

"DELIAH"

Concluded.

"Well, Inspector Sahib, what new?"
"I have had the woman watched, sahib. She has kept within doors for two days; but half-an-hour ago a beggar approached her and delivered a message; and now—even now—she has left her house, veiled, riding upon a pony, and goes towards the city gate. She goes slowly, as if she waited for the night or for men to join her. Very slowly, sahib; easy to be kept in sight, as is being done, or to be overtaken."

"Yes; and the beggar?"
"He has been arrested. There is much dust upon him; he has travelled fast and far."

"Bahut accha, very good. It is all quite satisfactory. Now, Inspector Sahib, send a constable with me to search the woman's room, whence I go now; and do you despatch twenty sowars by a circuitous route, to tarry for orders under the city wall; also an orderly to wait for my message at the end of the lane. What instructions has the spy?"

"To keep the woman in sight, to report her direction as he passes the thana, police station, and to give swift warning if she quickens her pace."

Macintyre and the policeman crossed the lane on foot, and dived through the gaping crowd into an alley that ran behind the shops. They pushed their way past the litter of the kennel, and found a rickety stairway that climbed to the upper floor against the outer wall. Macintyre ran up it, creaked along the balcony, pushed aside a curtain quickly, and advanced with boldness. It was the woman's room; a glance into the street below assured him of the fact; and the overhanging story projected so far above the shops that it seemed almost as if he could touch the Government Offices by leaning well over the balcony. The room was empty, and there was no tell-tale relic to reward his acuteness; only a star, a native bed, a couple of clay water-jars, and a medley of discarded finery and broken trinkets. A woman's shoe lay beside the bed. The room was very hot, and smelt of musk.

Macintyre turned everything over and searched for evidence. There was nothing to tell that the cast-off garments were stolen goods, or that the twisted bangles and scattered beads were the proceeds of Hira Singh's dacoity. The babble of the street droned through the window; the reek of hot bodies and greasy sweetmeats fought with the musk. It was all so sordid and unprofitable.

He turned to go—and then stopped in amazement at the sound of a voice in his ears. For the second he thought somebody was in the balcony, and was speaking into the room. A glance showed him that there was no one there, and he stood petrified, rooted to the spot by his astonishment; for the voice—and it rang with hollow distinctness—was that of his office peon, addressing, in the curt accents of authority, some lesser light. He looked at the constable, whose gaping mouth and round eyes showed his bewilderment. The voice continued to rumble in their ears.

"Are, son of a pig! Would you leave the Superintendent Sahib's room up-swept? There are three—four scraps of paper lying even now upon the matting. Sweep!" The sound of a blow followed.

"It—it is a spirit!" gasped the policeman.

"By George! no. It's the leakage!"

Macintyre's face crimsoned with excitement; he poked his head through the window, twisted his neck, and looked up into the bulging eave. He tapped the woodwork and listened, and his eyes travelled from the reeded windows of the offices to the balcony roof and back again.

"A perfect sounding-board!" His knuckles called out a hollow knock. "A voice, either in my room or the collector's, would be thrown upon it and rebound into the lady's ears with the greatest facility. No wonder Hira Singh's friend preferred her bazaar lodgings to better quarters! Well, there should be no more conjecture. It is all plain-sail now."

"The sahib understands?" said the policeman in awe-struck tones.

"Yes, I understand. There is the explanation, Ji."—and Macintyre gave a brief lecture on acoustics. "Go now, swiftly, and give this chit to the orderly for the Collector Sahib." He scribbled a note upon a leaf of his pocket-book. "Keep a still tongue in

your head, as befits a policeman, and tell my peon, when you see him, that he has no authority to beat the sweeper log."

The policeman scuttled away with a grin, and Macintyre followed him down the staircase. He went over to the courthouse, put a flask and a roll of bandages into his pocket, buckled on a Sam-Browne belt, and inspected the chambers of his revolver. Then he sat upon the veranda steps to watch the evening sky flush to rose and gold and blood-colour, and to wait the coming of fresh horseflesh and Mr. Faulkner.

PART II.

The spy threw himself down in the sand of the roadside and waited. In appearance he was a half-naked, dust-powdered, rhot, overcome with heat and exhaustion after a day's work at the water-wheel; in reality he was a tough and rising young policeman, keen and cautious, with a full knowledge of the responsibility of his task. But that was over now; he had done his work; and all that remained was for him to watch for the sahibs and their party, and to trust that some comrade would give him the tail of a horse to help him to the finish. The night had shut down upon the hot earth; in the glimmer of starlight the road could be seen dwindling to right and left, and the groves of mangoes that dotted the plain loomed large and vague. Clumps of coarse grass studded the sandy stretch; here and there a cultivator's patch was marked by its clumsy well machinery, and by the machan, bed platform, in the forks of a tree on which its owner would keep watch by night when crops were high. The cry of a quail and the yelp of pariahs at some distant village were all the sounds that broke the close, heat-laden silence.

