

# For Boys and Girls.

## THE LOST OPAL OF MYSTORE

OR THE  
SECRET OF THE CHAOTS.

By William Morris Graydon.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE FIGHT AT TIPPOO SAHIB'S

BARRIER.

Quick as he gave the command Pink was

crouching deep in the wayside vegetation.

The boys dropped clumsily beside him; for a

second or two their hearts seemed to stop

beating, and they felt an icy chill creep

through their veins.

At no time had the fugitives been in a

tighter place than now. It was terribly

trying to lie there and listen to the ominous

voice of danger in both directions—from the

rear the faint metallic ring of iron-shod

hoofs; from in front a louder and duller

sound that as yet baffled recognition.

Pink cocked his rifle, and glanced side-

ways at Jack and Myles. They understood,

and two more hammers rose with a sharp

click.

Pattu was busy at something else. He

had one ear to the ground, and his hand was

behind the other.

"An elephant, sahibs," he whispered, and

just then an elephant actually did lumber

into sight a short ways up the cross-road.

It was handsomely caparisoned, and bore

on its back a square howdah, in which sat

two persons, evidently servant and master.

The latter was a stout, full-bodied

oriental, with the dress and pompous bearing

of a rich zemindar, or landholder. The

other was an aged Hindu, gray-haired and

diminutive. In front of the howdah was

perched a thin and wiry little mahout.

The hidden watchers drew long breaths

of relief. Three rifle hammers were softly

lowered to half-cock.

"They're only travelers," whispered Myles,

"but they chose a mighty awkward time to

drop along. Oh, why don't they hurry?"

"They can't disappear too soon," replied

Jack. "Hark! The troopers are coming

nearer."

But, as the ill-timed howdah, the mahout

halted the heavy quadruped on the intersection

of the two paths. The zemindar and his

servant glanced uneasily down the crossroad.

They heard the tramp of the approaching

troopers, and were discussing it in low tones.

"I'll attend to these devils,"

It was a critical time for the fugitives, but

their suspense was happily cut short by the

conception in Pink's brain of a stupendous

idea.

"Lads," he whispered, "ere's a chance for

order and do as I do. That's

all."

With this Pink rose suddenly up and

drew a blade on the zemindar's breast. Al-

most as quickly Myles and Jack had their

servants and the mahout covered. The latter

trembled so violently that he let his girdle

fall to the ground.

"Down with you," commanded Pink, get-

ting up to seize Hindustanee. "No fool-

ing. We're in a hurry."

The zemindar was a plucky fellow, and his

face flushed with rage.

"Dogs, ye shall pay dearly for this," he

cried, in fairly good English. "I am Holkar

Singh, a landholder of Mercara in Coorg, I

am journeying homeward through the

territory of Mysore."

"Get down," persisted Pink, angrily.

"You're not going to be murdered or robbed.

With an evil scowl on his face the zemindar

nodded to the mahout, who instantly

made the elephant kneel.

Master and servant climbed out of the

howdah and stood a few feet to one side.

Both bristled with swords and daggers, but

neither had fear.

"Up with you, lads," cried Pink. "Lively

now."

Myles and Jack scrambled into the how-

dah, and as Jack followed them he caught

the servant's eyes fixed strangely upon him.

There was no malice in the look. It ex-

pressed sudden amazement and incredulity.

There was a touch of affection, as though the

servant of the old Hindu had been a

chord of memory in the old Hindu's heart.

"Your elephant will be back ere you know

it," added Pink, turning to the zemindar.

"If you want satisfaction apply to the

British resident at Mysore in about a week

from now. And as for the mahout, I'll

get him if you detain these cutthroats com-

ing yonder as long as you can."

The next instant Pink was in the howdah,

and as quickly the mahout tried to wriggle

to the ground.

But Pink leaned forward and caught the

follow by the back of the neck, at the same

time pressing the cold muzzle of a pistol to

his forehead and jabbering angry Hindustanee

into his ear.

This gentle style of argument was effective

and the mahout instantly became as tractable

as a lamb. At a word from him and a

touch of the lead elephant rose from his

knees, wheeled to one side and plunged on

the mountain path with long and rapid

strides.

Holkar Singh glared vindictively after his

stolen quadruped as it rolled down fearful

maladictions on the thieves. The aged

Hindustanee stood with uplifted hands, strain-

ing his eyes to get a last glimpse of Jack.

It was the end of the road and him from

view.

The daring act had transpired in a very

brief time and the fugitives now began to

realize that they had once more eluded their

bloodthirsty pursuers.

The tramp of hoofs grew fainter and

fainter in the distance and it could be heard

no more. On and on went the elephant

striding clumsily over rocks and logs at a

pace no horse could equal on so rough a

road.

The howdah swayed and shook dizzily, but

the straps held as fast as did its occupants.

The mahout clung to his perch like a

monkey.

"It won't do the zemindar any harm to

send a bit," said Pink. "We treated 'em

badly, lads, but it 'ad to be. I can hardly

believe that we are near our journey's end."

"Two hours at most ought to see us

there," declared Pink. "And then—"

He kept his eyes fixed on the road and

pondering some knotty question.

The boys did not disturb him. They kept

a close watch on the mahout and discussed

the strange conduct of the old Hindu, which

had been so queer.

"He wished to cast an evil spell upon

you, Sahib Wyndgar," said Pattu.

"More likely he was a thug," suggested

Myles, laughing, "and was aiming up your

neck for the sacred noose."

"I don't pretend to account for it," replied

Pattu, in a grave tone, "but I know I shan't

forget that I saw his hand on the noose."

Pink now came out of his brown study

and proposed that the interrupted lunch

should be finished. The half of the bag of

provisions was shared and quickly eaten.

The howdah was well stocked with food,

but this the boys did not touch.

They were sitting on the floor of the

howdah, and the mahout was sitting on the

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