"It brought me good luck and old him, apparently oblivious of any dan-Tom Gallon bad luck," was the re- ger. to keep it? It's my muscot."

Wilkerson's resolution, and he agreed a deep reverie. with Drake that they should surren der the image.

new difficulty. None of their men had ward. been allowed to know of the presence of the idol, and Drake asserted that to inform them now would be dan-

It seemed unwise merely to drop it by the wayside, as it might escape notice, and no good would be done

It must be delivered to the priests and the condition made that the white men should be allowed safe conduct to the city.

How to do this occupied their minds until the day when they found them seives really attacked in force and had to take refuge in a native but.

Here their position was so perilous that they had no time for anything but preparations for defense.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Snake in the image. mean business this time," Drake growled as they did their best to barricade the single door and

"And our own bullies aren't up fighting with good grace, either," Wilkerson confessed. "These half whites

window. "I believe those hills are full

of them."

"It's an odd thing," Drake said when the afternoon had passed without an assault, "that we hear firing, but none of it is directed at us."

"That's so," Wilkerson responded thoughtfully. "I wonder who it can

He was soon to know, for after night fall John Dorr and his single attendant rode furiously up to the hut and tried for admittance.

A few scattering shots told that they had been discerned in their flight. For the moment Wilkerson did not recognize his old enemy, disguised as he was in native costume, but when

door and admitted him. John flung himself inside and jam med the door to just as a second hali of bullets rattled on its surface. Then

he stared at the man opposite him. "Wilkerson!" he gasped. "Yes, it's me," was the snarling re- be cast aside as no longer useful. sponse. "What are you doing here?" "Some hillmen took us for enemies long." Dorr explained. "We saw this

but, and when it was dark enough to

conceal our movements we made for

"And now you can make for some tawny eyes and luxuriant beauty. other place," Wilkerson said, handling his revolver meaningly.

John laughed. "I feel myself that the place is too small for both of us. But it's white man against native now. If they get me they'll get you. Our only hope is to stick together now."

"I'll see you dead first!" snarled the

But Drake spoke up and silenced

"While you two are fighting for the benefit of the servants those hillmen are preparing to assault the hut", A long look through a crack showed

the hillmen closing up about them, and Wilkerson gave in with a bad grace. He was glad of the help, however when the firing grew hotter and they were hard pressed in the but.

The natives proved themselves ar rant cowards, and it depended on the three white men to defend the place. This they did with such success that

their assailants slowly withdrew. "Now is the time for a sortie," said Dorr. "We've got to drive them clean away from here or else we'll be as bad ly off as ever."

Wilkerson and Drake agreed, and John promptly led them out in a wild rush against the nearest hillmen. These were so surprised at the bold

ness of the maneuver that they field and soon the coast was clear except for a few too badly wounded to join in their comrades' flight.

Now that the immediate peril was past, Wilkerson and Dorr found them selves again antagonists.

But both were so wearled that by one accord they silently consented to a Yet Wilkerson could not resist taunt-

ing his rival. "It looks as if you were always a little late." he said, throwing himself back in a settle while John dropped

upon a stool by the table. "I heard you got the idol," John re-

plied in a dull tone. "Yes, and what was in the idol too!" Then, despite Drake's gestures of remonstrance, he went on: "I got the deeds and the master key and the idol and the plans Tom Gallon robbed me of. I guess I'm ahead in this

John nodded, his fatigue so great that he was unable even to reply.

"I guess that's right," said Wilkerson in an altered tone. "We'll catch a little needed sleep and get away before daylight. Time enough then to beneath your hand.

For a little while both men kept their eyes open, watchful each of the other. say: "What's the use? I've got the

things and the men to defend them too. Drake will keep watch." John nodded carelessly and laid his head on his hands, folded on the table. A moment later he was asleep, and not long afterward Wilkerson's satur-

nine visage was turned to the shadowy ceiling. Drake sat in a corner on the pack sacks, his revolver in hand.

The natives slumbered across from

sponse. "Do you think I don't want | When the but was completely quiet except for the breathing of the sleep-Yet a couple of night slarms shook ers Drake allowed himself to fall into

Now that the quest was practically ended he had begun to think about his Here they were confronted with a own part in it and reckon on his re-

Long association with Wilkerson had shown him that be had nothing to expect from him unless by an appeal to

his selfishness. There was but one person who might reward him-the woman they both

loved, Jean Darnell His mind went back to his first days



"I'll see you dead first!"

and he seemed again to feel the soft threads of the web she wove about

She had found him a young man at the precise point where a woman may either make or mar one for life.

He had been an easy prey for her tigerish desire for a slave. He had spent his little money lavishly upon her, without thought of other reward than to be near her, until Wilkerson he was sure he rejuctantly opened the had appeared out of the darkness of

> her past. Even then he had still been faithful to her, obeyed her every behest, risked life and liberty in her service, even aided Wilkerson in an endeavor whose success meant that he (Drake) would

And now he sat on guard in a but in a far country among a crowd of and chased us pretty much all day aliens whose very tongue was gibberish to his ears.

On guard for whom? For what? That Wilkerson might finally succeed and win Jean Darnell of the In that moment-was it to be too

late?-Drake came into his own. The mine and its wealth were as much his as Wilkerson's.

The plans were his as much as

Yet the man asleep on the settle had taken everything to himself and would continue to do so.

And Jean? Drake laughed silently.

