

THE ELUSIVE MR. SQUARE FACE

OF the three or four hundred people who boarded a certain train for Port Stanley, Ont., the Canadian summer city on Lake Erie, one Saturday afternoon, I was on the most important mission. I say this without any egotism; I was going there for local colour.

On the road to to-morrow I believed that some day I would find the plot for that great story I was going to write; that story that would herald my name near and far as a new light in the literary heavens. Ahead of me on the train sat a man who was reading a book entitled, "Why I am a German." Across the aisle, a Jew—his hawk-nose as conspicuous as "the egg on the chin of an O'Grady on a Friday"—was talking across the back of his seat to a chap who had come into this world under a foreign flag and was saying that "This war was caused by over-population in the countries affected," to which the other agreed with a nod of his head.

Disgustedly I looked towards my shoes. I would have shied one at the head of the Jew and the other at the fellow in front of me, but instead of doing that I reached down and pulled out a newspaper that had been folded up and squeezed in behind the steam pipes. The paper was a week old, but in a "box" at the top of the page I saw an item that at once made me forget the presence of my unconscious tormentors.

A DISTINGUISHED VISITOR.

Ottawa, Aug. 10.—The Nizam of Hyderabad has reached this country and will be the guest of the government. His mission at this time is believed to have to do with Indian emigration to Canada at the conclusion of the war. The Nizam is travelling incognito.

In a jiffy I threw down the paper and began fishing in my club bag for my note-book. Going over the index I came to this note, "The Nizam of Hyderabad, page 32." I turned up the page.

The Nizam of Hyderabad is the principal Mohammedan ruler of India. The family was founded by Asaf Jah, a distinguished Turkoman soldier of the Emperor Aurangzeb, who in 1713 was appointed subhadar of the Deccan with the title of Nizam-ul-Mulk (regulator of the State) but eventually threw off the control of the Delhi court.

In another place I found this:

The Nizam Mir Mahbub Ali Khan Badahur, Asaf Jah, a direct descendant of the famous Nizam-ul-Mulk, was born on the 18th August, 1866. At the death of his father in 1869 he succeeded to the throne as a minor, and was invested with full powers in 1884. He is notable as the originator of the Imperial Service Troops, which now form the contribution of the native chiefs to the defence of India.

And again:

The Nizam receives 25 lakhs (\$835,000) per year for the rent of Berar.

Ever since I could read, India and Indian affairs have been my hobby. A friend of mine for several years with the Seventh Hussars told me that he had been, on more than one occasion, a guest of His Highness, and that he had been shown the famous Nizam diamond, which weighed two hundred and seventy-seven carats, and was said to be worth seven hundred thousands of dollars.

Still thinking of the Nizam, I followed the crowd from the train to the beach at Port Stanley. Several thousand people were gathered there from all parts of the world. Foreigners of wealth, and perhaps breeding, rubbed elbows with those of lower birth and, maybe, lower morals. Walking up and down by way of getting a perspective, I passed several times a square-faced man who eyed me searchingly. He was alone, and like myself, appeared to court companionship. I had an idea that we would eventually get acquainted, so I put myself out for that purpose. It was a reciprocal matter with him, too, for we fell into conversation presently and sat together on a seat along the beach, where we could sit and talk and watch the sun as it played on the waters.

OUR conversation had nothing whatever to do with this story. But the man has. He accidentally pulled a newspaper out of his pocket and I saw at a glance it was of the same edition as mine and that the item about the Nizam of Hyderabad was

AT a summer resort almost any man thinks he can do things that he never could around home. Off the beaten track of business he goes about looking with great interest at other people who may in turn be equally suspicious—in a quite genial way—of him. And then—he becomes a detective.

By HARRY MOORE

encircled with a blue pencil mark. He caught me looking at the paper, crumpled it in his pocket, snapped his jaws, arose, smiled, and handed me a card:

Ogilvie Mills

Broker

Do you know I mistrusted him immediately, and when he gave me that card purporting to be his, I decided I would play a similar game on him. I handed him the pasteboard of an Eastern friend of mine who had enlisted and was "Somewhere in France":

Clifford Gage

Real Estate
Insurance

and he took it, smiled again, extended his hand and said:

"Well, good-bye, Mr. Gage—hope to see you later—" and with that he was gone.

