

MOTOR STORIES

THRILLING
ADVENTURE

MOTOR
FICTION

NO. 32
OCT. 2, 1909

FIVE
CENTS

MOTOR MATT'S
DOUBLE TROUBLE

OR THE LAST
OF THE HOODOO

By the AUTHOR OF
"MOTOR MATT"



Stop, shouted Motor Matt
laying back on the end of
the rope

STREET & SMITH
PUBLISHERS
New York

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This marks the final adventure for Motor Matt. Although number 33 was evidently ready to print, the publishers decided to end the series at this point.

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MOTOR STORIES

THRILLING ADVENTURE MOTOR FICTION

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Motor Matt's Double Trouble

OR,

THE LAST OF THE HOODOO.

By the author of "MOTOR MATT."

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CHARACTERS THAT APPEAR IN THIS STORY.

Matt King, otherwise Motor Matt.

Joe McGlory, a young cowboy who proves himself a lad of worth and character, and whose eccentricities are all on the humorous side. A good chum to tie to—a point Motor Matt is quick to perceive.

Tsan Ti, Mandarin of the Red Button, who continues to fall into tragic difficulties, and to send in "four-eleven" alarms for the assistance of Motor Matt.

Sam Wing, San Francisco bazaar-man, originally from Canton, and temporarily in the employ of Tsan Ti. By following his evil thoughts he causes much trouble for the mandarin, and, incidentally, for the motor boys.

Philo Grattan, a rogue of splendid abilities, who aims to steal a fortune and ends in being brought to book for the theft of a motor car.

Pardo, a pal of Grattan.

Neb Hogan, a colored brother whose mule, stolen by Sam Wing, plays a part of considerable importance. Neb himself engineers a surprise at the end of the story, and goes his way so overwhelmed with good luck that he is unable to credit the evidence of his senses.

Banks and Gridley, officers of the law who are searching for the stolen blue motor.

Boggs, a farmer who comes to the aid of Motor Matt with energy and courage.

Bunce, a sailor with two good eyes who, for some object of his own, wears a green patch and prefers to have the public believe he is one-eyed. A pal of Grattan, who is caught in the same net that entangles the rest of the ruby thieves.

CHAPTER I.

THE RED JEWEL.

Craft and greed showed in the eyes of the hatchet-faced Chinaman. He seemed to have been in deep slumber in the car seat, but the drowsiness was feigned. The train was not five minutes out of the town of Catskill before he had roused himself, wary and wide-awake, and looked across the aisle. His look and manner gave evidence that he was meditating some crime.

It was in the small hours of the morning, and the passenger train was rattling and bumping through the heavy gloom. The lights in the coach had been turned low, and all the passengers, with the exception of the thin-visaged Celestial, were sprawling in their uncomfortable seats, snoring or breathing heavily.

Across the aisle from this criminally inclined native of the Flowery Kingdom was another who likewise hailed from the land of pagodas and mystery; and this other, it could be seen at a glance, was a person of some consequence.

He was fat, and under the average height. Drawn down over his shaven head was a black silk cap, with a gleaming red button sewn in the centre of the flat crown. From under the edge of the cap dropped a queue of silken texture, thick, and so long that it crossed the Chinaman's shoulder and lay in one or two coils across his fat knees.

Yellow is the royal color in China, and it is to be noted that this Celestial's blouse was of yellow, and his wide trousers, and his stockings—all yellow and of the

finest Canton silk. His sandals were black and richly embroidered.

From the button and the costume, one at all informed of fashions as followed in the country of Confucius might have guessed that this stout person was a mandarin. And that guess would have been entirely correct.

To go further and reveal facts which will presently become the reader's in the logical unfolding of this chronicle, the mandarin was none other than Tsan Ti, discredited guardian of the Honam joss house, situated on an island suburb of the city of Canton. He of the slant, lawless gleaming eyes was Sam Wing, the mandarin's trusted and treacherous servant.

A Chinaman, like his Caucasian brother, is not always proof against temptation when the ugly opportunity presents itself at the right time and in the right way. Sam Wing believed he had come face to face with such an opportunity, and he was determined to make the most of it.

