

report early to-morrow morning." The detective took the list, made his salaam, and vanished! Thus having set matters in train, I indulged in the Siesta before alluded to! The following morning after the usual routine of my duties, had been gone through, I summoned my orderly to make his report, which he did, reading it off as follows: "Of the passengers arrived by the steamship *China*, seventeen had left the Island, and six remained, Major and Mrs. Selby Hope, Hall Hotel, Mazagon; L. P. Sandhurst, Civil Service, at his Bungalow, Race Course Road, Byculter; Ensigns E. Comee, J. Bemick, attached to the companies European Regiment stationed at Colaba, and Mrs. Percival Clifford—residence unknown."

"Am I to find out? said he looking up, as he finished reading his report."

"Not at present, but you may tell, the Hamalls to bring my Palenqueene, round to the office door, and do not leave here on any account until my return, as I then may require you!"

The first point for me to determine, was, whether Mrs. Percival Clifford and Mrs. Oscar Pemberton were one and the same person, I prepared myself for a visit to the Hope Hall Hotel, writing the lady's name on a card, and placing the portrait, with it, in my Sabertache, I jumped into my Palkee."

"Is Major Shelby staying here?" I inquired, of the proprietor of that establishment, half an hour later.

"Yes, Sir," you will find him in yonder verandah!"—pointing across the spacious hall—replied that polite individual.

Advancing in the direction indicated, I found the gentleman in question. "Good morning, major, are you disengaged for a few minutes?" I inquired, as I approached.

"I am at your service, Sir; but you have the advantage of me," he replied, bowing politely. I handed him my card.

"Chief of Police!" said he, looking up enquiringly? I bowed.

"To what am I indebted for this visit, or in what way, can I serve you?"

"You arrived from Europe by the steamer *China*, I believe. He assented. "Among the passengers, there was a lady named Mrs. Percival Clifford, was there not, Sir?"

"There was indeed," he unhesitatingly replied, "and a most beautiful creature she was. In fact usually styled, the fascinating Clifford."

"You then would have no difficulty in recognising her, if you should meet," I inquired.

"None in the least," he answered.

I produced the likeness, I had received from Oscar, and handed it to the major, "That is her," he exclaimed, the moment he saw it. "But I hardly think the artist has done her justice! This looks much younger, but I suppose, it may have been taken some five or six years ago?"

I assented.

"Has there anything gone wrong?" enquired the major?"

I answered, by a shrug of the shoulders.

I fancied there was a screw loose somewhere from the violent flirtations that was continually going on between her and Mr. Sandhurst, of the Civil Service; She is young and beautiful, and he rich and handsome; and if report speaks truly, a great admirer of the fair sex generally. But for that matter half the young fellows on board were going crazy about her."

While the major was running on, evidently carried away by the recollections of the fascinating Clifford. I quietly wrote down the name of "Sanhurst" in my memorandum book. Then after a few comments on the weather and other matters, I took my leave, and returned to my office, and summoning Acbar Ali, I gave him the following instructions:

"You will ascertain, if there is any European lady residing at Mr. Sandhurst's, Bungalow. If any of the bungalows at Tardeo, Walkeshwa, Mharluximee, Byculia or Chingleparra have been occupied recently by any European lady, and find out whether Mrs. Percival Clifford, who arrived by the overland mail, is residing there, or, if she has left the island. Look at this and remember the features, said I, showing him the likeness of Clara. This is Mrs. Percival Clifford, should you meet her anywhere, place her under strict surveillance. Take any number of men you require, but the utmost secrecy must be observed. During the course of the next day, I received from my subordinate this information,—"That Chittygong Lodge, the property of Sorabjee Pestonjee, and situated at Shingleparra, had been sold to a Mrs. Oscar Pemberton, and had been elegantly furnished by Rantoola and Jaffa Sullimon, furniture dealers, and the bills which were all paid, were made out in the name of the same lady, that Mrs. Percival Clifford, passenger by the last overland mail, after residing for four days in the British Hotel in the Fort, had moved into the said Bungalow, where she was now living with her servants only. That Raggo Bappoo, No. 342, of the detective force had been installed as house hammall. Who reported that the lady received no visitors, except Mr. Sandhurst, of the Civil Service, who called usually after sunset and generally remained there until after supper, which was usually served at eleven p.m. That he, the havildar, had seen the lady walking in her compound or garden, and that she bore a striking resemblance to the portrait shown him by the chief." This was the substance of my orderly's report; and from the information gained. There was no reasonable doubt but that my friend's secret foreboding, had been but too truly verified. That his wife, young, inexperienced and alone among strangers, had fallen a victim to the uses and wiles of that polished man of the world, yet heartless libertine, Leonard Sandhurst.

This would be bitter draught for poor Oscar, when he should learn the result of my enquiries, which I was very loathe to communicate. But he had wrung from me a promise to conceal nothing from him, and I had no other alternative, than to comply! but I deferred doing so, until after I should have had an interview with Clara. She might be persuaded to leave her present protector, and return to her home, and thus I should be spared the pain of recital of what had transpired since her arrival from Europe. And Oscar was too fond and forgiving to distress her by any question on such a subject."

Oscar Pemberton and I entered the service about the same time, and made each others acquaintance on board the *Indiaman*, during our passage out. He was of Irish parentage, but born and educated in England, and possessed all those dashing military qualities, so characteristic of his race. He was brave, and impetuous, confiding and generous, almost to a fault. On our arrival in India, we were posted to the same regiment, and remained fast friends and comrades, until he and his beautiful bride left to join his staff appointment in the Northern Division, that had been procured for him, through the influence of the colonel of her father's late regiment.

Captain Stanley, Clara's father, had been an officer in a Light Dragoon Regiment, and while out tiger shooting in the Warree Jungles had made his headquarters at Gou, a Portugues settlement, on the coast near Vingorla, here he met and fell in love with the beautiful Isadore Braganzar, who was being educated in one of the convents outside the city. She was of Portugues descent on her father's side, her mother being an Italian. After a few stolen interviews in the convent garden, he persuaded her to elope with him to the nearest European station, where they were married. She, being an orphan with no fortune, where with to endow the church, the Portugues ecclesiastics gave themselves little trouble concerning her marriage with a heretic. Clara was the fruit of this union, but unfortunately, her mother died before she had reached her seventh year, and her father transferred that love, with which he had almost idolised his young wife, to his now motherless daughter. He would not hear of her being sent to England for education, and being a man of a refined and cultivated mind, and highly educated, he devoted himself to the superintendence of her studies. Her music lessons were directed by the bandmaster of the regiment, in which she made rapid progress, astonishing and delighting her friends with her brilliant performance of Bellini's and Verdi's Operas, both vocally and instrumentally; her voice being a superb soprano. When she was about fifteen her father managed to get into some difficulty with a superior officer, which resulted in his having either to stand a court