

for, I had strayed into a desolate gulch, strewn with the debris of mighty rocks strewn with the debris of mighty rocks shattered, no doubt, in some remote nat-ural catastrophe. How to escape I knew not, except by the weary expedient of retracing my steps. A wall of adamant blocked the path in front. Suddenly I halted, in the cover of a huge bowlder. A mysterious figure, which I instantly recognized again, was at work amongst the stones a little distance ahead, appar-ently burying treasure. I saw bundle after bundle pushed into a yawning hol-low. With stupefied gaze I watched. What genius of Desert Mountain was this? Uncouth, dunrobed, dwarfish; I do not wonder that, for a space, I be-lieve in a being of other lineage than the human. But when the strange, squat figure moved off, I was sufficiently daring or sufficiently magnetized to fol-low.

low. Pursuit was unexpected, and stealth ruled my conduct. I was led by winding ways into yet another place of bewilder ment. Of Burmese ruby mines I know a little by report and reading. Now I was in one. On every side were tokenn of the fact, abruptly realized, that caprice had brought me into one of nature's no table treasure houses. A stonishment in.

weapon, drawn against eventualities. Closer scrutiny revealed a deformed Burman boy, with the stamp equally of intelligence and suffering on his pinched, prematurely old countenance. And it was a startling thing that he called me at once by my name, without prefix or ex-

"What do you do here, Ho-Ton?" he asked in a shrill, troubled voice. "I want the path to the lower village,"

I answered. "I have missed it." At last I got a clew to much that was

again. Come." I obeyed the word and gesture, and a very few paces brought us through a steep descent on to my old ledge, and thus once again into the familiar quar-

ters of Moung Ko's secret home. My geni of the mine, then, was Moung

they kill him?" Kill the loved and revered phoonghie of whose lapses from orthodoxy there seemed no current suspicion! I thought it very unlikely. Yet the foreboding words of the seer echoed in my memory. The eventide went in anxions watching and waiting. It was marvelous how one touch of nature made us kin.

But the boy spoke no word of his past. When the morrow dawned two ana-ious faces watched from the friendly well of the bushwood the bend of the great valley. A solitary wayfarer came into view. Relief, ringing into exube was the sergeant.

poor lad said. Alast the gladness was doomed to a speedy eclipse. I though that Moung Ko crept upwards slowly, and staggered "Albert Wessing," was the reply. poor lad said.

as he walked. And once within the mountain fastness it was plain that his somber forecast had not been so false as we would willingly have believed. Moung Ko looked at me first with con-sternation and then, I was almost sure, content. I know that, with genuine un-selfishness, he wished me well. A man was a man and a brother to Moung Ko, whether he were Burman or Briton. It is the glory of the world-bond that in all lands there are these hearts loyal to hu-manity. But the phoonghie reeled and sank upon the floor. To the boy's horror sank upon the floor. To the boy's horror and my own we saw that his coarse role around the waistband of his trousers and my own we saw that his coarse robe was dyed crimson at the side he gripped so tightly. Moung Ko was wounded. It was my turn to play the surgeon, aided, as to appliances, by the devoted, despairing son. But my skill was in-finitely below Moung Ko's. It was the patient's suggestions that I had to fol-low.

"And it will be in vain," the old priest sped, wearily, "the time is 2t hand, have known it from the first. It is my gasped, wearily. "the time is ct hand. I have known it from the first. It is my fate, and I deserve it. Listen, and I will make the dark thing clear. The law

"Have no fear concerning me, ser-geant; I am well known in the city. I the life of the solitary. I was sent on a mission soon after I became a priest; and they lost me. In an-other province I broke my vows for a "Yes," said the man beside him. "he woman's sake. I loved and married.

But it was an unhappy match. My wife deserted me, and 1 understood that our babs was doed The state of the st babe was dead. Then I returned to Anapoora as if nothing had happened. It was my great transgression. The story I told was true, but only half theetruth;

I told was true, but only half the truth; and so, in another sense, a lie. And I could not rest. I wandered much, and I found the mine—and this cave. It was occupied by—would you guess if?—my a round the mine-and this cave. It was occupied by-would you guess it?-my wife! She was bunting me to my dis-grace, and death had overtaken her here. I could not save her. But we were reconciled, and sharconfessed that

our son lived. I sought the child and I brought him here. We have been much "Two of together. Now I go." There was a long breath, and then the been"-

story reached its end. "The hill men rose, as I knew from my ton!" visions they would do. They came against the village. Many houses have

against the village. Many nouses have been burnt—the zyat among them. You escaped in time. I went into the fight— a man of peace, to stay the hand of the a man of peace, to stay the conclusion, the blow fell. It was not struck of intent, and I triumphed through the fact. I upon the dead man's face. pointed to the stream of blood, pleaded "Who are you?" deman pointed to the stream of blood, pleaded my works for their welfare. Then I got away by a secret path—and it is all. Only—care for Dara Maillu—my poor

The voice died into silence. There was speaker

a soft sigh. I looked again, and Moung a sort sigh. I looked again, and Moung Ko's eyes, open as they were, saw no earthly scene. He was dead. I kept the phoonghis's charge, and lived a cave life for many months, subsisting on the stores hidden where first I had found Dara Maillu. It seemed that tra-ders came into these hills at certain sea.

