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SECRET SERVICE.

THE BRADYS AND THE RUBY BUG.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.



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As the Hindoo looked upon the ruby bug, he whirled on one heel and sank to the floor. "What on earth ails the man?" cried Old King Brady; he stooped to raise him. The boy with the fez looked around the corner of the door

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES

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NEW YORK, OCTOBER 7, 1910.

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THE BRADYS AND THE RUBY BUG

OR,

A QUEER CASE FROM CALCUTTA

By A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

CHAPTER I.

THE CASE THAT CAME FROM CALCUTTA.

It is safe to assert that no private detectives in America have such a widespread reputation for honesty and efficiency than the Bradys, of Union Square, New York.

The firm consists at the present time of Old King Brady, Young King Brady and Alice Montgomery, the well-known female detective.

While not, strictly speaking, Secret Service detectives, these skilful sleuths still have an understanding with the United States Secret Service bureau, under which that institution can command their services at any time, and in course of a year they handle many government cases.

The case of which we are now about to write is one of these.

So secretly was the affair managed that even the Bradys themselves did not know at the time, nor do they know to this day, the true inwardness of it.

That it concerned some noble family in England is almost certain.

Such people command sufficient money and power to enable them to keep their secrets.

It would have been a matter of satisfaction to Old King Brady to have known the truth, but this was something not to be.

The case began with a letter from the Chief of the Secret Service Bureau to Old King Brady, personally, received early in July, 19—.

It read as follows:

“My Dear Mr. Brady:

“In the near future you will receive a communication from a Mr. Patrick Ferguson, a lawyer in Calcutta, India, asking if you will take up a case for him. You are hereby instructed by the U. S. Secret Service Bureau to promptly

able acceptance and to make a copy of the letter received and forward the original to Washington.

“This case we hope you will handle with your usual skill, as much depends upon its successful termination.

“Of the precise nature of the case even I am not informed and can therefore supply no advance information.

“My instructions, however, contain one clause to which I am directed to particularly call your attention.

“It is quite possible that an attempt will be made to mislead you, even to take your life rather than that you should be permitted to go ahead with the case. For this reason I am enclosing you Mr. Ferguson’s signature, which you will retain and carefully compare with the signature attached to any communication you may receive from Calcutta.

“I am instructed to say that you can hardly attach too much importance to this.

“You are to keep this bureau informed of the progress of the case.

“Render your bill to the bureau.

“Very truly yours,

“_____, Chief.”

As this mysterious letter was quite in keeping with the methods of the U. S. Secret Service Bureau and might mean much or little, the Bradys laid it aside without giving it particular thought.

They had received many similar letters from Washington. Frequently nothing had come of them. It might prove so in this case.

And so, as the weeks glided by and no case came from Calcutta, the detectives practically forgot the matter.

Early in September their attention was called to it again.

This was by the receipt of a letter bearing the Calcutta postmark and signed “Patrick Ferguson.”

“Here is our Calcutta case, Harry,” remarked Old King Brady, as he picked the letter out of the morning mail.

"What's that?" called Alice Montgomery from her private office. "The Calcutta case? Count me in. I am more than curious to know what it is all about."

She came through to Old King Brady's office and listened to the reading of the letter, which ran thus:

"Calcutta, July 10, 19—.

"To the Brady Detective Bureau, Union Square, N. Y.:

"Gentlemen.—I desire that you should handle a detective case for me.

"It is a matter which concerns a client of mine who does not care to be known.

"In the possession of a certain lady, a member of my client's family, there has been for many years an antique brooch of Indian workmanship, made in the form of a large beetle.

"The back, wings and head of this beetle are studded with rubies. Each wing consists of a single pigeon-blood ruby of immense value, as the stones are flawless and of unusual size. Ten thousand pounds has been refused for this brooch, which I would say in passing is only to be considered in the light of an antique, being entirely too large to wear.

"Besides the wing stones there are many others of high value.

"The brooch once formed part of the regalia of the Begum of Bhadapota, India. It has had a long and peculiar history, which need not be rehearsed. It is only necessary to say that it has a faculty for allowing itself to be stolen.

"This is what has again happened to it. It is impossible for me to communicate the name of the thief, although he is known; nor does my client wish that any arrests shall be made. All that is wanted is the ruby bug, as you in America would style the beetle.

"Should it be your fortune to recover it you are to cable me, care of Prowitt & Co., Calcutta, naming the amount of your bill. Instructions will then be sent you regarding its disposition and a draft will be promptly mailed.

"You will, if you decide to undertake the case, immediately go to the city of Boston, in your State of Massachusetts and report to Mr. Angus McPhinzie, No. 16 Calico Place, who will give you full instructions in the preliminaries of your work.

"Of course, you will understand that Mr. McPhinzie knows nothing of the whereabouts of the beetle, but he does possess certain information which I believe will be of the greatest service to you in your work.

"Very truly yours,

"Patrick Ferguson."

This long epistle was written in a cramped hand on thin, foreign paper.

The signature, on the contrary, was peculiarly large and bold.

Old King Brady, having finished the reading, proceeded to study the signature through a glass.

"What's the trouble?" asked Harry.

"Oh, nothing," was the reply. "Merely that this is evidently the fake letter against which we were warned."

"And why?"

"Look!"

Old King Brady handed the letter to Harry, who looked it over.

"How can you be sure, without comparing the signature with the one sent you from Washington?" the latter asked.

"It scarcely need comparison. Can't you see why?"

"I confess I cannot."

"I can!" exclaimed Alice.

"And why?" asked Harry.

"Because the signature is all out of harmony with the text of the letter."

"Right," said Old King Brady, "yet that is not in itself conclusive by any means. There is another reason."

"I noticed that," said Harry, "but I agree with the governor. The man may have hired some clerk to write that long letter and then have signed it."

"Examine the signature through this glass before we compare it with the one sent us by the Secret Service chief," said the old detective.

Harry did so.

"I see now," he said.

"Exactly; and you could not have seen without the glass."

"That signature has been traced."

"Manifestly. Now we will compare."

They did so.

The signatures were identical.

But for Old King Brady's discovery he might readily have been deceived.

"Call up Washington," he said; "get the chief on the wire, if possible. He requested to be informed of the progress of the case, you will remember. He must know of this."

It took time to get the chief, but at last Old King Brady had the satisfaction of hearing his voice, and he made his statement.

"It was to be expected," said the chief. "And now, Brady, I want you to follow that thing up. In my belief it is a deliberate attempt to trap you and thus prevent you from handling the case. Properly handled, it may prove just the clew you want."

And the old detective was much of the same mind.

"Suppose," he suggested, "we wait a few days before moving in the matter and see if the genuine letter does not come?"

To this the chief assented, adding:

"I think, in any case, it will be well for you to wait until I can cable a certain party for instructions. There is no sense in jumping right in on the matter. If we wait and catch these people unprepared it may work out to your advantage. They will be expecting you any time now. Let us keep them guessing. It will be all to the good."

And to this Old King Brady assented.

Three days later came a letter from the chief.

It seemed likely that he had cabled India, considering the lapse of time.

The letter was brief and merely stated that his correspondents had no advice to give. That the letter was a fake. That the genuine letter had just been mailed.

"And shall we wait for it or act on the fake?" Old King Brady asked over the telephone.

"Wait," was the reply, and wait they did.

On the first day of October the genuine letter arrived.

To Old King Brady's surprise, it was a duplicate of the fake, except for the last paragraphs.

It was also written in the same hand which had signed it and on different paper.

Instead of the instructions reading, "Cable Prowitt & Co.," it directed the Bradys, in case of success, to deliver the ruby bug to the United States Secret Service Bureau.

The final paragraph ran as follows:

"As to your beginning, we can only say that you must be patient with its peculiarity. There is to-day in Boston, Mass., a person calling himself Swami Yubata Yogi. His address is No. — Shawmut avenue. You are to call on him and present the ring here enclosed, which he is to keep. You will then act entirely upon the instructions he gives you. Success depends upon this. You will doubtless be impressed upon seeing this man that he is a cheap fortune-teller and consequently a fraud. It may be so. You may even find him in the hands of the law when you go to seek him, as I am informed an effort is now being made to suppress such persons in the United States. It matters not. Find him you must, and when found, act according to his instructions as I tell you."

Then followed a few general remarks with which the letter closed.

The ring now claimed attention.

It was a monstrous affair and made of silver.

Its sides were engraved with elephants in procession. Instead of a stone it carried in the middle of the shank an elephant's head.

The eyes were of peculiar greenish white stones, which possessed a "chatoyance," as jewelers call it; that is, a change of color, according to the viewpoint.

"Genuine sapphire cat's-eyes and worth a lot of money," Old King Brady remarked, when Alice inquired what they were.

Inside the ring were engraved strange characters.

Evidently they were the letters of some Oriental language.

But even Alice, who understands many languages, including Chinese, could not make them out.

Once more Old King Brady got Washington on the wire and put it up to the chief of the Secret Service Bureau.

"It would now seem to be unnecessary to look up that fake address," he said.

"Decidedly, if you can find the Hindoo," was the reply, "but in case you fail it may prove to be your only chance."

This seemed true enough.

The Bradys now dropped everything and started for Boston.

They went over by the Fall River Line and reached there in the early morning, putting up at their usual abiding place, Young's Hotel.

Breakfast over, they started for that notorious haunt of queer religionists, quack doctors, spiritualist mediums and fortune-tellers—Shawmut avenue.

This street has been noted as the abiding place of such people for many years.

The police and the reporters are ever after them with

a sharp stick, but despite of this, Shawmut avenue still remains their hold-out and probably will for years to come.

The number in question the Bradys located near Worcester street.

It was a shabby old swell-front brick house.

A doctor's sign was in the window.

Ringing the bell and inquiring for the Yogi, Old King Brady nearly had his head bitten off by the doctor, whom he insisted upon seeing personally.

"Don't know any such person, and don't want to," said the doctor, who bore every appearance of being a faker himself.

Then Old King Brady sprang his Secret Service shield.

That brought the doctor to his senses.

"This is government business," said the old detective.

"If you know anything of this man you will be required to tell it. You cannot possibly get out of it. Did such a man as Swami Yubata Yogi ever live in this place?"

The doctor answered, as if he was on the witness stand:

"Yes."

"How long ago?"

"About eight months. I took the house after he was arrested."

"For what was he arrested?"

"Practising medicine without a license. He was the head of a bunch of religious cranks. The place was pulled and this Hindoo Yogi, or whatever you have a mind to call him, was sent to Deer Island."

"Is he there still?"

"I have no possible means of knowing. It should not be difficult for a detective to find that out."

"Do you know any one who knew him?"

"No, I don't know anything at all about his affairs and don't want to."

This ended it.

There was nothing for the Bradys to do but to beat a retreat and acknowledge themselves balked at the outset of their queer case from Calcutta.

CHAPTER II.

16 CALICO PLACE.

"A complete turn-down," remarked Harry, as they turned back along Shawmut avenue.

"Yes, and it only goes to show how little this man Ferguson really knows about the matter of the ruby bug," replied Old King Brady. "However, if our Yogi is on Deer Island so much the better, for then we can readily locate him. Remember, we were warned of this very thing."

The detective now went to the city office where the records of the Deer Island penitentiary are kept.

The institutions on this island, which is several miles down Boston harbor, in a way, correspond with those of Blackwell's Island in New York.

Old King Brady found, as he fancied might prove the case, that these records were only of the sentences to the island.

In order to get the names of the discharges it would be necessary to communicate with the island itself, which the clerk very kindly did for him over the telephone.

The answer was promptly returned that the Yogi had served a three months' sentence.

Thus, he had been gone for eight months, where, the people at the other end of the wire did not know.

"It is a case of advertising," said Old King Brady. "We'll do it in all the afternoon papers."

And this was accordingly their next move.

The advertisement read:

"If Swami Yubata Yogi will send his address to the clerk of Young's Hotel he will learn of something from India to his advantage."

This matter attended to, the question of the fake letter now came up.

So long a time had elapsed since that letter was received that it seemed quite impossible that Mr. Angus McPhinzie should have any intimation that the Bradys were in Boston.

"We will take the man by surprise and see what comes of it," said the old detective. "The first thing, however, is to locate him. I have a pretty good knowledge of Boston's byways, but I'll be hanged if I ever heard of this Calico place before."

They consulted a street directory and sure enough there the name was.

Calico place, it appeared, was an alley running off from Stamford street, in that mysterious tangle of streets at the West End.

It was but a few steps from the hotel, and the Bradys were soon there.

Of all the shabby, run-down neighborhoods in Boston where there are so many this is the worst.

Shawmut avenue was a street of palaces in comparison, and yet many of the West End houses were once palatial and the homes of proud old families.

But it was not so with those of Calico place.

The street was a blind alley, with twenty three-story brick houses on each side.

These houses were now a part of Boston's new Ghetto, and the "place" swarmed with children.

Sewing machines could be heard clattering on every floor.

Bewigged women were shuffling in and out the ever open door with their marketing.

Long-bearded gentlemen, with bundles of ready-made clothing or the material for the same, were moving to and fro.

And all this applied to every house save one, and that one was No. 16.

"I do wish you had disguised, governor," remarked Harry, rather fretfully. "We are attracting a lot of attention here."

"And all owing to me," replied the old detective, quietly. "But cheer up, boy. It can't be helped."

The allusion was to the detective's peculiar costume.

For always when not in disguise Old King Brady affects a peculiar style of dress.

A long blue coat, with brass buttons, an old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar and a big white felt hat, with an extraordinary broad brim.

He was thus attired now and the youth of Calico place were calling after him in terms by no means complimentary.

It certainly would have been better if Old King Brady had disguised on this occasion and secretly he admitted it to himself.

But as to No. 16.

This house was like the others, but apparently it was no tenement. Its green blinds were closed, its whole air was one of desertion.

There it stood, between two swarming tenements, a thing by itself.

"Governor," said Harry, "I beseech you and Alice to sheer off and let me attend to this. If the whole outfit appears there at the door there isn't the slightest chance for us to do good detective work."

"He is right, Mr. Brady," said Alice. "We better go."

And for once Old King Brady allowed himself to be persuaded.

He saw that his partners were right.

So they all turned back and pushed through to Cambridge, where no one, no matter how peculiar his appearance may be, ever attracts any attention.

"Look out for yourself now, Harry," said the old detective, warningly. "Don't you enter that house under any consideration. I positively forbid it."

Harry gave his promise and left them, returning to No. 16 Calico place.

But it was to encounter nothing very formidable.

He rang the bell several times and received no answer.

Presently a young man came out on the next stoop and asked him who he was looking for?"

"Who lives in this house? Anybody?" replied Young King Brady, evasively.

"Yes, there's people living there."

"Who?"

"An old man and an old woman."

"What's the name?"

"I can't speak it. They are Irish, I think."

"That's all I want to know," said Harry, which was equal to telling the young man to mind his own business.

He did not take the hint, however, but stood watching while Young King Brady rang the bell again.

This time the answer was so prompt as to excite suspicion that the person who opened the door on a heavy chain must have been about to do so anyway.

She was an old woman, plainly dressed, with sharp features and white hair.

"Mr. Angus McPhinzie live here?" demanded Harry.

The woman gave a quick start.

"Who are you?" she asked, with a strong Scotch accent.

Harry did not care to reply directly to that question.

"I come from a party in New York," he said.

"What's his name?"

"Tell me, first, if Mr. McPhinzie lives here."

"I will tell you nothing, young man, until you have answered my question."

The old Scotch woman appeared to be stubborn.

Harry concluded to yield as it seemed to be the only way to get ahead.

He accordingly handed her his card.

The woman fumbled in the pocket of her apron, found a pair of spectacles, put them on and read the card.

"It is as I supposed," she then said. "You are one of the Brady detectives."

"Yes."

"Come inside and wait. I have to consult some one before I can say anything to you."

"No. I will wait here?"

"Suit yourself," replied the Scotch woman, and she closed the door, locking it with considerable noise.

Harry waited nearly ten minutes.

Many watched him out of windows and from doorways.

This closed house seemed to possess a fascination for these people.

Harry felt inclined to question some of them, but as no one spoke to him he concluded that it would be best not to."

