

THE LOST OPAL OF MYSTORE;

Or--The Secret of the Ghants.

By William Murray Graydon.

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TAP OF DRUMS.

Ho! get away, you bullock-man, you've heard the bugle blowed, there's a regiment coming down the Grand Trunk road.

To ringing tones Myles Chesney shouted out the stirring couplet for his favorite "Barrack Room Ballads." Then he made an imaginary slash at little Paltu, who dodged nimbly aside.

"Me no bullock-man, Chesney sahib," he grunted. "Don't you wish you were?" cried Myles, laughing. "That's better than a zyes any day. But come on, or we'll miss the show."

Side by side the two oddly contrasting companions ran across the lawn of the British residency. They passed through the gates, indifferent to the helmeted soldier standing guard, and halted on the edge of the street.

That distant bugle blast had not deceived Myles Chesney's keen ears. The regiment was coming--not down the Grand Trunk road, but along one of the principal thoroughfares of Mysore, the capital city of the native state of that name, in southwestern India.

Nearer and nearer marched the gallant fellows, keeping step to the roll of the drum and the fanfare of bugles. First the band, then the mounted colonel and his officers, then columns of bronzed faces and dusty uniforms and flashing rifles.

Myles drew himself up to the full stature of his 16 years, and his face glowed. "They're marching from the Madras railway station to the barracks, Paltu," he exclaimed. "It's the Twenty-first light infantry, the Bedfordshire regiment that was ordered here from England."

The soldiers bore plain evidence of recent campaigning with the cruel dacoits. Here and there were scarred faces, faces stamped with the mark of illness and exhausting wounds. The muster roll, too, could have told a sad story.

From out the passing ranks more than one pair of eyes glanced with interest at the two boys before the residency gates--the handsome English lad with his ruddy cheeks and curly brown hair; the thin, dusky-faced little Hindoo in white waist-cloth and jacket.

Dundas is with the party, too. I don't know what to do now." "I don't know," exclaimed Miles, coming to a sudden and imprudent resolve. "I won't do for you to stay here. The sentry may drop along, you know."

"No, no, no," replied Miles. "I could hardly believe it if you would believe it still less if you knew Pink as well as I do. Why, he's the very soul of honor. He never deserted. Miles, never, I'll tell you one thing, though. He hasn't been like himself since the rajah sent for him four or five days ago. He seemed worried over something, and he wouldn't say a word about it. There's been foul play, Miles, and that's as sure as you and I stand here."

"I mean that the rajah has got a finger in Pink's disappearance," exploded Miles, never, I'll tell you one thing, though. He hasn't been like himself since the rajah sent for him four or five days ago. He seemed worried over something, and he wouldn't say a word about it. There's been foul play, Miles, and that's as sure as you and I stand here."

"I don't see what you can do, I said I, compassionately. I had sat next her three nights at table d'hote and liked her extremely. "Look at those trees! Oh, how it blows! And see! Great waves!"

"The wind is certainly getting up," I admitted, sitting on a garden seat. "Oh, Mr. Vansittart, suppose he should be drowned?"

"Suppose he--?" I paused. The idea was a new one to me. I turned it over in my mind. "Well, suppose he should?" I said at last in an inquiring tone.

"And we've been married a year!" "Yes, yes," said I thoughtfully. "Your love is still fresh!"

"As fresh as the day when--" "Your romance has been worn off, the day of disillusion has not come. Your husband's memory would be the sweetest of consolations to you."

"There would be no ally in your recollections. You are young, your life would not be spoiled, but it would be, as it were, halved by sweet and not by bitter regrets. In the course of time the violence of grief would wear off."

"She sat down on the bench beside me, and dug the end of her parasol into the path. "You would feel," I pursued, "that sacred these memories were--precious as they were--you would not be justified in giving your whole life to them. And at last, it may be that another would come who--"

"im, mum. He's just rounding the point, and he'll be ashore in two minutes' time." "But Dobbs said it was very dangerous," I protested. "Dobbs don't know everything, sir, bogin' your pardon. Anyways the gentleman's safe enough, 'died on it for your sake, mum."

"Thank you--thank you so much," said Mrs. Lawrence. "The elderly man stood looking at me in such a manner that I took sixteen out of my pocket and gave it to him. To be frank, I have seldom grudged a sixpence more. Then the elderly man passed on."

"There was a long silence. Mrs. Lawrence had made quite a little pit in the gravel walk. Once she looked at me, and, finding me regarding her father gloomily, I believed, hastily turned away again, wise of bluish. At last the silence became intolerable--almost improper, in fact."

"What were we talking about when that man interrupted us?" asked Mrs. Lawrence, with a desperate assumption of ease. "It is a rule of mine to give a plain answer to a plain question," said I. "Of what would have happened if Dobbs had known everything? And, having thus said, I suddenly began to visit. There's been foul play, Miles, and that's as sure as you and I stand here."

"You play," exclaimed Miles, incredulously. "You don't mean to say--" "I mean that the rajah has got a finger in Pink's disappearance," exploded Miles, never, I'll tell you one thing, though. He hasn't been like himself since the rajah sent for him four or five days ago. He seemed worried over something, and he wouldn't say a word about it. There's been foul play, Miles, and that's as sure as you and I stand here."

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