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# BRITZ
## :: OF HEADQUARTERS ::

BY MARCIN BARBER

Supplied Exclusively in Canada by the British & Colonial Press, Limited, Toronto.

That the "fine gentleman" who gave the commission to old Martin was Bruxton Sands frankly astonished him. Britz had followed every line of facts leading to or from the millionaire with the fidelity that he bestowed on every potential clew in the entire case, but he had done so perfunctorily—never with the slightest suspicion that the trail of guilt would lead to Sands. Britz even yet was not prepared to say to himself, with whom he was always punctiliously candid, just who it was he did suspect. The possibilities, as he had seen them before his visit to the island, were between the East and the West. The theft might be the work of an Occidental or an Oriental. If the thief was a man of the former race it might be either Blodgett or Griswold, for, in his analytical consideration of the case, the Headquarters man had eliminated Sands almost as quickly as he had Elinor Holcomb. If an Easterner stole the gems it could be none other than Mrs. Missioner's Indian servant, Ali, unless—and Britz did some pretty deep thinking on this point—the crime was done by another East Indian, also in the employ of the mysterious Brahmin priest. Up to that afternoon the issue had seemed squarely joined. Griswold or Blodgett on one hand, Ali or a compatriot on the other—brown man or white, son of yesterday, or heir of to-morrow.

But that card! Sand's card! Against the background of the electric signs beginning to gleam in the Great White Way ahead of him, Britz saw, as if stippled on the twilight sky, that incriminating inscription, "Mr. Bruxton Sands."

Lieutenant Britz admitted that that simple line on the little white card apparently snapped in twain the long chain of facts he had linked together with so much skill and patience. If Sands got Martin to make the false Maharanee diamond why did he do so? Why should he have done so, unless with the idea of substituting it for the real diamond? Was there a compact between Sands and Griswold? Did the clubman make the sketches only to have the millionaire give them to the artisan with the order for the manufacture of a fraudulent gem? How could there well be a league bteween men as antipodally dissimilar as these two—Sands and Griswold? What motive could there have been to despoil the widow whom both wished to marry? It seemed impossible that a man of the substantial worth of Bruxton Sands could entertain a dishonest thought. It seemed equally as unlikely that Griswold would waste time in so perilous a hazard.

"Object matrimony," was the keynote to all Griswold's pursuit of the widow. Britz did not believe the clubman was in love with her in the right sense and, cautious though he was about attributing motives, he could not credit Griswold with disinterested impulses. Open though his mind was to the reception of incontrovertible facts, he was unwilling to arraign Sands as either a hypocrite or a thief. The very word thief seemed incongruous in connection with the millionaire, no matter how large the prize. Sands might not be able to buy as many stones like the Maharanee diamond as the wealthy widow, for where he counted his fortune in seven figures she could count hers in eight or nine. Nor was there the nth quantity—the possibility that Sands had stolen the jewel in the collector's lust of possession. Sands was not a collector; not at any rate, in the sense of being a faddist, to say nothing of a monomaniac.

Every detail in the millionaire's suite in the St. Baranbas and of his private room in the Bowling Green office was known to Britz even more minutely than to the owner. That had been among the early activities of the sleuth in connection with the case. He was able to assure himself, therefore, that no matter how much Sands might admire the Maharanee diamond, especially when it encircled the white throat of the wealthy widow, it would be nonsensical to suppose this admiration could descend to covetousness. Clearly, Britz was in some sort of blind alley. He was not, however, prepared to retire from a cul-de-sac without convincing himself that there was no outlet save that by which he had entered. For that reason he was bending his steps toward Sands' apartment in quest of an explanation rather than of evidence.

As the two men left their offices almost to the minute, Britz, many blocks ahead of Sands, had arrived at the St. Baranbas before the millionaire turned the Grace Church bend in Broadway. Sands's man, when the detective announced he was there for an important talk with the millionaire, admitted Britz readily to Sands's suite.