Sam Wing was a resident of San Francisco. He owned a fairly prosperous bazaar, and, once every year, turned his profits into Mexican dollars and forwarded the silver to an uncle in Canton for investment in the land of his birth. Some day Sam Wing cherished the dream of returning to Canton and living like a grandee. But wealth came slowly. Now, there in that foreign devil's choo-choo car such a chance offered to secure unheard-of riches that Sam Wing's loyalty to the mandarin, no less than his heathen ideas of integrity, were brushed away with astounding suddenness.

Tsan Ti slept. His round head was wobbling on his short neck—rolling and swaying grotesquely with every lurch of the train. The red button of the mandarin's

cap caught the dim rays of the overhead lamps and threw crimson gleams into the eyes of Sam Wing. This flashing button reminded Sam Wing of the red jewel, worth a king's ransom, which the mandarin was personally conveying to San Francisco, en route to China and the city of Canton.

Already Sam Wing was intrusted with the mandarin's money bag—an alligator-skin pouch containing many oblong pieces of green paper marked with figures of large denomination. The money was good, what there was of it, but that was not enough to pay for theft and flight. Sam Wing's long, talon-like fingers itched to lay hold of the red jewel.

With a swift, reassuring look at the passengers in the car, Sam Wing caught at the back of the seat in front and lifted himself erect. He was not a handsome Chinaman, by any means, and he appeared particularly repulsive just at that moment.

Hanging to the seat, he steadied himself as he stepped lightly across the aisle. Another moment and he was at the mandarin's side, looking down on him.

Tsan Ti, in his dreams, was again in Canton. Striding through the great chamber of the Honam joss house, he was superintending the return of the red jewel to the forehead of the twenty-foot idol, whence it had been stolen.

While the mandarin dreamed, Sam Wing bent down over him and, with cautious fingers, unfastened the loop of silk cord that held together the front of the yellow blouse. The rich garment fell open, revealing a small bag hanging from the mandarin's throat by a chain.

Swiftly, silently, and with hardly a twitch of the little bag, two of Sam Wing's slim, long-nailed fingers were inserted, and presently drew forth a resplendent gem,

large as a small hen's egg.

A gasping breath escaped Sam Wing's lips. For a fraction of an instant he hesitated. What if his ancestors were regarding him, looking out of the vastness of the life to come with stern disapproval? A Chinaman worships his ancestors, and the shades of the ancient ones of his blood have a great deal to do with the regulating of his life. What were Sam Wing's forefathers thinking of this act of vile treachery?

The thief ground his teeth and, with trembling hands, stowed the red jewel in the breast of his blouse. He started toward the rear door of the car—and hesitated again.

Sam Wing was a Buddhist, as the Chinese understand Buddhism, wrapping it up in their own mystic traditions. This red jewel had originally been stolen from a great idol of Buddha. In short, the jewel had been the idol's eye, and the idol, sightless in the Honam joss house, was believed to be in vengeful mood because of the missing optic. The idol had marshalled all the ten thousand demons of misfortune and had let them loose upon all who had anything to do with the pilfering of the sacred jewel.

Who was Sam Wing that he should defy these ten thousand demons of misfortune? How could he, a miserable bazaar man, fight the demons?

But his skin tingled from the touch of the red jewel against his breast. He would dare all for the vast wealth which might be his in case he could "get away with the goods."

Closing his eyes to honor, to the ten thousand demons, to every article of his heathen faith, he bolted for the rear of the car. Opening the door, he let himself out on the rear platform. A lurch of the car caused the door to slam behind him.

Meanwhile Tsan Ti had continued his delightful dreaming. His subconscious mind was watching the priests as they worked with the red jewel, replacing it in the idol's forehead. The hideous face of the graven image seemed to glow with satisfaction because of the recovery of the eye.

The priest, at the top of the ladder, fumbled suddenly with his hands. The red jewel dropped downward, with a crimson flash, struck the tiles of the floor, and rolled away, and away, until it vanished.

A yell of consternation burst from the mandarin's lips. He leaped forward to secure the red jewel—and came to himself with his head aching from a sharp blow against the seat back in front.

He straightened up, and the alarm died out of his face. After all, it was only a dream!

"Say!" cried a man in the seat ahead, turning an angry look at Tsan Ti. "What you yellin' for? Can't a heathen like you let a Christian sleep? Huh?"