A PATROL boat steamed into the harbour, a large Canadian ensign floating to the breeze, and as I watched it, I kept thinking all the time of the Nizam of Hyderabad and my strange companion. Why had this man a marked copy of the paper containing the item about the Indian Prince's visit to Canada? Why did he display such irritation when I caught him with it? Was the Nizam at Port Stanley? Was this square-faced stranger a member of the Secret Service? I kept saying, "No" to this last question. Who, then, was he? An international crook, a German spy, or what? To tell you the truth, Square Face's actions baffled me, for he gave me no clue whatever to himself.

I went to the Casino. A short, thick-set man in a heavy beard and with coal black hair under a head-dress such as the Indians wear, sat at the piano, while not far away was a peculiar looking little old man who put in a word every once in a while. Upon my approach the old man moved away and the player, without looking up, threw himself into Englemann's "Melody of Love."

He played like an artist, and at the conclusion arose, bowed to the few who were present and, followed by the other, went out.

There was no doubt in my mind that the man in the black beard was a foreigner. The Nizam of Hyderabad? I referred to my notes:

"Born in August, 1866."

Hardly! This man couldn't be over forty and so far as I could see there wasn't a grey hair in his head. And yet—he looked like a Mohammedan. It never appealed to me at the time that the beard and hair might be false or that the other might be His Royal Highness—an Indian Prince incog.

With both eyes and my brain store-house full, and many notes gathered here and there, I stood on the platform waiting for the train at eight o'clock that

evening. I had a realization that my trip so far had not brought me that plot for which I was searching. Presently I saw his nibs, the man in the black beard, and his small companion approach the station and a dark object, that dodged in and about the crowds, following. Square Face was shadowing them.

I had a feeling that these three men were the principals in something big, and I would have liked to stay and see what it was.

HOWEVER, I had made up my mind to return to the city, and I figured it out that probably my imagination was getting the better of me and that there was nothing particularly surprising to their actions.

Back in town I went to the hotel, got an evening paper and went to my room. But I couldn't content myself. I itched to get back to the Port. Funny, wasn't it?

At last I couldn't control myself any longer, so grabbing my hat I struck down the street. A crowd had gathered in front of a newspaper office and thither I went. I read the war news and then I was attracted by a piece of paper that hung in one of the windows. Upon approaching closer, I read,

"Clifford Gage was drowned at Port Stanley to-night."

Take it from me, that notice set me thinking! My good old friend, Clifford Gage, drowned at Port Stanley? Of course, it was impossible! Clifford Gage was fighting in France.

I got my grip and caught the last car for Port Stanley. What awaited me at the other end of the line? Who was drowned? Suddenly I remembered having given Gage's card to Square Face. Square Face must have been the victim. Ah, it began to dawn on me that the man in the black beard and his companion must have drowned—

Poor old Square Face!

Of that trip to the Port I know nothing. I was so dazed, or so deeply drawn into myself, that I was not a thing of this world at all.

When I stepped from the car, I asked the first person I met where the body was. He didn't know. I enquired from several. No one knew. I struck down the board walk. I saw a large crowd gathered before a boat-house. I asked to see the victim and was taken inside, the cloth was removed and I looked into the face of—a stranger.

I studied the corpse and the clothes it wore when mortal, and the more I studied the more I was convinced that the dead man was my twin brother—if I had ever possessed such a thing.

"The only clue to his identity," spoke up a fisherman, "is this card which he had in his death-grip—"

He handed me the card and it dropped from my fingers. It was the self-same piece of pasteboard I had given Square Face in the afternoon.

"Pockets inside out—nothing remains—looks like a robbery, sir," the fisherman ventured further.

I whispered to him. The crowd was shoving in and those in the rear were craning their necks. Oh, idle curiosity!

"Look at this man, then look at me! Do you see any resemblance? Do you think he could be taken for me, or I for him?"

YOU see, I was beginning to see a reason for the man's sudden ending and a probable idea as to who did it, and I wanted to assure myself that the resemblance was so marked that a mistake could be made.

"A remarkable likeness," commented the fisherman, after he had compared us. "Brothers?"

"No," I answered, quickly. "Nothing to each other. I never saw this chap before. Who found the body?"

"I did," he replied.

"Pardon me for my questions, but I would like to get all the help you can give me. At what time were you told that this man was drowned and by whom?"

The fisherman pulled out his watch and looked