Half-an-hour passed. The spy laid his ear to the ground, listened, sat up, and finally sprang to his feet as a blur upon the road began to take shape, and he could hear the clink of bridles and the pad of hoofs. He stood to attention, and Faulkner and Macintyre grew out of the dusk, and reined in. Behind them a many-headed mass paused too, in a scuffle of dust.

"Ah, here's our man, said Macintyre softly. 'What khabbar, policeman?'"

"Great news, Huzur. Hira Singh and his men are making merry in Kandua village, not a mile from here. The sentries are but blind men, for I crawled through them to the walls of the village, and I saw. The woman is there also."

"You followed her?"
"I followed, Huzur, when she left the gates of the city, where she was joined by two of the robbers—they are bold men—and rode away very quickly into the country. I took a pony from the thana, and I rode too, following far behind and riding always under cover, Faulkner. 'Why would he have thought it would be a long way to go, Huzur; but, lo! it is not so. They are close at hand.'"

"Doubled in his tracks. The impudence of the brute! And we were thinking he was in Trevor's district!" said Faulkner. "Who would have thought of looking for him in the scene of his last robbery? Go on, policeman."

"If the Heaven-born will come now, and those behind also, gently," said the policeman, "I will lead them. There could be no better time, for they are drunk, and over-bold."

"Take my stirrup," said Macintyre. He turned in his saddle and lifted his hand, and men and leaders jingled forward.

"What is the plan of campaign?" said Faulkner. "There's no sounding-board here, thank Heaven!"

"My idea is to ride within a quarter of a mile of the village, then to dismount the men, and let them surround the place, the inspector leading them upon the farther side. I go ahead with you and get as near to the huts as possible. The sentries must be surprised in silence, if it can be done. Then, when I give the signal, or the alarm is started, we close in, and you and I and such men as are near us make for the headquarter staff. It's Hira Singh I want; the others can catch the rest of the gang if they like—each man to pick his spot before he attacks, and work straight for it."

Faulkner nodded his approval, and the cavalcade trotted on in silence. The signs of cultivation at the roadside grew more frequent, and presently, low upon the horizon, a spark of fire glimmered in a setting of huddled shadows.

Macintyre drew rein and dropped his voice. "Kandua," he said. He turned to the men and addressed them briefly, and at the close of the exhortation the troop dropped from their saddles, and

hobbled each his own horse with halter-ropes. Then they spread out by the road into the fields, the stealthy figures creeping farther and farther apart until they faded into the dusk, and only two luckless constables remained to keep eyes upon the horses. The two in authority stalked cautiously from the track, and over the arra patches and the water-channels, their faces turned to the glitter of flame.

The village grew plain to see. They could hear now the hum of voices, the thud of a tantom, and occasionally a drunken shout that beat through the night towards them. A red glow glinted between the walls of the huts, and the spy, who had been stealing in Macintyre's foot-steps, crouched to his elbow and touched his sleeve. He pointed in one direction.

"There is the house in which I saw Hira Singh," he said.

Macintyre looked, and saw the outline of a hut blocking the starlight some fifty yards away. It had a window, from which there spread a cone of light, and between the window and their goal an unsuspecting dacoit lolled upon his rifle, with his face toward the earth. The spy looked at him, and made a significant gesture with his hands. Macintyre nodded; and the next instant the man had dropped upon his belly, and was advancing like a snake through the waving crops.

Faulkner caught his breath, his attention riveted by the unconscious figure. The crawling policeman had been swallowed up in the growth, and the sentry continued to nod above his folded arms. A minute passed, and the watchers saw something rise behind him to the robber's level. There was the muffled clatter of the falling rifle, a groan that was stifled as soon as it was uttered, and the dacoit blundered to the ground with ten iron fingers gagging him.

Macintyre did not speak; he waved only to the line and ran forward with stooping shoulders and with hardly a glance at the two men on the ground. The policeman was still clutching, twisting, and heaving silently above his handiwork. Faulkner felt a shudder of repulsion, but it was no time for scruples; he pressed on too, and hoped, doubtfully, that the man might survive the rough handling.