"A million pardons, most estimable sir," answered Tsan Ti humbly. "I had a dream, a bad dream."

"Too much bird's-nest soup an' too many sharks' fins for supper, I guess," scowled the man, rearranging himself for slumber. "Pah!"

Tsan Ti peered across the aisle. The seat occupied by his servant, Sam Wing, was vacant. Sam Wing, the mandarin thought, must have become thirsty and gone for a drink.

The mandarin heaved a choppy sigh of relief. How real a dream sometimes is! Now, if he—

His hand wandered instinctively to the breast of his blouse, and he felt for the little lump contained in the bag suspended from his throat.

He could not feel it. Pulling himself together sharply Tsan Ti used both hands in his groping examination.

Then he caught his breath and sat as though dazed. A slow horror ran through his body. His blood seemed congealing about his heart, and his yellow face grew hueless.

The red jewel was gone! The front of his blouse was open!

Then, after his blunted wits had recovered their wonted sharpness, Tsan Ti leaped for the aisle with another yell.

"Say," cried the man in the forward seat, lifting himself wrathfully, "I'll have the brakeman kick you off the train if you don't hush! By jing!"

The mandarin began running up and down the aisle of the car, wringing his fat hands and yelling for Sam Wing. He said other things, too, but it was all in his heathen gibberish and could not be comprehended.

By then every person in the car was awake.

"Crazy chink!" shouted the man who had spoken before. "He's gone dotty! Look out for him!"

At that moment the train lumbered to a halt and the lights of a station shone through the car windows. The brakeman jammed open the door and shouted a name.

"Motor Matt!" wailed Tsan Ti. "Estimable friend, come to my wretched assistance!"

"Here, brakeman!" cried the wrathful passenger who had already aired his views, "take this slant-eyed lunatic by the collar of his kimono and give him a hi'st into the right of way. Chinks ought to be carried in cattle cars, anyhow."

Tsan Ti, however, did not wait to be "hoisted into the

right of way."

With a final yell, he flung himself along the aisle and out the rear door, nearly overturning the astounded brakeman. Once on the station platform, he made a bee line for the waiting room and the telegraph office.

There was but one person in all America in whom the mandarin had any confidence, but one person to whom he would appeal. This was the king of the motor boys, who, at that moment, was in the town of Catskill.

CHAPTER II.

ANOTHER END OF THE YARN.

On the same night this Oriental treachery manifested itself aboard the train bound north through the Catskills, a power yacht dropped anchor below the town of Catskill.

There was something suspicious about this motor yacht. She carried no running lights, and her cabin ports were dark as Erebus. She came to a halt silently—almost sullenly—and her anchor dropped with hardly a splash. A tender was heaved over the side, and four men got into it and were rowed ashore by one of their number. When the tender grounded, three of the passengers got out. One of them turned to speak to the man who remained in the boat.

"Leave the tender in the water, when you get back to the *Iris*, Pierson. If the tender is wanted here, a light will be shown."

"All right, Grattan," answered the man in the boat, shoving off and rowing noiselessly back to the yacht.

"Hide the lantern in that clump of bushes, Bunce," went on Grattan.

"Ay, ay, messmate," answered the person addressed as Bunce.

"Look here, Grattan," grumbled the third member of the party, "Motor Matt has cooked our goose for us, and I'll be hanged if I can see the use of knocking around the town of Catskill."

"There are a lot of things in this world, Pardo,"

returned Grattan dryly, "that are advisable and that you haven't sense enough to see."

Pardo muttered wrathfully but indistinctly.

"Now," proceeded Grattan, "this is the way of it: We got Motor Matt and his chum, McGlory, aboard the *Iris*—lured them there on the supposition that Tsan Ti had sent Motor Matt the red jewel to keep safely for him for a time. Motor Matt and McGlory walked into our trap. We got the red jewel and put the two boys ashore some fifteen or twenty miles below here. Half an hour later I put the supposed ruby to some tests and found it was counterfeit—"

"Are you sure the ruby you stole from the Honam joss house was a true gem?"

"Yes. Tsan Ti sent Motor Matt a counterfeit replica for the purpose of getting us off the track. Motor Matt and McGlory will take the first train for Catskill from the place where we put them ashore. We'll lie in wait for them on the path they must take between the railroad station and their hotel. It's a dark night, few passengers will arrive at this hour, and we can recapture the two motor boys and take them back to the *Iris*."

