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MYSTERY OF THE GREAT RUBY.

BY LUCIE ST. DEANE.

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CHAPTER IV.

Just as I was entering the Windsor house a carriage halted in front of the family entrance, and a lady stepped out and passed into the hotel. One glance showed that she was the young woman who left my store an hour or two before after her purchase of the small ruby, and her expression of admiration of the larger gem.

She saw me and bowed. The action was so unexpected that I hurriedly lifted my hat, and I suppose would have made a graceful response, but in my confusion I struck the toe of my foot against the step and almost fell on my hands and knees, my hat rolling several feet away. I didn't dare look at her, but she must have laughed heartily, while I never came so near profanity in my life.

It took some minutes to pull myself together, and then my curiosity regarding the mysterious beauty led me to make inquiries of the clerk. He smiled significantly at my assumed matter of fact manner, as if to let me know he understood that I was another of the many that had been hit hard, but whatever he thought he was a gentleman.

"I would know whom you meant if you had used only half the words. Isn't she a beauty? Her name is Mrs. Darius C. Howard, and she hails from Vienna."

You could have knocked me down with a feather. The name precisely--except as to the sex--of the man who had placed Nana Sahib's ruby in my hands to be sold. The mystery was deeper than ever. Could it be--but what was the use? Any attempt at theorizing, as Wittner had said, could end only in becoming hopelessly befogged.

"Be good enough to send my card to Mr. Sandhusen's room."

Three minutes later word came that my friend was in his apartments and would be glad to see me. I lost no time in entering, shaking hands and telling my story.

Sandhusen was a millionaire, and we had been schoolboys. Having plenty of leisure on his hands, he expressed his pleasure that I had come to him with such an interesting yarn.

"I'll go down with you and look at the stone," he said.

"I have brought it with me," and I opened the box and placed the gem in the palm of the astounded gentleman.

His wonder and delight may be imagined. He fondled it as if the simple touch gave him pleasure. He stepped to the window in the glare of the sun-



She saw me and bowed.

light and seemed hardly to breathe while he drank in its marvelous beauties. Finally he resumed his seat in front of me.

"It surpasses anything I ever saw," he said, with flushed face, "and he asks only \$50,000?"

"That is all."

"It appears genuine."

"It is genuine. I have submitted it every test, and the fact is established."

"Brown, I'll buy it! I'll give you a check now."

"Hold on, Geoffrey," I protested. "Don't be in a hurry. Take time to consider the matter."

"But why should I take time?" he asked impatiently. "Some one else is liable to secure it. Have you offered it to any one?"

"No, I forgot. I offered it to Mrs. Howard this afternoon."

"Who's Mrs. Howard?"

"That East Indian woman stopping at this hotel."

"I have seen her. She is rich enough to buy a dozen of them at that price."

My friend seemed to think he had made a slip, and with just the faintest trace of confusion corrected himself:

"I should say from her dress, looks and manner that she was overburdened with wealth, but then one can't know. Why didn't she buy it?"

"She said she was too poor. I have offered it to no one else besides yourself and will not do so until you have made up your mind."

"Who wants him to give a reasonable pretext? I am willing to take the chances. I'll pay you now."

I said no more. He walked over to his desk, for his rooms were befittingly furnished, drew out his checkbook, wrote me an order for \$50,000, handed it to me and said:

"Now, old fellow, give me the quid pro quo."

"There! That's mine," he added, with glowing face, "and it will take a writ of certiorari from the supreme court to draw it from me."

"Where will you keep it?"

"I would let you have it until I moved into the house, but for fear that Mr. Howard may come back and change his mind. I may put it in the safe down stairs or take it to the bank or the trust company, but since no one besides yourself knows that I have it I will retain it in my room for a day or two, so as to have all the enjoyment with it I can."

I shook my head.

"Bad business. There's no saying who may know or suspect the truth. Remember that the man who put it in my hands and a certain woman stopping at this house bear the same name."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed my friend.

"There are 500 John Smiths in this city, and yet not a tenth of them are aware of the others' existence. Simply a coincidence, that's all. It signifies nothing."

It was a waste of time to discuss the matter, and bidding my friend good day I went down town to my store.

Mr. Darius C. Howard was there. He was the same well-dressed gentleman as before and as smiling and suave in his manner.

"I thought I would not wait quite as long as I intended," he explained, "and dropped in to hear whether you had any news for me."

"The ruby has been sold for the price you ask, and I have the check with me."

He did not show the pleasure I expected, but acted as if he regretted what had been done. He sighed and said, still smiling:

"I thought of recalling my offer, the price is so absurdly low, but the thing having been done it must go at that. I will call tomorrow and settle with you."

