, did not see the door either open or shut.

"He's a slick article all right," said Harry. "Did he

go through the door then? How on earth does he do it? By Jove, it beats me!"

"Probably beautifully simple when it is explained," said Old King Brady, "as I said before. Meanwhile I do hope he has left that door open for us."

"He was accommodating with the gate, however he opened it. Perhaps he will be the same with the door."

They ascended the steps and tried the door, finding it unfastened sure enough.

"Now what we want is light," said Old King Brady.

He produced his electric lantern and flashed it inside.

"Our friend seems to be still accommodating!" exclaimed Harry. "Look there."

Sure enough, there upon a table in the broad hall, which was furnished like a sitting room, stood an ordinary lantern.

Old King Brady took it up and shook it, finding the thing full of oil.

He at once lighted it.

The hall was cold, and a deadly damp seemed to pervade the house.

"Shut the door, Harry," said the old detective. "We are here, and I propose to stay here until we have learned all the secrets this old house conceals."

At the same instant a wild laugh rang out above them.

Twice it was repeated.

The second time it sounded in the distance, while the third was barely audible.

"The fun begins," breathed Harry.

"Exactly," replied the old detective. "Let them do their worst!"

It would seem as if the "ghosts" accepted the challenge.

For at the same moment a terrible crash was heard overhead, followed by a noise like a heavy cannon ball bursting down the stairs.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALICE AND THE CONJURER.

Alice put on the magic ring.

That was the beginning of her troubles.

Just what happened to Ned Westlake happened to Alice.

That the magic ring was hollow and contained some subtle drug there can be no doubt.

Equally certain is it that this accounts for the many wonderful things which Alice thought she saw while under its influence; nor will any other attempt to explain the strange doings of the Hindoo conjurer be made.

But for some mysterious reason the drug did not take the hold of Alice that it did on Ned Westlake.

Compelled to do certain things she was, but all consciousness did not leave the brave girl as in young Westlake's case.

At no time until sleep finally claimed her did Alice fully lose a knowledge of her surroundings.

She put on the ring even before she saw Harry, and took it off again immediately.

As soon as Harry turned away and started to climb the fire escape Alice put on the ring again.

This settled her fate.

All recollection of her surroundings instantly vanished.

Even Harry, who is actually dearer to her than she will admit, was forgotten.

In front of her, just as if she was looking at a moving picture, Alice saw a fine old mansion standing among trees, with the sea beyond.

In her ears a voice spoke:

"You are to go to this house," it said; and Alice declared afterwards that it sounded as distinctly as if someone had spoken close at her side.

Again the command was repeated:

"You are to go to this house, and you are to go now. Fear nothing. You will be shown the way."

And Alice walked right downstairs and out of the house.

She seemed to be treading on air.

She saw the crowd running to the fire on Carmine street.

She heard the clang of the engine bell.

But to her it seemed as if she was up in the air looking down upon it all.

She seemed to be moving with incredible swiftness.

Doubtless this was a mere delusion, and that she continued to walk at the same rapid pace which Harry saw her turn the corner of Bleecker and Carmine streets.

The next Alice knew she was in an electric car.

Then in what seemed no more than a second, she was on the ferry boat.

Equally rapid was the next change.

Alice found herself in a larger car.

It seemed to move like lightning.

There were people all around, but no one paid the slightest attention.

Then all in an instant she was walking on a country road under great spreading trees.

The same house she had seen pictured before her eyes before she left Bleecker street now loomed up again.

There was a big iron fence through which Alice seemed to herself to pass, she scarcely knew how.

She moved on to the door of this house, and it opened of its own accord.

She passed into the hall, and then she saw coming towards her a small dark man wearing loose black garments, with a queer little round cap on his head.

He was evidently a Hindoo, but he bore no resemblance whatever to the conjurer.

"You have come, lady," Alice heard him say. "You are to follow me."

And this was about the end of it.

All in an instant Alice found herself in a room where there was a bed.

The man had vanished.

A great drowsiness was upon her.

Alice flung herself down upon the bed, and knew no more until she was suddenly aroused by hearing someone knock loudly on a door.

She raised up, scarcely knowing where she was.

The knocking continued.

Alice found herself in a little room without windows, and with one door upon which the knocking sounded.

"Come in!" she called involuntarily.

Even yet she could not remember what had occurred, but the instant the door opened and she saw the little

Hindoo bowing and making motions with his hand, she recollected all that she had really known of her mysterious journey.

"It is the work of the magic ring," she thought. "Fool that I was to put it on my finger. Yes, that is what it is."

She looked for the ring, but it had vanished.

The little man was still bowing and salaaming.

"What do you want?" demanded Alice.

"The master has come. He wants you," replied the man in good English. "Will it please you to follow me, or would you prefer to receive the master here?"

Then Alice knew that she was not freed from the influence of the ring yet.

It seemed as if she was drawn towards the "master" by some mysterious attraction. She knew that she just had to go.

"I will follow you," she said.

She arose and stepped out into a little ante room.

There was no other door, but a narrow panel stood open.

Alice passed through it after the man, and the thing closed behind her.

She ascended stairs, passed through another door and then came into a wide hall.

Here she ascended a broad flight of stairs, and in an open doorway behind which were portieres stood the Hindoo with the turban, looking exactly as she and Harry had seen him on Broadway.

"Enter!" he said, drawing one of the curtains aside. "Have no fear."

Unable to refuse, Alice entered a large room bare of furniture.

On the opposite side was another portiere.

Upon this was embroidered a gigantic figure of the flaming sun.

Alice looked back at the portiere through which she had passed, and saw upon it, embroidered in the same fashion, a large star.

In the centre of the room, traced upon the floor in colors, was the five-pointed star, or pentagram, within a circle and upon this stood a brazier, or ornamental brass bowl resting upon three legs.

This, except for the two pairs of portieres, was the sole furnishing of the room.

The conjurer stood with folded arms regarding Alice fixedly.

For some moments he did not speak.

During this brief space Alice scarcely knew what she was doing.

She seemed to float away out of herself.

Green fields were all around her.

She could see children playing and cattle feeding, all very beautiful.

The conjurer vanished, and it was the same with Alice's surroundings until all at once she was recalled to herself by hearing strange words rapidly spoken.

In an instant the oppression which clouded the girl's brain vanished, and Alice was Alice once more.

She was standing with her back to the portiere of the sun.

A strange feeling of peace had come over her. Yet

she realized fully that she was in the hands of a very dangerous man.

The conjurer now addressed her, speaking in calm, measured tones.

His English was simply perfect—as is common among the educated Hindoos.

“You are the woman detective of the Brady Bureau, are you not?” he said.

“I am,” replied Alice.

“Your name?”

“Alice Montgomery.”

“Who is it who has hired you and your partners to interfere with my affairs?”

And now Alice began to understand that she was not quite free from this man’s mysterious influence even yet.

To have refused to answer his question would have been impossible.

Not only that, but she felt that it would be equally impossible to speak anything but the absolute truth.

“We were hired by a man named Edward Westlake,” she replied, and to her own surprise she added:

“But I should think your own wonderful powers would tell you that.”

“Ha! So?” answered the conjurer. “Understand once and for all, young woman, that my own wonderful powers, as you choose to call them, are limited. I have no wish to deceive you, and claim to deal with the supernatural. It is not so. By long study along lines of which you western people know nothing, I have acquired powers which must necessarily seem strange to those who do not understand, but which are actually very simple. I speak frankly to you, but I admit that I do not always do this, for often it is for my interest to deceive.”

“And you are a man who consults his own interest.”

“I am. So does everybody, although there are those who pretend to do otherwise. I suppose now, Miss Montgomery, that you would like to know why you are here?”