They pulled up under the very walls of the village; and so complete was the surprise that not even an exclamation of alarm was heard, and not a sentinel escaped to shout or fire. The dacoits continued to riot and drink in noise and fancied security. Macintyre and Faulkner crept to the window and looked in, so near that they could have almost touched the inner wall. The light came from a chirag, native lamp, which was smoking and stinking on the floor. Beyond it, reclining at his ease in the doorway, a large-bearded giant, clear-skinned, light-eyed, and swarthy, sprawled upon a string bedstead, a hookah at his lips; and beside him, the light flickering upon her beauty and her disguise, squatted Myra Pereira, arch-plotter and renegade, with his hand upon her shoulder.

"So thou hast outwitted them again! Well, it is easily done, for the pigs have little brains and no speed." The dacoit yawned. "To-morrow we go to harry the soul of Grigson Sahib, and loot that fat tehsildar of his."

"I am tired of playing eavesdropper," said the woman, with a shrug. "When are we to go to Delhi and show how rich we are? Here one hoards. I wish to spend."

"And I to rob," chuckled Hira Singh. "When, my pearl? Oh, when fighting, loses its savour. When—"

He stopped, and leapt off the bed with a clutch at his knife. The woman sprang to her feet and dashed a veil upon the lamp. She was too late. There was no time to scream, to fly, to put the knife to ribs, the doorway was choked with men, and Macintyre's arms were round the struggling robber.

A tumult of fighting arose from the village. The place had become an inferno of wounded men, of bitter enemies, of groans, and blows and exploding rifles. The dacoits had been thoroughly surprised, but they knew how to fight at odds. Their first instinct was to rally round their leader; and therefore it was that Faulkner, hurrying in to complete the capture, found himself furiously assaulted, instead, and fell to battering at his assailant's face in the frenzied struggle for life and liberty.

Macintyre and Hira Singh swayed and struggled and dashed each other from one side to the other of the hut into which they had tumbled. The dacoit's knife-hand was held to his side by the grip that had pinioned it at the first onslaught; but Macintyre

was a light-weight, and Hira Singh tossed him to and fro as a terrier tosses a rat, spitting with rage and his inability to shake himself free. The woman watched with a primitive curiosity; she exhibited no feminine alarm, and she followed the progress of the fight from the darkest corner of the hut, unwilling or careless of the chance of escape.

Weight told. Bit by bit Macintyre lost his vantage-ground; inch by inch his enemy captured his position, and reversed it. He slipped at last, gasping and clutching as he was driven downwards, and in the next breath he was hurled and pinned to the ground, and Hira Singh, above him, was wrenching the knife free for the thrust of victory.

He twisted his wrist, once, twice, and tore it out of Macintyre's fingers. The knife swung and then the woman sprang upon him and snatched it from his hand. It spun through the window of the hut; and Hira Singh's unwitting pause swept the tide of fortune again to Macintyre. He raised himself and caught the dacoit once more about the body, and they rolled across the floor. A minute later Faulkner and the inspector, pañting from their own perils, dashed in, and found them thus; and Hira Singh succumbed to the superior numbers.

Macintyre and Faulkner sat down upon the string bed, while the remnants of the fight ebbed and died about the village, and the policemen began to straggle in with their prisoners. The inspector knotted and re-knotted Hira Singh's bonds, and a couple of constables mounted guard over him and the woman.

The dacoit did not speak for a long time. When he did his voice was hoarse with rage and exertion, and the tiger-look he flashed at Myra Pereira made the onlookers think her well served by the turn affairs had taken.

"I have thee to thank for this," he said. "I shall not forget."

"Perhaps not, seeing that thou hast but short time before thee for remembrance," she said. She stared at him with indifference and he scowled and dropped his eyes. Something in his attitude, and in the woman's cold-blooded fickleness made a stir of pity in Faulkner's breast for the downfall of the man.

"Is he not your lover? Why did you do it?" he asked in English.

"Oh, he was a savage; I was tired of him," she answered carelessly. "He would have killed the tall young man, and I like him; he is very good to look upon. If it had been a little ape like you, now, he might have struck and welcome."

"Oh," said Faulkner, dryly, "I see. You evidently pride yourself upon your candour, Macintyre, do you hear? To your other laurels you must add the triumph of your beautiful appearance. It counts for much, you see, in the untutored nether world. We have cause to be grateful for the lady's favour. Not that something is not due to your quick wits also; I have you to thank for the jubilation in which I shall indulge when I communicate the news to Trevor and Grigson. There will be much jealousy; I doubt that if you have captured one adversary you have raised up two more."

