

STORY OF THE TIBETAN MAGIC

And of the Severity of the Llama's Curse.

Which Was Bestowed Upon Two Coins, One of Which Came Into Tom Martin's Possession.

The waiter brought us drink and change out of Tom Martin's half sovereign. I pushed the latter over toward him with my left hand, and with the right raised the water bottle to dilute my whisky.

"Your change, Tom," said I.

"Yes, of course," said Tom, who was absorbed in the story he was telling me. He put out his hand as if to pick the money up, but seemed to remember something, for he drew his hand back suddenly.

"Good heaven!" said he, "and I had forgotten that."

He took out his handkerchief, wrapped it around the forefinger of his right hand and then, with the forefinger so covered, gently scraped the money toward him, piece by piece, and earnestly looked at each coin.

"Now look here, Tom," said I, "this is a very pretty story that you have been telling me, but don't try and give it an air of reality by a performance like that."

"You can believe it or not, just as you like," said Tom; "but I tell you, Fred, that piece of money is coming along this way some day. I have seen it once and—I left it on the table. You don't catch me touching any coin while I am certain that one is in circulation. But let me conclude what I was telling you."

"Urga is one of the most peculiar places you could think of, and one of our first duties was to present ourselves to the grand lama. We had to get a palanquin, for it was only meet that Europeans of our importance should go in state, and it was while en route that we suddenly came to the praying mill. This was a sort of 'roundabout,' with huge wooden posts sticking out at the side, which every Buddhist passing was supposed to take hold of and push the mill round at least once."

"What caused Phil to do what he did then I don't know, but something seemed to impel him to get out of the palanquin, make a run over to the mill, catch hold of one of the wooden posts and commence to push it around at its topmost pace. The square where the mill was erected was pretty well filled with people, and when some of those saw what had been done they came rushing toward us, shouting and gesticulating. Phil had undoubtedly committed a sacrilege, and I was fearful for his safety. These fanatical Mongolians, once their religion is assailed in any shape or form, would certainly have no mercy upon the assailant."

"Phil came hurriedly back to me, jumped into the palanquin and ordered the bearers to get on. But they were struck dumb with terror. The mob came for us, smashed in the doors of the palanquin, dragged us out, and for two minutes there was the liveliest fight on record going on. We got the worst of it and, bruised, bleeding and insensible, were carted off to prison."

"We were taken before the grand lama, and then and there he ordered us to be sent across the Siberian frontier with the utmost dispatch. The next day we were hurried along under an escort of soldiers, and it was not long before we arrived at the frontier, the town of Miamatshin, which really is the Mongolian portion of Kiakta. We were taken along to the yellow posts which marked the actual frontier, and there the soldiers of the lama stopped. We were removed from the palanquin in which we had been carried and were commanded to sit down a few yards from the posts. Not 20 feet away were the black and white posts of the Russias, and it was indeed something to gladden our eyes to see the brown coat and the astrakhan fez of the Russian Cossack who stood there on sentry."

"Our guards spread themselves out, then there came forward a Buddhist priest, who began to talk to us in a jargon which, of course, we could not understand. He finished at length and produced from his robe a wire on which were threaded some hundreds of brass 'cash,' which the Chinese always carry. He took two of the 'cash' off the wire and laid them in front of us on the ground."

"Then the priest began waving his arms about, and the Mongolians took out their hand prayer mills and began turning them for all they were worth. The voice of the priest then rose on the

air. He said three or four words and spat deliberately at each of the coins which had been put on the ground before us.

"That was all. The priest departed, the soldier escorted us to the posts, the Russian sentry presented his rifle and we presented our passports. We passed over and breathed the comparative free air of Russia. Our first duty when we were in Kiakta was to go straight to the governor and lay our complaint before him. He was agitated when he heard of the ceremony at the frontier, and told us that the Buddhist priest had put into circulation two coins which had received the sun god's curse and that these coins would circulate throughout the world, harmless to everybody except the two they were destined for. The instant possession of either of these by the person cursed would mean immediate destruction."

"Nor was this all, the coins might not come to us as brass 'cash,' they might come to us as a kopeck piece, or as a ruble, as marks or pfenings, as francs or centimes, as anything, wherever it might be. We should never know when they were coming; we should take them in the ordinary way; we should handle them, but only for one moment, the next moment we should be dead."

One day Tom sent for me, and it was to tell me that he was going to be married. This struck me as something peculiar, for I had thought Tom Martin was one of the last men likely to fall in love. The wedding duly came off, everybody was pleased, and Tom and his bride went away to the south of France. A few more weeks rolled by and Tom returned. There was to be a reception at their London house, and the invitation which was sent me was one which I could not well refuse.

In the evening I had the opportunity of a chat with Tom. We had gone out on the balcony, which overlooked the garden, and there I purposely made reference to the superstition which he had for the lama's coin.

"Perhaps," said I, "now that you have gone unscathed all these years, you are beginning to lose faith in the potency of that prophecy?"

"Well, to tell you the truth," said Tom, "I am getting a little shaky about it, and when one begins to reason superstitious on any subject is likely to get knocked out. It has struck me that, after all, it may be but mere foolery."

We entered the room once more, but I was dying for a smoke, and, making some excuse, I slipped away to the smoking room. I had been sitting there about five minutes when Tom Morton came in.

"What do you think?" he said. "My wife has got this Mongolian story into her head so much that she is perfectly ridiculous. She has been telling everybody about it, and, of course, they are all laughing, and the worst of it all is that she is laughing with them at me. But come, come, old fellow. I want to show you something."

I rose, threw my cigarette end away and followed him. We went along the corridor to the drawing room, which was crowded, and even as we entered I heard Mrs. Morton's voice.