Britz, sitting in a great leather armchair in an attitude of sybaritic ease, chose a pantela from his pocket case, and then, with his eyes fixed on the ceiling and his hands clasped at the back of his neck, he gave himself up to as many moments of uninterrupted thought as the non-arrival of the unconscious host would permit. He had reached a point in his meditations that for an instant seemed to open a way for an explanation, for which he had come to see Sands, when a faint rustling in the adjoining room reached his acute ear. He did not move by the breadth of a hair. He did not check his regular breathing, knowing full well that a sudden silence is as often an effective warning as a sudden noise. His hands still locked behind his head, the smoke of his cigar curling upward without pause, he turned his eyes toward the direction of the sounds in the adjoining room whence the rustling came. A ribbon of subdued light between portieres of Moorish leather gave passage to his glance. He saw a shadow flutter at a far window and, in the next instant, rapidly and noiselessly, he had slid out of the armchair until he was on his knees on the rug behind the shelter of a library table piled high with books. Inch by inch, soundlessly, Britz lifted one knee until he was close to the portières. Britz was too good a sleuth to make the mistake of looking between the portières to get a glimpse of the inner room. It was no part of his programme to be seen by Sands's other visitor, or visitors. He felt justified in giving way to his curiosity because it might be as much to the millionaire's interests as to his own—to say nothing of Mrs. Missioner's, and that of the public. In fact, the Headquarters man did not waste much time in such reflections. He wanted to see and hear what was going on, and he took the readiest means of doing so. Instead of risking the danger of being seen by peeping between the parting in th portières, he pierced with his scarf pin a tiny hole in the leather curtain behind which he stood, and applying one eye closely, he could see the whole inner room. It was the millionaire's bedroom, and he commanded everything except the angle in which was set the window where he had glimpsed the shadow. A slightly more vigorous twist or two of the pin enlarged the microscopical aperture so that he could see even that detail of the interior. Britz almost grunted with satisfaction at what he witnessed in the next few minutes. The shadow man still was at the window, fluttering, flitting to and fro, rising and falling. It crouched outside the window in such a way as showed Britz it was on a fire escape, or a balcony of some sort. The rustling sound increased, and it was followed by a faint "cheep," like a sparrow's call. A second shadow fluttered from a point above the window and melted into the outlines of the first. Then came a slightly rasping sound, and the lower sash, Britz noticed, trembled. By well-nigh imperceptible degrees the sash was lifted. The next instant two men noiselessly lowered themselves to the floor and glanced hastily about the room. Reassured by the swift look they tiptoed along the walls from right to left; one of them stopped at the chiffonier, the other continued his little journey of investigation until he arrived at the portières. Then it was that Britz held his breath. He held it for seconds that seemed tedious as hours, while the nearer of the strange visitors, separated from him only by the thickness of the leather, peered through the parting between the curtains into the library where the detective stood.

Britz had not obtained a good view of the intruder's face, for it was half hidden by a loose fold of the turban upon his head that indicated the stranger's nationality. Britz's eyes still were fixed at the hole, and by that time the stranger was out of his line of vision. Had such not been the case, it is possible that even the imperturbable Britz would have moved at least to the extent of a swift reach to a side pocket in his coat. For it was about as evil a countenance as one could expect to see anywhere, save under the shadows of the gallows. In it rapacity, ferocity, bloodthirstiness, and cruelty of every degree spoke loudly. If that savage face had advanced an inch or two nearer, those shaky eyes would have seen the man from Mulberry Street who shrank into himself behind the shelter of the protecting strip of leather. But it did not; and, after a leisurely survey of the interior, the Oriental returned to the other end of the inner room and rejoined his companion.

