

THE MASTER KEY

CHAPTER XXIII.

Sir Donald Faversham Volunteers.

IN his search for the Hindu, who had bought the idol containing the plans of the mother lode of the "Master Key" mine, John Dorr had recourse again to the pawnbroker.

"That individual's curiosity was aroused by now, and he asked a great many questions, which John answered evasively.

When it came to getting a description of the Hindu the broker could give but few details.

He laid emphasis on the fact that he sold rugs and that he looked like any one of a dozen East Indians frequenting a Pacific port. He knew of no address.

With this Dorr had to be content, and he returned to Ruth to discuss with her what they should do next.

"If Wilkerson gets it there is an easy way to get him," he said in the course of their conversation.

"How?" demanded Ruth.

"Have him arrested as a fugitive from justice and hold for the county sheriff and the warrant that Tom Kane swore out," he replied.

Ruth considered this thoughtfully and shook her head.

"It would mean our going back to the mine and all kinds of trouble," she said wisely. "Besides, we wouldn't be any nearer the papers father wanted me to have."

"That is very true," John agreed. "We'll keep that in reserve in case we discover that he has the idol. Our only plan, then, is to trace this Hindu. That will be a hard job."

"Why not put detectives on the trail?"

"I don't think any detective could do better than myself," was the reply.

"But you can't do it all," she argued. "You can't be looking for this peddler and keeping an eye on Wilkerson and seeing to me at the same time."

"The seeing to you is the pleasantest part of the job," he said laughingly. "I refuse to delegate that to any one. Of course you're quite right, though, about it's being too big an affair for me to handle alone. I think I'll ask Everett to join us. Maybe he can suggest something. I'll wire him, and then we'll take a trip down to the water front and interview our launchman again. He seemed to me a pretty level headed chap, and he'll maybe be able to put us on the track of the Hindu if he took a steamer for the north, as I strongly suspect he did."

Ruth could not understand why the peddler should do this, and Dorr explained that the Hindu evidently had set great store on the idol, as he had not only paid cash, but had given a rug as well in exchange.

"He would know that the thing was worthless as an article of merchandise," he went on. "In the next place, he wasted no time in getting possession of it once he saw it. I have no doubt that it is sacred in his eyes—a god. It was stolen at some time from

quizzes elsewhere developed nothing but a fraud.

Everett arrived on the evening train and after dinner listened to the story of their adventures with great interest. When he had asked a few questions he and John looked at each other. Finally Everett spoke.

"It might take years to locate that lode without the exact plans," he said thoughtfully. "I don't doubt that your father, Miss Ruth, spent many a long hour and day prospecting for it. So we must have the plans if it's in the bounds of possibility to recover them. I think you will have to find your Hindu."

"There is the question of the mine," John said soberly. "It has already



"But Mrs. Grundy insists on the maid."

been allowed to go pretty much to ruin. Tom Kane would do his best, of course, but actually we are looking for the bird in the bush when we have one in the hand."

"I see your point," the promoter said promptly. "My offer of days ago still holds good. I'll finance this matter to the end, and I'll look after the mine too. So you can be care free so far as that goes, John."

"You know I wouldn't take it for myself," John began awkwardly and was silenced by a smile.

The next morning they had barely finished breakfast when the launch captain was announced.

The three of them found him bursting with news.

"I think I located your Hindu," he told them. "He came down at daylight this morning looking for a steamer sailing for the north. The Halcyon leaves at noon, and the steward gave him a job in the galley."

"But it might be another Hindu," Ruth suggested.

The captain turned toward her and shook his head. "I don't think it's possible," he said. "He answered the description clear down to the rugs. Besides that, he seemed kind of nervous, and when one of the sailors jollied him the man nearly had a fit. I'm sure he's your man."

"There's only one thing for you to do," Everett said promptly—"take passage on that steamer yourselves to San Francisco. By that time you can be pretty sure whether he's your man or not."

This was agreed upon, and Ruth started on her preparations immediately. Everett insisting that she take her maid with her.

"But I don't need her!" Ruth protested. "She's so expensive too!"

"You are merely a youngster," Everett said quietly, "and you must have a woman traveling with you. It is all right to do as you like in the mines, where no one would dream of speaking evil or thinking it, but Mrs. Grundy insists on the maid."