"I can give you a check now."

"It is not worth while. Suppose I drop in at 10. Will that suit you?"

"Perfectly. How do you prefer your money--in bills or a check?"

"It will perhaps be better in money. I have few acquaintances, and there might be delay in obtaining the funds."

"It shall be as you wish."

"Thanks. Good day."

I determined to have Carl Wittner in the vicinity next day, for I was sure there was need of his services. To my disappointment, however, word came from his home that evening that he was out of town and there was no saying when he would be back. A similar reply was returned from the central office.

Punctual to the minute my handsome, well-dressed East Indian presented himself at the store the following day. I had the money ready, done up in neat packages, and counted it out to him. At my request he recounted it and pronounced it right to a dollar. Then he handed one-fifth of the amount back to me. I protested.

"Ten per cent is all I can accept."

"But I insist. You have been so prompt and businesslike that I hope you will not persist in refusing."

"But I must. I will retain \$5,000, and now if you will oblige me by signing this paper the account will be closed."

He put on his eyeglasses and examined the receipt with much care. It was simple, and no fault could be found with it. He took the pen held out and wrote in a clear, flowing script his name at the bottom, "Darius C. Howard."

Then he offered his hand, repeated his thanks, bowed and passed out.

I would have given half my fee had Wittner been within call that he might have shadowed the man. Something told me that trouble was coming, and there was no one upon whom I could lean like my cool-headed friend, the detective. But for the moment he was beyond reach--that is, I supposed so, but such was not the fact.

That afternoon, immediately after my return from my lunch, there was a call at the telephone. I answered, and the response was:

"I want John R. Brown, jeweler, of--Maiden lane."

"That is my name. Who are you?"

"Geoffrey Sandhusen, Windsor hotel."

"All right. What can I do for you?"

"You remember the article I purchased of you yesterday?"

"Of course."

"It was stolen from my room last night."

CHAPTER V.

Within the same hour that I received the startling message over the telephone from Geoffrey Sandhusen that he had been robbed of Nana Sahib's ruby I was in his apartments at the Windsor.

I found him cool, but disturbed over the occurrence.

"The loss of the gem is irreparable," he remarked, pulling at his cigar and walking slowly up and down the room while I sat in an easy chair watching and listening, "but the mystery of the whole thing is beyond my comprehension. I have been robbed before, as possibly you know, but in every case there

was a clue. Here there is absolutely none."

"Give me the particulars."

"There are blessed few to give. The ruby is missing, that's all."

"Not by any means. Tell me what took place after I left you yesterday afternoon."

"I spent an hour or so in feasting upon the prize. I laid it away in the secret drawer there (he showed me) of my desk when I went down to dinner. It was there when I returned from the theater about 11 o'clock, for I took it out and spent another half hour with it before I went to bed."

"What next?"

"When ready for bed, I put it back in the small pasteboard box, having made up my mind that I would take it down to the trust company tomorrow. I tied it around with a bit of red twine, the knot being a peculiar one which I have never seen any one else use. I slept late and merely looked at the box without opening it this morning. It was there just as I had tied and left it. After breakfast I settled down for another treat before placing it in the vaults. I took out the little box, untied the string, which was precisely as I had left it, opened the box, and it was empty."

He paused in his walk and looked with a smile at me, as if to ask what I had to say about it. I didn't speak. He opened the secret drawer, took out the small box again, lifted the lid and held it so that I could see the interior. There was the tuft of fine pink cotton, but nothing else, save a few particles and a trifle of dust.

"Are you satisfied," he asked, "that it is not there?"

"There couldn't be a pinhead in that without its showing."

He drew out the cotton, pinched it and put it back, tossing the box on his desk.

"Where's Wittner?" abruptly asked Sandhusen.

"I don't know. I sent for him last night, but he couldn't be found."

"Get him here as soon as you can."

"No one ever accused me of being a detective, but will you answer me a few questions?"

"Have you told any one of the robbery?"

"Not a soul except you. My message over the phone was so worded that no one else hearing me would have known to what I referred."

I rose and looked at the door. He laughed.

"Nothing there. It was securely locked and the bolt slid in place this morning when I examined it precisely as I left it when I went to sleep."

"Then no one could have entered that way. What of the windows?"

"Equally impossible. Look for yourself."

I did so. His apartments were on the fourth floor, and to reach his rooms through any of the windows a person would have to climb a sheer wall of great height.

"Entrance by that means is out of the question."

"So it is. Could any one have been concealed in your rooms?"

"If so, he must have left by the window, which is impossible. Had he gone out by the door he could not have left the bolt in place, not to mention the key of the lock being turned."

