

The BRONZE BELL

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SYNOPSIS.

David Amber, starting for a duck-shoot visit with his friend, Quain, comes upon a young lady equestrian who has been frightened at her horse becoming frightened at the sound of a gun. Amber, dressed as a buri Hindu, declares he is "Bharat Lal Chatterji," the appointed messenger of the Bell, adding that Amber is a man of high rank and possessing a mysterious little bronze box. "The Token." In his hand disappears in the pocket. The young woman, named Quain, turns addresser as Miss Sophie Farrell, daughter of Col. Farrell of the British diplomatic service, who is visiting the Quain home is burglarized and the house is stolen. Amber and Quain are hunting on an island. Amber is lost and Amber is left marooned. He wanders about, finally reaches a cabin and recovers. He sees his old friend returned Rutton, whom he last met in England, and who appears to be in hiding. When Miss Farrell is missing, Amber starts north, uninvited. Chatterji appears summons Rutton to a meeting of a mysterious body. Rutton seizes a revolver and dashes after Chatterji.

CHAPTER V. (Continued).

Suddenly Rutton started and wheel-round, every trace of excitement smoothed away. Meeting Amber's gaze he nodded as if it casually, and said, "Oh, Amber," quietly, with an effect of faint surprise. Then he dropped heavily into a chair by the table.

"Well," he said slowly, "that is over."

Amber, without speaking, went to his side and touched his shoulder with that pitifully inadequate gesture of sympathy which men so frequently employ.

I killed him," said Rutton dully.

"Yes," replied Amber. He was not surprised; he had apprehended the tragedy from the moment that Rutton had fled him.

After a bit Rutton turned to the table and drew an automatic pistol from his pocket, opening the magazine. Five cartridges remained in the clip, showing that two had been exploded. "I was not sure," he said thoughtfully, "how many times I had fired." His curiosity satisfied, he reloaded the weapon and returned it to his pocket. "He died like a dog," he said, "whimpering and blaspheming in the face of eternity . . . out there in the cold and the night. . . . It was sickening—the sound of the bullets tearing through his flesh"

He shuddered.

" Didn't he realize?" Amber asked involuntarily.

"He tried to. I let him pop away his revolver until it was empty. . . .

—where you wait?"

One

for his life; I gave him every chance. But it had to be as it was. That was fate."

With a wrench Amber pulled himself together. "Rutton," he demanded suddenly, without premeditation, "what are you going to do?"

"Don't say that, Rutton."

"It is so written, David." The man's smile was strangely placid. "After this night, we'll never meet. In the morning, Doggett will ferry you over—."

"Shan't we go together?"

"No," said Rutton serenely; "I must leave before you."

"Without Doggett?"

"Without Doggett; I wish him to go with you."

"On the errand I am going to ask you to do for me. You are free to leave this country for several months."

"Quite. I corrected the final galley of my Analysis of Sanskrit Literature just before I came down. Now I've nothing on my mind—or hands. Go on."

"Wait." Rutton went a second time to the leather trunk, lifted the lid, and came back with two small parcels. The one, which appeared to contain documents of some sort, he cast negligently on the fire, with the air of one who destroys that which is no longer of value to him. It caught immediately and began to flame and smoke and smoulder. The other was several inches square and flat, wrapped in plain paper without a superscription, and sealed with several heavy blobs of red wax.

Rutton drew a chair close to Amber and sat down, breaking the seals methodically.

"You shall go on a long journey, David," he said slowly—"a long journey, to a far land, where you shall brave perils that I may not warn you against. It will put your friendship to the test."

"I'm ready."

The elder man ripped the cover from the packet, exposing the back of what seemed to be a photograph. Holding this to the light, its face invisible to Amber, he studied it for several minutes, in silence, a tender light kindling in his eyes to soften the almost ascetic austerity of his expression. "In the end, if you live, you shall win rich reward," he said at length. He placed the photograph face down upon the table.

"How—reward?"

"The love of a woman worthy of you, David."

