

## The Prussian Major's Helmet

(Continued from page 26.)

It was right in an instant, and that Doyle does really chuck with ghosts."

At dinner each chucker of the polo was dissected play by play.

"You played like old times, Trevelyan," Harding said—then he stammered, hesitated, his mind had been on the slipping of Trevelyan since their come back to Bramhope; he added hastily, "before we went overseas, I mean; we're just getting over it."

Le Mesurier turned into infantry—dashed if I didn't catch myself tripping a heel at the other leg when we were doubling, thinking I was spurring my mount."

But Trevelyan's face was the face of a man battling for ginger—trying to lift himself out of apathy.

The fierce drive of the polo was having its reaction; below par, at best, he was feeling it.

Colonel Cunningham was glad that he had acquiesced in the junior's scheme of the Yogi when Trevelyan's chowkidar, coming to the door of the room, announced that a Holy One sent his salaam, and begged audience of the sahibs. "If it is a lie, Haroor," the chowkidar said, "the Holy One has been summoned, I will drive him forth with denunciation, for against such a one my staff is not to be used."

They all chirked up, for dinner over, the servants gone, an oppressive drizzle hovered over their spirits.

Then the puddah of the doorway was swept to one side by a lean, dark-skinned man, and a tall form clad in a yellow robe, in one hand a staff from the top of which swung a yellow bag, stepped into the light of the oil lamp, fanning in a soft, clear voice: "Aum, aum, aum, the burden of his chow, and the light of earth, the divine light that illumines our souls. Salaam, sahibs."

"By gad!" Colonel Cunningham ejaculated, "the Yogi is a sannyasi, the highest sect of these beggars; his regiments show that. Odd; didn't know they went in for this sort of thing."

"That's the man, sir," Le Mesurier declared, "and he's top hole at it."

**A Mysterious Demonstration.**

"Very likely," the Colonel concurred, "the sannyasi has gone deeper into the mystery of mental abstraction than any of them. I always fancied, though, that they disclaimed tricks; they rather pose as ascetics, chaps who stare the fish and feed the starving. Might be deuced interesting; not a half bad idea, Le Mesurier."

The younger's face glowed, and he moved at Harding's nod.

A khiltastar came into the room and Trevelyan said: "Put a bottle on the table, soda, and glasses, legs and carry all the servants off to the kitchen. The chowkidar will call when you're wanted."

The Colonel looked quizzically into Trevelyan's face. Why the precaution. Then with a shrug he thought, "There's a curious sort of morbidness about his man; he's getting superstitious."

The swami was speaking now. "The Sahib would have their servant combat doubt by occult manifestation, by appeal to the mental habit of earth."

He drew from his yellow bag a copy of the Bhagavad Gita, saying: "Herein is revealed the message of Brahman, which can only be interpreted, lived into by those who have purified themselves of earth taint by meditation and absorption in the spirit. And through that perhaps the gods have given to me mastery over mystical manifestations. In the sahib's mind now is a thought that they will be deceived by trickery."