I glanced at the transom. Sandhusen explained that he fastened it before retiring and found it undisturbed in the morning.

Leaning back in my chair, I tried to think. He resumed his pacing up and down the floor. After two or three turns he stopped in front of me and said:

"That won't answer, Brown."

"I do not understand you."

"You are asking yourself whether I am a somnambulist and whether with the thought of the ruby ringing through my brain I did not get up and hide the gem somewhere in the room. I did not."

"Can you be certain?"

"Never in all my life did I walk in my sleep, not even when my mental trouble was tenfold as great. Besides, conceiving such a thing possible, I must have left the ruby somewhere in my rooms. I have searched every nook and corner where it could be concealed, and it isn't in any one of them."

There was one subject in my mind to which I did not dare refer. On the day previous Sandhusen had made a reference to Mrs. Howard, in which an uncharitable mind would have seen evidence that he was not a stranger to her. I wanted to ask him whether he had exchanged a word with her or seen her after I left him. But he was a man of family, of the highest character, and likely he would have considered the question an insult. No hint of the kind passed my lips.

"My good fellow," I said after a minute or two of meditation, "you must have formed some explanation, some theory of this strange business."

"I have tried to do so, but have given it up. It is simply one of those things that are beyond my comprehension and yours, too, I judge."

"Yes, and I wonder whether Wittner will be able--"

"Have you seen anything of the man Howard?" broke in my friend.

"I paid him for the ruby this forenoon."

"I thought he was to wait till the latter part of the week."

"Such was the understanding, and he explained that he merely called to learn whether I had any news for him."

"I wonder whether there could be anything in that?" remarked Sandhusen, running his hand through his hair and resuming his walk more thoughtfully. "It would have made no difference in the payment, though. He left the gem with you, and you delivered the goods as per contract. He has done

his part and was entitled to the payment."

"Unless he happens to have the goods in his possession."

"How can that be?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"It is beyond my ken. Nevertheless I believe he either has Nana Sahib's ruby or knows where it is."

"How would it do," asked Sandhusen, "as if the thought was a brilliant one, to offer to give him the price to restore it to me? I would be paying twice for the thing, but even that would be less than it is worth."

I saw the absurdity of this suggestion.

"If he is the man I take him to be, he would not admit his criminality, for it would be nothing less, for three times the sum. Besides how can he know anything about this robbery?"

In my fancy a figure assumed form between my friend and myself. It was that of the dark-eyed woman, the most beautiful of her sex. I could not shake off the belief that hers was the brain that had played all this mischief, but I shrank from hinting my thoughts, for she had pitted her mind against ours, what a triumph it was for her!

"Well, Geoffrey," I remarked, rising and taking up my hat, "the fog just now is impenetrable. Neither you nor I can see our way out. Perhaps after we have spent a night over it and made some investigations we may hit upon a clew. Come down to the store tomorrow and we'll see what we'll see."

My yearning was to find Wittner. He delighted in such intricate problems as the one which confronted us and had done several things so creditable in his line that I was hopeful that he would help us in our present dilemma.

I sent a special messenger to his home up town, but his wife replied that he was absent and she could not say when he would return. The message from headquarters was less definite, being simply that he was not there. They were too prudent to give even his friends an intimation of what he was about.

To my delight, however, the fellow sauntered into the store that same afternoon, smoking his cigar and as nonchalant as usual. He had been to his home and learned of my message a few minutes after it was received and took his own time in answering it. He had not visited headquarters, for he did about as he pleased in reporting there.

I took him back into my office, closed the door and told him the whole astounding story, feeling some impatience that he showed so little interest in my words. But that was his way.

Forgetting his previous warning against "theorizing," I added:

"Now, I can't help believing that that Mrs. Howard had something to do with the robbery--that, in short, it was she--What's the matter?" I demanded, observing his smile and shake of the head.

"There is one fatal objection to that theory."

"I should like to know what it is."

"If your theory is correct, Mrs. Howard must have been at the Windsor hotel last night."

"Of course."

"Well, she was not in the city or state of New York at the time."

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEDNESDAY.

PIDGIN ENGLISH.

The phrase "pidgin English," means "business English," the word "pidgin" being the Chinaman's pronunciation of "business." It is the jargon by means of which nine-tenths of the business between Chinese and foreigners is transacted. Here is an example of it, taken from Chester Holcombe's recent work on China:

A young man who called upon two young ladies was gravely informed by the Chinese servant who opened the door that "two piecey girlie no can see. Number one piecey top side makee washee, washee. Number two piecey go outside, makee walkee, walkee." By which means he meant to say that the elder of the two was taking a bath upstairs, and the younger one had gone out.