"But—I!" In consternation Amber rose, almost knocking over his chair. "But—Great Scott, man!"

"I will go," Amber promised.

a sunbeam. Tonight Destiny chose to throw us together for little space; tomorrow we shall be irreversibly parted, for all time."

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AMERICA TO GET CLOISTER.

Beautiful Structure of the Cordellers at Charleroi Is to Be Lost by France.

To many travelers the most beautiful things seen in Europe are the cloisters of churches and monasteries, perhaps for the very reason that the cloister is so opposed to the spirit of modern America. No one who has seen

"Bear with me, David, for yet a little while," Rutton begged. "Sit down." "All right, but—I" Amber resumed his seat, staring.

"You and Doggett are to seek her out, wherever she may be, and rescue her from what may be worse than death. And it shall come to pass that you shall love one another and marry and live happily ever after—just as though you were a prince and she an enchanted princess in a fairy tale, David."

"I must say you seem pretty damn sure about it!"

"It must be so, David; it shall be so! I am an old man—older than you think, perhaps—and with age there sometimes comes something strange akin to the gift of second-sight. So I know it will be so, though you think me a madman."

"I don't, indeed, but you . . . Well! I give it up." Amber laughed uneasily. "Go on. Where's this maid-in-distress?"

"In India—I'm not sure just where. You'll find her, however."

"And then—?"

"Then you are to bring her home with you, without delay."

"But suppose—?"

"You must win her first; then she will come gladly."

"But I've just told you I loved another woman, Rutton, and besides—"

"You mean the Miss Farrell you mentioned?"

"Yes, I—"

"That will be no obstacle."

"What? How in thunder d'you know it won't?" Amber expostulated. A faint suspicion of the truth quickened his wits. "Who is this woman you want me to marry?"

"My daughter."

"My only child, David."

"Then why won't my love for Sophia Farrell interfere?"

"Because," said Rutton slowly, "my daughter and Sophia Farrell are the same. . . . No; listen to me; I'm not raving. Here is my proof—he latest photograph." He put it into Amber's hands.

Dazed, the younger man stared

"You will be kind to her, and true, David? You'll love her faithfully and make her love you?"

"I'll do my best," said the young man humbly.

"It must be so—she must be caught to love you. It is essential, imperative, that she marry you and remain in India with you without a day's delay."

Amber sat back in his chair breathing quickly, his mouth tense.

"My best. But, Rutton, why? Won't you tell me? Shouldn't I know—I, who am to be her husband, her protector?"

"Not from me. I am bound by an oath. David. Some day it may be that you will know. Perhaps not now, but you have much to go on. But from me nothing. Now, let us settle the details. I've very little time." He glanced again at the shadowy clock, with a slight but noticeable falter.

"How's that? It's four o'clock in the morning."

"I shall never see the dawn, David."

"What—?"

"I have but ten minutes more of life. . . . If you must know—a word: poison. . . . That will be saved a blacker sin, David."

"You mean that medicines—the silvers phial?" Amber asked, his voice thick with horror.

"Yes. Don't be alarmed; it is now but sure and painless, dear boy. It works infallibly within half an hour. There'll be no agony—there's no drawing of the curtain. Death comes—it leaves no trace; a glimmer, a faint call to heart-failure. And thus I escape death. My death coolly toward the door."

"But this must not be, Rutton!" Amber rose suddenly, pushing back his chair. "Some thing must be done."

"Not so loud, please—you might alarm him. After all, it's all over, all done. But now—it's useless. Nothing is done; there's no known antidote. Be kind to me, David. In this state of mine extremity. There's much still to be said between us and in

silence, he never seemed to have any practise to speak of—and he invented this stuff and named it the B-formula." Rutton tapped the silver phial in his waistcoat pocket, smiling faintly. "He was a good little man."

Two minutes. Strange how little one cares, when it's inevitable."

He ceased to speak and closed his eyes. A great stillness made itself felt within the room. In the other, Doggett was silent—probably asleep. It was close upon two in the morning.