Hardly had Britz begun to let the air seep out of his lungs, and before he had indulged in the luxury of an intake of breath, when he became an interested spectator in the gentlemanly art of searching a gentleman's room. The Central Office man was no Vidocq. It is doubtful if he had even read Poe's story of "The Missing Letter," and had he done so, it is by no means certain he would have adapted the methods of the French police to metropolitan detective work. Nevertheless, he had flattered himself that he usually made a pretty thorough search for anything he wanted; but what he saw through that tiny pin hole in the leather portiere showed him that he was the veriest tyro in that sort of thing. The two visitors went through the millionaire's furniture and other possessions with a minuteness that would have made a fine-toothed comb look like a garden rake. There could not have remained anything—any nook or corner, any crack or crevice, not anything larger than a bacillus which they happened to covet. If an article no bigger than a pinhead had been the object of their hunt, their untiring scrutiny would have brought it to light. Yet so deftly had they searched that, granting them a minute's respite, they could have left the room without any traces of their activity.

Their search seemed fruitless until they arrived at a desk under a hanging incandescent lamp, at which Britz assumed Sands was in the habit of writing his more personal letters. From one of the pigeon-holes one of the intruders drew something that crackled slightly as the man stuffed it into the folds of his tunic. From a neighboring compartment of the desk the second stranger drew another find, which he in turn hastily hid in the same way. With lightning rapidity they went through every part of the desk. In that same instant Britz felt rather than heard a footstep behind him, and, jerking a glance over his shoulders, saw Sands advancing upon him angrily. With a quick uplift of his hand, the detective stopped the millionaire in his tracks, and then drew him quietly toward the portiere and motioned for him to look through the hole in the leather. Sands bent a little, and then glanced wonderingly into the bedroom. He raised a face of astonished inquiry to Britz. He was answered by another silencing gesture from the sleuth. He looked once more through the tiny hole just in time to see the Hindoos straighten themselves from their crouching attitude over the desk and turn toward the window. His hand thrust itself into his coat pocket, he slipped into the opening in the portieres with a single stride, and, leveling an automatic pistol that looked more like a block of steel than anything else, he cried: "Hands up!"

The men did not turn; instead, they leaped for the window, followed by Britz and Sands. Quick as they were they were not quick enough for the Headquarters man. Launching his wiry form as a tiger springs, pistol in hand, hurled himself between the foremost Indian and the open window and seized him in his strong grasp. Sands, almost as rapid in his movements in spite of his bulk, flung a powerful arm about the throat of the other intruder, and with his other hand closed the window with a crash.

Britz and Sands dragged their prisoners to the other side of the room and forced them down upon a couch. Then the sleuth, slipping his pistol back into his pocket, seized the Indian Sands was holding by the throat and, more as an order than as a request, asked the millionaire to bind the captives.

"I think I recognize you, my dear young friends," he said. "You are two of the dark jugglers who had fun with me in Central Park and Riverside Drive last evening. I think it's about time for me to return the compliment with a merry little jest of my own." Turning his head to the millionaire, he said again: "If you have any silk handkerchiefs to spare, Mr. Sands, use them as handcuffs. These gentlemen are accustomed to silk, and I would not like to use anything cheaper on them than they used on me. I suppose if we trussed them up with cotton or hemp, they'd die of mortification."

The detective's sarcasm was lost on Sands until he thought to recount in a few brief words his abduction in the park and the struggle for life that had followed it. It was evident that, in spite of the detective's coolness, he had some feeling on the subject. In fact, his manner toward the now cowering Hindoos was more or less revengeful. Sands fell in with the humor of the situation, and in a few minutes the Easterners were bound with silk handkerchiefs as soft, yet strong, as any scarf they could have produced in the bazaars of Calcutta or Cawnpore. When the task was done, and it was done pretty neatly, Britz relaxed his hold on the half struggling men's throats and pushed them against the back of the sofa until they half sat, half lay there, head to head. Then he stepped back, rested his hands on his hips, and eyed them mockingly.

"You are not very clever," he said, "but anyway, you're a fine-looking body of men. What do you think of yourselves, anyhow? Think you'll cut out this 'second-story' game? Or will you content yourselves with the safer occupation of dips? My private advice to you is to try hencoops for a while. Cut out the big circuit, and go and get a reputation.''