"I really do believe it will be such fun," she was saying. "Here comes Tom, and now we will try. A coin, if you please, from each of you. Let me see—how many are there here?—26. Good! Then I want 26 coins. Now, Tom," she said, "take off that wretched glove and let us demonstrate that you can touch money with your ungloved hand."

Tom was pale, and I saw his brow shining with perspiration. He muttered something, but what it was was lost in the laughter and banter which went around the room. With a quick, impulsive movement, he drew off his right glove.

"Well," he said, and I saw his lips wreath into a hard, unamirthful smile, "I will take the coins just to show you that I am not afraid."

Then, one by one, his wife counted out the coins into his hands. Twenty were already there, when, unable to control the impulse which came over me, I started up and cried: "Drop it, Tom! Why challenge such a thing as that?"

He looked at me, and I saw how pale and how stern was his face. He said nothing to me, but merely turned to his wife with the whisper, "Go on!"

"Twenty-one, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27"—"Twenty-seven," I cried, "what is that, there are only 26 people here, there is a mis"— But I could get no further. Tom had staggered back, his body shrunken in size. He fell to the floor. A deathlike silence fell over the assemblage. I strode over to my friend's prostrate form.

Tom was dead and cold and in his right hand there were 27 coins. I looked

at the top one; it was a German piece, value 20 marks. I took it to the light and gazed upon it. Across the profile of Emperor William II. I saw a mark which described a true square, and then I knew that the lama's curse at length had had effect.—Penny Pictorial Magazine.

The Steamer Cutch.

The Cutch still rests on the rocks of Horseshoe reef, where she struck on the fatal August night. The hole in her bow has been patched up, but no successful efforts has yet been made to float the once staunch Skagway-Vancouver flyer. It is even uncertain as to whether or not the owners will ever try it. The Farallon, which arrived Wednesday night, and the Danube yesterday, each passed the Cutch and report that there seems to be no change in her position. She lies as she was when her loss was first reported. Capt. Newcomb was seen at Juneau by Farallon officers and passengers. He is reported as saying: "I do not know what will be done with the Cutch. The owners have not abandoned her, but have patched up the jagged hole caused by the sharp rocks of the reef. Whether they will try to do more I do not know."

It is further reported that Capt. Newcomb thought it probable that the ship would be delivered to the underwriters, who would probably wreck the speedy craft.

It has been nearly six weeks since the old East Indian ship went ashore. If she shall be abandoned by the owners and saved by the underwriters, she will probably be repaired, given an American register and a new name. Whether or not she would resume the Skagway run would depend upon the offers received by the new owners.—Alaskan, Oct. 5.

A Dangerous Hallucination.

I saw a shrewd and successful gentleman who, on my being introduced, said he was glad to have a talk with a nerve doctor, for he thought there was something wrong. Then he told his tale, which was that he was pestered by gangs of gypsies who appeared everywhere. He said that he had just come in from chasing them in his garden, for wherever he looked out he saw them pulling up his shrubs.

I said: "But the shrubs are not removed. How do you account for this?" He said: "Well, it is hard to tell, but I still feel they do it, and when I wake in the morning I see the same gypsies using my toothbrush and my hairbrushes. I jump up, only to find they have disappeared." He admitted the absurdity of the whole thing, but yet he said he felt it was true, and he must act upon his belief.

What might have prove a serious loss followed the persistent hallucinations, for before I insisted on his withdrawing from all business he had on one holiday gone to his office to look through his private safe with its very valuable securities. Before leaving he thought he saw his son in the adjoining office and told him to put the things away and to lock the safe. The son was a hallucination, and it was only by accident that the son discovered the state of affairs before others arrived next day.—London Lancet.

Would Be Rich and Original.

The German emperor has many "hobbies," relates a Berlin correspondent. One of the kaiser's chief delights, however, is in collecting ties and scarfs of all ages, of all patterns and of all countries. He has no fewer than 18,000 ties and bows of different descriptions. When he was last in England the emperor one morning came down to breakfast in Sandringham, wearing a most gorgeous, many-colored tie. On asking the Prince of Wales, who is known to have a very quiet taste in this article of dress, as to what he thought of his tie, the prince replied good naturedly:

"Well, now you have asked my opinion, I will give it to you very frankly. We are such old friends that I am sure I shall not offend you. Should plain Mr. Robinson wear such a tie as yours in this country it would be called 'deucedly vulgar'; should a duke or an ordinary price wear it, it would be called 'striking'; but when it pleases the German emperor to honor such a mixture, it is called rich and original."

Dawson's Trade Reaching Out.

That Dawson has a future, even outside of the business from the creeks in the immediate vicinity of the metropolis, was evidenced Thursday when the Canadian left this port with almost a full cargo of merchandise for points along the upper river.

The principal consignments are for the Stewart river, but, considerable invoices were sent to Kirkman, Indian, Selwyn and Henderson.

Milne, the outfitter, has been busy for days filling orders for this shipment and has sent over 15 tons of general merchandise up river to the different stations.

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PRESIDENTIAL BALLOT.

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REPUBLICAN TICKET.	
FOR PRESIDENT	
WILLIAM MCKINLEY	
VICE-PRESIDENT.	
THEODORE ROOSEVELT	
DEMOCRATIC TICKET.	
FOR PRESIDENT	
WM. JENNINGS BRYAN	
VICE-PRESIDENT.	
ADLAI E. STEVENSON	

SIGNED

Instructions: Mark your ticket thus, X in the space opposite the names of the candidates for whom you wish to vote. Each voter is entitled to vote only. Place ballot in sealed envelope marked "Vote" and mail or send to Nugget office.