

THE CANADIAN MAGAZINE

VOL. XIII

AUGUST, 1899

No. 4

THE CAPTURE OF SHEITAN.

A TALE OF A VICEROY'S DIPLOMACY.

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IF a man go into a dark pantry and drink from the first bottle he puts his hand on, he may get wine, or stove-polish, or cream, or disinfectant. If he stand well with the gods he may get cream, but the average explorer will hit upon the bottle of disinfectant.

Many offices in India are filled on this dark-pantry plan; and the office of Police Nabob of Calcutta had drawn a queer decoration for its head. Officially he was not called Police Nabob; that is only a story-teller's license. This story is about the time Eden-Powell was Nabob.

People asked why he had been pushed up to that place; but nobody answered them, and they passed on to other things.

The Nabob was always discovering something—some tremendous conspiracy among the natives. If some caste took to painting their knees crimson, that meant another mutiny was on the tapis, and if Eden-Powell didn't watch sharply the British Raj would be swept out of an Indian existence.

When Sen Mullick gave the *nautch* (dance) out at Hathabad, near Calcutta, Eden-Powell felt that the time had come for him to distinguish himself. A contemplative goat would have characterized the thing he did as stupid, but Powell felt that he had received an inspiration.

Sen Mullick was one of the black sheep the Nabob had written down as second cousin to Nanna Sahib. At this *nautch* there would be some mischief hatched, and he'd find out all about it for himself.

That was why he got the disguise. It was a decorative thing, this disguise, a long, unkempt beard and wig, purchased in detachments from different hairdressers; and an up-country native's outfit of clothes, silk-embroidered vest and all.

Not a soul knew about it but the Nabob himself. When he had saved the Empire, and could place his hand on the shoulder of the leader of the new revolt, he would declare himself, but not till then.

The beard bothered him a bit, also the wig. They weren't sufficiently attachable, it seemed to him; the soft wires passing over his ears were quite inadequate to the desired stability of the make-up; so he had his bearer bring him from the bazaar an adhesive compound warranted to cement oil and water together.

Eden-Powell lived at the big hotel, and the night of the *nautch* at Mullick's place he went to dinner in evening dress, as usual.

A man can't have all these big things on his mind and contain them without showing a bit queer; so when