How much of his biting irony, if any, the Orientals understood they did not indicate. They only gazed at him in dumb misery, evidently in expectation of an ignoble end. They followed Britz with their joint gaze as he paced up and down the room, both pitifully watchful and manifestly most wholesomely afraid.

"You saw part of what these chaps were doing, Mr. Sands," said Britz, "but what you saw was only the last of it. I want to tell you the way they went through this room was amazing. I hope you didn't lose many valuables."

Sands, in his slow way, assured the detective that it was not likely the searchers had found anything he would miss very greatly; but the Headquarters man was not satisfied. The mystery of the proceedings, he was inclined to think, did not begin and end with the Orientals. It was possible, of course, they had searched Sands's room simply as a matter of routine in the same way that at the first opportunity they probably would search the home of everyone who might be connected in any way with the Missioner jewel robbery. Yet something stirred uneasily in Britz's mind as he reflected on the possibility that the coming of the Orientals held a deeper significance. What if they had reason to believe they would surely find what they sought in that room? If Sands did not know there was justification for the search, why did he take it so calmly? It did not seem natural for a man to keep his temper whost apartments had been invaded so thoroughly. If the millionaire had expressed any indignation he, Britz, would have felt better satisfied. Besides, what was it the Hindoos had taken from Sands's desk? Sands had not seen them take anything, as they were ending their search when he got the first glimpse of them. Britz watched Sands closely to see if the millionaire's eyes would turn anxiously toward that part of his furniture. He almost started when the first move Sands made, after finishing his task of binding the prisoners, was to saunter with a careless air across the room and, in passing, glance swiftly and questioningly into the pigeon-holes whence the thieves had abstracted the mysterious articles that so actively engaged Britz's always active curiosity.

"It's about up to us to do a little searching now, isn't it?" asked Britz. "These bright, young men have had their innings, and I believe it's our turn at bat. What do you say, Mr. Sands?"

Sands said nothing. He nodded his head in assent, however, and Britz began a search of the Orientals fully as exhaustive as that they had performed on the room. Before he had gone far in his quest, Sands volunteered assistance, and each explored the folds of the Hindoos' raiment with the clumsiness that might be expected of men not accustomed to that sort of work.

(To be Continued.)

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Some three or four hundred of the Royal Canadian regiment will shortly leave for Bermuda to release British regiments stationed there, and which are going to England.

The Canadian Pacific railway donated £1,000 pounds to the national relief funds, which stand at £1,650,000.

## EXTRAORDINARY MODESTY.

**Big And Little Successes All Alike to Official Russia.**

St. Petersburg, Aug. 25.—It is officially announced that the Russian forces are advancing on a broad front in Prussia and Galicia. The Germans, it is reported, are retreating towards Koenigsberg. In Eastern Galicia the Russians apparently have advanced to a distance of about twenty-five miles beyond the frontier.

The position in Poland is that while several towns in the west have been occupied by small German detachments, Warsaw, in which several government offices were temporarily closed a fortnight ago, is now living a vigorous life and is officially declared to be absolutely out of danger. Kutno, which was occupied by the Germans, is now re-occupied by the Russians.

An Austrian force from Cracow, in Kielce, was easily repulsed by Cossacks, and the Austrians were driven back to the frontier. The general staff is modest in its reports and rather under-estimates than over-emphasizes Russia's success. It is extraordinarily sparing in adjectives and records small engagements and big battles with almost equal absence of any emotional coloring. The military considerations which dictate this method of communicating information are undoubtedly of worth and the effect is to prevent any undue relation of undue depression at any particular moment of the long land struggle. One result is that the general public are only now gradually waking up to the fact that the Russian army won a striking victory at Interburg and that the Germans are in full retreat.

Russian people as a war for an ideal, liberation from everything that German militarism tyranny has meant for Russian and Europe. It has had a purifying effect and as aroused throughout the empire an unexampled spirit of devotion.