“Naturally.”

“Then I will be frank with you again. I have brought you here for two reasons. First, because I do not propose to have the Brady Detective Bureau interfere with my business. Second, because I have a use for you.”

“Which is?”

“That I shall not explain just yet.”

“One reason, then would have been sufficient to mention.”

“Doubtless. But let us now drop the subject. Soon I propose to introduce you to a person whom I wish you to help me entertain. Meanwhile would you like to have me entertain you with a slight exhibition of my magic, as you call it, although I propose to call it my conjuring art?”

“Naturally, if I am to be kept a prisoner here, I should like to see what you can do,” Alice replied.

“Very well. Then stand exactly as you are, and I think I can surprise you. This may not prove all so bad, Miss Montgomery. You look like a good, sensible young woman. If you will consent to give up a few things in exchange for certain others you may find that you never made a better step in your own interest than by coming here.”

“And what am I to give up?” demanded Alice quickly.

“Your detective career.”

“I shall hardly do that unless you put me out of business.”

“Not in exchange for millions?”

“Millions?”

“Yes, millions. But we will not discuss that now. Listen, Miss Montgomery. I could very easily make you do my will down to the smallest particular. I possess the means of controlling your mind——”

“By your magic ring?”

“By my so-called magic ring, yes. I could make you my abject slave, but I do not desire to do that, for the effect would not be permanent, and to keep you under the influence too long would surely destroy your life. No; in what I am going to ask you to do I want you to act of your own free will. But enough of this talk. Now you shall see what I can do in the line of conjuring. You will stand just as you are and not speak.”

He turned, passed through the star portieres, and vanished, although Alice did not hear the door open or shut.

Alice now started to have a closer look at the brazier.

To her disgust she found that the conjurer had already begun his tricks.

She could not move hand nor foot.

“How on earth does he do it?” she asked herself.

But this is a question which many have asked about the tricks of Hindoo conjurers.

We are not aware that any satisfactory answer to the question has ever been returned.

A few minutes elapsed and then the conjurer suddenly came through the star portieres again.

He was now dressed in a long, loose robe belted in at the waist, the turban was still upon his head.

In one hand he carried a long glass flask, in the other a brass rod or waif.

He did not address Alice nor even look at her.

From the flask he poured a colorless liquid into the brazier, emptying it.

He then gave the flask a toss up in the air.

There was a sharp explosion.

Alice saw, or thought she saw, the flask fly into a hundred pieces.

But not a piece fell.

All seemed to vanish on the instant away up near the ceiling.

The conjurer did not follow them with his eyes, but began stirring the liquid in the bowl of the brazier with the brass rod.

Presently stopping this, he drew a little leather case from his robe and took out two long slender vials.

One contained a greenish liquid, while the other was bright red.

The conjurer poured a few drops of the green into the bowl, and the contents foamed up higher than the rim of the bowl, but none spilled.

Uncorking the red now, he applied a few drops of its contents.

Immediately the foam sank and for a moment there was nothing doing.

Then a smoke began to curl up out of the bowl.

The show was about to begin.

The first act was startling.

Suddenly the conjurer turned one of the best known tricks of the Hindoo fakirs.

Folding his arms, he seemed slowly to rise in the air until his head touched the ceiling.

With the smoke curling all around him he looked down upon Alice.

"Watch!" he called. "Watch the smoke!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE SMUGGLERS' CAVE.

The Bradys listened to the bumping ball until the sound died away, which it did in a few minutes.

Needless to say they saw nothing.

"Old business," said the detective. "One of the most common tricks performed by those who want to establish the reputation of a first-class haunted house."

"Yes; but how do they do it?" demanded Harry.

"Don't ask me. I'll never tell you. It is a question I often asked myself, but the answer to it I never could obtain."

"Shall we go on upstairs?"

"Not at all. I will neither be hurried nor turned back by any such performance. We will examine the lower part of the house first."

"If Alice is here——"

"Which I believe she is!"

"I too. I was going to say——"

But Harry never said it.

At the same instant a blood-curdling yell was heard on the floor above.

It was thrice repeated and then died away in the distance the same as the sounds they had previously heard.

"They are determined to send us charging upstairs," said the old detective, "but I just won't go. Come on, Harry, we will search just as if this had never occurred."

They did.

The search of the house was as thorough as they could make it without taking extreme measures.

They visited every room but one.

This was the front chamber on the second floor on the left as they came upstairs.

Here they found the door fast.

It was secured by a peculiar lock which could not be mastered by Old King Brady's skeleton keys, and those which Harry carried were equally useless.

Old King Brady figured it out that there might be another room beyond this, reached only through that door.

There was also other enclosed space which he could not account for.

That there were secret rooms in the old mansion he could hardly doubt.

In each room which they visited odds and ends of old furniture were found.

One or two rooms were quite comfortably furnished.

But all the things they saw were old and well worn; such things as were scarcely worth carrying away.

During all the search not a sound was heard, and to account for what they had already heard was no easier

when they got through with their work than it had been at the start.

The Hindoo did not again show himself. His appearance and disappearance seemed to be the most mysterious thing of all.

The detectives now went out behind the house and walked to the edge of the bluff.

Below them was the bay, out into which ran a ruinous little pier.

There was a flight of steep wooden steps very much dilapidated leading to it, but the detectives did not descend.

"What are you going to do now, Governor?" demanded Harry. "We don't seem to be making the least headway."

"I take it we shall have to wait for his nibs to declare himself," replied the old detective. "He invited us here, and it is up to him to explain why."

"Meanwhile, what about breaking into that closed room?"

"I shall certainly kick the door in if he doesn't open it soon."

"Let's go back to the house. There is certainly nothing to be discovered here."

They turned, both exclaiming together.

For in one of the windows on the second story burned a ghastly blue light.

"Ha!" exclaimed the old detective. "They are starting in with their tricks again."

"Let's hurry up there and see what we can find."

"Not at all. We shall find nothing. Let us stay just where are and see what he proposes to do."

They stood watching.

Suddenly the figure of the conjurer appeared at the window in the line of the light.

For an instant the Hindoo remained thus peering out at them.

Then suddenly the light vanished and the figure with it, of course.

"Let us hurry around in front," said Old King Brady. "I want to watch the window of that closed-up room for a few minutes. There may be something doing in there."

There was something doing, even as they got there.

The light was in this window, just as they had seen it in the rear.

The conjurer stood in front of it looking down at them.

This lasted only for an instant.

Then as before the light vanished, and the figure disappeared.

"Quick work," said Old King Brady.

"It certainly is," replied Harry. "What can be his object?"

"That is hard to guess."

"Suppose I go back and watch the rear window while you watch here. Just as quick as I see the light I'll whistle."

"With what object?"

"To see if the light appears in both places at once."

"Go if it will be any satisfaction to you, though I must confess I don't see the use."

"A fellow wants to be doing something. You can't imagine how nervous I feel about Alice, Governor."

"Indeed I can. Go, Harry, but look out for yourself now."

"Have no fears. They won't get me."

Harry hurried back to the rear, while Old King Brady continued to watch the front.

Suddenly the light appeared again.

The next instant and the conjurer stood in front of it.

At the same moment Harry gave a shrill whistle.

"This is certainly very remarkable," thought Old King Brady. "A pretty slick trick, I must say."

The light vanished.

The old detective waited a minute, thinking that Harry would return, but he did not.

Then he started for the rear to find out why.

He found no light and no Harry.

Old King Brady gave an exclamation of disgust.

"By Jove, they have got him!" he muttered. "We should have stuck together. This means more trouble now!"