He exar He examined the body. "The man is dead," he exclaimed. were last with the deceased.' "That is well." He lifted the arm of the victim. "Except the address of this man." "Heavens! The knife is still sticking turning to Wessing, who had never left him. Did any one see this?" the side of the sergeant. "Yes, I did," said the man who had "I am a stranger in the city," he re-plied. "I live in Philadelphia; I came irst shouted "murder." Then he told what he had seen. from there this evening." "You came last night." "Yes, since this is the morning, a new "Stand here till I can take your name and address," said the policeman, "but I He rapped several times on the pave-ment with his long night club; the sig-"Where are you stopping?" Wessing hesitated. This made the sergeant suspicious.

"The truth is, sergeant," said Wessing, "I have not taken lodgings yet. My va-lise is over there at that hotel," pointing "Tt is my father. He is safe," the told him he dispatched an officer for the to Fourteenth street. "I was about to

take a turn in the park, smoke my cigar Then he asked the name of him who and then go back to take a room." "Um. Well, I will accommodate you with lodgings for the rest of the night."

"Why," said Helbrook, "he saw more than I did." "That may be," replied the sergeant grimly, "but he may know more than

you do. At all events, he must give a better account of himself than he has vet done." This made Wessing smile.

"That I will do, but I prefer doing it at the station house rather than in this rowd."

"Well, let us go." "I will go, too," said Holbrook, who was strongly attracted by Wessing. "As you please," rejoined the ser-geant; then turning to an officer he said: he said: "No, not the only witness, for I "Watch the body; I will send a litter to you as soon as I can."

saw the blow." "Where were you?" sharply queried he sergeant. had been excluded except the coroner "Looking out of the window of my

and Holbrook, Wessing gave a straight-forward account of his coming into the room," replied the newcomer, pointing city from Philadelphia the night previ-ous, and his determination not to register himself at any hotel until after he had taken something to eat; that having

Then, perceiving that the sergeant scru-tinized him, he added:

"Have no fear concerning me, ser-

would smoke it in the park and cool off before he returned to the hotel. He gave names and addresses in Phil "Yes," said the man beside him, "he

adelphia whereby his statements could be verified by telegraph. The sergeant, however, determined to hold him until verification could be rushing down stairs." This satisfied the sergeant, for he rec nade To this Wessing acquiesced so readily

ognized in the man the night clerk of the that Holbrook was convinced he had nothing to fear from investigation. "But why have you not searched the

So expressing himself, he remarked t he sergeant: "Be careful you do not have a suit for false imprisonment o your hands." This made the sergeant uneasy.

The coroner laughed, but would say "Yes," said a frowsy tramp, "I saw a nothing to relieve the officer. man running through the park when I "Have no fear," said Wessing, "you was woke up by this ere feller hollerin' are only doing your duty."

This complaisance secured for Wessing the captain's room for the night rather "Two of you search the park," or-dered the sergeant. "That should have

han a cell. Holbrook, having nothing to detain "Great Heavens! It is Mr. Temple

in, went away. When he reached the square he went This interruption came from the one wer to the spot where the murder had w 10 had come from the Broadway side; een done. He had no purpose in going there; an irresistible imp ascination-drew him thither. The square was deserted again and quiet reigned. The revelers had gone back to their haunts, the tramps to their

about, thus enabling the light to shin benches in the park, the "night hawks" slept again on their boxes, while they "Who are you?" demanded the ser awaited the belated ones who might require their services. The moon shone

brightly. The silence was oppressive; un the cry of murder recognized the broken only at intervals by the snatches Sliding up to the superior officer he

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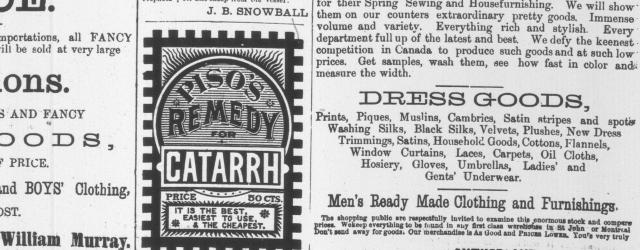


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