He spoke in his usual whimsical way; but Macintyre looked into his face and saw something that warmed his heart. He, too, was sufficiently thankful for the caprice that had saved his life, and he leaned back against the doorway and surveyed his prisoner with satisfaction and relief. He measured Hira Singh with a foe's appreciation; though he twinged, momentarily, like Faulkner, at the sight of even a rascal suffering the bitterness of desertion and defeat. Myra Pereira had turned her back upon the lost cause, and was trying to coquette with the adamant inspector.

Macintyre folded his arms, and pictured the little mother in Scotland, receiving the news of his success. The tingling exultation of the victor was stirring in his veins.

LONDON'S GREAT DOCKS.

London has a larger commerce than any other city in the world. Liverpool comes next, and Hamburg probably ranks third, although Antwerp closely approaches her. The docks of London cover a greater area than those of Liverpool, and some of them individually are, or were until recently, larger than any on the Mersey. The Victoria dock, opened in 1855, measures 3,000,1,050 feet. The Royal Albert connecting with it and completed in 1880, is 6,500 feet long and 450 feet wide. The two with their locks, constitute a chain almost three miles long, across one of the great horseshoe bays in the lower Thames.

A LOCK AS A DETECTIVE.

An Indian Rajah's Plan to Watch Dishonest Servants.

A look for which Messrs. Chubb, the famous English lockmaker, not long ago received an order, taxed the ingenuity of all their experts. It is a point of honor with the firm that no order, however uselessly ingenious, shall baffle the inventive faculty of the designers or the technical skill of the workmen. Whatever a customer wants he must have.

The order came from an Indian rajah. After the manner of dusky potentates, he suffered from the dual possession of dishonest servants and magnificent diamonds. The diamonds had been disappearing at an alarming rate, and although only seven servants had access to the box containing them, it had been found impossible to discover the culprit. Whether the rajah dismissed his retinue or put them to death on suspicion, the thefts continued with unbroken regularity.

In his extremity he thought of Messrs. Chubb. An ordinary person would have contented himself with procuring a safe, the lock of which would answer to no key but his own, but the rajah desired something more. He wanted not simply to preserve his jewels, but to catch the thief. It was the fashioning of a lock that should carry out the rajah's idea that taxed the ingenuity of the designers of the great lock-making establishment.

The rajah's order was for an exceedingly complicated lock. He wanted a safe fitted with eight different keys, one for each of his servants and one for himself. A piece of glass about eight inches square was to be let into the front of the safe.

To carry out his wishes, the lock must be so constructed that upon the opening of the safe by any particular key the photograph of the opener should appear immediately in front of the glass, to remain there until another key was inserted. Thus it would be always possible to tell who had last opened the safe.

The clumsy ingenuity of the idea made it a hard one to carry out, but in less than a week an apparatus was designed which would contain the seven photographs. This was fastened inside the safe and made to communicate with the lock. By a clever mechanical device, the key of each servant, as it turned the lock, acted on the photograph and brought it into view.

Whether this unique lock answered its purpose is not yet a matter of history, but it was certainly a clever piece of mechanism.

NEW MODE OF CHEESE-MAKING.

Carleton Experimenters Have Now Caught the English Palate.

An interesting experiment in the curing of cheese is being carried out at Carp, Carleton county, under the direction of the Commissioner of Agriculture and Dairying. The English palate likes a Canadian cheese of a flavour similar to the English Cheddar, which is cured at 62 degrees Fahrenheit. At Carp a special room has been set apart in the factory, the air of which is drawn into the room through the drains, cooling it so that the temperature of the room is continuously under 65 degrees, and a flavour is given to the cheese cured in it equal to the best English make. Last year similar experiments were carried on, and the unanimous opinion of the Montreal Cheese Board was that cheese so cured was worth half a cent per pound more than cheese from the very same vat cured under ordinary circumstances. In addition, the shrinkage in weight of the cheese in the cooler room is much less. On the basis of last year's output of cheese in Canada the increased value represented by the new method would be about \$900,000, or to a small factory it would represent an annual increase of \$40,000 after the initial expense of \$250. The general adoption of the new system in Canada will certainly work a revolution in this important industry.

TO CLEAN SPONGES.

Don't throw a sponge away because it appears to be good for nothing. Very often old sponges can be cleaned to be as good as new. Make a strong suds with hot water and soap, dissolving in it a small handful of washing soda. Plunge the sponge into this and allow it to soak for some time. Then knead and rub it until perfectly clean. Rinse in very hot water, then in tepid water until every particle of soap has disappeared. Lay on a clean cloth in the sun to dry.