At last the door was again opened by the Scotch woman.

"I am instructed to say that Mr. McPhinzie does not live here," she said, "but he sometimes comes here. He will meet you here at nine o'clock this evening if you will come with your principal, Old King Brady."

"Very well. I will report what you say to Old King Brady," replied Harry, and he went away.

At the corner of Stamford street he met a policeman to whom he showed his shield.

"Officer," he said, "does your beat take in Calico place?"

"Sure," was the reply.

"What about No. 16? I am working on a Secret Service case, which has brought me up against that house."

"You mean the closed house?"

"Yes."

"Say, now you've got me. We have been trying for a year to find out what's doing in there but we can't."

"You suspect the place of being crooked?"

"We don't know. For many years that house was occupied by an old man, a retired butcher. His name was John Hammond. He was a miserly old fellow and lived there all alone. He owned every house on Calico place, and a lot of other property around here into the bargain. About two years ago he died, leaving instructions in his will that the house should not be disturbed and that Mr. Dalgatty, his housekeeper for many years, should be allowed to remain in it till her death."

"That's the old Scotch woman who lives there now?"

"Yes."

"That sounds straight enough. Where does the crooked part come in?"

"I don't say that there certainly is anything crooked," was the reply, "the point is here: On certain nights people go into that house, men and women. Some come in carriages, some on foot; well-dressed people, mind you. The trouble is, they never come out again."

"Do you mean that they disappear?"

"No; the same people have been seen going in again and again. They have been questioned, but they will give no satisfaction. The house has been watched more than once all night, but nobody but old Mrs. Dalgatty has ever been seen to come out of it, and she mighty seldom. We have forced an entrance twice on the nights these people go in, but we can't find any one nor can we get any satisfaction from the old woman."

"Are any of these people known?"

"I can't say. Our detectives may know the names of some, but if they do I never heard who they were. I'm not long on the beat. I have never been in there myself."

"The name of the man I want to see is McPhinzie, Angus McPhinzie."

But the policeman had never heard of Mr. McPhinzie, so Harry had to give up.

He now returned to Cambridge street, where he found Old King Brady and Alice pacing up and down, as agreed, and rendered his report.

"The mystery fits the case," said the old detective, "but more must be known of this matter than that policeman has told. We will apply to the head of the Boston police detective bureau."

"Do you propose to go there to-night?" asked Alice.

"I think not," was the reply. "Not at this stage of the game, at all events. We owe it to ourselves to exercise every care."

They went to the City Hall and conferred with Boston's head police detective.

"It is as you were told," that officer said. "There is a mystery about that house which we have been unable to fathom. It has been thoroughly searched for secret doors, panels and so on, but without the least success."

"Probably these people pass out by the rear."

"That's the theory, of course. If you can tell us how or where, we shall be deeply grateful to you."

"What does the house back up against?"

"There is a nest of buildings. You see, the streets and alleys are all at such angles that in the rear of that house they come to a point, so to speak; there are four or five houses through which these people could pass. They have all been looked into with no success."

And the chief went on to explain this more in detail.

Old King Brady saw how complicated the situation was.

"Are any of these mysterious visitors known?" he asked.

"Some of them are," was the reply, "and these are people of wealth and standing. For instance, there is Dr. Bullman, a retired dentist, a man worth a million, very eccentric character. Another who has been seen going in there is Mr. Percival Glynn, a rich wholesale dry goods man. Still another is Mrs. Macready, a widow, who is worth millions. She lives on Commonwealth avenue and is noted for her charitable work."

"Know of a man named Angus McPhinzie?"

The chief had never heard of Mr. McPhinzie.

He now began to question Old King Brady as to his interest in the matter, and the old detective, somewhat to Harry's surprise, freely responded.

"Really, I don't believe you run much risk in going there," said the chief. "Personally, I consider these people just a bunch of religious cranks. It is hard to imagine that such men as Glynn and Dr. Bulman would engage in anything like counterfeiting, to say nothing of murder. I can send a couple of men with you, if you wish."

"I won't go to-night, anyway," said Old King Brady. "Now, about another matter. In connection with this case we are looking for a party known as Swami Yubata Yogi, who was arrested on Shawmut avenue and sent to the island about a year ago. What is his record, if you happen to know?"

"I remember the case," replied the chief. "He was a spiritualist medium, gave seances, ghost raising; a woman complained that he had swindled her out of five hundred dollars; pretended to raise the spirit of her husband; the

dear departed wanted to borrow the money for one night; some cock-and-bull story was told. She gave the cash to the Yogi or the spirit, I forget which. Of course, she never saw any more of it, so after waiting a few days she complained to the police. My men worked into a seance, grabbed a materialized spirit, which turned out to be the Yogi. They took him to the station and he landed on the island."

"And you have no idea what has become of him?"

The chief declared that he had not, but he promised to inquire.

And that was as far as the Bradys got that first day, except that a look into the city directory revealed no such name as Angus McPhinzie.

CHAPTER III.

THE REFLECTION OF THE WAX NOSE.

Old King Brady determined to play a waiting game.

The enemy—if the McPhinzie outfit could be so termed—now knew that the Bradys were in Boston.

He felt that if he could keep them guessing for a few days they would probably make a move on their own account.

Meanwhile, something might be heard of the Yogi.

Therefore, our detectives remained quiet for three days.

The only thing they did during this time was to watch No. 16 Calico place, in disguise.

And, sure enough, on the second night, between eight and nine, they saw the mysterious visitors.

There were five of them, three women and a man.

Two of the women, heavily veiled, came together, rang the bell and were instantly admitted.

This pair came on foot, but the third, an elderly woman, came in a carriage.

She was unveiled, and a very stylish person she was, too.

The Bradys put her down for Mrs. Macready.

The men came singly, and there was apparently no attempt at disguise.

The Bradys hung around for three hours after that.

No others came, nor did any one leave the house.

It seemed hardly worth while to watch all night.

Thinking that after this gathering of the clan some move would be decided upon, the detectives stuck close to the hotel all the next day and evening, but no one came near them.

The morning of the fourth day brought a change.

While the Bradys were seated at breakfast in the big dining-room the waiter brought word that somebody was inquiring at the office for the old detective.

"Man or woman?" asked Old King Brady.

"A boy, sah," replied the colored man. "Furriner. He's got a funny red cap on his head."

"Go and see who he is, Harry," said the old detective.

Harry accordingly went to the office, but the boy had gone, leaving behind him a letter addressed to Old King Brady.

"What did he look like?" asked Harry of the clerk.

"He was a dark little fellow, about twelve or thirteen years old, I should say," replied the clerk. "I should imagine he might be a Turk. Anyway, he wore a fez."

"Did he speak English?"

"Why, yes; he spoke well enough. I told him you were

at breakfast. He said he would wait, but when I looked around he had gone and the letter was lying here on the desk."

Harry took the letter back to the table and turned it over to his chief.

It read as follows:

"Mr. Brady:

"You wish to see the Yogi Swami Yubata, I am told. I am also informed that there are three in your firm and that it is your custom to work together.

"If you will stand in front of the Commons to-night at eight, opposite Winter street, you will be addressed by my messenger, who will inform you what you must do in order to see the Yogi."

The letter was unsigned, but the writing was manifestly that of a woman.

"Turns out just as I supposed it would," said Old King Brady. "They are tired of guessing. They have made a move."

"You think it is a move on the part of the enemy?" asked Alice, for so they had come to call the mysterious people of 16 Calico place.

"I so take it to be," was the reply.

"But may it not be the outcome of our advertisement?" asked Harry.

"Maybe so. I wouldn't undertake to say. We are simply groping in the dark, but I shall keep the appointment and see what comes of it."

"If we could only see the inside of that house of mystery," sighed Harry.

They were to see it that very morning.

For the Bradys had scarcely left the breakfast table when the chief of the detectives walked up to them in the hotel office.

"How are you getting along with your case?" he asked.

"Not at all," replied Old King Brady. "I may say we have done nothing."

"I called around to say that never having seen the inside of 16 Calico place myself, I am planning to force an entrance there this morning. Have you done anything in that matter?"

"Nothing."

"Would you like to go along with me?"

"I should, if you don't object to me going in disguise."

"Not at all. Go as you please. You have a great reputation for finding secret panels and so on. It occurred to me that I might as well use you while I have the chance."

"I haven't the least objection. And my partners?"

Alice was not present. The chief expressed himself as willing that Harry should go, but he preferred that Alice should not.

Thus the appointment was made, and at ten o'clock the chief, with two of his men and the two Bradys, turned into Calico place.

The crowd gathered in an instant when they saw their destination.

But two policemen were on hand to keep them back.

They ascended the steps and the chief rang the bell sharply several times.

Presently a window overhead was opened and the old Scotch woman's voice was heard speaking behind the blinds.

"What is wanted?"

"We are officers. We want to come in," replied the chief.

"What, again?"

"Yes, again."

"I shall not let you in."

"Then we shall be obliged to break the door down."

"Wait!"

"Listen, Mrs. Dalgatty, we shall not wait. Unless you instantly open that door we shall break it in."

"You will give me time to get downstairs, I suppose. I can't open the door up here."

"Time will be given you for that, of course, but no more, so mind what you do."

"I'll open the door," replied the woman, and the window was heard to close.

Mrs. Dalgatty opened the door and admitted the detectives.

She was furious!

Such another tirade the Bradys never listened to.

It was her house while she lived.

Mr. Hammond's will had so stated.

It was nobody's business who visited her.

She had a right to entertain her friends, she guessed, and so on and so on.

Such were the sentiments of Mrs. Dalgatty, but the language in which they were delivered would not look well in print.

Little heed was paid to her.

The Bradys and the police detectives went all over the house.

It was comfortably furnished in old-fashioned style, and everything was very neat and clean.

Nothing was discovered to offer any clew to the mystery. Nor could anything be gotten out of Mrs. Dalgatty.

Even in her rage the woman gave nothing away, and after it was over she would not speak at all, but just followed the detectives around in grim silence.

Special attention was paid to the cellar, of course, but nothing came of it.

Old King Brady and Harry made one of their usual examinations for secret doors; more careful and thorough none can be, but all in vain.

In short, there was absolutely nothing discovered to throw any light on the mystery of No. 16 Calico place, so far as any one but Old King Brady knew up to the time when they left the house.

And the old detective?

Even Harry did not suspect that he possessed extra information, and yet his suspicions might have been aroused.

It was after all was over and the chief, standing with his men in the hall, was trying to force Mrs. Dalgatty, partly by threats and partly by persuasion, to answer questions.

Harry, who was watching the operation curiously, suddenly missed the old detective.

"Where did Mr. Brady go?" he exclaimed.

"He went upstairs," replied one of the detectives.

Harry had not seen him go and he wondered why.

He was about to follow him when he saw Old King Brady coming downstairs.

"Anything up?" he demanded.

"No," replied the old detective, quietly. "I just went up to the bathroom to wash my hands. I got them fearfully dirty feeling around the walls in the cellar.

Soon after all left the house with the mystery unexplained.

They parted on Court square, the Bradys starting back for the hotel.

"Harry, I've hit something," said Old King Brady, as soon as they found themselves alone.

"You don't say. Why didn't you give it out?"

"Because I saw no use. That raid wasn't our funeral. This thing came to me by accident and I have made up my mind to suppress it for the time being until we know where we are at with our case."

"But what was it, governor? I am all impatience to know."

"I actually did go upstairs to wash my hands, Harry. While I was doing it I left the bathroom door open. You will remember it stands directly opposite the door of the back room, the large chamber which Mrs. Dalgatty says was Mr. Hammond's."

"Yes, yes. Well?"

"Well, I had just finished with my hands and was about to turn away when I saw reflected in the glass which hangs over the wash basin a man's face and the upper part of his body."

"Well, say! Who could it have been?"

"It was a most peculiar face. I should say that of a man at least sixty. Tall, little eyes, gray hair, choppy gray side whiskers and a wax nose."

"A wax nose? Are you sure?"

"Positive. There can be no mistake."

"What did you do?"

"Got into that room as quick as my old legs would take me, Harry, but I was not quick enough."

"No one there?"

"No one; but there was a pointer to mark the way he went."

"What do you mean?"

"Remember that big wardrobe?"

"Yes, indeed. As big as a house."

"You will remember then that I examined it and sounded the back. The chief and I tried to move it out but it is solid mahogany and weighs a ton. We couldn't budge it."

"Yes, yes, I remember it all very well; but——"

"Patience. I am coming to the point. I am positive that I closed the door of that wardrobe. What is more, it closed hard and could not have opened of itself, nor could Mrs. Dalgatty have opened it, for she was with us all the while."

"And it was open when you got into the room?"

"Wide open. The man with the wax nose went through the back of that wardrobe just as sure as I am telling it to you now."

"If I remember right, there were clothes hanging in it."

"Yes, old clothes belonging to Mr. Hammond, the woman said."

"Did you examine them?"

"No. It came to me that this was my secret and that it had been given to me privately for some good reason, so I determined to keep my mouth shut. Before we quit Boston the chief shall be told, in any case."

"He ought to be. He has been good to us and it is only his due."

"I think so. He has been civil to us, to say the least."

"If we had gone to meet Mr. McPhinzie we should have known what lies behind that wardrobe, governor."

"Surest thing you know, Harry. Not a doubt of it, and to our cost. But here is another point, I think. I have discovered how those people get out of the house."

"How?"

"Did you notice when we were looking out of the back window that one end of that old church which the chief told us was now used as a storage warehouse actually touched the wall of the house?"

"Just at one corner."

"Yes; but there is room enough for a passage through. That church will bear an examination, and it is going to get it in the near future. In the meanwhile all that I have actually seen is the reflection of a wax nose."

CHAPTER IV.

THE BRADYS FIND THE YOGI.

Alice was greatly interested in all the Bradys had to report.

"It is a good thing you went," she remarked, "and there is something coming out of it, I am sure."

"And now for to-night," said Old King Brady. "If we get back into 16 Calico place at least we shall know how to act."

Evening came and found the Bradys on Tremont street, pacing up and down in front of the far-famed Boston Common, directly opposite Winter street.

And this was the time when even Harry had to admit that the old detective's peculiar costume has its advantage.

For nobody can mistake Old King Brady for anybody but Old King Brady when he dresses thus.

They waited more than half an hour beyond the appointed time when suddenly a handsome touring car drew up at the curb on the opposite side of Tremont street.

The sides were up and they could see no one but the chauffeur and a boy, who sat beside him.

But their attention was attracted to the outfit at once, for the boy wore a fez.

"This is ours," said Old King Brady. "High priced, at all events."

The boy jumped down and hurried across the broad street.

Approaching Old King Brady, he folded his arms and made a low bow.

"You are Mr. Old King Brady?" he said.

"I am," replied the old detective.

"The lady waits for you in the automobile."

"For me alone? These are my partners."

"She waits for all three of you."

"Very well. Lead on."

They crossed the street, coming up to the auto on the side towards the walk.

A large, stout woman, most expensively dressed and

wearing a heavy black veil which completely concealed her features sat in the tonneau.

"You are Mr. Brady?" she asked, in a low, well-modulated voice.

"I am, madam."

"And these are your partners, Young King Brady and Miss Montgomery?"

"They are, madam. May I inquire whom I have the honor of addressing?"

"I regret to say that there are certain reasons why I should conceal my identity, Mr. Brady. Still, as it is inconvenient to carry on conversation when one has no name, I must give myself one. You may call me Madam Nemo. Nemo, meaning nobody, you understand."

"I understand. What is your pleasure?"

"You advertised that you wished to see the Yogi Swami Yubata."

"May I ask how you know this?"

"It is quite simple. Your advertisement stated that replies were to be sent to Young's Hotel, but it bore no name. I instituted inquiry and found that you were staying at Young's, so I felt it safe to assume that you were the party who advertised. Am I right?"

"Quite right."

"And you still wish to see the Yogi?"

"I do."

"May I ask with what motive?"

"I prefer not to state my motive."

"Which makes it necessary for me to state it for you. It is in reference to the ruby bug."

"You appear to be well informed."

"Admit that I am right, if we are to pursue this matter further."