John agreed with Everett and departed to get the tickets, in spite of Everett's warning that he had better send and get them.

The result was that George Drake, just landed from the mine and in search of Wilkerson, found him shadowing Dorr.

Drake explained his coming by saying that he had heard nothing from either Wilkerson or Mrs. Darnell, and he could be of no use at the "Master Key."

"It's just as well," Wilkerson said sulkily. "I have a dozen things to attend to, and you can help. The first is not to let that man Dorr get out of our sight or turn a hand unless we know it."

In a few sentences filled with bitterness he told the story of the finding of the chest and the futile search for the plans and the abstraction of the idol containing them.

When Wilkerson found that Dorr and Ruth booked passage on the Halcyon for San Francisco and had inquired about the next sailings for the Orient he took Drake aside and they determined that this could only mean one thing—

Dorr was on the track of the idol. "We'll follow them!" he said savagely. "We've spent too much to quit now."

Jean Darnell received Drake coolly and listened to Wilkerson's explanation of his new scheme without a word.

Her stormy eyes boded no good to some one, and Wilkerson feared she would abandon him.

grass in her passions, and now she could not give up her sweet revenge nor forego the thought of possessing the wealth which had once been Tom Gallion's and which he had tried to conceal.

She agreed to go, and they decided to leave by train that evening, thus being in San Francisco in time to meet the steamer and watch for Dorr's next movement.

Two days later Everett again met John and Ruth in the hotel in San Francisco.

John's news was that the Hindu they sought had undoubtedly been on the Halcyon and that John had bought a steerage passage for Bombay.

"You ought to get the plans before you get to India," Everett said earnestly. "You'll find yourself in a strange land where it will be like looking for a needle in a haystack. Get hold of your man."

Dorr acknowledged this and outlined his tentative plan of getting hold of the idol during the passage.

"After all, we don't want the idol. I shall try to persuade the man of this and get him to let me have the papers concealed in it."

At this moment Sir Donald Faversham was announced.

The entrance of the Englishman who had made himself so attentive to Ruth at the southern hotel awakened little enthusiasm in either Dorr or Everett, but for Ruth's sake they played the civil part.

She, on the other hand, received Sir Donald with every evidence of lively pleasure.

"We are this minute talking of going over to India, where you lived so long," she told him after the first greetings. "And you are just the man to tell us all about it."

"Going to India!" ejaculated the baronet. "My word!"

"Yes," she proceeded. "We are after a Hindu and his idol."

At this point John laughingly came to the rescue and briefly explained the object of their quest.

Sir Donald listened quietly, occasionally glancing at Ruth, whose beauty was enhanced by pretty excitement.

At the conclusion of the tale he nursed the end of his stick awhile in very apparent perplexity.

"You know, my dear fellow," he said, addressing John, "that India is a large country filled with millions of different races. Even granting that this man is a Hindu and that your surmise about the idol is correct, I don't see how you are going to accomplish anything."

"That is just where you can help us!" said Ruth impulsively.

For the instant Sir Donald actually blushed with embarrassment.

Then he gathered himself together and went into details of what they must expect and the difficulties they must encounter.

"If you could only go along!" Ruth said plaintively when he had got them thoroughly discouraged. "You could talk their horrid language and make them behave."

"By Jove," said the baronet, smiling, "that's not a half bad idea! I have nothing to do, and I might as well see the chaps in India again as stay here."

"You know, Sir Donald was in the army there," Ruth explained to Everett.

"Brought up there," Faversham added. "Know India pretty well. I really believe I'll go with you if you'll accept of my company. What a jark!"

Neither John nor Everett received this proposal with undue warmth, but Ruth found it delightful, and before any of them realized the seriousness of the conversation everything had been arranged.

Outside Faversham spoke to Dorr as man to man.

"I don't want to thrust myself on you in any way," he said briefly. "I happen to know India and to be sure that I can be of service to you. In fact, I should think it a jolly trip. But if you think I took advantage of the little lady's courtesy say so."

Entirely disarmed, John Dorr had to confess that Sir Donald's offer relieved him of a responsibility too heavy for him.

The two parted the best of friends, though John could not refrain from an expression of jealousy to himself.