But the next instant and he was not so sure that the enemy had captured Harry.

The rear door of the house stood wide open.

He had not observed this before, and yet it seemed to him that he had looked at the door.

"Strange I did not observe that," thought Old King Brady. "This business is beginning to get on my nerves. Probably Harry has stepped inside. Did we leave the door open when we came out? It don't seem to me that we did."

He could not remember, try as he would.

He started for the door and walked in without thought of danger.

And right here was where Old King Brady got left. Scarce had he put foot inside the door when the floor gave way under him.

A trap had opened at his feet.

It was a drop of about ten feet, and no harm done save the shock.

The trapdoor closed above the old detective, and there he stood in the dark.

He was furious with himself.

"By Jove! was there ever such carelessness!" he growled. "Now they have got us all!"

He made sure that Harry was there with him, and he shouted his name.

There was no answer.

Old King Brady got out his electric flash light.

He was standing in a bricked up vault about ten feet square.

Directly in front of him was a grated iron door, old and musty.

The door stood wide open.

A dark passage opened off beyond.

The disgusted detective looked up at the closed trapdoor overhead.

It was entirely beyond his reach.

The dark passage looked inviting.

But fearing that this might be some further trap, Old King Brady scarcely dared to enter.

He examined the door carefully.

It had no fastenings of any sort save one rusty bolt at the bottom.

Old King Brady pulled this out, and taking it with him, started along the passage.

Which way it headed he could not tell, for he had become completely turned around by his fall.

He got out a little pocket compass and found that the passage ran towards the bay.

Old King Brady now began to suspect what this meant.

Not a few old houses along the Staten Island shore have been used by smugglers.

In old times cheating Uncle Sam in this fashion was not regarded as any particular crime.

The passage led Old King Brady on about twenty feet, and then came to an end.

The entire distance to the edge of the bluff was all of a hundred feet.

But the old detective was not to be deceived by the apparently solid brick wall ahead of him.

"This thing goes on further," he said to himself. "It is an old smuggler's tunnel, surest thing. Perhaps these people are not up to that. Indeed, why should they be? But I have seen such an outfit before."

He flashed his light over the wall.

It was as he thought.

Up against the side walls at both ends were strips of joist.

"Bricks set in a box," muttered Old King Brady. "The same ancient contrivance. Let me see, let me see."

Familiar as he was with this sort of thing, the old detective had little difficulty in finding the secret spring.

But it was old and rusted.

Evidently this peculiar door had not swung on its hinges in many years.

Old King Brady fussed over it for fully fifteen minutes.

At last he succeeded in moving the thing.

The door swung inward slightly.

Old King Brady gave it a kick, but the rusted folding hinges refused to do business.

He threw his whole weight against it.

There was a sharp snap.

The top hinge broke off short, and the whole weight of the door being thrown upon the bottom hinge, that went too.

The whole outfit fell with a tremendous crash, the bricks scattering on all sides.

Old King Brady flashed his light ahead.

The tunnel went straight on.

"Just as I thought," he muttered, and picking his way over the bricks, he pushed ahead.

The tunnel ran on until Old King Brady thought they must have reached the shore.

At its end was a wooden door, which was locked.

The lock was of the ordinary sort, which should have yielded at once to the detective's skeleton keys.

But it was very old and rusty, and to turn the bolt required patience.

At last Old King Brady got there, and the door swung open.

Behind was a cave about twenty feet long and ten feet wide.

It appeared to be a natural formation helped out and squared up in places by the hand of man.

And now the old detective saw that in his conclusions he had been entirely right.

The floor of the cave was littered with boxes, bales of cloth and other things.

There was one rack containing two hundred cigar boxes.

There were many cases labelled "cognac."

It was the cave of a smuggler, but a glance was sufficient to show that it was many years since these things had been put in here.

"Some old Van Doren died and left his secret unrevealed," thought the old detective.

He kicked the cigar rack to pieces.

The wood was old and rotten.

Breaking open one of the cigar boxes, Old King Brady found it full, but the cigars were green with mold.

He examined some of the bales.

Most of them contained woollen cloth.

This put the date of the cave as a smuggler's storehouse nearly fifty years, for it is all of that since woollens have been imported into the United States to any extent.

And now Old King Brady made another discovery.

Moonlight came streaming into the cave through a hole in the rocks.

Old King Brady went over there and found that the opening was round and about a foot across.

Through it he could look directly off on the bay.

A large packing case stood near.

It was empty, and without a lid.

It rested on its side, and there were knotholes in the wood.

As he stood there Old King Brady could feel a draught of air around his legs.

"There is an opening under that case," he said to himself, and he dragged it away.

Sure enough, he found himself right again.

There in the floor of the cave was a square hole, and descending from it was a flight of rough wooden steps.

"Probably I am going to pull out of this all right," thought the old detective, and he prepared to descend.

CHAPTER X.

HARRY ALSO IN THE TOILS.

As the Hindoo conjurer looked down on Alice out of the smoke she returned the compliment by looking up at him.

The next instant she wondered if she had allowed her imagination to run wild.

There was nobody up at the ceiling.

It was only the smoke which had taken the form of the fakir.

There stood the man himself on the other side of the brazier slowly waving his rod.

"Watch the smoke! Watch the smoke!" he said in the same calm tone in which he had previously spoken.

Then came another illusion.

Out of the brazier in the midst of the smoke quantities of flowers seemed to come flying.

They seemed to go right up in the air with the smoke and they vanished as they neared the ceiling.

Alice saw roses of all sorts, beautiful orchids, dahlias, pinks, and many other kinds of flowers.

This continued for a minute or two and then they ceased to come.

There was a lull.

Then all at once imaginary birds came flying up out of the bowl of the brazier.

It was with them just as it had been with the flames.

They ascended with the smoke and vanished as they neared the ceiling.

Many of them resembled birds that Alice knew by name.

Others again were total strangers to her, and more beautiful than any birds she had ever seen.

At last came one huge black bird with wings raised and spread.

All others vanished as this one soared aloft until the tips of its upraised wings touched the ceiling and then vanished too.

"Watch the smoke!" cried the conjurer. "Watch the smoke!"

Alice kept her eyes upon it, you may depend.

Never even in her experiences in China had she seen anything to equal this.

And now out of the smoke human hands began ascending.

Some were large and rough, the hands of men.

Others were just as certainly the hands of women.

There were dozens of children's hands.

Some had rings on the fingers. One woman's hand held a rose.

Then came a great hairy hand, which clutched a wicked looking knife.

It brandished the knife about and the other hands seemed to dodge out of the way.

But Alice particularly remarked that none of them left the line of the smoke.

Less rapidly than the other objects had done, these hands moved up to the ceiling and disappeared.

Then came the last and perhaps most marvelous of all. Faces began to appear in the smoke:

There were old men's faces and young, the faces of hideous old hags and those of little children.

Alice saw hundreds glide upward in the smoke.

One or two seemed to look at her curiously.

One young man's face turned full towards her and the left eye seemed to wink at her.

The faces were all white.

It was a marvellous exhibition, however viewed, and it was the last.

The conjurer continued to wave his rod, but he waved it more and more slowly.

As he did so, the smoke began to die down until at last it vanished altogether.

The Hindoo then laid his rod across the bowl of the brazier and folded his arms.

"And now, Miss Montgomery, what do you think of my powers?" he asked.

"You are certainly a very clever conjurer," replied Alice.

"Ever see anything to equal it?"

"I never saw anything just like it."

"A doubtful compliment."

"I have already paid you a compliment. I said you were a very clever conjurer."

"Indeed! And you might say that of any mountebank who does stunts as you say on a street corner."