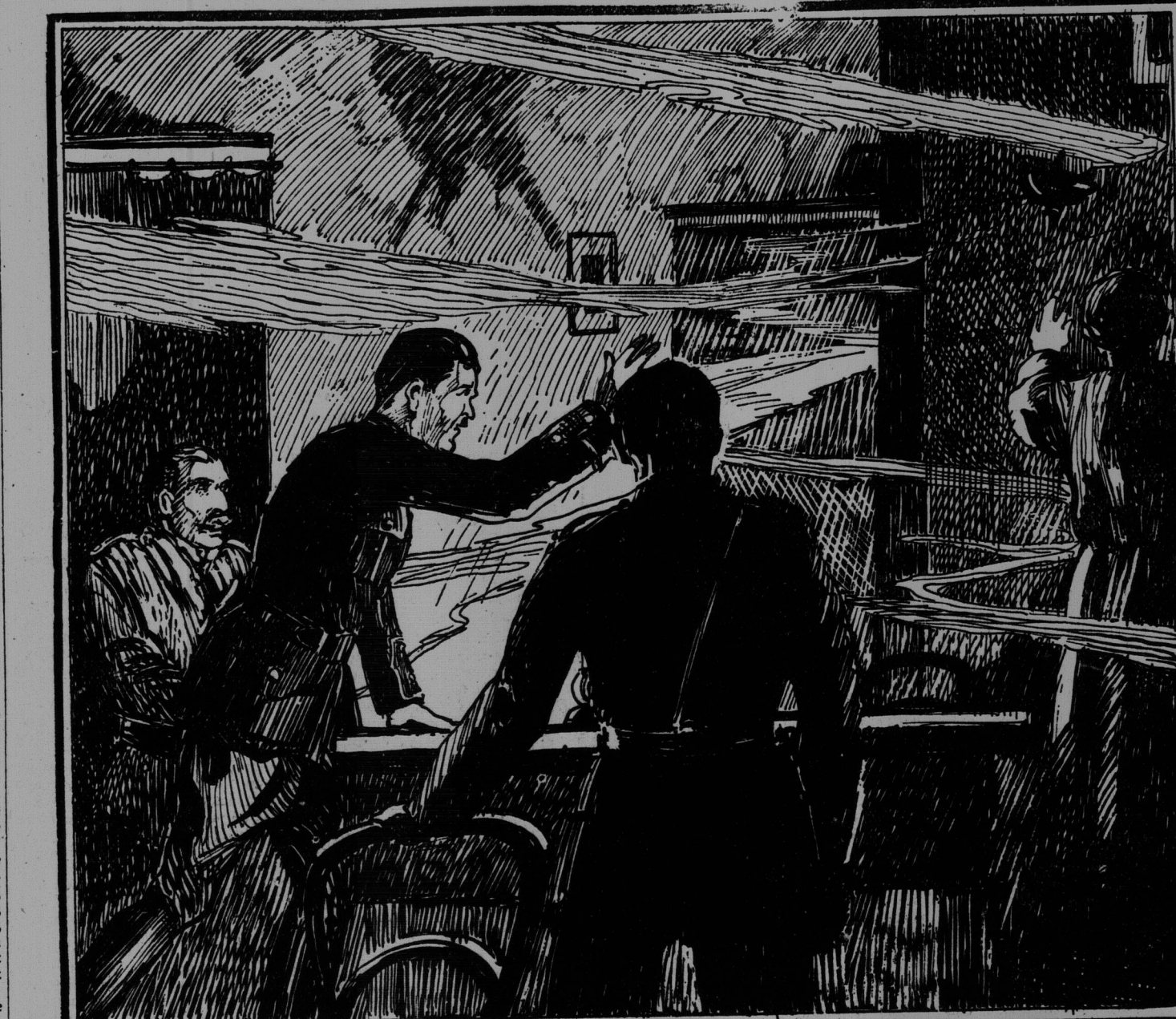
"By jove!" Harding exclaimed, "for that was the very thing in his mind."

"But they will see, will they? what they will see, for I cannot lift them into the realm wherein I know that I am but an instrument, an atom in the vast whole that is Brahman, that is the ever and ever life."

The Colonel was impressed; he was inclined to a nebulous belief in mystic power, and there was something of earnestness emanating from the sannyasi that hushed them all. And his words, couched in the purest Aesop Hindu, spoke of the highest cast of superior mental attainment.

Trevelyan said: "The Captain fash his large, luminous eyes on Sahib's watch has been stolen."

"Hardly, Yogi," Trevelyan said, al-



"My God! stop this tomfoolery," said Trevelyan.

least ghostly arms and take up their march, closing in on Bramhope; hyenas and wolves steal along in the shadows of the trees, and their noxious stench is in my nostrils. Bramhope is rolled up like a rug and slipped into hell. I waken from this terrible thing, horrible as it might be.

Major Harding, floundering for something to break the spell said, "That deuced Yogi did hypnotize us. I see it all. He knew that helmet was a war trophy from France, that we had been there and would have memories, and that by concentrating our minds on the helmet, we would mentally picture the face we thought we saw. I was thinking of the dead Prussian, and, by gad! for a minute I would have sworn that his face scowled at me."

"That's what I saw," Cox corroborated, "the Prussian—ugly face was too; hate in the eyes, a supercilious sneer on the lips."

And the Yogi, draping his lean shoulders in the yellow cloak, answered, "I have the colonel's salaam, ordered backward, through the purdah, his hands to his forehead in a salaam of obeisance."

Harding sprang to the doorway, closer the two wooden doors, and dropped the bar across them.