"What good will that do?" demurred Pardo. "Motor Matt hasn't the real stone—Tsan Ti must have that."

"I'll find out from Motor Matt where Tsan Ti is," said Grattan, between his teeth, "and then I'll flash a message to the mandarin that he must give up the real gem, or Motor Matt *will suffer the consequences!*"

"You can't mean," gasped Pardo, in a panic, "that you will—"

"It's a bluff, that's all," snapped Grattan. "It will scare the mandarin out of his wits. Have you hid the lantern, Bunce?" he demanded, as the other member

of the party came close.

"Ay, Grattan," was the reply. "First bunch of bushes close to where we came ashore."

"All right; come on, then. I've figured out what train Motor Matt and Joe McGlory will catch, and it should soon be at the depot."

With Grattan in the lead, the party scrambled up the slope through the darkness, passed some ice houses, crossed a railroad track, and finally came to a halt in a lonely part of the town, near the walk leading from the railroad station to the business street and the hotels. A billboard afforded them a secure hiding place.

Grattan had figured the time of the train pretty accurately. He and his companions waited no longer than five minutes before the "local" drew to a halt at the station.

"If those boys are not on the train," muttered Pardo, "then we're fooled again. Confound that Motor Matt, anyhow!"

"He has my heartiest admiration," returned Grattan, "but I'm not going to match wits with him and call myself beaten. Hist!" he added abruptly, "here come two people—and maybe they're the ones we're looking for. Mind, both of you, and don't make a move till I give the word."

Breathlessly the three men waited. Footsteps came slowly up the walk and voices could be heard—voices which were recognized as belonging to the motor boys.

"Well, pard," came the voice of McGlory, "New York for ours in the morning. Tsan Ti, with the big ruby, is on the train, bound for China and heathen happiness, Grattan has the bogus stone and is making himself absent in the *Iris*, and you and I are rid of the hoodoo at last, and have fifteen hundred to the good. That's

what I call—"

By then the two lads had passed the billboard and were so far away that spoken words could not be distinguished. And Grattan had given no word for an attack!

"What's the matter with you, Grattan?" whispered Pardo. "They're too far off for us to bag them now."

"We're not going to bag them." Grattan was a man of quick decisions. "We've changed our plans."

While the other two mumbled their surprise and asked questions, Grattan had taken pencil, notebook, and an electric torch from his pocket. Snapping on the torch, he handed it to Bunce.

"Put a stopper on your jaw tackle and hold that," said he crisply.

Then he wrote the following:

"Conductor, Local Passenger, North Bound: Fat Chinaman, answering to name of Tsan Ti and claiming to be mandarin, on your train. He's a thief and has stolen big ruby called Eye of Buddha. Put him off train in charge of legal officer, first station after you receive this. Answer.

James Philo, Detective."

"This is a telegram," said Grattan, and read it aloud for the benefit of his two companions. "You'll take it down to the railroad station, Pardo," he went on, "and have it sent at once to the nearest point that will overtake the train Matt and McGlory just got off of. Bunce and I will wait here, and you stay in the station till you receive an answer."

"But how do you know Tsan Ti is on that train?" asked Pardo.

"Didn't you hear what was said when the motor boys passed us?"

"But nothing was said about the mandarin being on *that* particular train."

"I'm making a guess. If the conductor replies that no such chink is on the train, then my guess is wrong. If he answers that the chink was there, and that he has put him off, red jewel and all, into the hands of the legal authorities, then James Philo Grattan will play the part of James Philo, detective, and fool these country authorities out of their eye teeth—and, incidentally, out of the Eye of Buddha."

The daring nature of Grattan's hastily formed plan caused Pardo and Bunce to catch their breath. Grattan was a fugitive from the law, and yet here he was making the law assist him in stealing the red jewel for the second time!

"You're a wonder," murmured Pardo, "if you can make that game work."

"Trust me for that, Pardo. Now you hustle for the railroad station and get that message on the wires. Hurry back here as soon as you receive an answer."

Pardo took the paper and made off down the slope. He was gone three-quarters of an hour—a weary, impatient wait for Bunce, but passed calmly by Grattan.