"I admit it."

"Very well; then all you have to do is to get in with me and I will take you to my home where the Yogi is at present staying."

"But where is your house?"

"That brings me to rather an unpleasant part of the business. I cannot tell you. What is more, during the last stage of your ride it will be necessary for you to allow my chauffeur to blindfold you."

"But, madam, this is scarcely reasonable."

"I know it must sound very unreasonable, but it has to be."

"You do not even show your face to us. You want us to hide ours. All this is calculated to arouse one's suspicion."

"I know it. You have a right to suspect me. Nevertheless, I give you my word as a woman of honor that I intend no harm. You are as safe in acceding to my request as you would be in walking up Tremont street; of course, barring accidents; unless, for instance, something should happen to the automobile."

"I will confer with my partners," said Old King Brady, and he drew away.

"What do you think, Harry," he whispered, "shall we risk it?"

"I'm inclined to," replied Young King Brady.

"Same here," said Alice. "I want to see the end of this."

"I fail to see how we run any great risk," said the old

detective. "We are two men to one, the boy don't count, of course."

"And I ought to be good for the woman," added Alice.

"But the blindfolding?"

"That's the worst feature of it," said Harry. "If she could only be induced to cut that out."

"I am afraid it is useless to ask it. She does not appear to be a person who can be argued out of anything."

"That's right, judging from her talk."

"So we must either accept or reject her proposal."

"Let's go," said Harry, who is ever ready to take chances.

"I'll keep a sharp lookout, for Alice's sake."

Harry and Alice are practically engaged, we may remark.

It is probable that the near future will see them man and wife.

Old King Brady returned to the automobile.

"We will go with you, madam," he said, "but Miss Montgomery has serious objections to the blindfolding. Would it not be possible to cut that out?"

"No," replied the woman, decidedly. "I do not care to have you know where you are going. It is either that or nothing, Mr. Brady. Believe me when I say that unless you yield to my wishes you will never find the Yogi Swami Yubata."

"Well, then, we will go."

"It is well," said Madam Nemo. "Miss Montgomery and the young man can crowd in here with me. You can ride with the chauffeur; the boy, on the outrigger seat."

The Bradys and Alice thus disposed themselves and the ride began.

From the moment they started no word was spoken.

Alice, indeed, tried to draw the veiled woman out, but she answered only in monosyllables.

Seeing that it was useless to try to make her talk, Alice soon gave it up.

As for the chauffeur, Old King Brady found him equally taciturn.

They went out Brookline way, but passed through that richest of all American towns and struck into the city of Newton.

This place is worthy of a moment's description.

It covers a wide space and consists of many small towns recently incorporated under this name. It is one succession of beautiful villas and comfortable cottages.

Poverty and squalor are all but unknown.

On and still on the auto flew, coming into a country less thickly settled, though there was scarcely a break between the villas, which became even more stately and expensive.

This was the Wellesly district.

Thus far, Old King Brady had been able to follow their route.

But Madam Nemo was now prepared to head him off.

The auto suddenly turned down a country lane where there were no houses and stopped in the midst of a piece of woods.

"Now, then, Mr. Brady," said the veiled woman, "the time has come when you must be blindfolded. If you will kindly step out the chauffeur will attend to it."

Having gone thus far, the old detective saw nothing for it but to submit.

A large, new silk handkerchief was accordingly tied over his eyes and he was helped back into the automobile.

Harry's turn came next.

Madam Nemo blindfolded Alice herself.

All being ready, the auto again started, and this time they went like the wind.

For fully twenty minutes the ride continued.

The old detective felt satisfied that they were taking the back track from the turns they made, and that they had returned to the Newtons.

At last there came a slowing down, and soon they stopped after the machine had made a sharp turn.

"Off with the handkerchiefs," said Madam Nemo. "No more secrecy now."

The blinds were quickly removed and the Bradys and Alice saw that they had stopped before a large old Colonial house, painted white, and fairly well preserved, as nearly as they could make out in the dim light.

The front door stood open and just beyond the threshold was an elderly man holding a lantern.

He was evidently English and equally evident was it that he was a servant.

The chauffeur jumped out, helping Madam Nemo to alight, and Harry assisted Alice.

"You will follow me," said Madam Nemo.

Meanwhile, the boy who looked to the Bradys to be an Oriental of some sort had preceded them into the house.

They passed into a plainly furnished parlor, where everything was quite in the usual New England style.

"Be seated," said Madam Nemo. "I will wait on the Yogi and see how soon he can receive you."

She did not remove her veil, although the Bradys had been in hopes that she would do so.

Now was the time to press for one essential point the old detective thought.

"Madam," he said, "there is one thing I must impress upon you. It will be necessary for me to see this man alone."

"I understand that perfectly, and you shall see him alone," was the reply.

She then swept from the room with the grace of a duchess.

"That is a highly educated woman and one who has been accustomed to move in the highest society," Old King Brady remarked.

"Undoubtedly," replied Alice.

"You didn't get much out of her, did you?"

"Nothing at all."

"The machine made such a noise that I could not hear whether you were talking or not."

"She wouldn't talk."

"Any idea where we are?" whispered Harry.

"Somewhere within the limits of the city of Newton, undoubtedly," replied the old detective.

"That don't tell us much. Newton is a big place."

"Not only that, but it is spread over a tremendous amount of ground. It would be very difficult to locate this place."

"I've got the number of the auto all right."

"Yes, but how do we know that it is not a false one, prepared for the occasion. It is impossible to tell."

"Well, that's so. What do you think of the boy?"

"Do you mean how do I place him as to nationality?"

"Yes."

"Well, I should say that he probably comes from somewhere in the northern part of India."

"And is a Mohammedan?"

"Yes, if the fez is any guide. Probably that is what he is."

"Hark!" said Alice. "I hear somebody coming."

It proved to be Madam Nemo herself.

She opened the door, her face being still veiled, and said:

"Now the Yogi will receive you, but do not address him until he speaks to you. He has just come out of a trance. It is always best to leave him alone on such occasions."

"Is he subject to trances?" asked Harry.

"It is his business," replied Madam Nemo, almost sternly. "You don't believe in such things. I do."

They arose and followed her up a flight of stairs, into a front chamber, which was furnished in true Oriental style.

There were no chairs here, nor bed.

In the middle of the floor a Persian rug was spread, which the Bradys recognized as being exceedingly valuable.

In one corner were many cushions.

Near the middle of the rug was a man of rather small build, dressed in Hindoo style, with an enormous white turban on his head.

He was seated crosslegged on a large cushion, with his arms folded.

Madam Nemo bowed low.

"These are the detectives, Swami," she said. "I have brought them to you according to your desire."

Then, with another profound bow, in making which she bent nearly double, she withdrew and closed the door.

The Bradys had found the Yogi Swami Yubata at last.

CHAPTER V.

THE BRADYS ARE INTRODUCED TO "JIMMIE."

When Madam Nemo addressed the Yogi he made her no answer, nor did he even raise his eyes from the Persian rug upon which they were fixed.

It was the same in regard to the Bradys.

He paid absolutely no attention to them.

Thus the situation became embarrassing as the moments passed, and this state of things continued, more especially as there was not even a chair for Alice to sit on.

But the Bradys, heeding what Madam Nemo had said, remained dumb.

Fully fifteen minutes passed before this changed.

At last the Hindoo, heaving a deep sigh, raised his head and fixed his eyes upon the detectives.

They thought it was going to end then, but it did not.

He kept staring at them until the strain became almost unendurable.

Harry expected to see his chief explode every instant, but Old King Brady held himself in tight.

He had no doubt that this was really the man they sought, nor did he doubt now that Madam Nemo was acting in good faith, whatever her motive might be.

At last the Yogi spoke.

Like most educated Hindoos, and this man's face seemed to indicate that he was one, his English was perfect.

"You are Old King Brady, the detective?" he asked, in a deep voice.

"I am," was the reply.

"You advertised for me?"

"I did."

"Why?"

"I am acting under the instruction of Mr. Patrick Ferguson, of Calcutta."

"I do not know the man. What is his business? What is yours?"

"He is a lawyer. I am a Secret Service detective. These are my partners. We are working on a case concerning which we really know very little. It is desired to recover a certain brooch made in the shape of a bug or beetle and studded with rubies, which has been stolen from some client of Mr. Ferguson. I am instructed to present you with this ring and to ask your help to find this ruby bug. You are to keep the ring."

Thus saying, Old King Brady produced the ring.

But instead of receiving it the Yogi waved him back.

"Wait!" he cried, in a tone of awe. "It is my sacred ring of the elephant god Ganessa, the god of my fathers for many generations. I must put myself in position to receive it."

He bent low until his face touched the carpet.

Then raising his head, without in the least disturbing the position of his body, he fixed his eyes on Old King Brady and extended his hand, saying:

"Give me the ring."

The old detective presented it.

The Yogi kissed it, pressed it for a moment to his forehead, then clutching it in his hand he seemed to lose consciousness.

His eyes closed, he rolled over on his back and lay as one dead.

"He's in one of his trances, I suppose," said Harry.

"Evidently," replied the old detective.

Harry gave a contemptuous sniff.

"Hush!" said Old King Brady, sternly, and his partner checked himself in whatever he might have said.

For a few minutes the Yogi lay thus, and then a strange voice spoke.

It seemed to come from the Hindoo, but his lips did not move.

The voice, moreover, was that of a child.

And we may as well add right here that the Bradys always believed that the boy acted as a confederate to the Yogi. Probably there were others also who played their part in the strange action which was to follow. But the truth of this they never learned.

"Mr. Old King Brady," said the voice, "we are going to help you find that ruby bug, but you must be good and do everything you are told."

Of course, Old King Brady knew that this voice was supposed to be that of a "spirit," speaking through the "entranced" Hindoo.

Equally, of course, he attached no weight to it.

But it was necessary to humor the Yogi, so he replied:

"All right. Who are you?"

"I am Jimmie," said the voice.

"All right, Jimmie."

"You don't believe it."

"Never mind about that. I am ready to do what you tell me, Jimmie."

"All right, Mr. Detective. Say, we are going to find that bug."

"It is what we want."

"Much obliged to you for bringing that ring to my Yogi. It is just what he wanted."

"Don't thank me, thank Mr. Ferguson."

"I don't know Mr. Ferguson. Say!"

"Well, Jimmie?"

"What you want to do now, first off, is to go downstairs and get your supper. See?"

"We have had our supper, Jimmie."

"That makes no difference. Mrs. Mac——. There! I almost spoke her name, and she told me I mustn't. I near forgot. You call her Madam Nemo. That's good enough. Well, say, she will make you eat supper. Do it to oblige her. It will make her feel good. She's a good woman, Mr. Detective."

"All right, Jimmie, all right."

"Well, I'm going now. So long! See you later. Don't you touch my Yogi. You leave him just as he is."

And that was all.

Old King Brady arose and opened the door, motioning to Harry to follow him, which they did, closing the door.

"What rubbish!" breathed Young King Brady. "Just as though we could be fooled with any such cheap skate business."

"Hush! hush!" whispered the old detective. "None of that now or we shall spoil everything."

He led the way down into the lower hall.

Madam Nemo, who had removed her wraps, sat there awaiting them.

She had removed her veil, too, but in its place she had put on a white silk half mask, which entirely concealed the upper part of her face.

"Jimmie told us to get out, madam," said Old King Brady, "so here we are."

"So you have been talking to Jimmie," replied the lady, with a light laugh. "Did he send any instructions to me?"

"None."

"They will come later. Meanwhile, if you will do me the honor, we will sit down to supper together. It is all ready to be served."

"We have had our supper, but, as Jimmie says, we must have another. I suppose we must obey."

"It will be best to obey Jimmie, if we want to make any headway in this business of the ruby bug," replied Madam Nemo, quite seriously. "But tell me, Mr. Brady, do you believe in this sort of business?"

"Frankly, madam, I do not."

"I suppose not. But wait. We shall convert you yet."

"I am open to proof, I trust."

"That is the way to look at it," said the lady, and, arising, she rang a bell.

The serving man appeared.

"Thomas, we are ready for supper," said Madam Nemo.

"Very good, ma'am. Supper is all ready," was the reply.

"Serve it and summon us."

Thomas did not keep them waiting long.

The Bradys were ushered into a comfortable dining-room where a model supper was served by the butler.

Having already eaten supper, the Bradys and Alice were able to partake but sparingly.

Madam Nemo made an effort to be sociable. She inquired about the detectives' work, generally, and all three responding, conversation was maintained for awhile, but it soon lagged.

Clearly, the lady had no intention of telling anything about herself.

After supper they retired to the old-fashioned parlor, where they waited in painful embarrassment for some time.

Madam Nemo did her best to keep up the conversation.

The Bradys scarcely responded, for the old detective thought that it was best to leave the woman to her own reflections and had so told his partners by secret sign.

Suddenly the lady sprang to her feet.

"Mercy!" she cried, "I can stand this no longer. It is worse than a Quaker meeting. Do you mind if I play and sing, Mr. Brady?"

"Certainly not. I shall be delighted to listen," was the reply.

She opened the piano and, seating herself, sang several operatic airs and ballads, accompanying herself on the instrument.

Her voice was superb; it had evidently been highly cultivated.

It was indeed a treat to listen.

She was still at it when there came a knock on the door.

Madam Nemo stopped instantly.

"Come in, Muley," she called.

The door opened and the boy appeared, still wearing his fez.

"Jimmie says he is all ready, madam," he said, with a low bow.

"Oh, all right. We will come up," replied the lady.

Turning to Old King Brady she added:

"The Yogi is about to entertain us with a little seance. You will not object to joining me, I suppose? It was for this I brought you out here."

"Certainly not," said the old detective. "We are in your hands."

They ascended to the room above, Muley leading the way and opening the door for them.

Here conditions had changed.

A small lamp shielded by a piece of orange-colored tissue paper burned in one corner on a table.

Across another corner black curtains had been drawn, forming such a "cabinet" as cheap spiritualist mediums use.

In front of this, but at some distance back, four chairs had been placed.

Close to the cabinet was a low stool, upon which Muley seated himself.

And now from behind the curtain the voice "Jimmie" spoke.

"Good evening, Mrs. Mac," he called, and then with a chuckling laugh, added:

"There I go again. Another break. But don't be mad. I'm the worst hand in the world to keep a secret."

"It's real mean of you, Jimmie," replied the lady, "but as I am in your hands I can't help myself. You may as well go on calling me Mrs. Mac, now."

"She's Mrs. Macready, of course," thought Old King Brady. Harry and Alice had already decided that same way.

"Good evening, Mr. Big Detective!" Jimmie went on. "Good evening, Mr. Little Detective! Good evening, Miss She Detective! Good evening, everybody!"

All this seemed so comical that no one could help laughing.

"I don't think you are a bit complimentary, Jimmie," said Alice.

"I know it," replied the voice, "but that's only my fun, and I don't want to hurt your feelings. I'll call you Miss Alice after this. But sit down, everybody, and keep quiet. I can't tell you about that bug. I don't know anything about bugs, but somebody is coming, bye-and-bye, who does, and he will tell you all you want to know. Meanwhile, let's have a little fun. I want to show you what me and my Yogi can do."

"You better get your Yogi to teach you good grammar, Jimmie," observed Mrs. Mac.

"That's what the big cop said who arrested my Yogi and had him sent to the island," chattered Jimmie. "Huh! I can talk as good English as he can, anyway."

"Never mind about that now, Jimmie," said Mrs. Mac. "That was long ago."

"Oh, I know!" cried the voice. "The Bradys and Miss Alice know, too. But what's the odds? It all worked out to the good. You know as well as I do, Mrs. Mac, that if it had never happened my Yogi would never have got acquainted with you and we shouldn't be here now. But that's all. Now I'm done for I must get down to business. But first you must come and see my Yogi, you detectives! You mustn't touch him, mind. Just look. Come now."

Old King Brady arose and pulled the curtain aside.

There seated, cross-legged, upon a cushion thrown down on the floor was the Yogi.

His arms were folded across his breast; his head was bowed; he seemed to be in a deep sleep.

"He seems to be asleep, Jimmie," Old King Brady observed.

