

Hansen's track, and return at twelve," the Chief said.

"And I will be upstairs, Mr. Teck, if you wish any information," the manager added. "That will give you the whole lower floor to yourself. The durwans and assistants are at your command."

The detective drifted casually about the showroom; had the heavy iron shutters of the front windows lowered; tried the lock of the front door with the manager's duplicate key; examined the iron-barred window, the vault, the private office where he had sat with the manager; and finally walked out the front door and sauntered casually up and down the sidewalk with his hands in his pockets. Then he hailed a gharry and drove to the municipal offices, where, for five minutes, he consulted a city map. At twelve o'clock he was back waiting for his Chief, and together they were ushered into his private office by the manager.

"What was Hansen like, Mr. Dodd?" Teck asked as soon as they were seated. "Was he athletic—would he fight if cornered?"

"Yes, he was a Birmingham man; he would be a tough customer to overcome."

"But they did him up, the cowardly sweeps!" Teck exclaimed.

Dodd started. "You don't mean—"

"Yes, it's a thousand pounds to a gooseberry that you'll never see Hansen again, dead or alive."

Teck drew from his pocket some tiny fragments of pearl.

"Ah!" exclaimed Dodd, "the Maharaja broke that pearl yesterday."

Teck placed in the palm of his hand two additional pieces of broken pearl, and asked: "You are an expert, Mr. Dodd; are these pieces from the same pearl?"

With a powerful glass the manager examined the shell in Teck's hand. "No, they are quite distinct," he said; "one is from a pearl of exquisite lustre, the other carried a shapely purple shade."

"Then Hansen is dead, instead of being a thief," Teck declared.

"You think the durwans killed him?" the manager asked in a hoarse whisper.

"The durwans had nothing to do with it. They could not get in at the front door until Hansen had unlocked it as he passed out. At the time the vault would have been locked—they couldn't get into it."

"I forgot that."

"There was a struggle in the vault. As Hansen was placing the kasaba in the silver casket he was struck from behind; the kasaba fell from his hand, struck the side of the casket—there is a little glint of gold there which I can show you, plain as a footprint in soft clay; and these pieces of pearl, that are not from the one Darwaza broke yesterday, were some of them on the floor of the vault, and some in the casket itself."

"But Hansen walked out the front door," objected Dodd.

"No, he didn't."

"The durwan saw him."

"He saw a man dressed in Hansen's clothes. Hansen always had a few words of greeting with the durwans when he went out; this man hurried off with a gruff salaam. The durwan admits that he didn't see his face, there was very little light. Gopal Singh says that was at 12.30, and Hansen left the workshop at 12. That gave them half an hour for the job."

"But you say they did this, Mr. Teck—only one passed out."

"Through the door; the other went out the way they

came in and took Hansen's body. The job was done by Ives Holborn."

"Holborn!" the Chief gasped.

"Yes. While I've been watching here for him—I had advice from Scotland Yard that he had headed this way after the Brighton Hotel robbery—he slips in and does this trick under my very nose. And, Mr. Dodd, I can tell you this, if Holborn had done it alone, we might say good-bye to your pearls; but, luckily, this time he needed an accomplice—"

"One of my employees, Mr. Teck?"

"No; fortunately it's next door to a fool, a sailor—I mean a fool at this sort of work. They came here last night at half past eleven and started to cut away the iron bars of the window for egress. I found the mark of Holborn's saw."

"But, Mr. Teck," the Chief said, "if they could get in, why this trouble to get out by a different route?"

"Because it was not low tide until six o'clock and they were in a hurry."

"I don't understand—what has the tide to do with my shop?" cried Dodd petulantly.



"..... a rustle, a gurgling, stifled cry, and at their feet on the ground lay the gatekeeper, his voice strangled in his throat."

Teck's mild blue eyes assumed a bored, patient look as he answered: "My dear sir, it has taken me an hour to discover these matters, and you would comprehend all in a minute—please be patient. As I said, Ives Holborn and the sailor came here at 11.30. While Holborn cut at the window bar, the sailor amused himself with the silver trinkets in that showcase which has been disarranged. Fortunately for us he put a little trinket in his pocket, a silver boat's whistle. Now you see how I know he was a sailor, and by this we will make him pay for his whistle; this trinket will get us back the pearls, I hope. At twelve o'clock Holborn heard Hansen's key at the door of the workshop, and he and the sailor hid in this office. From a chink in the door Holborn saw Hansen open the vault that he had meant himself to drill open. As you have said, Hansen carried a little lamp so our friend was enabled to see the pearl kasaba. The two thieves crept to the vault, knowing that Hansen would close it when he came out. No doubt he was taking a good-night look at the beautiful kasaba, and as his back was turned they pounced upon him like two thugs. Hansen

had placed the lamp on the little shelf just above the casket where you will find a ring of oil. It was likely he was struck from behind with an iron bar or a sandbag and never made a sound. Holborn realised the situation at once. There is no cleverer thief in the world than Ives Holborn.

"Observe that he took nothing but the pearl crown. That was so that it would be supposed your man had disappeared with this that he had in charge. Holborn saw Hansen bolt the shop door on the inside and knew that he would not go back that way; and on the ring that held the key was another that fitted the front door, so he knew it was his habit to go out that way. He exchanged clothes with the dead man, sent the sailor out the way they had come in with the body, covered up his tracks, put the crown on his head beneath a cap or soft hat, and walked out."

Dodd and the Chief sat with their heads craned toward the little, blue-eyed man who spoke in the monotonous tone of one who reads from a book.

"Now," the jeweller asked, "how do you know they came here at 11.30 as you say, and how could they get