But he knew that Ruth's interests were now doubly safeguarded and tried to restrain his unruly heart.

As the steamer sailed the next day they had little time for their preparations, but John made sure that the Hindu was on board before the last line was cast off and the big liner backed into the stream and headed slowly round for the channel to the open sea.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"He is a Prisoner!"

DURING the long voyage to Hongkong the three were thrown much together, and Sir Donald learned in full the history of the "Master Key" mine and the present search for the plans of the lode.

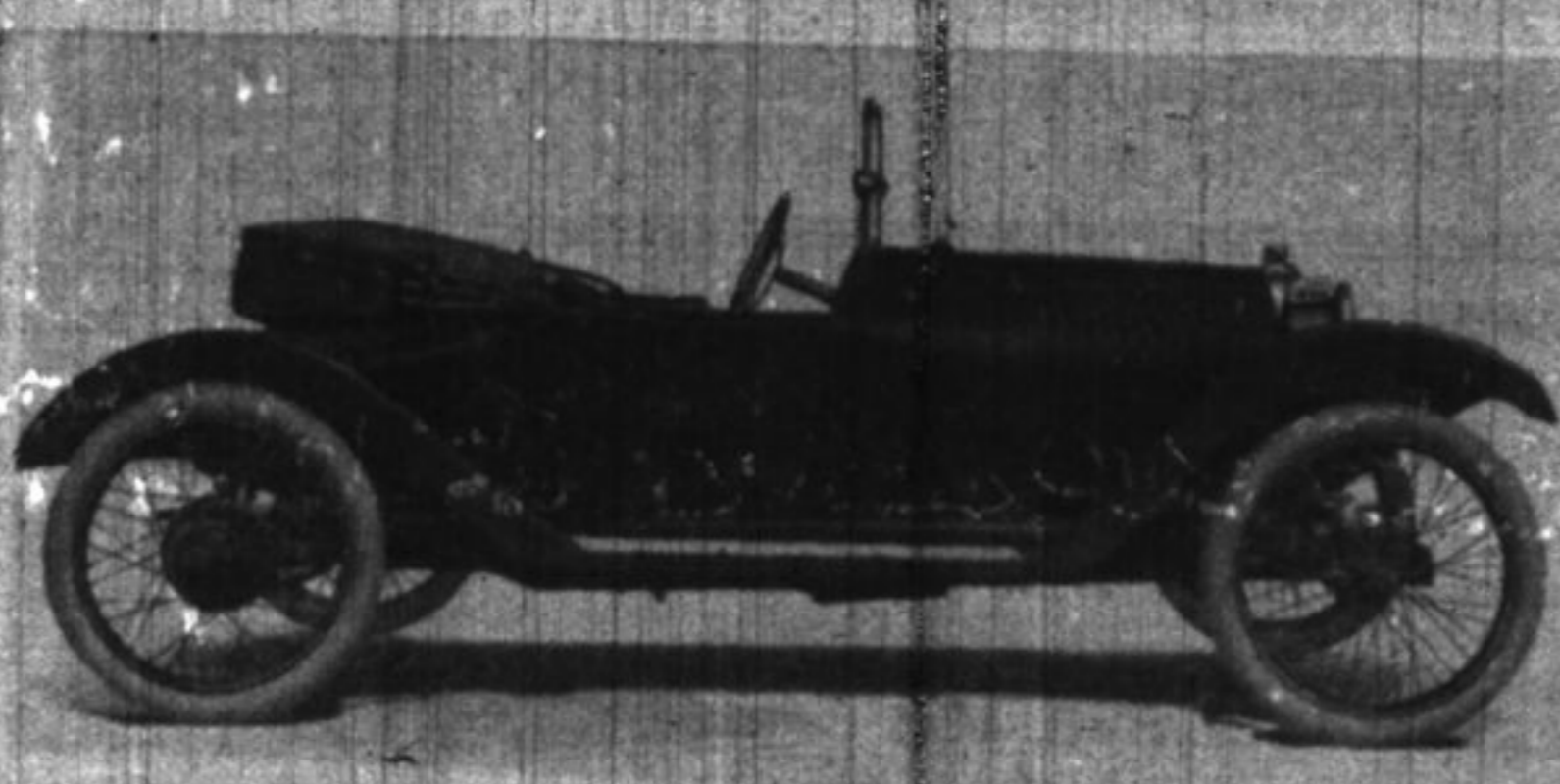
At first he could hardly believe that such things could happen, but slowly he came to understand that the tremendous passions that were fighting to be satisfied would stop at nothing.