There was no response.

"Jimmie won't speak when you have the curtain open," remarked Mrs. Mac.

"Can't!" cried the voice, after Old King Brady had drawn the curtain into place.

"There are some things I can do and some I can't," he added. "It is impossible for me to do but one thing at a time."

While this was being said, Harry closely observed Muley and plainly saw the boy's lips moving.

"He's just a clever ventriloquist," thought Young King Brady, and so it probably was, and yet it is a fact that the voice of "Jimmie" bore no resemblance whatever to Muley's manner of speaking.

"Now sit down and watch, you detectives," cried Jimmie, "for the fun is about to begin."

CHAPTER VI.

THAT WONDERFUL "SEANCE."

It is not without much hesitation that we have decided to work up Old King Brady's notes for this chapter.

This, lest it should be thought that we were drawing on our own imagination and trying to force things incredible upon our readers.

But we can only say that nothing is here described that has not been already described by many travelers in India, as indeed have tricks even far more wonderful.

Indeed, there seems to be no limit to the skill of a well-trained faker.

In India, these tricks are usually performed in the open air, which makes them all the more difficult.

In Boston, that city of many queer religious sects, where occultism, so called, runs rampant, it is not strange that the Yogi Swami Yubata should choose to do his tricks behind the shelter of a "cabinet" and in a darkened room.

Doubtless, the Yogi congratulated himself upon finding his Bostonian admirers "dead easy."

But be all this as it may, certain is it that the unbelieving Bradys were not able to detect fraud which probably would have been "dead easy" for them had they been afforded sufficient light.

But to resume with "Jimmie's" seance.

The first thing which happened involved the boy Muley. It began with a woman's voice being heard up at the ceiling, near the middle of the room.

"Muley, come here!" the voice seemed to call down. "Muley, I want you. Come here! Come here!"

The voice ceased and "Jimmie" said:

"Let no one move or speak."

Mrs. Mac turned suddenly upon the detectives and said:

"I trust, gentlemen, that I am making no mistake in relying upon your honor not to interfere with these proceedings in any way?"

"We shall not interfere, madam," replied Old King Brady, quietly. "You may rely upon us."

"Of course," said Jimmie, "Mr. Big Brady is a good man. I know who I can trust. Now look!"

As the voice spoke the stool upon which Muley sat began to slowly rise in the air, carrying the boy with it until it got up about as high as Old King Brady's head.

There was no support that the Bradys could see, but they felt sure that invisible wires supported it.

It hovered there for a few seconds and then slowly ascended to the ceiling.

Muley did not seem in the least afraid.

He sat there with his arms folded and appeared rather to enjoy it.

For a few more seconds it remained there and then suddenly the stool, still carrying its burden, shot with lightning rapidity over the open top of the cabinet and hovered there.

At the same instant a large black hand and arm rose from above the curtain, seized the stool and turned it upside down.

Muley dove into the cabinet, while the stool came flying over the curtain and dropped at Old King Brady's feet.

Muley jumped out from behind the curtain, as lively as ever.

Jimmie called:

"Now, Mr. Brady, come in and find that hand! Just you alone. You can use your flashlight if you want to. Look all around, only don't touch my Yogi; and, remember that he is no coon."

It was a fact that Swami Yubata was the lightest skinned Hindoo Old King Brady had ever seen.

The old detective accepted the invitation, but nothing came of it.

The Yogi sat there precisely as before.

Old King Brady carefully examined the interior of the cabinet with his flashlight, but not a trace of the huge black hand could he discover.

Doubtless it was concealed beneath the Yogi's flowing dress, which was in the native Hindoo style.

And Old King Brady practically said as much when he came out, for, addressing "Jimmie," he remarked that he did not care to make any further examinations in the cabinet unless he could examine the Yogi's clothes.

"Oh, is that so?" cried the voice, insolently. "Well, you can't do it and that's all here is about it. See?"

There was silence for a moment and then something happened.

Now the Yogi himself came floating out of the open top of the cabinet, probably on wires.

He remained in precisely the same position.

Crossed legs, folded arms and his turbaned head dropped upon his breast.

He moved on to the exact position to which the boy had attained and his head seemed to bump against the ceiling.

Then back he went, until while hovering over the top of the cabinet, out popped that same huge black hand—it was twice as big as any hand the Bradys had ever seen, and pulled him down behind the curtain.

"There now, Mr. Big Detective," cried Jimmie, "did my Yogi have that hand up his sleeve?"

"You have me there," replied Old King Brady. "All the same, Jimmie, I should like to see you lift me up."

"I can do it," was the retort.

"Do it, then."

"Mebbe I will before we get through."

But he didn't, and Old King Brady was not converted, despite the mystery of the hand.

Now many other remarkable things occurred at Mrs. Mac's seance that night.

These, however, we do not propose to give, for we feel that we have sufficiently taxed the credulity and the patience of our readers.

We shall, therefore, simply add that after all was over a tall figure suddenly appeared at the cabinet, parting the curtains with both hands.

It was a dark-skinned man, clothed in gorgeous Oriental robes, which certainly seemed to be all ablaze with jewels, as was the immense turban which he wore.

He was a man much taller and much larger every way than the Yogi, who could not be seen behind him.

His eyes appeared to be immense and were set very wide apart.

Mrs. Mac at once arose and went forward.

The figure laid a jeweled hand on her head and spoke in a whisper.

She bowed low before him and retreated to her seat.

Then the man spoke in a deep voice, exactly resembling that of the Yogi, saying:

"Mr. Brady, I am here to give you a clew to the whereabouts of the ruby bug. You will find it in the possession of the shadow with the wax nose."

Having said this, the gorgeous figure seemed to melt away, although the curtains did not close till after he had fully disappeared.

The last the Bradys saw was a thin line of white, which looked almost like a cloud.

This vanished and the curtains closed.

And this was all.

The Yogi was now heard coughing violently inside the cabinet.

Muley went for a glass of water from a pitcher which stood on a table.

He threw aside the curtain.

The Yogi had unfolded his arms and his head was up.

He seized the glass with an unsteady hand and drank, greedily.

"It is all over," said Mrs. Mac.

"Is it?" replied the old detective.

"Yes. What do you think of it?"

"Very clever. I don't know that I ever saw anything of the kind better done."

The woman gave a contemptuous sniff and said no more.

And now the Yogi spoke.

"Did you get what you wanted, Mr. Brady?" he asked.

"I don't know that I exactly understand your question," replied Old King Brady, anxious to draw the man out.

"Oh, I think you do," was the reply.

"Kindly be more definite."

"Your letter of instruction from Calcutta ordered you to come to me and also stated that I would give you a clew to the whereabouts of the ruby bug. Is it not so?"

"It is."

"Have I done so?"

"Something was said; I cannot say whether it was a clew or not."

"What was it?"

"If you said it you surely ought to know what it was."

"You shall not be kept in ignorance, Swami," cried Mrs. Mac. "It is useless to fence with unbelievers. What the Begum said was that the bug is in the possession of the shadow with the wax nose. Doubtless, Old King Brady knows what that means."

The Yogi gave a violent start and immediately came out of the cabinet.

"And was that said? Was that said?" he demanded.

"It was," admitted the old detective.

"And you know what it refers to?"

"I cannot deny that it has a reference to a matter which I understand."

"What matter? Tell it!"

"Pardon me, my friend, but I shall not tell it."

"And such is your gratitude!" cried Mrs. Mac. "After all the trouble I have been at, but it is only what might have been expected of your kind."

She arose and angrily swept out of the room.

Old King Brady expected that the Yogi would pursue the subject, but he did not.

Instead, he told Muley to light a large lamp which stood on the table, and this was done.

The Bradys stood around, embarrassed.

The Yogi meanwhile took down the curtain, folded it up and flung it on a sofa.

Then he pulled the cushion forward, seated himself on it in his usual fashion and lighted a cigarette.

"I suppose we are all through here," remarked Harry.

"How is it?" Old King Brady asked the Hindoo.

"I am quite through with you," was the sour reply.

"It seems to me that it is up to you to explain what was meant by that allusion to the shadow with the wax nose," said Old King Brady, who was determined to make no mention of 16 Calico place in any event.

"Nothing to say," snarled the Yogi.

"But, my friend——"

"Nothing to say, I tell you."

"My letter of instruction mentions that the ruby bug was formerly the property of the Begum of Bhadapota. Our friend, Mrs. Mac, alluded to that last figure which appeared as the Begum. Do I understand that you pretend to have raised the spook of the original owner of the ruby bug?"

"Nothing to say. I raise no spooks. I don't know what you mean!" snarled the Yogi, so fiercely that Old King Brady concluded that, on Alice's account, it would be best to beat a retreat.

"Come, we will go," he said, and they went down into the parlor.

Probably Mrs. Mac heard them on the stairs, for she immediately joined them, dressed as they had first seen her, even to the veil.

"Well, Mr. Brady," she asked, "are you prepared to explain the meaning of what was said?"

"I am not, madam," replied the old detective. "I cannot consent to give away my professional secrets to any one."

"Very well. I shall not ask you again. I presume, however, as a man of honor, you are prepared to fulfill the contract you made with me, without putting me to unnecessary trouble?"

"You refer to what?"

"To leaving this house blindfolded as you came."

"Yes, I shall live up to my bargain."

"Very well. The automobile is ready. I shall accompany you to a certain railroad station and there leave you."

They passed out by the big front door and entered the automobile after the blindfolding had been done.

Like lightning they were whirled along the country roads for many miles.

Finally they stopped and the handkerchiefs were removed.

On they went, until they finally turned up at the Brighton station, which is within the limits of the city of Boston.

"There will be a train in ten minutes," said Mrs. Mac, adding:

"And now, Mr. Brady, I make one final appeal to you. Will you take me into your full confidence in this case?"

This time Old King Brady changed his tactics.

"Yes, madam, I will," he replied, "providing you will show me your face and tell me your name and what interest you have in this matter."

"I cannot do it."

"Then I cannot comply with your request."

"As you will," replied the veiled woman, coldly. "But believe me, you will regret this."

She gave a signal to her chauffeur and was whirled away.

CHAPTER VII.

M'PHINZIE.

Needless to say the clever work of the Hindoo juggler called forth a lot of discussion between the three members of the Brady Detective Bureau.

But it was only a discussion as to how the Yogi did it, for that he actually manipulated the whole affair himself they accepted without question.

Harry favored the theory of confederates.

Old King Brady, dwelling on the darkness of the room, leaned towards the idea of concealed wires for the lifting, or "levitation," as believers call it, and a lay figure with the Yogi inside to operate it for the "Begum."

But they could arrive at no satisfactory conclusion, for against all these theories was the fact that these wonders had been performed in a private dwelling, presumably the property of a person of wealth and station, who certainly seemed to believe in it all.

The old detective did not feel so sure that the veiled woman was the rich Mrs. Macready, and he told Alice next morning that it must be her work to ascertain this fact.

As for himself and Harry, they were to hark back to 16 Calico place.

This was not now to be avoided, danger or no danger.

For the second advices in this queer case from Calcutta had thrown them back upon the first.

But for the backing of the United States Secret Service Bureau, it would be hard to determine which was genuine.

"We'll go to the tax office first and ascertain who owns that old church," said the elder detective. "After that I want to get a look at old John Hammond's will, which can be easily had at the Recorder's office."

They attended to both.

The old church—it had long been abandoned as a house of worship—proved to belong to the Hammond estate.

As for the will, it at once blocked the Bradys' road and made it appear that the dead butcher might himself have been mixed up with some odd religious cult.

After ordering the distribution of half the property among his legal heirs, it devised the remainder to "my friend, Percival Glynn, in trust for the Brotherhood of Brahma."

The trust had not yet been vacated, according to the records.

What the "Brotherhood of Brahma" could be was a matter of guesswork, of course, but it seemed probable that the name could only refer to some Hindoo religious cult.

As Old King Brady well knew, there are many such in Boston.

"We must go to work," observed the old detective. "No use, of course, to call on this man Glynn. We want to

get into the church, if we can, and doubtless we can do it, but that will have to be postponed until after dark."

"What about trying to smoke out Angus McPhinzie," suggested Harry. "He may prove to be your man with the wax nose."

"I had thought of that. Suppose we try it. We will go to the house together and see what Mrs. Dalgatty has to say for herself to-day."

They went.

No disguising this time.

Old King Brady was determined to use his "trade-mark clothes," as Harry styles them, for all they were worth.

It took three rings to bring Mrs. Dalgatty to the door. Her sharp, comely features lighted up when she looked at her visitors.

"Come!" she exclaimed. "You have got sensible at last, young man; you have brought Old King Brady."

"Yes, ma'am, this is me," said the old detective. "I've been a long time coming, but now I am here. Tell me when I can see Mr. McPhinzie?"

"Well, I guess you can see him most any time now," was the reply. "If you will come in and wait I was ascertain."

"Is he here in the house?"

"Now don't you go asking me questions," retorted Mrs. Dalgatty, "for I am not going to answer one single one. You don't have to come in, either; you can stand on the steps or come again in fifteen or twenty minutes, whichever suits you best."

"We will come in and wait," replied the old detective.

"There's one thing I ought to say to you if you are going to do that," said Mrs. Dalgatty.

"And what is it?"

"I shall have to lock you in the parlor."

"Why so?"

"Those are my orders."

"Orders from who?"

"No matter."

Old King Brady hesitated.

But he had examined the parlor and felt satisfied that there was no secret panel, movable floor or anything of that sort connected with the room, so he consented.

There were two doors to the parlor.

One leading into a room behind had been bolted on the other side when Old King Brady came with the raiders and was so now.

The other led out into the hall, and this door Mrs. Dalgatty locked. They could hear her take out the key and go away. She had also been particular to bolt the front door and put up the chain.

"Well," questioned Harry, looking around at the old-fashioned furnishings, "what are we up against now, do you suppose?"

"Up against a wait, and we must improve every second of it," replied the old detective.

He produced his skeleton keys and readily handled the lock.

"Quick! To the wardrobe!" he breathed, "and don't make a particle of noise.

They tiptoed upstairs.

Everything remained as they had seen it before.

If ever the Bradys did quick work it was then.

And they met with their reward.

The back of the wardrobe opened inward, like a door. It was Harry who found the secret spring.

Behind was a passage leading towards the rear of the building.

It was so narrow that to pass through it one had to go sideways.

Old King Brady made the attempt, while Harry stood guard.

He was back in no time.

"Ends at a door on the right," he announced. "Undoubtedly this leads into the old church. It was locked, and I did not attempt to open it."

"We better get back, I suppose."

"I think so. We don't want to be caught spying at this stage of the game."

They hurried downstairs and locked themselves in the parlor.

It was well that they did so, for within two minutes Mrs. Dalgatty was heard at the door.

She came in, looking a shade disappointed, the Bradys thought.

"He will see you if you will call on him," she said.

"Where?" demanded the old detective.

Mrs. Dalgatty mentioned one of the many narrow alleys in the neighborhood, the name of which we don't care to give.

Enough to say it was immediately in the rear of Calico place as much as anything could be, in the rear, where every alley runs at angles.

"The name is not on the sign," Mrs. Dalgatty went on to say. "That's Angus, but you will find Mr. McPhinzie there."

The Bradys then withdrew, looked up this alley and found Mr. McPhinzie's sign.

It was a quaint little shop where watches and clocks were repaired.

There were trays containing old coins in the window, sea shells, minerals, stuffed birds and the like were there, too.

A regular old curiosity shop, in fact, and the name over the door, painted on a huge wooden watch, was "Angus."

The Bradys entered.

The danger element was not very apparent here.

Behind the counter stood a tall, spare man of fully seventy years, with sharp features and iron-gray hair, evidently a Scotchman.

There was nobody else in the store.

Evidently he had seen them coming for he eyed them with no surprise.

"I am Old King Brady, and I want to see Mr. Angus McPhinzie," the old detective said.

"I am Angus McPhinzie."

The reply was given with the strongest sort of a Scotch accent, which we shall not attempt to reproduce.

"You know our business?" asked the old detective.

"Is this young man your partner?" demanded the curiosity dealer.

"He is."