"Amber," said Rutton suddenly and very clearly, "you'll find a will in my dispatch box. Doggett is to have all I possess. The emerald ring—the Token—I give to you."

"Yes, I—"

"Your hand. . . . Mine is cold? Not I fancied it was," said the man drowsily. And later: "Sophia. You will be kind to her, David!"

"On my faith!"

Rutton's fingers tightened cruelly upon his, then relaxed suddenly. He began to nod, his chin drooping toward his breast.

"The Gateway . . . the Bell . . ."

The words were no more than whispers dying on lips that stilled as they spoke.

For a long time Amber sat unmoving, his fingers imprisoned in that quiet, cooling grasp, his thoughts astray in a black mist of mourning and bewilderment.

Out of doors something made a circuit of the cabin, like a beast of the night, stealthy footsteps muffled by snow—pad—pad—pad . . .

In the emerald ring on Amber's finger the deathless fire leaped and pulsed.

CHAPTER VI.

Red Dawn.

Presently Amber rose and quietly exchanged dressing gown and slippers for his own shooting jacket and boots—which by now were dry, thanks to Doggett's thoughtfulness in placing them near the fire.

The shabby clock had droned through 30 minutes since Rutton had spoken his last word. In that interval, sitting face to face, and for a little time hand in hand, with the man to whom he had pledged his honor, Amber had thought deeply, carefully weighing ways and means; nor did he move until he believed his plans mature and definite.

But before he could take one step toward redeeming his word to Rutton, he had many cares to dispose of. In the hut, Rutton lay dead of poison; somewhere among the dunes the babu lay in his blood, shot to death—foully murdered, the world would say. Should these things become known, he would be detained indefinitely in Nokomis as a witness—if, indeed, he escaped a graver charge.

It was, then, with a mind burdened with black anxiety that he went to arouse Doggett.

"Mr. Rutton is dead, Doggett," he managed to say with some difficulty.

Doggett exclaimed beneath his breath. "Dead!" he cried in tones of rage in two strokes he had left Amber and was heading by Rutton's side. The most cursory examination, however, sufficed to reassure him every doubt.

"Dead!" whispered the servant. He rose and stood swaying, his lips a-tremble, his eyes blinking through a mist, his head bowed. "E always was uncommon good to me, Mr. Amber," he said brokenly. "It's a bit hard, comin' this w'y. 'Ow—ow did it?" He broke down completely for a time.

When he had himself in more control Amber told him as briefly as possible of the head at the window and of its sequel—Rutton's despairing suicide.

Doggett listened in silence, nodding his comprehension. "I've always looked for it, sir," he commented. "Ed warned me never to touch that silver tube; 'e never said poison, but I suspected it, 'e being blue and melancholy-like, by fits and turns—'e never told me why."

Then, reverently, they took up the body and laid it out upon the hammock-bed. Doggett arranging the limbs and closing the eyes before spreading a sheet over the rigid form.

"And now, what, Mr. Amber?" he asked.

"Mr. Rutton spoke of a dispatch box, Doggett. You know where to find it."

"Yes, sir."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Salutary Example.

Every legal expedient for delaying being exhausted, and their appeal for executive clemency having been made in vain to the president, five wealthy Alabama lumbermen have entered the federal prison at Atlanta to serve penal sentences for the crime of peonage. Pity will be extended to the families of these men, but the event itself cannot be regarded as one of the most important and significant in the whole course of the recent awakening of the public conscience. It is a demonstration to the country that only by holding personal accountability the men responsible for violation of the law can respect and obedience to law be enforced. The futility of fines as a punishment in such cases has been shown, but it will only require a few such applications of the law as in those Alabama convictions to instill a wholesome regard for law everywhere.—Exchange.

"No. Why?"

"Never mind—but remember these two things: you do not know me and you must under no circumstances have anything to do with the police. They could do nothing to help you on the other hand, to be seen with them, to have it known that you communicate with them, would be the equivalent of a seal upon your death warrant. You remember the money lender's name?"

"Dhola Bakash of the Machua bazar."

"Trust him—and