DOG DENTISTRY.--Dog dentists are multiplying. While it is a comparatively young profession here, the success attending the efforts of its pioneer to minister to the needs of the pampered puppies who get more than their share of teeth-destroying sweets has led others to enter its ranks, until there are over half a dozen such dentists doing a good business. One of the canine tooth carpenters says he got \$650 for making a false set of teeth for an aristocratic pup whose jaws trifled with the hoof of a horse. Teeth are pulled, filled and filed, as required, and as the owners of the dogs are usually women of wealth, the prices paid for the work are decidedly high.

A COMPLIMENTARY HUSBAND.--Here is a bit of repartee from Lawyer Joseph H. Choate, of New York, at a dinner when Mr. and Mrs. Choate sat at the same table. Mr. Choate was asked who he would prefer to be if he couldn't be himself. He hesitated for a moment, apparently running over in his mind the great ones of earth, when his eye fell on Mrs. Choate, who was at the other end of the table, looking at him with intense humor and interest depicted in her face, and he suddenly replied: "If I could not be myself, I would like to be Mrs. Choate's second husband."

The Electrical Review says the Western Union telegraph company collected about \$15,000,000 last year for telling the time of day.

Miscellaneous Reading.

THESE ARE THE QUESTIONS.

Information that Judge Goff Requires of Governor Evans.

Following are the questions propounded to Governor Evans in the Caldwell-Pope injunction suit and which must be answered before Judge Goff on May 2.

1. If you held an office in the State of South Carolina, what office is it and when did your term of office begin, and when, under the constitution and laws of said State, will it terminate?

2. Did you hold a conference on or about the 18th day of February, 1895, in the city of Columbia, relating to the composition of a convention for the alteration, revision or amendment of the constitution of the said State of South Carolina, provided for by an act of the legislature of that State, approved on the 24th day of December, 1894?

3. Did you hold such a conference as is referred to in interrogatory 2 with Benjamin R. Tillman, J. C. Hemphill, Joseph W. Barnwell, John T. Sloan, Jr., George S. Mower, Ira B. Jones, William C. McGowan, C. A. Efield and Altomont Moses, or any one or more of them, and if so, with which ones of them?

4. Did you, on the said 18th day of February, A. D. 1895, or at any time thereafter, agree to the plans, propositions and suggestions set forth in the writing set forth in paragraph 22 of this bill herein? And if you did so agree, state in what manner you expressed your agreement?

5. Is the said agreement as set forth in paragraph 22 of the bill herein a correct copy of an instrument of writing whereof you assented on the said 18th day of February, A. D. 1895, or thereafter, and if so, did you express your concurrence in the plans, announcements and principles of action therein set forth by signing your name as appended to that writing?

6. Have you personal knowledge or information which causes you to believe that a majority of the male citizens of South Carolina above the age of 21 years, who have resided in that State for more than 12 months before the first Monday in March, 1895, and have not been convicted of any of the crimes of treason, murder, robbery or dueling and are not confined in a prison, almshouse or asylum, and are not of unsound mind in a legal sense, are white men?

7. Have you personal knowledge or information which causes you to believe that the white men of the State of South Carolina coming within the description set forth in interrogatory 6 are a majority of persons of such description in a majority of the counties of the said State, or in half of the counties of said State, or in one-third of the counties of the said State, or that they constitute a majority in a sufficient number of the counties in said State to elect a majority of the whole number of delegates to the State constitutional convention, provided for by the act of the legislature, approved on the 24th day of December, A. D. 1894?

HOW GRANT LEFT THE ARMY.

The majority of people who know much about the life of Grant are aware that he graduated from the Military Academy at West Point, and remained in the army for some years, when he left the service, to enter it again at the commencement of the civil war. General Grant was a captain in the Fourth infantry at the time of his resignation, and his regiment was stationed in Oregon. Major R. C. Buchanan, also a graduate of the academy, who was a fine type of the old-time soldier, was in command of the battalion to which Captain Grant's company was attached.

"Old Buck," as Major Buchanan was generally called in the army, was rigid and unbending in his manner, and the sternest of disciplinarians. He took it into his head that Captain Grant was drinking too much, and said so to him. At that time there was a good deal of drinking in the army. Finally, in the spring of 1854, "Old Buck" made Grant sign a pledge, which, with his resignation, he placed in Major Buchanan's hands. Grant meant to keep his word, but one cold morning he called upon a brother officer, who had just brought his wife to the post. Of course there were refreshments, and among them egg-nog, and Grant was invited by the bride to join her in a glass of this delicious drink, little thinking of the consequences, as she did not know of the captain's pledge, and he took one. "What possessed me I never could tell," Grant said, brokenly, to a brother officer, as he told him the story, "but the first thing I knew I had broken my pledge."