"Yes, I know your business. You have been in Boston several days. Why didn't you come to me before, according

to your instructions from Mr. Patrick Ferguson, of Calcutta?"

"Mr. McPhinzie, it may be well enough for you to know that we are not working for Mr. Ferguson, but for the United States Secret Service Bureau. We are obliged to do as we are told."

The Scotchman looked surprised.

"What has the Secret Service Bureau got to with the case of the ruby bug?" he asked.

"I will be perfectly frank with you. That we do not even know."

"Strange."

"You do not understand Secret Service methods or you would not say so. It is a thing which frequently occurs. But to get to business. According to the letter you were to give us a starting clew to work on."

"Yes; but I don't know about that. You have already begun work. I don't know if I want to give you the clew or not. What have you done so far?"

"I may say nothing. What little has been done can be crossed out. We are ready to begin again."

"Have you any idea what this ruby bug looks like?"

"It has been described to us by Mr. Ferguson."

"Would you like to see a photograph of it?"

"Very much. Have you such a thing?"

"I have."

"I shall be pleased to see it."

Mr. McPhinzie turned to an old-fashioned coin cabinet and pulled out a drawer from which he took an unmounted snapshot print.

But it did little for the Bradys save to confirm the impression of the bug already in their minds.

"That picture came to me from Calcutta," said the curiosity dealer. "There is your brooch. It is up to you to find it."

That McPhinzie was likely to prove a long-drawn-out proposition seemed plain.

Old King Brady determined to bring matters to a head.

"We have exhausted every effort to find this rub bug," he said. "If you can't help us I propose to throw the case up."

"I can help you if you will trust me," replied McPhinzie, slowly.

"Kindly explain yourself, sir, and do it as quick as possible. If we are not going to work on the case we are anxious to catch a train for New York."

"Patience, man! I am one who moves slowly. You must let me take my time. Besides that there are others to be consulted. I cannot see them until to-night. If you will call here to-morrow evening at eight o'clock I will probably be able to give you a clew which, if it is followed up properly, will lead you to success."

Harry expected that his chief would argue the matter further, but Old King Brady merely said:

"Very well, Mr. McPhinzie, I shall call at the appointed time," and out he went.

They walked through to Cambridge street before Old King Brady spoke.

"A foxy old guy," he said, then. "Ah! I wish, my dear boy, I only knew the true inwardness of this queer business. Then I should know how to act, but as it is I can simply grope in the dark."

"Are you going to keep that appointment?"

"That depends. I am not going to remain idle till the times comes. To-night we must move on the Calico place outfit on our own account. Upon that I have determined. If nothing comes of it then we keep the appointment. What we are gunning for now is the man with the wax nose."

"Then you are banking on the Yogi?"

"I am following instructions, Harry. We were ordered to bank on the Yogi."

"That's so, too. You mean to move on the old church to-night?"

"Listen! Mrs. Dalgatty never went out on the street; of that I am sure. Angus' shop is immediately in the rear of the Calico place house. It is my belief that there is some secret passage leading to it which the woman used. I am going to try to force an entrance to the shap. Its situation is retired. I noticed that there was an alley gate alongside of it; by means of that we can attack it in the rear. Any way, it is worth the try."

"I entirely agree with you, however. It will be a relief to be doing something definite. I am heartily tired of the comparative inaction which seems to have been necessary in this case."

The Bradys returned to Young's.

Getting Washington on the wire, Old King Brady told the chief of the events of the preceding night as far as he cared to go, thereby fulfilling his instructions.

He also mentioned his interview with McPhinzie.

"Just how dangerous is it supposed to be to meddle with this bunch?" he asked.

"I know no more than you do, Mr. Brady," came the answer. "To be frank, if the case is a mystery to you it is the same to me. I am acting under instructions from a high government official. Privately, I will say that I believe the British Ambassador to be behind the case, but this I do not actually know."

And as this seemed to be all he was likely to get, Old King Brady gave it up and had to resign himself to remain groping in the dark.

The afternoon passed and Alice did not show up.

The Bradys were beginning to fret about her when a messenger boy brought them a note which read as follows:

"I have struck a clew which I intend to follow up. It leads to 16 Calico place. I know you will not approve of me taking this risk, but I am determined to do it. I will only add that we were wrong in supposing that our Mrs. Mac is Mrs. Macready, of Commonwealth avenue. This is certainly not so. Do not worry about me. My safety is guaranteed by a person whom I feel I can safely trust. Expect to see me first thing in the morning. Meanwhile, if you will take my advice you and Harry will cut out Calico place till you see me."

Old King Brady was distinctly vexed.

"She has no right to do it!" he exclaimed. "Really, Alice must be restrained. This is not the first time she has exceeded her instructions, but it must be the last."

"Probably she feels that she is justified," said Harry, in a troubled tone, "but I agree with you, governor. She is wrong to do it. I don't know how you feel, but I say

this is all the more reason why we should not cut out Calico place."

"Decidedly," replied the old detective. And after that he declined to discuss the matter. It was easy to see that he was very much vexed.

The day passed and evening came.

Right away after supper the Bradys strolled down to the old watch repairer's place.

The store was still open.

The Scotchman could be seen inside, showing old coins to a customer.

This was at seven o'clock.

At eight the Bradys looked down the alley again, taking in the store from the opposite side.

The old man was still there. There were also three well-dressed men outside the counter to whom he was talking in an animated fashion.

Once more they wandered away.

"We'll make it nine," said Old King Brady.

"What about half-past eight?" suggested Harry.

But the old detective stuck to his guess and at nine o'clock they were back again.

And now it looked as if their time had come.

For the store was dark, save one gasjet turned down low, which the curiosity dealer evidently was in the habit of keeping burning all night.

The detectives crossed the street and tried the door, finding it locked.

The door at the end of the store leading into what were probably McPhinzie's living-rooms was shut, but as there was no light to be seen under the threshold the probability seemed strong that unless the old man had gone to bed he was not in there.

"Come, Harry," said Old King Brady, looking around and seeing that they were unobserved, "now is our time. It is up to us."

And the detectives moved on the alley gate.

CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. MACREADY.

The home of Mrs. Macready was one of the most elegant mansions on Commonwealth avenue.

This broad street cannot exactly be termed the Fifth Avenue of Boston, yet it is the abode of many of the richest people in the city.

But Boston has many such streets, the very wealthy do not confine themselves to any particular one, as is the case in New York.

How to get at this wealthy widow was a problem which Alice found herself quite unable to solve.

She first put the question to Old King Brady, but as he could think of no answer he turned her off by telling her to follow her own head.

After much debate with herself, Alice came to the conclusion that there was but one way, and that was to ring Mrs. Macready's bell and send in her card.

This, because she felt certain that she was the veiled lady of the automobile.

Alice went out by the electric car and having located the number she saw that it was attached to one of the most elegant residences in the neighborhood.

It was a mansion, in fact, and stood somewhat back from the street.

Alongside was a great door of solid oak leading into the grounds in the rear, where Alice assumed there was probably a private garage.

Everything about the appearance of the place indicated great wealth.

"Hit or miss," thought Alice, as she ascended the steps.

If the woman turned out to be the veiled lady she was prepared to tell her all, for Old King Brady, upon reflection, had changed his mind and so instructed her.

A man servant, in livery, answered Alice's ring.

He was stiff and cold, refusing to say whether Mrs. Macready was in or not.

Alice's card seemed to excite suspicion.

At first he declined to receive it, or to admit her until she had stated her business.

"I can't possibly do that," said Alice. "You take my card to Mrs. Macready. She may be the person I want to see, and she may not. If she is she will receive me at once."

The butler then took the card and shut the door, leaving Alice standing on the steps.

He was back in a minute, however, with his manner completely changed.

"Madam will see you," he said. "Follow me."

Alice was conducted to an elegantly furnished chamber where she was received by Mrs. Macready.

One glance was enough to show her that she was not up against the veiled lady of the automobile.

Mrs. Macready, who was a large, portly woman, certainly past sixty, was an entirely different looking person.

Indeed, her voice would have settled the question if there had been any doubt.

She was dressed in morning costume, and she arose and came forward as Alice entered with both hands outstretched.

"My dear Miss Montgomery!" she exclaimed, "this certainly is wonderful beyond all belief. Whatever sent you to me?"

"You are Mrs. Macready?" asked Alice, guardedly.

"I am, indeed."

"I wanted to see you on a matter of business, madam, so I took the liberty——"

"No liberty. If I was to tell you something you would not believe me, but fortunately I hold proof. Peter, why do you stand gaping there? Retire instantly. If I want you I will ring."

The abashed butler, who had remained in the doorway with the evident idea that his services would be required to throw Alice out, promptly took himself off, closing the door behind him.

"Be seated," said the lady, placing a chair.

"And now," she added, advancing to a little desk and taking up a letter, "I want you to read this."

Apparently the letter had been written by the lady herself.

It read as follows:

"No. — Commonwealth Avenue.

"October 10. 19—.

"Mrs. Macready desires to have a brief private interview

with Miss Montgomery on a matter of the highest importance. Understanding that Miss M. is now staying at Youngs', Mrs. Macready will take it as a great favor if she may be allowed to wait upon her at any hour which is most convenient. The nature of this business will be explained——"

The letter remained unfinished.

"I was in the act of writing this when Peters announced you, if you will believe me, Miss Montgomery!" cried the lady. "Surely some kind spirit must have sent you here."

"How can I do otherwise than believe you," said Alice, "when I hold the proof?"

"I am so glad to have the proof for you," replied Mrs. Macready, sinking into an easy chair. "And now, before we proceed any further, may I ask why you called?"

"Under a pure misapprehension," Alice answered. "I thought we had met before. The instant I entered this room I saw that I was mistaken."

"Indeed! I was not aware that I had a double."

"It is not that. I feel that I ought to add that I never saw the face of the woman I took you to be."

"Some mystery connected with your detective work?"

"Yes."

"Then I cannot ask you to explain it."

"It would not be right for me to explain—not now, at least."

"And certainly I must not ask it. I see it is up to me to explain my own position, Miss Montgomery. I know what case you are working on, you and the Bradys. You seek a ruby brooch which was stolen in India and is supposed to have been brought to this city—is it not so?"

Here seemed a chance for a clew, and Alice admitted that such was the case.

"I know all about it," said the lady. "Your instructions come from a Mr. Patrick Ferguson, of Calcutta."

"It is so."

"They directed you to apply to one Angus McPhinzie, of 16 Calico place."

"It is so."

"Then let me ask, Miss Montgomery, why you have been so very, very slow in acting? Several days ago one of your firm called at Calico place and saw Mrs. Dalgatty. She offered to arrange an appointment with Mr. McPhinzie. Indeed, I believe one was made, but it was not kept by any of your firm."

"For which there was good reason," replied Alice, guardedly.

"You are fencing with me, Miss Montgomery, while I am disposed to be perfectly frank and open with you. Was it fear?"

"We felt that we ought to be on our guard."

"There was no need, believe me. No harm is intended you. Doubtless you have been working up the case on the quiet. I assume that you know that a peculiar religious cult, called the Brotherhood of Brahma, frequent that house."

"We have assumed that. We did not know the name, however."

"It is as I have stated, and I am going still further in my frankness. I am a member. I suppose you would

call us spiritualists, but it is not exactly that, nor must I explain just what it is. Let us call it that we are followers of a prophet."

Mrs. Macready kept tapping the floor, lightly, with her foot as she spoke. She was evidently very nervous.

"Do you meet in that house, am I to understand?" asked Alice.

"Not precisely. Let me explain as far as I may. The late owner of that house, a Mr. Hammond, was one of our members. Indeed, he was the founder of the cult. He fitted up a secret meeting-room so that there need be no danger of being disturbed by the police, and in spite of the dreadful character of the neighborhood we have continued to meet there ever since for certain reasons which I must not explain."

"And the ruby bug?" asked Alice, feeling that they were getting along but slowly.

"I am coming to that," was the reply. "It is so hard to make you understand without going into details, which I must necessarily suppress. It is like this: Our prophet has prophesied that this bauble would come into our hands; also that great things would happen when it did; also that it would come to us through certain detectives of the name of Brady. It is of the highest importance to us to take steps to have this prophecy fulfilled."

"But, madam, you must understand that we are under instructions to ship the ruby bug back to India in case we recover it," said Alice, sticking to the text of the first Ferguson letter.

"Oh, I know!" cried Mrs. Macready. "What is more, no one of our society has the least intention of preventing you from doing that. All we want is to hold the bug in our possession one night. Just one single night."

"Is this really so?"

"I give you my word of honor it is so."

"Then I must believe you. But tell me, have you any idea in whose possession the ruby bug is at the present time?"

"Not the most remote; nor has any member of our society, but as we have learned to believe in our prophet, we are firmly convinced that only some member of the firm of Brady can help us out. More than that, I have reason to believe that the person is none other than yourself."

"A bunch of crazy spiritualists!" thought Alice. "But whatever the rest may be, evidently this woman is sincere."

"And is this all I get of your strange story?" she asked.

"It is all I can give you at present. More may come later, I cannot say."

"And what do you want me to do, Mrs. Macready? Why did you write to me?"

"For this reason: To-night the society meets. I want you to go with me, alone—that is, without the Bradys, I mean. I am deeply impressed that to you alone will be told where this bug can be found."

"But——"

"Now, don't raise objections, my dear. Naturally, you feel afraid to trust me, but I solemnly promise you that I will return you in safety to Young's Hotel. I am worth millions, Miss Montgomery. I hold a high place in Boston society. My word is as good as my bond."

"May I notify the Bradys that I am going there?"

"If you must, but I would rather you did not mention

my name; also I must request you to ask them not to interfere."

Alice was strongly tempted.

And to end this long conversation, we shall simply add that it continued for some time longer and that in the end Alice yielded.

Mrs. Macready expressed the greatest delight at Alice's acceptance.

She made one more proviso and that was that Alice should not leave her that day, and this also was acceded to.

And that was the way it all came about.

Alice was shown all over that elegant mansion in which this wealthy widow lived alone with a companion and many servants.

The companion appeared at lunch, a stately Boston dame, who knew nothing of the "Brotherhood of Brahma," Mrs. Macready assured Alice, so no allusion to the subject was made in her presence.

After lunch, Mrs. Macready took Alice for a ride in her automobile.

They went out around the Newtons and beyond, and the ride brought its own discovery, for as they were returning, Alice saw the house where she and the Bradys had been the night before.

She called Mrs. Macready's attention to it and asked if she knew who lived in it."

The widow made a face as she replied:

"Now, as it happens, I do, Miss Montgomery, but why do you ask?"

"Merely because it reminds me of a house I have seen before."

"It belongs to a Mrs. McPherson. To be frank with you, she has been trying this long while to get into our society, but we have rejected her. She is a great believer in the occult. She belonged to a set who used to follow a certain Hindoo juggler. The man was caught at his tricks and sent to Deer Island."

"What was his name?" demanded Alice.

"He called himself the Yogi Swami Yubata," replied Mrs. Macready. "He is a fraud."

"And where is he now?"

"I am sure I don't know."

"You were personally acquainted with him?"

"Oh, yes. I have sat in his seances many a time. Fraud, all fraud. Just the same he did do some wonderful things."

CHAPTER IX.

"NAGA! NAGA! NAGA!"

The Bradys sneaked through the alley and found themselves in a little triangular back yard, scarcely big enough for them to swing around in.

It was cut off by the walls of other buildings on all sides, the arrangement being so peculiar that it is hardly worth while to attempt to describe it.

Enough to say that the Bradys, upon sizing the situation up, became satisfied that one of the walls was that of 16 Calico place, projecting a little beyond that of the swarming tenement next door.

As there was every danger of being seen by somebody from one of the windows of this latter house, the detectives hurried to get in their work.

But the back door of Mr. McPhinzie's place seemed to have been made unusually secure.

The windows, of which there were two, were concealed behind heavy wood shutters.

The only thing which seemed feasible was an old-fashioned cellar door.

This was fastened, it is true, but it was only by hasp and staple.

The Bradys both got hold of it and pulled.

They loosened the staple a little after a few efforts.

Then Harry got his hands in under and easily ripped the thing up.