"Then I will pay you another compliment."

"I wish you would. I like them, especially when they come from beautiful young ladies like yourself."

"Indeed. It would seem to be you who were paying compliments now."

"Go on with yours."

"I am going to show sufficient interest in you and your work to ask your name."

"Pshaw, woman! That is indeed a doubtful compliment. But I will answer. I will satisfy your curiosity. I am the man the Brady Detective Bureau started out to find. My name, or at least the name by which I have been known in America is Runjeet Mokagee."

"And Sutlej Dowee?"

"You are going a step too far, Miss Montgomery. I am under no obligations to betray all my secrets to you."

"None at all. I will ring off and ask no more questions."

"And I will ring on and talk business. Your main object in meddling with my affairs is to find a missing man. Is it not?"

"Yes."

"One Homer Sears?"

"Quite correct."

"Then let me take you into my confidence. That young man is now a prisoner in this house."

"I thought as much."

"Of course. It was I who put the thought into your head. I have the power to make you think anything I please."

"I beg leave to doubt that."

"Believe what you will, and doubt as you will. I have stated a fact."

"Very well. Go on."

"You are now wondering why I have Homer Sears a prisoner."

"Yes."

"You are now thinking that it is the work of his guardian, J. Chauncey Sears."

"I will not deny that you are right."

"You cannot deny it. Of course I am right. I can read your mind like an open book."

"Indeed! I doubt it."

"As I said before, believe what you will, and doubt as you will, I have stated a fact."

"What am I thinking about now?"

"Do you want me to tell you the line of thought which is running through your brain?"

"If I had not wanted it I should not have asked you."

"Very good. Give me your hand."

The conjurer caught Alice's hand with a grip which nearly crushed it.

For a minute he stood in silence with closed eyes. Then he began to talk.

"Ha! You are indeed a shrewd one. I read your mind

and you to a certain extent read mine. You are thinking thus: He—that is me—was hired by Sears to put his ward out of the way in order that he might control the estate. Now that he—I, myself—has done this, he plots to dispose of Sears so that he may keep the young man under his influence, and so gradually work his great fortune into his own hands. He—that's me again—would like to provide young Sears with a wife to help take care of him and keep quiet, and he wants to get me—that's you—for that purpose, but he never will. Such are your thoughts, Miss Montgomery, is it not so?"

But Alice did not answer.

Strange sensations had come upon her. Things were growing dim and misty.

She wanted to pull her hand away, but she had no power to do it.

Suddenly she felt herself sinking—the next she knew she lay upon her back on the floor within the magic circle.

But though to all appearances unconscious she was not so.

Absolutely powerless to move, perfectly comfortable in spite of her position, Alice was now as clear headed as ever.

She had heard every word the Hindoo uttered. What he said was absolutely true.

The conjurer looked down upon her disgustedly.

"Well, well! The magnetism which flowed through my hand was too much for her," he muttered. "Shall I arouse her? But no; I will leave her as she is for awhile; it will put her more into my power and will do her no harm."

Just then a knocking was heard behind the portiere of the star.

The Hindoo threw the curtains aside and Alice heard him say:

"Well, what now?"

"Sahib, the detectives have come," a man's voice replied. "They are now walking down the road."

"It is well, Harweet," replied the Hindoo. "Admit them when they reach the door. Meanwhile I will give them a taste of my magic powers."

"Pardon, Sahib, but the lady—is she dead?"

"Not at all, Harweet. I have simply put her in a trance. It was an accident, but I propose to allow her to remain thus for a while. Go! I will join you presently."

A door was heard to close.

The Hindoo bent over Alice in silence for a minute.

"She is all right," he muttered, and then he passed through the portieres of the sun.

In a few minutes Alice saw him come out again.

He was now dressed as she had seen him first on Broadway.

Merely glancing at her, he left the room.

Scarce had he departed than all consciousness left Alice. She seemed to fall into a deep sleep.

Leaving her thus, we pass to Harry at the time of his disappearance.

Young King Brady saw the conjurer at the rear window and whistled, as we have said.

Whether the light and the man appeared at both windows at the same instant Old King Brady could never

determine, but certainly the lapse of time between the two appearances must have been incredibly short.

Creeping up behind Harry as he stood there was the little Hindoo Harweet, as the conjurer called him.

In his hand he held a big bag net attached to a long handle.

He moved as noiselessly as a snake, and swiftly raising his net, he clapped it down over Harry's head.

Harry's struggles were useless.

A string was pulled. The net was drawn taut.

Next instant hands clutched his throat.

Despite of his struggles, Young King Brady was choked into insensibility.

The last Harry knew he heard a voice call out:

"Don't kill him, Harweet. Don't kill him! I shall have use for him later on."

Then all in an instant, as it seemed, Harry came to himself, but as he figured it out later on, there must have been a considerable lapse of time.

He was lying on a bed, neither gagged nor bound.

It was the same room Alice had been in at first, beyond a doubt.

It was as firm as a rock.

There seemed to be nothing for it but to wait.

This proved a tedious business.

But the end came at last when the door was opened by the conjurer himself.

With folded arms he stood looking at the young detective.

Such eyes!

Such power which seemed to proceed from them!

Harry was caught by their lure on the instant.

He tried to speak.

Not a word could he utter.

He attempted to advance towards the man.

Not a step could he take.

Having got his man where he wanted him, the Hindoo broke the spell himself.

"Well, Mr. Young King Brady," he said with a sneer. "So you have chosen to favor me with a visit. Sorry I could not be on hand to receive you when you first entered my house, but as it happened I was busy elsewhere. However, it is better late than never, and here I am now! Speak!"

The spell was off of Harry on the instant.

"You have got me into your power," he said. "I don't know that anything more need be said."

"A man of few words," sneered the Hindoo. "Let me do the talking if you don't care to speak. First, I have captured the old Brady as well as the young one. Second, let me tell you why you came here."

"That of course you know, if you and Mr. Sutlej Dowèe, of Bleecker street, are one and the same person, as I am inclined to believe!"

"As to that I say nothing. Believe what you please. Your errand here is to find and rescue young Homer Sears."

"That is part of it."

"Ha! Yes; only part. The other is to find and rescue Miss Alice Montgomery, your partner, and— Ha! My magic powers tell me a secret. You love her. Well

I do not blame you. She is certainly a most highly accomplished young woman."

"She is here then?"

"Certainly. I invited her to my house, and she came."

"Not voluntarily."

"Certainly not. Quite the reverse, I assure you. But follow me, my bold young detective. I will show you the man you seek; I will show you the lady of your heart. Come!"

And Harry followed as the conjurer backed through the door.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TRAGEDY ON THE SHORE.

Old King Brady descended the smuggler's secret stairs. They brought him down to the water level at the foot of the bluff.

Here he found another secret door, but this time it was pieces of rough stone, and not bricks cemented into a box.

But not on the inside.

There it was just boards which the old detective saw, and he did not discover the true situation until he got on the other side.

This time he was fortunate to get the door open without the least difficulty.

He now found himself in a small cave scarcely big enough to turn around in.

Moonlight came streaming in, and the old detective discovered that by turning around a bend in the rocks he could walk right out upon a beach.

He was just on the point of doing this when his sharp ears caught the round of voices outside.

Old King Brady peered cautiously around the rocks.

There stood the Hindoo in his black dress and big white turban.

With him was an elderly man wrapped in a long ulster, with a yachting cap on his head.

Drawn up on the shore was a rowboat, and lying at anchor about a hundred yards out from the pier was a small steam yacht.

Evidently the man had pulled ashore from the yacht.

"And now who have we to deal with?" Old King Brady asked himself. "Can it be that this is Mr. J. Chauncey Sears?"