He knew her price. He remembered his last conversations with her, those half confidential talks when she had insinuatingly warned him to keep a watchful eye on Wilkerson.

He had been given to understand that it was the gold she wished. And he (Drake) had the key to that gold in his own keeping for the while.

He set his teeth when he realized how Wilkerson despised him, had counted him altogether as a mere pawn in the great game.

He had not even troubled to conceal from him the hiding place of the

They were once more within the idol, for Wilkerson had boasted that he had put them back and would leave with a muttered oath, the natives rose them there till he reached America as one and thrust him aside from the again.

keep 'em for me, just as it did for Gallon. It's a poor idol that won't serve two masters." And the idol lay there wrapped in ture of terror.

the bundle under his feet. The price of Jean Darnell: The thought worked in his mind ac-

tively. He could not refrain from following it out to its logical conclusion. Why should it be Wilkerson who returned with the plans and claimed her? Why should be (Drake) continue to play the slave?

A moment while they slept and the plans were his; then when Wilkerson unsuspectingly presented the idol and pulled out its eye there would be

It would be George Drake who held the master key to Jean Darnell's avaricious heart.

So he dreamed, open eyed, staring into a future where he played the master and not the slave.

And in his waking dream he touched the bundle and felt beneath the rude covering the hard contours of the

Again it ran through his head like a call: You have the price of happiness

Slowly he yielded to the temptation. Gradually, with eyes constantly fixed on the motionless forms of Wilkerson Wilkerson was the first to laugh and and Dorr, he got the bundle between his knees; then he unlaced the fasten-

ings tremulously. I'm going to sleep. You'd better do so | The idol came out under his hand, and he stared at it, fascinated by its De kid knew it wasn't safe to tell de ugliness and the thought of the secret | lie.

that it held. No wonder that at every sight of it natives bowed in abject worship. It held wealth, power, love, happi-

He shook it softly. Yes, the plans sciousness can't conquer de primitif were still within; he could hear the impulse to avoid de consequences. Let rustle of the folded papers.

He peered around the hut, and, and ing all asleep, he set the idol on his

knee and bent over it. He pulled at the eye which he had seen Wilkerson draw out. It came with difficulty. Then he held it up and looked into the dark orifice. There was nothing there.

He was about to throw the idol down in disgust when a glimmer of something bright within the head caught his attention.

He stooped over again and then froze into immobility. The spirit of the vile god was moving within.

The point of light grew into intense brightness. It approached the dark eye socket and glowed therein with frightful fire. Drake's whole body oozed sweat; his

hands clinched unwillingly about the

form of the idol. He could not thrust

it away. Then the socket was filled, and the devilish eye buiged outward phosphorescent, gleaning with wickedness. Drake felt his heart bur-t in his bosom. Then the snake that had ian so long hid within the hollow of the image struck forth and, having struck, slip-

ped away. "God!" whispered Drake, with thickened tongue, and hammed the moving eye back into place.

Then he huddied the idot itself into its bundle, laced the throngs with stiffening fingers. "God!" he whi pered again. Then

he fell across the bundle dead, without

a sound to waken the sleepers It was three hours before the dawn that Harry Wilkerson a woke and looked about him. All the rest were still

He rose softly and peered out of the window. It was very dark outside, and he could see nothing.

He turned his gaze within and saw Drake huddled over the packs apparently sound asleen.

"The fool!" muttered Wilkerson. "I've got all out of him I want. But I suppose I've got to take him along a way yet." He resolved to be rid of the young

man so soon as he was through with Dorr. Then he paused, in deep thought, his ugly brows bent on the unconscious object of his batred.

An instant was sufficient for him to make up his mind. He silently went to work and bound John firmly in his

Then he tried to waken Drake. In shaking him he made sufficient noise to stir the natives, and they sat up and stared, sleepy eyed.

But when Wilkerson raised the swoilen, discolored face and shrank back



John Led Them Out In a Wild Rush Against the Nearest Hillmen.

door and pushed through, panic ; He recalled his words: "Let the idol stricken.

Only John's servant remained, kept to his post by the fear of Sir Donald's wrath. But he could not repress a ges-

"It is the god!" he whispered. At this John wakened and, finding himself bound, struggled violently. "Not yet!" snarled Wilkerson. "Here's where you stay!"

In the instant Dorr realized his helplessness. He did not even remonstrate when Wilkerson drove his servant out with curses and bade him begone and fired a shot after him for emphasis.

Nor did he speak while Wilkerson hastily chose the pack containing the idol, kicking Drake's body out of the way, and left on the run.

Speech was useless. He stared down at Drake's contorted form. Beside it lay coiled a lithe serpent, its bright eyes fixed on him, its head weaving to and fro.

Unknowingly Wilkerson had left him not only to famine and thirst, but to sudden death. He bowed his head and cried in agony, "Ruth, Ruth!"

The Wise Child.

The Teacher-So George told his father that he cut the cherry tree. He knew it was wrong to tell a lie. Now, why did George say he cut it? The Pupil-Aw, you know, The Teacher-Why, Jimmy! He

knew it was wrong to tell a lie. Now, what was the reason? The Pupil-Aw, say, wat's de use

The Teacher-Jimmy! The Pupil-Aw, don't pull no more of dat soshylogical stuff. Me brudder's got two shelves of books full of de dope. You knows dat de inner conit go at dat."-Cleveland Plain Dealer.

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