"Slide down and then look and see if we are being watched from the window," the old detective said.

This was done.

Harry could not make out that any one was particularly observing them, although several persons were sitting in the windows of the tenement.

But the evening was cool and the lower sashes down, which probably prevented the noise they made from being heard.

Old King Brady now closed the cellar door and got out his flashlight.

"For all we know, we are going to run right up against McPhinzie," he said. "We must be prepared."

They listened, but could hear no sound.

There was coal and wood in the cellar, also many barrels and boxes.

Harry got out his lantern, too, and they hastily made the rounds of the walls, working in their usual thorough style.

And very quickly they discovered just what they were looking for.

Two big packing cases, nailed together, working on a concealed hinge, constituted a door which was not even fastened.

Behind it was a brick arch with a narrow passage leading off into the darkness.

"Shut the door and follow me," said Old King Brady.

"If I know anything, this passage is going to lead us into the cellar of No. 16 Calico place."

And so it did.

The secret door at the other end was constructed in a very ingenious manner, forming the back of a closet in which Mrs. Dalgatty kept pickles and preserves.

"She went through here to consult McPhinzie while she kept us waiting in the parlor," observed the old detective.

"Undoubtedly," said Harry, "and while she kept me waiting on the steps that time I came here first. We are right in business now, governor, and something is going to come out of it, I am sure."

"Caution! caution!" replied the old detective.

"Suppose we run into Mrs. Dalgatty?"

"Let us hope we don't. Should we, then we will be guided by circumstances. That wardrobe is what we are gunning for. Now to sneak upstairs."

They noiselessly ascended.

A gasjet burned in the lower hall and they could see a light in the kitchen, the door of which stood partly open.

Assuming that Mrs. Dalgatty was probably in there,

with even great caution the Bradys stole up the basement stairs.

In the main hall it was dark and the same in the hall above and in the room where the wardrobe stood.

Not a sound had been heard, thus far.

Old King Brady opened up the doors of the wardrobe by the aid of his flashlight, and they passed through into the secret passage, closing the door behind them.

"Safe, so far, and now sideways," said the old detective. "It is only a few steps."

He led the way, and in a few seconds they were up against the door he had previously discovered.

It had no visible fastening, which made it seem certain that it was operated by a secret spring.

After considerable search, Harry found what he was looking for, in the floor of the passage at some little distance from the door.

It was only necessary to press one's foot hard upon it to cause the door to swing inward.

Beyond was a very narrow flight of winding stairs, set in the angle of two walls, leading down.

"This grows interesting," whispered the old detective.

"We are coming to what we want, all right."

They listened, but could hear nothing.

Down the winding stairs they crept.

That they were now within the walls of the old church seemed certain.

The stairs landed them in a narrow passage, which Old King Brady was satisfied lay below the cellar level.

It was bounded by a brick wall on one side, while on the other were four doors set in a stout wooden partition.

And here a solitary gasjet burned.

They could hear voices talking behind one of the doors.

"Not a sound," breathed Old King Brady. "Everything depends upon careful work."

They easily located the door from behind which the voices proceeded.

Old King Brady bent down and applied his ear to the keyhole.

He remained in that position so long that Harry's patience was all but exhausted.

Then he applied his eye to the keyhole, but quickly pulled away, and, drawing Harry back to the foot of the stairs, began whispering.

"It is McPhinzie and another talking spiritualism or some such nonsense," he said.

"Could you see them?"

"No. The room appears to be a large one. They are not in range of the keyhole, but I could make out all that is being said."

"Just what was it?"

"Oh, they are talking about us, about the ruby bug and the wonders they expect it to perform for whoever holds it in his possession."

"In the spirit-raising line?"

"I judge so. I can't exactly make out their jargon. The second man talked about the bug being a charm; he spoke of it having been 'magnetized' by a powerful genii."

"Which is the same as a spirit."

"Of course. But listen to the most important point: Some one, I take it to mean some spirit, has spoken through the prophet of this beautiful bunch of dupes and

humbugs, to the effect that the ruby bug will only be brought to light and put in their possession by the Bradys."

"So? If the Bradys once get the bug into their possession mighty little good it will do this gang."

"We must go on with our work while there is a chance, Harry. Those two appear to be alone in there and their attention full engaged. Let us see what lies behind these other doors."

Harry was ready, of course, and he immediately tackled the door nearest to him.

It was not locked, and behind lay a small room.

It was fitted up as a ladies' dressing room, with every appliance.

From hooks along the walls several dresses of white muslin hung; there were also many pairs of white slippers.

It looked as if the lady members of the Brotherhood of Brahma were accustomed to dress in white.

The next door was also unfastened and communicated with a similar room intended for men's use.

Here were more white slippers and white suits were hanging against the walls.

The space between this door and the next beyond and between that again and the fourth door indicated that the room behind this door was much larger than the ones the Bradys had already examined.

They did not dare to try this door, so they passed on to the fourth and tackled that.

It was locked.

Old King Brady listened at the keyhole, but could hear no sound.

He got out his skeleton keys and easily opened the door, although the lock was of the night latch kind.

A flood of light came streaming out upon them.

It came from the room where McPhinzie was.

The partition here was open at the top for about the depth of two feet, which brought the bottom of the opening just above Old King Brady's head.

Across this opening was fastened a very wide-meshed wire netting, carefully secured on all sides.

"Singular," thought Old King Brady, for he did not dare to speak.

The door worked with a spring, and it had closed automatically as the Bradys entered.

At first they feared that the snapping of the night latch would give them away, but McPhinzie was talking in his guttural Scotch at the time and they did not seem to hear.

Another peculiar feature of the room which the Bradys did not fail to observe was a queer, circular trap door in the middle of the floor.

It had no ring attached to it, nor was there any apparent way of raising it unless one made use of a number of auger holes, which were bored in the boards.

"You want to keep off that thing," whispered Old King Brady, with his mouth close to Harry's ear.

Harry nodded and they approached the partition, where they stood listening.

And now the talk, which had been upon a matter of no importance, ran to the Bradys again.

"I am half sorry you postponed it till to-morrow night, Mac," said the second speaker. "I could easily have got word to all hands that I couldn't attend, and the meeting would have to be postponed."

"But how was I to know that?" demanded McPhinzie.

"True, you could not have known, but you might have put them off and told them to call later in the day, meanwhile I should have returned and Mother Dalgatty would have let you know."

"I suppose I might have fixed it that way, but you see I was thinking only of the meeting."

"Well, it can't be helped. Do you think they will come?"

"I am sure of it. I believe they have tried every other means to get hold of a clew to the ruby bug and all have failed. Who can have it? It beats me."

"Don't ask me. When I left Calcutta the matter was a profound mystery."

"Do you think there is any suspicion of who the thief really is?"

"I am sure his lordship had no such suspicion. He was relying solely on the faker who assured him that the bug would turn up in Boston."

"And did the faker really say that detectives named Brady would find the bug? You are giving it to me straight, old man?"

"Sure he did! Sure I am! Do you think I'm going back on you, Mac? You don't know me yet, it would appear."

"Well, I fancy I know you better than anybody else in the Brotherhood of Brahma, Mr. Prophet," replied the curiosity dealer, and then both laughed again, after which the Bradys heard the other man get up, with the remark that he must attend to business.

"Is it time?" asked McPhinzie.

"Yes, feeding time," was the reply.

There was silence, then Harry stepped back and unthinkingly stood upon the round trap door.

Suddenly there was a rattling sound.

Old King Brady, who was still facing the partition, wheeled about.

To his horror he saw that the round trap door had fallen and now hung down in a dark hole by a hinge.

Harry had vanished.

"Heavens!" gasped the old detective, beneath his breath. "This is the limit! Why couldn't the boy have minded what I said!"

Even as he said it he heard a peculiar hissing sound.

It appeared to issue from the hole beneath the trap door.

A strange smell seemed now to pervade the place.

And then, to his horror, Old King Brady saw rising out of that hole something which made his blood run cold.

It was the head of a huge serpent, with shining scales and glittering eyes.

"Naga! Naga! Naga!" called a voice from behind the partition.

Higher and higher rose the serpent's head.

CHAPTER X.

THE SEANCE OF THE BROTHERS OF BRAHMA.

Alice and Mrs. Macready did not start for the meeting of the Brotherhood of Brahma until after nine o'clock.

They went in an automobile to the corner of Cambridge and Stamford streets, and the rest of the way on foot to 16 Calico place.

There were two gentlemen right ahead of them as they turned in on that unsavory street.

One of them bade Mrs. Macready good evening, at the same time looking hard at Alice.

"You are wondering at me, Mr. Bullman," said Mrs. Macready.

"I confess I am," replied one of the pair, a large, heavy man.

"So am I," added the other, sourly.

He was a spare, elderly person, with a long, pinched-up face which reminded Alice of a squeezed lemon.

"Can you restrain your curiosity until we get inside?" added Mrs. Macready.

"I presume I shall have to," replied the lemon.

"If we get inside," added the doctor. "Of course, I don't intend to make any scene right here on Calico place, Mrs. Macready, but you know our rules, and I really wonder at you."

"I am wondering at myself," replied the lady.

"Mac will never let you in," said the lemon.

"I'd like to see him refuse me, Mr. Glynn!" flashed Mrs. Macready. "Because he has failed to execute our purpose by his clumsy methods, there is no reason why I should not adopt better methods and succeed."

They walked on in silence to No. 16.

Here, then, was the rich retired dentist and the dry goods dealer.

Alice felt that she was right in it. She could not but wonder how it was all going to end.

They ascended the steps and Mr. Bullman rang the bell.

Mrs. Dalgatty was not in evidence now.

It was Mr. Angus McPhinzie who answered the bell. But he held the door on the chain and eyed Alice with no favor.

"Who have we here, sister?" he demanded, in a tone of surprise.

"A friend of mine, brother," replied the lady. "I desire that you should let her come in."

"For what purpose? This is not our night for admitting strangers, as you are well aware."

"Do not hold us up here on the steps!" flashed the lady. "Can't you see we shall have a crowd around the house in a minute. We can do our discussing in the parlor, I suppose."

"Let us in, Brother Mac," said Mr. Bullman. "Already we have attracted attention. Open the door without further delay."

The curiosity dealer did so, and they passed into Mrs. Dalgatty's parlor, where a light burned.

"And now let me introduce my friend, Miss Randal, of New York," said Mrs. Macready, who, by the way, had given Alice no hint as to what method she intended to pursue.

"Miss Randal, Mr. Bullman," she added. "Mr. Glynn, Mr. McPhinzie. Gentlemen, Miss Randal is interested in our work. As her stay in Boston is limited, I have taken the liberty of bringing her here to-night, even though it is not our usual night for introducing strangers to our meetings. I trust that you will waive objections and allow her to pass."

"I'd like to speak with the master," said McPhinzie.

"Do it, then," replied Mrs. Macready. "You three gentlemen go on, and I'll remain here with Miss Randal until you return."

The three men then left the room.

"Come and sit beside me on the sofa," said Mrs. Macready. "I want to whisper in your ear."

Alice complied.

"Why did you not tell them who I really am?" she asked. "I thought you were going to do so."

"It is because I do not altogether trust that man McPhinzie," was the reply. "I don't just know why. I am very sensitive, my dear. It seems to come to me that he is keeping something back which he has no right to do from me. I——"

The bell rang.

Mrs. Dalgatty could be heard shuffling to the door. 2

There was a brief parley and then a man and a woman were shown into the parlor.

They stared at Alice, as did Mrs. Dalgatty, but no one spoke.

Mrs. Macready now had to do the introduction act again.

These people seemed to have little to say.

The man inquired for "Brother Mac," and when Mrs. Macready informed him that he would presently return, he retired to a corner, with the lady, and they remained conversing in whispers.

Presently McPhinzie looked in alone.

He greeted the newcomers and then asked Mrs. Macready to step out into the hall, as he wished to speak to her alone.

"How soon, Brother Mac?" asked the gentleman.

"Just a few minutes now, brother," was the reply, and Mrs. Macready retired with him to the hall.

They were gone perhaps five minutes and then McPhinzie opened the door and, looking in, said:

"Now, then, we will all go."

Mrs. Macready stood in the hall and there was a smile of triumph on her face.

"I've won out," she whispered in Alice's ear as they ascended the stairs.

They entered the front room.

The secret door in the back of the wardrobe stood open.

Dr. Bullman and Mr. Glynn were not to be seen.

McPhinzie stood aside, saying:

"I will not go with you, sister. Others may come. I will do my duty as doorkeeper."

"All right," replied Mrs. Macready, and she led the way through the secret passage.

The door at the end was open and they descended to the passage below.

Mrs. Macready, the lady and Alice went into the ladies' dressing-room already described.

Here, Mrs. Macready and the lady put on white muslin dresses and white slippers.

Alice asked if she should do the same, and was told that it was not necessary.

They passed back into the hall, meeting the man there who had dressed in a white suit, with white slippers.

Dr. Bullman and Mr. Glynn were also there, similarly attired.

They stood around, talking in low tones, Mrs. Macready keeping aloof with Alice.

Presently the middle door opened and there stood a tall man dressed in long, flowing white robes, like the Yogi.

But this man was an entirely different person.

Alice could not feel otherwise than intensely interested when she saw that the man who looked like an Englishman had a wax nose.

Here was the original of the "shadow" seen by Old King Brady!

Then, if the Yogi personating the "Begum," had spoken the truth, this was the man in whose possession was the ruby bug.

"Enter, brothers and sisters," he said, in a solemn tone.

"And welcome to the stranger!" he added, folding his arms and bowing low to Alice.

They passed into a sizeable room, richly furnished in Oriental style.

There were chairs placed in a row in the middle of the room, facing a raised platform, where there was a sort of tent made of white silk, the folds of which were drawn close.

The "prophet" stepped upon the platform, and seating himself cross-legged upon a large cushion, folded his arms. The others took chairs and sat in silence.

After a little a knock was heard.

"Who calls?" demanded the prophet, in a loud voice.

"Brother McPhinzie!" came the reply from outside the door.

And to this was added:

"Also Brother —— and Sister ——. Our number is now complete."

"Enter!" called the prophet, and they filed in.

All were dressed in white.

Before seating himself, McPhinzie locked the door.

Alice thought that there was a worried look about the man's face.

This was confirmed in the fifteen minutes of absolute silence which followed.

The old man kept twitching about in his chair.

He was so nervous that he could scarcely sit still.

Meanwhile, the prophet sat motionless, with folded arms.

Not a word was spoken by any one until at last the prophet made the remark:

"It is a long time coming to-night. I feel a strange influence. It seems to me as if some great calamity has or is about to happen to us."

He was silent for a moment, and then asked:

"Also some great good fortune."

Then a pause, and then he again added:

"I do not want to raise your hopes, brothers and sisters, but it is strongly impressed upon me that this good fortune concerns that which we have so long waited for—the ruby bug."

More silence.

Suddenly the prophet began to wink and twitch.

Then his eyes closed and his head fell forward.

It was the Yogi over again.

"More fake trance business," thought Alice.

Slowly the prophet arose, muttering words in an unknown tongue.

The tension was over now.

"Wooona seems to have got him at last," remarked McPhinzie, as the prophet staggered to the tent, parted the curtains and passed inside.

"He has been long enough about it," said the "lemon," sourly.

"Can there be anything in what he said about the ruby bug?" questioned Dr. Bullman.

"Better wait a minute and hear what Lord Chichester has to say about it," observed Mrs. Macready.

"Lord Chichester!" "Wooona!"

Were these supposed to be "spirits" who controlled the "prophet?"

Alice, finding everybody else was now talking, ventured to put the question to Mrs. Macready in a whisper, and that lady assured her that it was so.

"Of course, you don't believe it, my dear," she said, beneath her breath; "all the same it is true. Didn't I tell you that there would be something doing if you came here?"

"Then this is to be a seance?"

"Yes."

Now a loud voice called out from within the tent:

"Good evening, friends!"

The voice was certainly very different from the prophet's. Everybody said "Good evening!" addressing the voice as "My lord!"

McPhinzie appeared to be spokesman, for he now said: "My lord, our worshipful prophet remarked just now that he felt that some calamity hung over us. Is it so?"