The conjurer was speaking.

"Everything is progressing well," he said. "I have almost reduced the man to a state of imbecility. If he wears the magic ring twenty-four hours longer his reason will never return. He will forget his identity, and believe that he is the person whose name I shall give him. He will forget his past life, and will believe in the fictitious past which I shall instill into his memory."

"And that is exactly what I want. You are not lying to me, Mokagee? You have not killed the young man?" The Hindoo drew himself up with an offended air.

"It is not my custom to lie to my friends," he said.

"Oh, I do not doubt you. Can I see the young man?"

"You certainly can if you insist, although your very request implies doubt."

"Do not take it that way, Mokagee. Naturally I want to be assured of the success of my scheme."

"Which you cannot be to-night. Homer Sears lies in a trance. You shall see him if you wish, but you will only see a sleeping man."

"Can you not arouse him and let me see if he would know me?"

"Yes, certainly, and make him an absolute idiot. I can do that if you wish."

"No. I am wrong, Mokagee. I'll take your word for it."

"My dear friend, it is just as you wish. I don't care whether the fellow lives or dies. I will cheerfully give him a dose which will put him out of the world altogether if you say the word. All for the same price."

"No," said the other, emphatically. "No; I shall not do that. Let it rest in the way we have arranged it. Later I will see him, and thus assure myself that you have performed your part."

"And in the meantime?"

"In the meantime you get the second instalment of your money. You have already received \$5,000 on account. I am now prepared to pay you the balance, \$5,000 more."

"Very well. Give me the money. I am satisfied."

Again Old King Brady peered around the corner of the rocks, even at the risk of being seen.

He saw the money passed over to the Hindoo, who asked:

"Do you want a receipt?"

"Certainly not," was the reply. "Is this a case where a man can demand money twice and bring suit? I think not."

"I prefer to give one."

"Mokagee! What's the matter with you?"

"Take your receipt!"

"Oh, heaven! Help! Murder!"

The cry was followed by the sound of a fall.

Whipping out his revolver, Old King Brady jumped into the open.

The stranger lay stretched upon the sand near the foot of the steps.

The Hindoo had vanished.

To have got up the steps it would seem as if he must have flown.

Or perhaps there was some other secret passage.

At all events the conjurer was gone on the instant, and how he went Old King Brady never knew.

Feeling that it would be useless to attempt to find him, he turned his attention to the man who lay bleeding on the sand.

A knife had been driven into his side close to the heart.

It was a new ivory handled dagger.

Old King Brady drew it from the wound.

As quickly as possible he rendered the man such surgical assistance as under the circumstances was possible.

At the start the man appeared to have fainted.

He revived under Old King Brady's ministrations.

"Who are you?" he gasped.

"One who is trying to help you," replied the old detective, who was just finishing up his work.

"Oh! Am I dying?"

"You have been seriously wounded."

"Listen! The man who did this is called Runjeet Mokagee. He is a Hindoo conjurer. He lives in that old house on top of this hill."

"Right. He shall be apprehended if possible. Meanwhile to help you. That is your yacht out there?"

"Yes."

"You must lie here. I'll go for help. This is a dangerous man we have to deal with. Probably there would only be another victim if I attempted to tackle him alone."

"Go! I may die before you return."

"Indeed you may. Better tell me your name and address before I leave you."

"I am J. Chauncey Sears. I am a lawyer. My office is No. — Broadway."

The man's voice was growing weaker.

Old King Brady considered it only a matter of a few moments with him.

So he jumped into the boat and pulled for all he was worth.

As he drew near the yacht he saw two men well wrapped up in pea-jackets pacing the deck.

"Hello there! Who are you? Where's Mr. Sears?" demanded one, hurrying to the rail as he caught sight of Old King Brady in the boat.

"Friend. I want the captain of this craft!" the old detective replied.

"That's me," said the man. "My name is Benis. I am Mr. Sears's sailing master. This is his yacht, the Orion. Speak out! What has happened to the boss?"

"Captain Benis, I am a detective. My name is Brady," he said. "Mr. Sears has been stabbed by the man he came ashore to deal with. He is probably dying. I want as many men as I can get to help me capture the scoundrel and to assist the boss."

Captain Benis's exclamation would not look well in print.

He shouted and men answered.

Another boat was launched.

Four men went in that.

The captain and another man got in with Old King Brady.

As rapidly as possible they pulled for the shore.

The old mansion on the hill was shrouded in darkness.

Captain Benis eyed it curiously.

"What was his business here, and what brought you here?" he asked.

"His business was crooked, Captain," was the reply.

"I just thought as much."

"As for me, I am after this Hindoo conjurer who stabbed him."

"A Hindoo! Ah ha! I know him. He used to go out with us in the yacht. Mr. Mokagee."

"That's the man. And listen, perhaps you came down here one night with Homer Sears."

"No. Don't know him. Only know Mr. Chauncey Sears."

"Well listen; this Homer Sears is a young ward of Chauncey Sears. He is now a prisoner in the hands of the Hindoo in that house. So is another young man, who is my partner. I also have reason to believe that a

young lady is being held a prisoner there too. I want your help to rescue these people, while two of your men take Mr. Sears off to the yacht."

"Oh, you get it, of course," replied the captain. "If we can capture the scoundrel, why so much the better, but he has probably made tracks by this time. What is it all about?"

"That I am not at liberty to tell you," replied Old King Brady. "It will surely come out in time, but for the present I am dumb."

They had reached the shore by this time.

Mr. Sears lay as Old King Brady had left him.

The old detective assisted in placing him in the boat, and saw the two men pull away with him.

Then, followed by Captain Benis and three others, he started up the steps.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Harry followed Runjeet Mokagee through the main hall and upstairs.

The Hindoo kept facing him as he walked, but here he raised his hand and said:

"Stand as you are. You cannot move!"

Harry tried it.

Move one step he could not.

The conjurer now opened a secret panel at the lower end of the hall.

"Come!" called the conjurer, waving his hand at Harry with an upward motion.

Immediately the spell passed.

Harry followed into a long, narrow room.

It was comfortably furnished in old-fashioned style.

Upon a bed lay a handsome young fellow dressed only in pajamas.

He seemed to be in a deep and peaceful sleep.

Upon the third finger of the left hand was what certainly appeared to be the self-same serpent ring which Alice had exhibited at the window on Bleecker street.

"There, Mr. Detective," said the Hindoo. "There lies your man. He is completely in my power; even more so than you are, and that is saying a good deal, since I hold your destiny absolutely in my hands."

Harry was silent.

"And now," said the conjurer, "would you like to see a slight exhibition of my powers?"

"Certainly I should," Harry replied.

"Very well," said the Hindoo. "Now watch. Fix your eyes on that ring."

"Is that the same ring you gave the lady in that house on Bleecker street?"

"I decline to answer. I will not be questioned. You persist in putting me in that house on Bleecker street and making me out someone else. This house is my home, and my name is Runjeet Mokagee; further than that in your investigations, Mr. Detective, you will never get."

"Very well. Go on."

"Feel it with your fingers. Make sure it is real."

Harry did so.

The ring was real enough as far as that went.

"Now stand back," said the conjurer, and he began to wave his hand before Harry's face.

Now if Young King Brady was hypnotized or anything of that sort he did not know it.

While he watched the ring it seemed to fade away off of Homer Sears's finger.

For a single instant everything seemed to grow dim and misty.

It seemed to Harry that the fakir was close up against him.

Then he was standing where he had been still waving his hand.

Harry looked at the third finger of his left hand without knowing why he did so.

The magic ring was on the finger!

He could scarcely believe his eyes.