A few days after this Captain Grant was sent for by Major Buchanan. Poor Grant knew what was coming as he walked across the parade ground to the office of the commanding officer, and when he entered the office several brother officers left. Major Buchanan nodded to his adjutant who also left the office, leaving the poor captain to "face the music alone. Holding two papers in his hand, Major Buchanan said, in his sternest manner:

"Captain Grant, here are two papers you signed two months ago. One is your true, the other your resignation. Is it true that you have broken the former?"

Grant met his commanding officer's eye fearlessly. "Yes, sir, it is true," he said.

"What do you deem my duty in the matter of your resignation?" was the major's next question.

There was a moment's silence. Then Grant spoke: "You are an old soldier, Major Buchanan. You do not need instructions from me. But, since you have asked me the question, I will answer it. It is your duty to send in the resignation of any officer who breaks his pledge, and I know of no reason why an exception should be made in the case before you."

"That is all, sir," answered "Old Buck," as he arose and bowed poor Grant out.

Two months later, an official communication reached the post. It informed Captain U. S. Grant that his resignation had been accepted, to take effect July 14, 1854. This was the end of it, and Captain Grant ceased to be an army officer from that date. He packed up his goods and early one morning left for the East. This is how Grant left the army the first time.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

The following interesting anecdote is told of Mr. Booth, the American tragedian: Booth and several friends had been invited to dine with an old gentleman in Baltimore, of distinguished kindness, urbanity and piety. The host, though disapproving of theatres, and theatre-going, had heard so much of Booth's remarkable powers that curiosity to see the man had, in this instance, overcome all his scruples. After dinner was over, lamps lighted, and the company reseated in the drawing-room, someone requested Booth as a particular favor, and one which all present would, doubtless appreciate, to read aloud "The Lord's Prayer." Booth expressed his ready willingness to afford them this gratification, and all eyes were turned expectantly upon him.

Booth rose slowly and reverently from his chair. It was wonderful to watch the play of emotion that convulsed his countenance. He became deathly pale, and his eyes, turned tremblingly upwards, were wet with tears. As yet he had not spoken. The silence could be felt. It became absolutely painful, until at last the spell was broken as if by an electric shock, as the rich-toned voice, from white lips, syllabled forth, "Our Father which art in Heaven," etc., with a pathos and fervid solemnity that thrilled all hearts. He finished. The silence continued. Not a voice was heard nor a muscle moved in his astonished audience, until, from the corner of the room a subdued sob was heard, and the old gentleman (their host) stepped forth with streaming eyes and tottering frame, and seizing Booth by the hand, "Sir," said he, in broken accents, "you have afforded me a pleasure for which my whole future life will feel grateful. I am an old man, and every day from boyhood to the present time, I thought I had repeated the Lord's Prayer; but I never heard it before--never!"

A PNEUMATIC HORSE COLLAR.--Horses with sore shoulders will be a rarity, it is said, when the pneumatic horse collar comes into general use.

It has been invented by a Londoner, and is being introduced in the leading European cities. The patent consists of the usual leather casing, but instead of being packed with a hard, non-yielding substance, the pneumatic principle is applied, a rubber air chamber being substituted for the packing, this in turn, being covered with leather, and when the collar proper is inflated a flexible and yielding surface is presented to the horse's shoulders. It must be apparent to the most casual observer that the collar in present use must cause and give man's noble companion an immense amount of pain. Owing to the harsh padding it is impossible for the collar to adapt itself to the animal's shoulders, and, therefore, chafing and sundry other ills ensue. With the pneumatic collar, as before stated, chafing is impossible, as, instead of the horse having to adapt itself to its collar, the collar adapts itself to the horse the moment it is put on.--Philadelphia Bulletin.

FRIDAY--LUCKY OR UNLUCKY?--Lee surrendered on Friday. Moscow was burned on Friday. Washington was born on Friday. Shakespeare was born on Friday. America was discovered on Friday. Richmond was evacuated on Friday. The Bastille was destroyed on Friday. The Mayflower landed on Friday. Queen Victoria was married on Friday. Fort Sumter was bombarded on Friday. King Charles I was beheaded on Friday. Julius Caesar was assassinated on Friday. Napoleon Bonaparte was born on Friday. The battle of Marengo was fought on Friday. The battle of Bunker Hill was fought on Friday. Joan of Arc was burned at the stake on Friday. The battle of New Orleans was fought on Friday. The Declaration of Independence was signed on Friday.