"It is so," replied the voice.

"Will it please your lordship to explain?"

"Later, yes. After the usual ceremonies. Let us sing. Brother Mac, you will summon Naga in the usual way."

Alice did not fail to remark that the old Scotchman's face twitched and his general nervousness was even more apparent.

"That man knows something," she thought. "He is a confederate, all right. Don't I wish I could get an inside view of this!"

McPhinzie, in a high-pitched, cracked voice, now began chanting words in a foreign tongue.

All joined in with little reference to time or tune.

The din was horrible. Alice felt like stopping her ears.

This painful ceremony lasted for perhaps ten minutes, during which the same words were said, over and over again.

Then, all at once, Lord Chichester took up the chant.

His voice was really musical.

Nine times, three times three, the words were repeated, and then as silence fell upon the assembly, McPhinzie arose, stepped on the platform and, throwing back his head, roared out:

"Naga! Naga! Naga!"

The others, in low, awesome tones, repeated this singular word.

All eyes were now fixed upon a wire netting at the top of the partition above the tent.

McPhinzie now advanced to the partition and pulled upon a brass handle close down to the floor.

About a foot of brass chain came out as he pulled and a singular sound was heard on the other side of the partition.

McPhinzie retreated, and planting himself in front of the tent again threw back his head and roared:

"Naga! Naga! Naga!" in a still louder voice.

The brothers and sisters echoed the cry, as before, and kept their eyes fixed upon the wire netting.

Silence followed.

The brothers and sisters began look at each other.

McPhinzie's back was turned, but Alice could see his hands tremble.

The nervousness was still on the man.

Then for the third time he flung back his head and now fairly shouted:

"Naga! Naga! Naga!"

Instantly the voice of "Lord Chichester" called out, in solemn tones:

"Friends! You have summoned our sacred serpent, as our ritual directs. Three times Naga has been called and Naga fails to respond. Prepare for the calamity predicted by your prophet. Never more will your sacred serpent respond to the call. Brahma has taken Naga unto himself. Naga is dead."

Exclamations of horror ran through the circle.

"Dead!" screamed Mrs. Macready. "Dead! Dead!"

And the voice from the tent echoed: "Dead!"

CHAPTER XI.

ALICE SEES THE RUBY BUG.

Naga means serpent in Hindustani.

Alice knew that much of the language.

But Old King Brady had no such knowledge, hence the appearance of the python, for such it was, as it came up out of the trap door took the old detective all by surprise.

Fully expecting to see the monstrous reptile make a dart at him and seize him in its deadly coils, the old detective whipped out his revolver and fired.

His aim was true.

The shot took the python in the head.

There was one fearful hiss, a wild wiggling, and it dropped back into the hole.

Had it fallen on poor Harry?

No other sound had yet been heard to proceed from that horrible pit.

But there was sound enough from the other side of the partition.

A fierce shout from McPhinzie.

Wild words from his companions.

Old King Brady could hear them running, and he himself darted for the door.

Bad luck seemed to attend him.

He missed his footing, the floor was very slippery, and fell flat.

The revolver flew out of his hand and dropped through the open trap.

And then, before the old detective could rise, the door flew open and McPhinzie and the prophet were upon him! Half rising on his knees, Old King Brady saw that he was up against the man with the wax nose.

But there was nothing the matter with the fellow's arms. He hauled off and dealt Old King Brady a wicked blow, which sent him sprawling backward, this time.

Suddenly the prophet drew a revolver and held Old King Brady covered.

"Fetch a rope! Tie him up, Mac!" he cried.

Past resistance, having been taken at such a fearful disadvantage, Old King Brady allowed himself to be tied.

"Where's the other one?" cried McPhinzie. "If the old one has found his way here then the young one must have come, too. Where's your partner, old man?"

"In that hole!" gasped Old King Brady. "He went down with the trap door."

"And you shot the snake?" demanded the prophet.

"Yes, I shot the snake."

"How did you get in? How did you get in?" demanded McPhinzie, fiercely.

"Through your cellar and the secret passages," was the reply.

McPhinzie would have said more, but the prophet headed him off.

"Of what use is all this?" he demanded. "Let us go down into the den and see how matters stand there. If Naga is not dead, then Young King Brady surely is."

They retreated.

A moment later Old King Brady could hear them talking beneath the trap door.

Presently they were back again.

"We must be quick," he heard McPhinzie say, as they entered. "It is almost time for the brothers to come."

"What shall we do with the old fraud?" he added.

"Put him with his partner," replied the prophet.

Picking Old King Brady up they carried him out of the door, down a few steps, through an open trap and then dropped him.

The prophet then picked up a lantern which stood at the foot of the steps and flashed it through a low door.

"The young fellow lies as we found him," he remarked. "He must have struck his head against the iron bar. He is surely dead."

They lifted Old King Brady in through the door, laid him down and retreated, closing the door behind them, but not locking it, as near as he could make out.

Light streamed down through the open trap; the lantern had scarcely been needed.

There, close beside Old King Brady, lay the python, its tail still moving, after the manner of dead snakes.

Harry lay at one side, on his back, his face covered with blood.

Just then the trap door was closed.

Now all was inky blackness.

Again and again Old King Brady called to Harry, but all in vain.

* * * * *

We have turned aside for a moment to see how it fared with the Bradys, but now we must get back to Alice, in the seance room.

The excitement over the death of the python was tremendous, but talk was checked by the voice of "Lord Chichester," from within the tent.

"Peace, brothers! Peace, sisters!" it called. "What has happened cannot be helped. Peace, I say."

"Tell us, how did Naga die?" demanded Dr. Bullman.

"That I cannot reveal, nor will it ever be revealed," was the reply. "It is enough for you to know that Brahma has taken Naga. Now for the second prophecy of our prophet. That also is to come true. It concerned the ruby bug. Are you, brothers, are you, sisters, ready to make good your promises if I produce the sacred beetle of the Begum of Bhadapota?"

"I am!" said Dr. Bullman.

"I also," added Mrs. Macready.

"Count me in if the bug will bestow upon our prophet the power you say," put in Percival Glynn.

"It will bestow all I have stated upon him and more," was the reply. "Remember the original prophecy of the faker in Calcutta, this bug was to be recovered by a detective of the Brady Detective Bureau, of New York. Friends, we have such a person here with us to-night!"

All eyes were turned on Alice.

"Yes, there she sits," continued "Lord Chichester," "and we may thank our friend, Sister Macready, for her presence. I am going to bring the ruby bug, taking it from the hiding place in which the thief has deposited it. You shall all see it as soon as you have passed in your checks to me. Then something else will happen. Your prophet will be dematerialized and remain thus for three days, when he will return to you and, with the money you have contributed, the foundation of our sacred temple shall be laid. Write your checks. I will now go for the ruby bug."

Dr. Bullman, Mr. Glynn and the two other men went, one by one, to a desk over in one corner, each drawing up a check.

Alice knew afterward that each of these men wrote a check for \$5,000.

Mrs. Macready was the only woman who contributed, and her check was for \$10,000—\$30,00 in all.

McPhinzie drew no check, it is scarcely necessary to say, for, as the reader is aware, he was a party to this barefaced fraud.

And now when all this was accomplished, "Lord Chichester" spoke again.

"Are the checks all drawn?" he asked.

"They are, my lord," replied McPhinzie. "I hold them in my hand."

"It is well. Let Miss Montgomery come to the cabinet."

Alice now arose and went to the cabinet.

"Face the friends!" Lord Chichester called.

Alice turned about.

"Brother McPhinzie, give her the checks," ordered the voice.

The Scotchman obeyed.

"Hold them behind you, against the curtain," was the next order, and it was done.

Instantly a hand came out from between the curtains and clutched the checks.

"Watch! Look at the carpet," came the order.

Alice looked down. Every one else looked, too.

And there, sure enough, seemed to appear a glittering bauble.

It was a big beetle, in the form of a brooch, and even in that dim light the rubies glittered, showing them to be gems of the purest water.

Alice stooped to pick it up, but even as she did so she felt a hand thrust under her skirts between her feet.

She tried to shut her feet upon it but she was not quick enough.

The ruby bug vanished.

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" cried McPhinzie, and others echoed the exclamation.

"What is the lady to do now, my lord?" called Mrs. Macready.

There was no answer.

"Oh! our prophet must have dematerialized already!" cried McPhinzie.

At the same instant heavy blows descended upon the door.

All sprang to their feet, but before any one could make a move the door was forced and half a dozen men burst into the room, headed by the chief of the Boston police detectives.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Now it may seem to the reader that we have dealt somewhat too heavily in the line of the marvellous already.

But this story was begun and has been carried out along the lines of the things recorded in Old King Brady's notebook, and we can only finish it in the same way.

What we now have to tell seems to us the most marvellous part of the whole affair, for which reason we prefix to the events of this concluding chapter the statement that when the Bradys came to gather up the threads of their case, so to speak, they learned to a certainty that the Yogi Swami Yubata had formerly been associated with the Brotherhood of Brahma and its "prophet," one Edward Simmons, once a well-known palmist and fortune-teller, who has figured in this tale as the "man with the wax nose."

Old King Brady was still lying there in the dark, alongside his unconscious partner and the dead python, when, to his great joy he heard Harry give a groan.

"My dear boy!" he cried. "Speak to me if you can! Tell me you still live!"

"Live? Why, of course I live!" Harry answered. "Governor, what's the matter? Where am I, anyhow? I seem to have hurt my head. My face is all covered with blood. I feel so strange."

Then, before Old King Brady could answer, Harry gave a startled cry.

"For heaven sake what fearful thing is this alongside of me?"

He had never seen the snake.

Striking his head against an iron bar as he went down, Harry had relapsed into unconsciousness without knowing where he had fallen and the fearful fate which might have been his.

It took a lot of explaining to make all this plain to him, and Old King Brady was just winding up his explanations, Harry having rolled over and cut him free, when suddenly a light appeared over in one corner of the serpent's den.

Then a voice, speaking out of the darkness, said:

"The Bradys, I believe?"

It was the voice of the Yogi, and the next instant a flashlight was turned on the detectives.

There he stood in his Oriental robe and turban, looking just the same.

"Swami Yubata, what brings you here?" asked the old detective. "Do you come as a friend or a foe?"

"As a friend. So the old snake is dead. It is well. Listen! Did you get the ruby bug?"

"Not yet. Instead, your shadow with the wax nose has got us."

"Ha! It would have been otherwise if you had consented to work with me instead of insisting upon working against me. But no matter about that now. The young man has had a fall. His head has been seriously cut. If he will permit me to treat it I will heal it at once."

He produced a little medicine case as he spoke.

The Yogi now opened his case, produced a piece of cotton cloth, poured a little of some liquid out of a bottle and applied the cloth to Harry's wound.

And it is a fact that all pain instantly left it and next day the wound was all but healed.

"And now help us to escape from here, friend," said Old King Brady, "and I will make it worth your while."

"Wait! My time is close at hand; so is yours. Hark! he comes!"

A singular noise was heard near where the Yogi appeared.

Instantly the Hindoo shut off the light.

He had scarcely done so when another light appeared, vanished, appeared again and there stood the man with the wax nose!

Now, what happened next we want it distinctly understood came, according to Old King Brady's notebook, so quickly as to border on the marvellous.

The old detective distinctly states that neither he nor Harry had time to make a move.

First they saw the man with the wax nose standing in the corner, dressed precisely like the Yogi, holding a flashlight.

Instantly that huge black hand seemed to dart from under the Yogi's robe and seize the prophet by the throat.

He gave one cry of horror and fell on the dead python.

For the fraction of a second the Yogi bent over him.

The next he was in the corner holding the ruby bug in his left hand, while the right turned his flashlight upon it.

Old King Brady made a start for him, but he might as well have tried to catch the wind.

The light, the bug and the Yogi all vanished, like a flash.

By the time Old King Brady could turn his light upon the scene he and Harry were alone with the dead snake and what appeared to be a dead prophet.

The man's neck was all black and blue; it seemed as if he had ceased to breath.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Harry, "that was quick work. How on earth does he do it?"

How, indeed?

The Bradys could find no secret door or panel in the brick wall of the vault.

While they were looking for it somebody kicked the regular door down.

It proved to be the chief!

The place had been pulled, the detectives were making their rounds.

And as Alice was with them the explanations which followed cleared up all there was to tell on both sides.

The prophet was searched and the checks of his deluded disciples taken from him.

As for the disciples themselves, they were allowed to sneak out through McPhinzie's cellar—their usual road—and go free.

But McPhinzie was held as a confederate, and so was Mrs. Dalgatty.

The prophet revived and landed in the police station.

Later he got six months on Deer Island, and McPhinzie got the same, both being convicted of fraud and extortion on the confession of Mrs. Dalgatty, which secured her own freedom.

And thus ended the mystery of 16 Calico place, and the "Brotherhood of Brahma."

It was shown that these cranks were serpent worshippers and that the big python had been there in the secret rooms under the church since old John Hammond's time.

But the ruby bug?

Simmons, the prophet, would reveal nothing. The Bradys learning that the man had recently come from India, suspected him of being the thief, but they could not prove it.

What they wanted was the bug.

For two days they sought the Yogi high and low, but without success.

At last, on the third day, Alice suggested a call on Mrs. Macready.

They went to her house on Commonwealth avenue, but it was only to be informed that the lady was away.

By heavily bribing the butler, Old King Brady learned that she had retired to her elegant summer residence at Manchester-by-the-Sea, and hither they went that afternoon.

The Bradys approached the house by a broad walk, which led up to a heavy oak door.

As they drew near all saw a boy wearing a fez step out from among a clump of shrubbery.

It was the Yogi's boy Muley.

He recognized the detectives, of course, and took to his heels through the garden.

Scarce had they taken a dozen steps toward the door than it swung back and there stood the Yogi.

He had a queer pasteboard box, with a strap slung over his shoulder.

He uttered a sharp cry at the sight of the detectives and jumped back, the box falling to the tiled floor.

At the same instant something else dropped, either from his turban or his dress, and struck the tiles.

It was the ruby bug, and a most brilliant bauble it was, seen now in the full sunlight.

The old detective gave a cry of triumph, the Yogi, one of dismay, and directed his eyes towards the tiles.

As the Hindoo looked upon the ruby bug he whirled on one heel and sank to the floor.

"What on earth ails the man?" cried Old King Brady. He stooped to raise him.

The boy with the fez looked around the corner of the door, vanishing instantly.

Harry pounced upon the bug and got it.

At the same instant the Yogi's lips were seen to move and the voice of "Jimmie" called out:

"Say, Mr. Big Detective, the little detective has got the bug. My Yogi came here to sell it to Mrs. Mac No. 2, but she wouldn't buy. Take my advice, be satisfied that you have got what you want and get out. If you go to making trouble for my Yogi I'll make trouble for you."

For a second Old King Brady hesitated, and then turning to his partners he said:

"All right, Jimmie! That's good advice and I'll go you. Come along, Harry and Alice."

And they went, seeing nothing of Muley as they beat a retreat.

And that was the end of it as far as the Yogi was concerned.

That day the old detective had a long interview with the "prophet" in his cell.

"Tell me something of the history of the ruby bug and I will put in a good word for you," he said.

"All I know about it is that it was stolen in Calcutta," was the reply.

"Stolen from who?" demanded Old King Brady, whose curiosity was thoroughly aroused.

"I shall not tell you."

And then, in the same breath, the prophet asked the old detective what he intended to do with the ruby bug.

"I might be as stubborn as you and refuse to answer," was the reply, "but I am going to do the other thing. My orders are to deliver the ruby bug to the United States Secret Service Bureau at Washington."

"Ah!" said the prophet, "and what becomes of it after that?"

"I don't know."

"Then let me give you a pointer; if ever you go to London and want to find the ruby bug you need not maste your time looking in any poor man's house. Start at the top of the social ladder and you will be more likely to meet with success."

And that was as far as Old King Brady could get with the ex-prophet.

The brooch was duly delivered at Washington, and the detectives were duly rewarded for their work.

And this was the last that any one ever knew of the case of THE BRADYS AND THE RUBY BUG.