The Colonel had a hand on the captain's shoulder, and was saying, "Back up, Trevelyan. You played that last chucker after your helmet was knocked off, and the devilish evening up-elating says, you know, got you? I was afraid."

Harding had poured some brandy into a glass, and was handing Trevelyan on the arm, said gently, "Take this, boy."

With a shudder Trevelyan drained the brandy, and throwing himself back in his chair said brokenly: "Sorry, Colonel, I'm—"

"I know, Trevelyan," the Colonel interrupted, "don't mind; this devilish climate will crack a man when he least expects it."

"I can't sleep," Trevelyan pleaded. "At night my cot is a grid. The sun that is accounted an enemy in my friend; when it steals away I hear the jungle, the trees stretch out their

his eyes as if he would shut out the horrible thing. Why destroy all that was left of his faith? Why change love to loathing? Was there nothing of God's creation left pure? Unconsciously he had covered the thin sheet with his hand as if he would shield the girl's name from the searching eyes of the Yogi.

Then, stealing his heart he read, translating unconsciously into English. It began "Mon cher." It was brief, compact—just information, diabolical information. The Anglaise would attack that night in full force, covered by a barrage from guns secretly brought up. It ended, "Save your precious life, mon cher."

As Trevelyan slumped back in his chair, vacant eyes staring back to that night in France, the Yogi said, "If I have the Captain's permission I will go."

Trevelyan nodded apathetically, and pointed to the rupees on the table.

**Theresa Rehabilitated.**

The swami shook his head, saying, "I am but an instrument in transmitting to the Captain Sahib the message the gods have sent him. It is well." Then he slipped noiselessly from the room.

And Trevelyan's mind became strangely revivified; clarity of thought came to him now that his mind was riveted upon a concrete thing, the note. And, battling with the why, he came to a solution, an absolute solution—there could be no other. Theresa became rehabilitated in honor, in truth, in fidelity, in love. She had sent this note, taking the chance of being shot as a spy, not to save the Russian's life, but to save his. If he knew anything she would know there was to be no assault in force, she was to be perhaps, from his thoughtless, too-fond goodbye, that he expected to be killed. She had reasoned with a startling intensity of thought that the Major, warned of a crushing assault, would draw his men back from the indefensible front line, the "feeler trenches," to the main force in the rear, that held an almost impenetrable position, to save his men. It was often done. And perhaps she had sent the note too late so that there would be no time to bring up reinforcements, reinforcements that would only have crumpled up in the open ditch under the barrage.

Why the Major had remained alone was of no importance, just a nagging touch of misery. Perhaps, with military bravado, he had stayed to acquire authentic information of the assault, feeling that he could slip away when the barrage started.

Then came another thought. Perhaps the Major's death was the cause of his death; the helmet he had put it in was a parade helmet, a lofty, showy thing, with its two black eagles guarding the Prussian coat-of-arms. He would be wearing a steel trench helmet in that front line and perhaps in the midst of evacuation he had forgotten the order, and realising what discovery of the spy note would mean to Theresa, he had come back for it, came back to be trapped to his death. Nemesis!

Next day Trevelyan visited his colonel, saying, "I'm peckish, sir, fed up on the jungle, I fancy; as an officer I'm rotten. I was thinking of furlough—"

Colonel Cunningham's face lighted up, and he exclaimed: "Topping! Three months in Blight will buck you up."

"First, sir, will you answer one question, because—"

"Ask it, Trevelyan."

"Was—was Theresa shot as a spy?" "I should say not! Why should she be?" The colonel answered emphatically. "There was nothing against her—absolutely nothing; there was nothing against anybody, it was just Headquarters playing with red tape. The girl is jolly well alive and in France now, breaking hearts, I suppose."

"I can have furlough, thank you, sir?" "I'll recommend it; you'll get it; you used it, and you deserve it, Captain Trevelyan."

**THE END**

A witty individual one Christmas morning dangled that he would ask fifty different persons the same question and receive the same answer from each. The wit went to one and to another until he had spoken to the whole 50. And this is how he won the bet. He whispered half audibly to each: "Say have you heard that Smith has failed?"

"What Smith?" queried the whole fifty one after another and it was decided that the bet had been fairly won.

An instrument that makes an engraving of finger-print marks is being used by the police department of Paris, France.

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