The ordinary romance of war is absent. Not a regiment, not an officer, not a soldier, is mentioned in the reports. The public bears only a vague echo of deeds of extraordinary heroism. The number of guns captured from the enemy, the number of prisoners and the probable extent of the enemies' losses seem to be regarded as trifles not worth mentioning in the official report. Nothing could better illustrate the intense concentration of the general staff on the work in hand and its firm determination to win. Wounded officers who have just arrived from East Prussia give a few picturesque details of the fighting. The Germany artillery, they say, is good; but the Germans cannot endure cold steel. The spirit animating Russian soldiers is entirely different from that shown in the Japanese war. The officers have to restrain them from rushing prematurely to the attack. The Jewish soldiers, I am told, display great courage.

The German prisoners were terror stricken when they surrendered, as they had been led to expect brutal treatment at the hands of the Russians. After a few hours, however they expressed amazement of Russian kindness. The attitude of the Russian soldiers to the Germans is slightly contemptuous, but of good humor. None of the others here noticed instances of German atrocities but were surprised at the quickness with which the Germans took flight.

All the wounded officers and men are anxious to return to the front. Drink shops throughout the entire empire have been closed since mobilization began and Russia is now sober than the state of Maine. The effect of the measure has been so good that it is proposed, despite the cessation of the big revenue from the brandy monopoly, to continue its operation for another three months and possibly until the close of the war.

## HYMN

**In The Time Of War And Tumults.**

By Henry Newbolt.

O Lord Almighty, Thou whose hands
Despair and victory give;
In whom, though tyrants tread their lands,
The souls of nations live;

Thou wilt not turn Thy face away
From those who work Thy will,
But send Thy peace on hearts that pray,
And guard Thy people still.

Remember not the days of shame,
The hands with rapine dyed,
The wavering will, the baser aim,
The brute material pride;

Remember, Lord, the years of faith,
The spirits humbly brave,
The strength that died defying death,
The love that loved the slave;

The race that strove to rule Thine earth
With equal laws unbought;
Who bore for Truth the pangs of birth,
And brake the bonds of Thought.

Remember how, since time began,
Thy dark eternal mind
Through lives of men that fear not man
Is light for all mankind.

Thou wilt not turn Thy face away
From those who work Thy will,
But send Thy strength on hearts that pray
For strength to serve Thee still.

## Irish Harvest Outlook

An official report on the outlook for the harvest has just been issued by the agricultural department. According to this the drought which was the feature for the months of May and June adversely affected vegetation with the result that crops in the early stages were stunted. During the first week of July, however, the rain was general and brought welcome relief. The department on the whole is optimistic as to the harvest outlook.

## Strategy.

"I say, old chap, I'm in shocking luck. I want money badly and haven't the least idea where I can get it."

"Well, I'm glad to hear that. I thought perhaps you had an idea you could borrow from me."—Sydney Bulletin.

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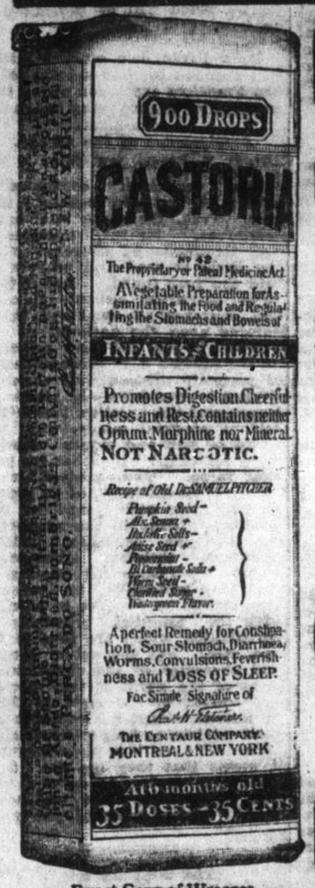

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