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS AND THE FLAT-HOUSE THIEVES; OR, THE UNDER SIDE OF NEW YORK," which will be the next number (612) of "Secret Service."

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ITEMS WORTH READING.

In adjudicating a dispute as to the ownership of a just-vacated seat in a crowded car, Judge Kleiber, of St. Louis, has decided that it does not belong to the man who sees it first, but to the man who first takes possession.

The electric fan, which adds much to summer comfort, is far from useless in the winter. Storekeepers have found that the circulation of air which it creates is the simplest and cheapest way to keep their show windows free from frost.

The American Institute of Social Service has received from Berlin an exhibit containing forty-five specimens of different kinds of dust—mineral, animal, and vegetable—produced in various industries, and likely to be inhaled by workmen. Also the same number of photographs showing the microscopical characteristics of these various dusts. Models in wax represent human lungs as they are affected by occupational dusts; other models show normal lungs for comparison, while still others show the effects of industrial poisons on the system. An advisory committee of the editors of the great technical papers has been organized to co-operate with the institute in the work of protecting life and limb of industrial workers.

Many have thought that snakes accomplish the feat of climbing by wrapping themselves about the tree and following a spiral course upward. Several years ago two wood-choppers, having felled a large oak-tree several feet in diameter and very tall, found in its top two common black snakes. After pondering for some time, the men arrived at the conclusion that one snake had taken hold of the other's tail, and thus by co-operation they had been enabled to clasp the trunk, and by circling about it had ascended to the top. Whatever probability may have attached to this conclusion was dispelled by the observation of two naturalists. A black snake, measuring perhaps a trifle over six feet, was found clinging to the side of a small tree, around which it could have wrapped itself nearly twice had it wished to do so. Instead of this the snake passed right and left at short distances, catching the folds along its under parts over and behind the slightly projecting rough strips of bark. As the snake rested only five or six feet off the ground one of the naturalists grasped its tail to test its climbing qualities, but so great was the force with which it pulled upward that it proved a difficult task to hold it. Finally, becoming annoyed at this ill treatment, the snake reached down threateningly at the offending hand and, losing its hold, fell to the ground.

According to dispatches from London, Chili has commissioned Armstrong, Whitworth & Co. to build for them a vessel of 32,000 tons, which is to be armed with the heaviest gun in existence. The cost is stated to be \$15,000,000. It is said that the gun will fire shells as heavy as those of the 110-ton gun of thirty years ago; but probably this is an error, and it should read that the penetration and energy will be as great. If Chili has actually ordered such a vessel, this is certainly a case of putting all of the eggs in one basket, for at least two serviceable dreadnoughts could be built for the same money.

WITH THE FUNNY FELLOWS.

The Girl (rather weary, at 11:30 p. m.)—I don't know a thing about baseball. The Beau—Let me explain it to you. The Girl—Very well, give me an illustration of a home run.

She (her first season)—I have been shut up in boarding-school so long that I feel very awkward and timid in company. I do not know what to do with my hands. He—I'll hold them for you.

A preacher was invited to take dinner with a Lebanon family several days ago. As they were leaving the dining-room after the meal, the good man turned to the hostess and said: "Sister, I rarely ever get such a good dinner." Before she could reply, Johnny piped up: "Same here."

The famous Champ Clark, at a dinner at Bowling Green, said of the trusts: "The feeling against monopolies has reached even to the nursery. I saw a little girl the other day slip something beneath her plate. Then she murmured angrily: 'I wish there was an anti-trust law.'"

"Why did you take Elmora away from school, Aunt Mahala?" a lady asked her cook one day. Aunt Mahala sniffed scornfully. "'Cause de teacher ain't satisfactory tuh me. Mis' Mally. What you reckon she tell dat chile yistiddy? She 'low dat IV. spell four, when even a idjut 'ud know dat. It spells ivy."

"You say Col. Dawson can't see me?" demanded little Blinks, indignantly. "I do," returned the colonel's secretary. "And may I ask if he gives any reason for this extraordinary behavior?" said Blinks, trembling with emotion. "Yes," replied the secretary, coldly. "He says he doesn't want to strain his eyes."

Stranger—Sir, do you remember giving a poor, friendless tramp 50 cents one cold night last winter? Jones—I do! "Sir, I am that tramp; that 50 cents was the turning point in my career; with it I got a shave, a shine, a meal and a job. I saved my money, went to Alaska, made a million dollars, and last week I came back to New York to share my million with you. But, unfortunately, I struck Wall Street before I struck you—and—have you another 50 cents that you could conveniently spare, sir?"

Slowly, imperceptibly, almost sneakingly, as the lights were turned down and the play began, he slid his hand along the back of the seat in which she sat. Then he leaned toward her and whispered: "Laura," he said, between his set teeth, "I'll button up that gap in the back of your waist this time, but when you want anything of this kind done again you'll ask me to do it before we leave the house, or, by ginger, you'll reach around and button it yourself." Whereat Mrs. Ferguson merely glared at her husband and said nothing.

SAVED BY A BEAR.

By Alexander Armstrong.

Along the upper waters of the Northwest Miramichi, in the province of New Brunswick, Canada, many wild animals live in the dense, dark stretches of spruce and pine forests. The clearings and farm-houses are few, but the region is visited in the early summer by hundreds of salmon fishermen. There is no dwelling in the wild and secluded place that has not some legend about bears, Indian devils or wolves, and the inmates gather closely around the open fires on a winter's night and tremble as the stories are told.

But of all the beasts that roamed these dense forests, there never was one that filled the inhabitants with half so much dread as the "mad moose." This creature had been seen by a score of people living along the Miramichi. It stood nearly as high as a giraffe, and had in summer two mighty antlers, which curved out and branched so widely as to resemble two trees. Whenever seen, it was tearing at a mad pace through the woods, making a crackling noise and throwing the branches in every direction, and its bellowings terrified every one who heard them. Its eyes were large and fierce, and I have been told that in the dark they glowed like two great balls of phosphorescent flame.

Many belated travelers and lumbermen saw it late in the night on their way through the forest to some clearing, and they related how its terrible mooring resounded for miles through the woods and hills on a still summer night. Whenever it saw a human being it seemed to grow enraged, thrust its huge head downward, and at once charged. But as it kept constantly in the covert, the pursued person was enabled to climb into a tree and escape the wrath of the monster. Many a traveler was obliged to take refuge in a tree at sundown, and compelled to remain there all night with the two greenish-yellow eyeballs of the beast glaring upon him till daylight.

Four or five persons, who were not enabled to get into trees in time, became victims of the wild brute. From the marks found upon them, it was clear that he had goaded them to death with his horns and then trampled upon them with his ponderous feet. It was said also that he tore his victims with his teeth, and it seemed to have been established by those who saw him that he raced among the trees with his mouth open and a ball of foam on either side of his jaws. It was natural for the inhabitants to believe that the moose was mad, like a dog, and when they sometimes found their cattle dead in the woods, swollen and showing scratches or wounds, they believed that they had been bitten by the moose.

The animal did not show near the settlements in winter, for the snow is usually deep and soft in these woods and it is difficult for a deer to travel. The popular belief was that the mad moose lived far away in the heart of the forest in what is called a yard, eating the branches of fir and spruce trees and digging under the snow for leaves, roots and mosses. A couple of hunters were said once to have come upon him in his winter home, and he bellowed so loudly as to fill the woods with tumult; his eyes blazed with rage and he dug his feet in the snow with such violence that it rose about him like a white cloud. As they had no weapons they were obliged to pass and leave him unmolested.

One autumn afternoon a boy about fifteen years old, named George Adams, left his father's farm-house near by the edge of the river to get some things at the store in the nearest settlement, which was about three miles distant. His course lay along a faint path through a thick stretch of spruce and pine forest. He made some delay at the settlement and when

he set out for home it was nearly sunset. When he entered the forest it was already gloomy, and he hurried along, for there was in his heart a great dread of the mad moose, which in summer time made this region his headquarters. He had gone over the path so often before that he instinctively made his way along, sometimes walking and sometimes running. Every unusual sound in the wood terrified him and he regretted he had not brought his father's gun, for a year before he had obtained permission to carry it, after the latest victim of the moose had been discovered by his father's house gored to death.

When about two-thirds of the way home and in the densest and most lonesome part of the bush, George was horrified to hear a fierce bellowing near him, and then it seemed from the crackling and swishing as if a cyclone were passing through the forest. He at once thought of the mad moose, and looking in the direction of the confusion, saw among the trees and moving swiftly toward him two globes of smoldering fire. He flung down his parcel and at once clambered into a pine tree, the branches of which grew well down on the bole. It was well that he was so quick, for he had not got more than ten feet from the ground before he felt a blow upon the foot from one of the moose's horns. When the animal saw that it had been foiled, it increased its mooring and bellowing till all the forest fairly rang with the hideous noises. Higher and higher George went into the tree and then he found two branches growing close enough together to afford him an easy resting place. His cap had fallen off when he began to climb, and the moose first took it in his mouth, then flung it from him and butted it savagely with his horns. The parcel, which contained articles obtained from the store, was the next object of the brute's fury; he stamped upon it, burst it asunder and with one of his antlers scattered the contents among the trees. The boy sat there stiff with terror, watching the frightful animal, which in turn looked at him with its dreadful eyes, up through the branches of the tree. After awhile the moose lay down directly below him, his head resting upon his forelegs, his eyes turned upward.

George knew that he was safe here for the night, but what would his parents think if he did not get home at the time expected? There were several paths between his home and the settlement, and as they did not know by which one he went, it might be a long time before they could release him from his predicament. He knew too well from what happened to others that the beast would keep him there all night, and how much longer he could not guess. He sat there in the branches for hours, till the constellation known as the dipper, or great bear, stood upon its end in the heavens and was turning over; then the sky darkened, great masses of black clouds rolled across the heavens, and very soon seemed to touch the tops of the trees. Soon the lightning shot from cloud to cloud like mighty scarlet daggers; rain began to patter among the branches and great thunders roared and reverberated across the heavens, all the while the moose glaring at him with his two terrifying eyes. Hour after hour he still lay there upon the branches, drenched to the skin by the driving rainstorm. Two or three times he slept for a few minutes, and once, upon awakening, he nearly lost his balance and fell; so he sat upright, resolved not to doze any more. As the wind went whistling through the trees his teeth chattered with the cold.

How glad he was when the gray dawn came struggling through the murk! And when the day cleared out he raised his voice and cried loudly for help. This startled the moose, who had lain in the same place in the moss through the night, and he jumped upon his feet, made a hasty breakfast from buds and young branches about the base of the tree, and once more took up his position of watching the boy.

George, as the morning passed began to grow hungry and

thirsty, every few minutes raising his voice and continuing to cry for help. The moose made a plunge for a spring near by, drank copiously, ate some more buds and young bushes, and again took his post under the tree. Hour after hour passed, and the boy's position in the branches became almost unbearable; he was sore, sleepy and weak from hunger and thirst; when he cried out his voice was feeble, and the hideous animal he thought was mocking his helplessness. When he saw the sun go down beyond the far pines a cold feeling of despair entered his heart. He never expected to see his parents again, and shuddered to think that when he fell asleep sometime during the night he would fall from his place and be maimed to death by the fierce beast. It was not until the second night had come that his hope completely broke down; then he began to cry, and then as if to mimic his misery the moose bellowed louder and louder.

About an hour after dark he saw the moose start up and thrust its head into the air toward the thickest part of the bush; then it sniffed and snorted and at the same time the wearied boy heard a sound as if some heavy body were breaking dry twigs come from the point where his jailer was watching. He straightened himself up on the branches and listened eagerly, then through the dusk he saw a pair of small burning eyes approaching the moose. The latter stamped the ground with its fore feet and thrust its head low, waiting for the newcomer. Then George heard a deep growl, the moose gave a loud bellow and the next moment he saw that some other animal had attacked his jailer. The moon shone clearly through the trees when the conflict began, and he was able to make out that the stranger was a huge black bear, and that it had seized the moose around the neck and was hugging him to death with its huge fore paws.

Evidently at the very first clasp the bear had broken the moose's neck, for the hideous brute had fallen back limp and apparently dead; whereupon the bear seized him by the throat uttering great deep growls, and did not let go while one spark of life remained. The bear then proceeded to make a meal from the body of his victim, and after half an hour's gorging he waddled away into the deep forest.

George waited till the last sound of the bear had ceased, and then making the best of his exhausted strength, went down out of the tree and set out for home. He was almost blind from sleeplessness and hunger and could scarcely totter along, but as he neared his home he found a party of a dozen people with birch-bark torches, continuing the search for him. The path by which he had gone and came was the last they had thought of searching.

The inhabitants from far and near came to see the terrible mad moose, but he was not a pleasant spectacle after the bear had had three, or four meals out of him.

A WONDERFUL CAVE.

A cave was discovered some years ago on White river, some thirty miles above Meeker, which seems to be as important a discovery of that kind as any ever made in Colorado. It was found by a prospector and hunter named Hooper, who reported it to the citizens of Meeker. But no one seemed particularly interested in the new find, as that portion of the country surrounding the headwaters of White river is full of curious things, and the settlers in that locality have become accustomed to them, and their curiosity is not easily aroused. Two gentlemen recently made an exploration of the cave, and found it in a limestone formation and extending into the mountain for half a mile or more.

The opening has the appearance of a railroad tunnel, twelve

or fourteen feet wide. The cave continues at this width for a considerable distance, when it grows narrower, and in one or two instances the explorers were obliged to stoop in following the passage. The opening is about sixteen feet above the river, and has the form of an incline.

When the party had reached a distance of a quarter of a mile, the floor sloped quite rapidly for two hundred or three hundred yards, when they came to an abrupt drop. Rocks were thrown down and the presence of water ascertained. When one of the party was lowered, the distance that had seemed so great was only twelve feet, and not more than three inches of water was found on the floor of the cave.

The air was good, and they found that the passageway continued, and was followed some three hundred yards further, when another drop of seven or eight feet was encountered. There was a dry, sandy bottom in this cave, and the passageway was found to continue still further, and was pursued thirty or forty yards further, when they came to what was apparently the end of the tunnel. A stream of water two feet or more in diameter was rushing out of the wall at one side, cutting across the foot of the breast of the passageway, and, to all appearances, was lost in the wall on the other side. The stream was swift, and came out with great force, and, stranger yet, the water was quite hot, and when tasted, was very much like the water found in the springs at Glenwood.

Where the water comes from and where it goes is a mystery that the explorers could not solve. Aside from the lime formation, the formation surrounding it is lava, and the supposition has been advanced that there is a crater in the vicinity filled up by crumbled walls of rock, which constantly discharge hot water, and during the course of ages has eaten its way down through a seam or crevice in the limestone to the river below. A few miles above Glenwood there are springs of a similar nature, which are situated almost in the bed of the Grand river. It is quite probable that further investigations will be made.

A resolute little school teacher, Miss Mildred Williams, of Lintonville, Minn., has broken the record in the Canadian Northwest for the length of time the land office has been besieged by homesteaders. She completed a wait of twelve days at the local land office and succeeded in securing a quarter section sixteen miles northeast of Saskatoon, valued at \$18 an acre. While there were a number of fine farms to be given out to the lucky ones, this was the prize, and Miss Williams prepared for it with all the care of a general undertaking a city's siege. She employed a woman to bring to her meals and soft drinks. She employed another woman as a kind of a scout and messenger. Then she moved into the vacant space just outside the door with a reclining chair. She took up her quarters just twelve days before the time announced for the homestead allotment. The rule in Canada is that a line shall be formed and the first one in gets first choice. Miss Williams got expert advice and then started her long vigil. Her equipment was a heavy coonskin coat and blankets, for the nights were chilly. With a supply of current literature and a regular service by which she received the daily papers, she kept her mind busy. At night she made a kind of a tent over her chair, which secured all the privacy she required. Every one was in sympathy with her because of the ingenuity and determination she displayed. Therefore there was a cheer when she marched into the land office and secured her homestead. She came to Canada eight months ago and began to teach school. As the support of a widowed mother she was entitled, under the law, to a homestead of 100 acres, and learning of the prize at this entry she laid her plans with care.

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