Strange sensations were creeping over him.

They were the same experienced by Alice and by Ned Westlake.

"It's the ring!" thought Harry, and he tried to snatch it off his finger.

It would not budge.

The conjurer stood laughing.

"Easy to get on, easier still to get off," he said, "but you can't do it. No, sir. Try as you will you cannot remove that ring."

"What is the secret of its power?" demanded Harry.

"Ask me not. I never reveal any of my tricks, for tricks and nothing else they are, of course. Want me to take it off?"

"Yes, yes."

"Wait! Don't be in such a hurry. Do you know what effect it would have on you if I left that ring on for any length of time?"

"Explain."

The Hindoo waved his hand at the bed.

"You would be reduced to that," he said.

"I am getting there now."

"Bah! That is only the beginning. What are your sensations?"

"I feel as if I must do whatever you order me to do. My head is swimming, my mind seems to be giving away."

"So? The thing seems to take an unusual hold on you. Why your dear Alice came all the way from New York to this house—but what am I saying! The influence of the ring must be extending itself to me. Well, I will relieve you of it now, young man. Look at the ring!"

As nearly as Harry was able to fix his eyes upon anything, he fixed them on the ring.

All at once it vanished.

An immense feeling of relief came to him when he saw that it was gone.

"Well, do you see it now?" demanded the Hindoo.

"No; it is gone."

"You will see it once again and under very different circumstances. That which I am going to show you is one of my best tricks. Follow the ring and wait."

The conjurer waved both hands.

Instantly all knowledge of his surroundings left Harry.

The next he knew he was standing with his back against portieres in a large room.

It was the closed room.

The brazier was in the middle of the circle of the pentagram.

Alongside of it lay Alice in her trance.

Harry saw and recognized her.

He made the most violent effort to go to her assistance.

He could not move hand nor foot.

His back was against the portieres of the blazing sun.

He was facing the portiere of the star.

But the Hindoo was not present, and he could see nothing of the magic ring.

* * * * *

It was just at this moment that Old King Brady and Captain Benis landed on the beach.

Perhaps ten minutes elapsed before the old detective and his companions started up the steps.

Gaining the top of the bluff, they hurried to the rear door of the old mansion.

It seems strange that under the circumstances the fakir should have left it unfastened, but so the old detective found it.

"We want to look out for a trap door right here," he said. "I have had one experience with it, and don't want another."

He tested the floor with his foot.

It seemed firm enough.

He crossed the trapdoor space, and the others followed all right.

"There is a room on the floor above which is locked," said Old King Brady. "We will try our luck there. Softly now! We want to catch the fellow unawares."

They tiptoed up the stairs, and Old King Brady listened at the door of the locked room.

He could hear the voice of the Hindoo speaking within.

Very cautiously he tried the knob.

The room was no longer a locked one.

The knob turned.

* * * * *

While Harry in his helpless condition stood against the portiere of the sun the Hindoo entered the room.

"Ah! So you are here!" he said sneeringly. "And there lies your dear Alice on the floor. She is not dead, my dear boy, although you may think so. She is simply in a trance, out of which she will surely come all in good time. Meanwhile let us see if we can find that magic ring. You have not seen it around here anywhere, have you?"

Harry started to reply.

It was not encouraging to find that he could not utter a sound.

The fakir laughed heartily.

"Don't feel like talking, eh?" he said. "Well, it is not surprising, seeing that you have had on the magic ring. Another dose of it, and it may do you good. Stand aside."

Harry stepped away from the curtains.

The Hindoo passed between them into the inner room.

In a minute he reappeared dressed in his robe, and carrying the brass wand.

The same process which Alice had seen was now gone through with.

"Stand back by the curtain," ordered the Hindoo, and Harry obeyed.

"Now watch the smoke," was ordered.

A giant hand seemed to form in the vapor and between the thumb and forefinger it held a ring.

Just then Old King Brady peered in.

Harry, who had been terribly startled, gave a shout.

The conjurer turned as the old detective drew his revolver and Captain Benis and his men rushed into the room.

"Stand as you are or you are a dead one!" shouted Old King Brady.

Instead of doing it the Hindoo made a dart for the portiere of the sun.

Harry tried to grab the conjurer, but he slipped through his fingers like water, passing between the curtains.

The gigantic hand and the ring vanished as soon as Harry spoke.

And the Bradys never saw the Hindoo again.

Behind the portiere was a locked door.

When they got it open there was an empty chamber with a secret stairway leading to a little door in the side of the house.

Doubtless the conjurer and his confederate used this avenue of escape, but neither was ever seen or heard of from that hour, nor did Mr. Sutlej Dowee ever appear in Bleeker street again, so no doubt he and Runjeet Moka-gee were one.

Alice recovered herself fully as soon as the Hindoo vanished, for, of course, he had simply hypnotized them and made them see visions.

Homer Sears had to be taken to a hospital, and it was a week before the doctors got him out of his trance.

Mr. J. Chauncey Sears died on the yacht, a victim of his own plotting.

Ned Westlake was triumphant when he heard the news, and he rewarded the detectives liberally for their work.

Homer Sears in due time came into what property his guardian had left him. It was millions still, but not half what he should have got; stock gambling on the part of his guardian had wasted much.

But certain it is that the young man would never have come in for any of it but for the successful termination of the case of the Bradys and the Magic Ring.

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS AND THE SEVERED HAND; or, THE CLEW FOUND IN THE SEWER," which will be the next number (508) of "Secret Service."

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ITEMS WORTH READING.

A picnic was broken up by large rats recently at Lafayette Island, on the Schuylkill. The nineteen young lady members of the club, with their escorts, landed on the island in the morning. All went well until afternoon, when swarms of muskrats began to appear, and soon every table held groups of frightened girls. Miss Gertrude Barnett, Miss Alice Wirnot and Miss Sara Hilson were all bitten by the rats. The picnickers finally escaped in boats.

Living in Alaska continuously for the past forty-three years, L. Nadeau, aged 70, of Ketchikan, declares that he would not live in any other country on the globe. His friends assert that he has lived in the frozen North longer than any other white man now in that country. Nadeau was one of the first employees of the old Hudson Bay Company in that district, and knows the history of Alaska like a book. He lives alone in his cabin at Ketchikan, and every man, woman and child in that town is his friend. Nadeau is a native of Maine. His closest companion is a big dog.

A drum fish was captured off Sugar Loaf, Cal., by J. M. Berg, and placed in the local aquarium. It measured 23 inches in length and weighed a trifle more than 6 pounds. This is the largest specimen of this rare fish that has ever been brought in alive. It derives its name from the deep booming sound it emits when in captivity. The curator of the aquarium, J. Vlahinich, states that on several occasions he has been startled at night by the strange noise, which would stop on his attempting to see how it was done.

During the fiestas of Christmas or the week of All Souls and All Saints, when the Indians swarm down from the mountains with their holiday wares for sale, visitors in the City of Mexico may notice the strange language that the vendors use in addressing each other. Even when they turn to serve the purchaser their Spanish is neither Castilian nor Mexican, but is frequently broken by peculiar syllables and accents. This is merely an illustration of the fact that the Indian languages of old Mexico have not been entirely submerged by the conquering Spanish, and in some of the most remote districts of the republic various and distinct languages, handed down from the pre-Columbian era, are still spoken in their pristine purity by many tribe members.