"I fear you will find it different in India," he told John many times. "The country is immense, it is inhabited by races of different speech and habits and religions, and yet over it all there is the vague spell of the east which is so foreign to your western America that I fear you will not easily recover what you seek."

"But I must get the papers back," said John quietly. "There is no question about it."

"Many a man has refused to ac-

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COURT TRIALS IN FRANCE.

Three Judges and Two Sets of Jurors in Each Criminal Case.

Most interesting indeed is it to watch the trial of a criminal in Paris, especially when defended by a woman. French procedure is quite different from ours.

There are two sets of jurors, who must sit throughout the trial, so that any mishap to any juror in the group selected to determine the facts is prevented from retarding the trial by the immediate substitution of one of the jurors from the second group. Three judges always sit in all the assizes at every trial.

The prosecuting attorney, beginning with the words "I accuse," reads the indictment to the prisoner and does not speak again. The presiding justice does all the questioning, and there seem to be no rules of evidence to restrict his questions. The defending attorney at the close of the trial addresses the jury. He has the last word before the judge's charge.

A word here about the criminals of France. I have never seen a worse looking lot than those "Apaches" I was told that they are the descendants of criminals, and they looked it. Comparing them with our criminals, I was led to state that the United States had no criminal class, and it will be our own fault if we permit a criminal class to exist. Mary M. Lily in Case and Comment.

Hard to Explain. Cummings and Welsner were business rivals. One day at the club they fell to talking.

"Do you carry any life insurance?" queried Cummings.

"Yes," was the answer. "I have \$10,000."

"Made payable to your wife?" asked Cummings.

"Yes," said Welsner.

"Well," asked Cummings, "what kind of an excuse do you give to your wife for living?"—New York Press.

Notice

Public notice is hereby given that the Board of Local Improvements of the City of Highland Park, County of Lake and State of Illinois, has filed in the county court of Lake County, Illinois, a certificate that the following improvement has been completed, and that it conforms substantially to the requirements of the original ordinance for the construction of the same, to-wit:

For the grading, draining, curbing, paving with reinforced concrete pavement and otherwise improving Sheridan Rd. from its intersection with the easterly line of St. Johns Ave. southerly to the northerly end of the new pavement in Dean Ave., said northerly end of said new pavement being in the southerly line of Cedar Ave., produced easterly, at the junction of Sheridan Rd. and Cedar Ave., all in the city of Highland Park, Lake County, Illinois. Highland Park Special Assessment of said court docket number 214, and that application has been made to said court to consider and determine whether or not the facts stated in said certificate are true. That a hearing will be had upon said application on Friday the 26th day of February A. D. 1915, at the hour of ten (10) o'clock in the forenoon of said day, at the county court room of said court, in the county court house, at Waukegan, in said Lake County. Objections may be filed to said application on or before the hour of ten (10) o'clock in the forenoon of said day.

Frank P. Hawkins Robert W. Buckley Frank W. Sheahan Byron J. Stevens

Board of Local Improvements of the city of Highland Park, Illinois, Decem-ber 30, 1914. 50-51

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"Seeing to you is the pleasantest part of the job."

a temple. What more natural than that he should see the chance of a great reward for doing a pious duty and returning it to its native place?"

"But that's all guesswork," Ruth insisted practically.

"I know it," he admitted. "But a good guess is better than nothing to work on. Let's go and see our skipper person."

The launch captain received them genially and listened to John's story. At its finish he agreed with John that it was very likely that the Hindu had recognized a native god and would restore it to its own temple.

"I've visited those eastern ports a good deal," he told them. "I know boys on a bark from the ship will do just that trick—run off with an idol for a curio—and I know the fuss the heathens make about it too. They'll go any length to get back a first chop god."

Before they left he promised to keep an eye open for the Hindu and inform them if he got the smallest clew. With this they had to be satisfied, as in-