Orlie Hizer, who lives near Lawrie, Okla., was in that city recently to claim bounty on a couple of large wolf scalps. Having occasion to go down into a gulch, he threw his shotgun over his shoulder, in hopes of a chance shot at a rabbit. He noticed a stir in a clump of bushes, and found that they contained a wolf, part of its body being visible. With only a single-barreled shotgun, he took chances, and fired. Through the cloud

of smoke he saw the animal coming straight at him, and jumped to one side as its jaws snapped. Quickly reloading, he fired again, killing it. On examination of the bushes, he found that he had killed the wolf that he had first seen, and that its mate had been there also, and had made a spring at him.

Professor Rubner, of the University of Berlin, has just invented a registering apparatus which enables one to calculate the number of noise waves which strike upon the ear in any given period. The new apparatus invented by Rubner proves beyond question that the prolonged labor—it is none the less existent, though we are frequently unconscious of it—to which the acoustic nerve is subjected in large cities or in large establishments, has the effect, ultimately, of paralyzing its efficiency, and consequently of creating a breach in the intellectual center which, as far as the brain is concerned may be the beginning of cerebral dissolution. Rubner points the moral of his investigations by showing that insanity is rare among the inhabitants of moderately sized country towns. It is, he says, greatest in cities and in great solitudes. On the principle of "the identity of countries" according to Hegel, continuous existence in a tomb-like silence would have as bad an effect upon the brain as the pandemoniacal noises of a vast city, and to this cause is attributed the fact that when townsmen lose their way in the wilderness the terrible silence is the first reason of their invariably being found in a state of chattering insanity by their rescuers. Dr. Th. Lessing, of Munich, has also undertaken the study of noises and the effect of them in shortening human life by a process of simple attrition, or wearing away of nerve tissue.

WITH THE FUNNY FELLOWS.

When Patrick McGinnagan became a member of the Chicago police force a delegation of his friends burst in upon him while he was at dinner, and presented him with a handsome night-stick, in honor of his popularity and their esteem. Completely bewildered by this unexpected token, the new policeman, nevertheless, struggled to his feet and stammered his appreciation: "Frinds, ye have upset me wid y'r kindness," he said, flourishing the night-stick. "Oi'll try and do me duty wid dis little shillaly, an' I hope an' thrust that ivry mon here'll live t' feel its inflooince."

How brides are sold in the open market, is the subject of an article in the St. Petersburg Herald, which reveals an extraordinary state of affairs in Southeastern Russia. In the commune of Kusnez, in the government of Saratoff, about 200 young Mohammedan girls, aged from 13 to 17, were publicly sold by their relations not long ago, owing to the prevailing distress. The buyers were chiefly Turcomans, who acted as agents to supply the markets at Samarkand and Tashkend, Turkestan. The traffic is, of course, forbidden by Russian law, but all efforts to stamp out the traffic are of no avail.

A one-armed man entered a restaurant at noon, and seated himself next to a dapper little other-people's-business man. The latter at once noticed his neighbor's left sleeve hanging loose, and kept eyeing it in a how-did-it-happen sort of way. The one-armed man paid no attention to him, but kept on eating with his one hand. Finally, the inquisitive one could stand it no longer. He changed his position a little, cleared his throat, and said: "I beg pardon, sir, but I see you have lost an arm." The one-armed man picked up his sleeve with his right hand and peered anxiously into it. "Bless my soul!" he exclaimed, looking up with great surprise. "I do believe you're right!"

TRACKED BY A PHOTOGRAPH.

By D. W. STEVENS.

"I have a photograph I wish to show you, sir," said Farmer Allen, an old acquaintance of mine from Vermont, as he entered the Boston office of our detective agency.

"Yes. Nothing in my line relating to it, is there?"

"Well, I reckon I kin see about as far into a millstone as the rest o' folks, and 'lowin' your Unkle Ike to be the judge, I should say I've got a case for ye. A real, right out-and-out murder case, too."

"Indeed!"

As I spoke I received the photograph which Farmer Allen, or Uncle Ike, as he was familiarly called, at that moment handed me. I looked upon the pictured face. It was a dark, handsome one. The original of the photograph must be a young man, not yet, I judged, more than twenty-odd years old.

"Well, what about this photo?" I asked.

"Jist this: I believe that is the picture of a murderer. I'll tell you all about it."

"Go ahead, Uncle Ike."

"Years ago Miles Montgomery, a distant relative of mine, who was a prominent citizen of the section of the State in which I reside, went West to seek his fortune, after failing disastrously at home. Montgomery was a bachelor, and no ties of home, such as wife or children, bound him to any one locality, and he became a wanderer in the Western wilds. As a miner and prospector he spent some years, and I last heard of him from California, more than a year ago. The other day I received this letter, in which the photograph was inclosed."

Farmer Allen paused, and taking a letter from his pocket-book, he read as follows:

"Boulder City, Cal., Jan. 10, 18—.

"Isaac Allen, Esq.—Dear Sir: The inclosed photograph and note were both found on the body of a man whose skeleton we discovered while prospecting in the hills hereabouts. A hole in the skull told that the man had been slain by a bullet.

Yours truly, John Lake, Prospector."

"That's what the man who found the skeleton writ me. Now, here's what was inclosed besides the photo which you have in your hand.

"To the Person Who May Find This.—I have chosen to live here in the hills like a hermit, with no companion save Gaspard Torres, a young Mexican, whom I have befriended. I have discovered some valuable claims, and Gaspard and I are rapidly accumulating wealth. When I have sufficient gold to meet the demands of all my creditors in the East I shall return there for a visit, if I live. It seems to me that death is near, and I have a premonition that I shall die unnaturally. I distrust Gaspard Torres, whom I formerly confided in, for I suspect now that I have been deceived in his character, and that at heart he is treacherous and cruel. I have Gaspard Torres' photograph, and I shall conceal it, with this note, on my person in such a way that it will not be easily found. In case I die an unnatural death, I know Gaspard Torres will be my assassin. If the finder of this note will see that it and the photograph reach my old friend, Isaac Allen, of Allenville, Vermont, I am sure an effort will be made to bring my assassin to justice.

Miles Montgomery."

"Now," said Uncle Ike, when he had read the skeleton's accusing message, "I want you to take hold of the case, my boy, and find the young Mexican, Torres."

"Yes; but suppose he is found, it will be difficult to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that he killed this man Montgomery, despite the accusing letter of the dead man."

"That's so; but you run the Mexican down. Track him to

earth by his photograph, and if he should turn out to be an innocent man, you ought to be able to find it out," said Uncle Ike.

"That's so, uncle, and I'll do the best I can for you."

"Good. You'll have to go West then, and if you should run across the valuable claims of which Montgomery spoke in his message, and which I suspect were secretly worked by himself and the young Mexican, just make a note of it, will you?"

"Certainly. You always have an eye to the main chance—eh, uncle? You wouldn't be a New England Yankee otherwise."

After this we arranged the details of the terms upon which I was to track down by his photograph the suspected murderer, and in the course of the conversation it came out that Montgomery had once saved Uncle Allen from financial ruin, and that their friendship had been as close as though they were brothers.

I started West, and without adventure of a surprising kind reached Boulder City. Of course I did not make known the real motive of my visit, but while assuming to be a speculator from the East, I managed to find out that Gaspard Torres, the young Mexican, had not been seen in the neighborhood in nearly a year. I was seated in the office of the Boulder City Express conversing with Bob Hamilton, the celebrated express driver, when a young Indian passed the window. He was as straight as an arrow, rather slightly-built, and graceful. There was something in his face that seemed familiar to me, and when he had disappeared, it flashed upon my mind that he bore a wonderful resemblance to the man I had undertaken to hunt down by his photograph.

Could it be that Torres had assumed the disguise of a red-skin? The thing was not impossible.

"Who was that young redskin?" I asked of the veteran.

"Don't know him."

Hamilton had been recommended to me as a reliable man. I determined on the instant to make a confidant of him.

Quickly I placed him in possession of all the facts relating to the case which it was necessary for him to know.

"Look here, partner, I'll tell ye where ye may strike suthin' that'll help ye. Go up to old Cordova Castelar's—the old Mexican that lives on the edge o' town in the big house. He's rich, and his daughter—the prettiest little Mexican you ever seed—was putty sweet on this here Torres at one time," said Hamilton.

Half an hour later I was in the presence of old Cordova Castelar and his daughter. I made a plausible excuse for my call as a stranger, and, in the course of the conversation that followed, I said:

"I used to know a young countryman of yours, Mr. Castelar. Perhaps he is not unknown to you. Here is his picture."

As I spoke I extended Torres' photograph across the center-table. We had all arisen from our seats, and Castelar and his daughter eagerly scanned the picture, while I fancied both seemed somewhat startled, and the old Mexican clenched his hand nervously.

"Yes, I know that man, but his name is not Torres," said the old man, quickly.

I was surprised.

"Not Torres?" I exclaimed.

"No, not Torres. True, the original of that picture resembles Torres, but he is a half-breed, by the name of Lamos Kando—a man who once served me, but whom I discharged because he dared to make love to my daughter. He disappeared, vowing that he would one day return with wealth to buy my daughter. Yes, the wretch told me to my face that it was only because he was poor that I would not permit him to address my child. He told me gold was my god, and that I would be glad to receive him when he returned with wealth."

"But Gaspard Torres, whose picture I supposed this to be—where is he?" I asked.

"In the City of Mexico, whither he went a few days before Kando quitted my service. When here he was my chief accountant, and resided with me. He is engaged to my daughter," answered the old Mexican, and I felt convinced that he was telling me the truth.

"Oh, sir!" cried the pretty Mexican girl; "when you, a stranger, produced a picture which you said was Gaspard, you startled us, for we feared it meant trouble for him. We have heard of the finding of a murdered man's skeleton back in the hills, and that a letter almost positively accusing Gaspard Torres, and Gaspard's photograph were found upon the skeleton. I am sure you have come here to investigate the matter, and I swear to you Gaspard is innocent. He has not been in California for three years, as he can prove."

"I must see the man Kando. If he has plotted to place the brand of assassin upon an innocent man, it shall be my duty to expose him. Have you ever heard of him since he left your service?"

"No. We have heard nothing, and we fancied he had permanently left this part of the country," said the old Mexican.

That day I wandered about the town, and finally I sighted the young man in the Indian garb. I followed him to a gambling den, where he was soon engaged in a game of cards with a couple of savage-looking white men. I had been watching him for an hour in the gambling-house when suddenly a pistol-shot rang out, accompanied by fierce yells and imprecations. The commotion was instantly such that, as the crowd sprang to their feet, I could not see the table at which my man had been seated; but presently, when the excitement subsided, I saw one of the savage-looking whites lying dead with a bullet in his brain, while the other knelt beside him.

Kando, the half-breed, was gone, and I heard it said he had killed the white man and leaped through the window.

"The cursed half-and-half killed poor Tom because he feared him, for Tom knew a secret of his that would hang him. Never mind; though he's killed my brother, I hold the secret which he thought was known only to Tom. I'll down the red cuss yet, or my name ain't Sim Barker," said the man who knelt beside the dead gambler.

I presently drew him aside, and when I had convinced him of my identity, he grasped my hand warmly.

"You are just the man I want. Yesterday Tom told me he was afraid Kando, who followed us from the Gulch claim back in the hills, meant him some harm, and he finally told me why. In some way Tom found out that Kando had, a couple of years ago, made the friendship of an old prospector by the name of Montgomery. Kando suspected the old man had some rich claims, and it was his game to find out where they were. He gave the old prospector his name as Gaspard Torres; and as that was the name of the man who had cut him out with the daughter of old Castelar, I reckon the wretch had it in mind to place the suspicion of a crime he must have even then contemplated on him. Waal, Kando went off 'way back in the mountains to live with old Montgomery. Brother Tom, who were at the time dead broke and putty nigh famished, struck Montgomery's hut one night, and he were just coming in to axe fer suthin' to eat, when he heard a shot, and peering into the hut, he saw Kando, with a rifle still smoking, bending over Montgomery. Kando discovered Tom, and I reckon it's a big wonder he didn't kill him. They must have come to some sort of an agreement, which I reckon the half-Injun has since broken, fer Tom kept his secret even from me. Tom were a putty tough one, yer know, himself, though he never killed no man unfair."

Thus concluded the brother of the man whom Montgomery's assassin had shot in the gambling-house.

"The next thing is to find Kando and arrest him. Can you aid me in that?" I asked of my informant.

"I reckon I kin do suthin' fer ye," replied Sim Barker. "Yer see, I reckon Kando are mixed up with the road-agents o' Pop David's band, what hev made it interestin' fer the express companies and stage lines round here lately. The chances are he'll steer fer their headquarters, and if you catch him at all it must be did afore he reaches his friends."

"I agree with you. But how to strike his trail?"

"He'll lay low until dark, I'm pretty certain. At that time we'll be on the watch, and I've got friends around here who will help to guard against his escape soon as I post 'em."

"I think you are right; and so, while you arrange to have your friends on the watch, I'll keep my eye open and meet you at the express office at sundown," I said.

With this we parted. At the appointed time we met again, and I took my station on one of the main highways leading from the town.

Sim Barker and others were stationed elsewhere on routes of which the half-breed might possibly avail himself to escape.

The hours passed uneventfully until midnight, and as I had not heard the signal, which it had been agreed should be given when Kando was captured or discovered attempting to leave the town, I began to fear that after all he had given us the slip. I was standing in the shadow of a clump of trees, when a mounted man came dashing from the town at headlong speed. There was a yawning canyon on one side of the road where I stood, and a steep bluff on the other.

The moonlight enabled me to see the approaching horseman, who was not in Indian garb, and I thought for a moment that he was not my man. As he drew nearer, I saw, however, that the late rider was indeed Kando. The signal which was to warn all who were on the lookout for him of his discovery or capture was to be two pistol-shots in quick succession.

"Halt!" I cried, as Kando came dashing down upon me.

He did not heed me. I discharged my revolver at him once. At the same moment the horse gave a terrible leap, and went crashing down the canyon with a bullet in his brain.

Kando threw himself from the animal's back just as the steed went over the canyon.

I sprang at him and seized him; at the same time pulling the trigger of my pistol again and again in order to give the signal.

The weapon failed.

In a moment I was struggling desperately with the lithe and active half-breed, who was doing his best to throw me over the edge of the canyon.

Suddenly he uttered a peculiar yell, and a moment later from the mountain pass above came an old Indian squaw, mounted upon a pony, and brandishing a tomahawk in hand.

She dashed up to us.

At the same time I heard the rattle of wheels.

The old squaw leaped from her pony, and rushed at me with uplifted tomahawk.

She meant to dash it through my skull. I tore myself from Kando. The next instant Bob Hamilton's voice rang out as his six-mule coach dashed round the corner of the rocks, where the trail made a quick bend, and his long-lashed whip cut the air, and, with a report like the discharge of a pistol, cracked in the old squaw's face, causing her to drop her hatchet and beat a hasty retreat, yelling with pain.

Kando started to run also, but Bob whipped out a pistol and ordered him to halt. He obeyed, and, well bound hand and foot, we conveyed him as an extra passenger into town, where he was locked up. That night a mob, led by Sim Barker, took him from the calaboose and hung him. He confessed that he murdered Montgomery, but the secret of the location of the old prospector's "gold finds" died with the half-breed.

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