When Pardo returned he came at a run.

"Your scheme's no good, Grattan!" were his first breathless words.

"Why not?" demanded Grattan. "Wasn't Tsan Ti on the train?"

"Yes—and another chink, as well. Fat Chinaman, though, jumped off at Gardenville, first station north

of Catskill. Here, read the conductor's message for yourself."

Grattan, still cool and self-possessed, switched the light into his torch and read the following:

"Two Chinamen, one answering description, came through on train from Jersey City. Fat Chinaman jumped off at Gardenville, although had ticket reading Buffalo. Don't know what became of other Chinaman. Two young men boarded train River View, talked with fat Chinaman, got off Catskill.

Conductor."

Grattan must have been intensely disappointed, but he did not give rein to his temper. While Bunce spluttered and Pardo swore under his breath, Grattan was wrapped in profound thought.

"We'll have to change our plans again," he observed finally. "We gave over the idea of capturing Motor Matt and McGlory for the purpose of getting Tsan Ti held by the authorities as a thief; now we've got to give that up. Why did Tsan Ti get off the train at Gardenville when he was going to Buffalo? It was an Oriental trick to pull the wool over my eyes. The mandarin is afraid of me. We must proceed at once to Gardenville before Tsan Ti has a chance to get out of the town."

"How are we going to get to Gardenville?" demanded Pardo. "If we take the *Iris*—?"

"We won't."

"If we walk—"

"We won't do that, either. We'll take an automobile. It may be, too, that our motor cycles will come in handy. You go down to the bank, Pardo, signal the yacht, and have Pierson bring the two machines ashore. While you're about that, Bunce and I will visit

the garage and borrow a fast machine. You know these hills?"

"As well as I do my two hands."

"On your way to the *Iris* I'll give you something to leave at the hotel for Motor Matt."

Grattan did some more scribbling on a blank sheet of his notebook; then, tearing out the sheet, he wrapped it around a small object and placed both in a little box with a sliding cover.

"They may recognize me at the hotel," protested Pardo.

"I don't think so. It will do me good to have you leave this, anyhow. I don't want Motor Matt to think that I was fooled very long by that bogus ruby. If we're quick, Pardo, we're going to catch Tsan Ti before he can leave Gardenville. And when we nab the mandarin we secure the ruby."

Grattan was a master rogue, and not the least of his shining abilities was his readiness in adjusting himself to changing circumstances.

Fate, in the present instance, had conspired to place him on the wrong track—but he was following the course with supreme confidence.

CHAPTER III.

SHOCK NUMBER ONE.

When Motor Matt and Joe McGlory dropped off that "local" passenger train at the Catskill station they had just finished a series of strenuous experiences. These had to do with the great ruby known as the Eye of Buddha. A cunning *facsimile* of the gem had been sent by Tsan Ti to Matt, by express, with a letter desiring him to take care of the ruby until the mandarin should call for it. This responsibility, entirely unsought by the king of the motor boys, plunged him and his cowboy pard into a whirl of adventures, and ended in their being decoyed aboard the *Iris*. Here the ruby was taken from Matt by force—Grattan, who secured it, not learning until some time later that the object Matt had been caring for was merely a base counterfeit of the original gem. And Matt and McGlory did not find this out until they caught the train at Fairview, when they discovered that Tsan Ti and Sam Wing were aboard.

The twenty-mile ride from Fairview to Catskill with the mandarin proved quite an eye opener for the motor boys. They learned how Tsan Ti had deliberately set Grattan on their track to recover the bogus ruby, while he—Tsan Ti—made his escape with the real gem.

This part of the mandarin's talk failed to make much of a "hit" with Matt and McGlory. The mandarin had used them for his purposes in a particularly high-handed manner, keeping them entirely in the dark regarding the fact that the stone intrusted to Matt was a counterfeit.

Although the boys parted in a friendly way with the mandarin on leaving the train at Catskill, yet they

nevertheless remembered their grievance and were heartily glad to think that they were done for all time with Tsan Ti and his ruby.

Very often it happens that when we think we are done with a thing we have reckoned without taking account of a perverse fate. This was the case with the motor boys with reference to Tsan Ti and the Eye of Buddha.

While they were climbing the slope from the railroad station to their hotel, glad of the prospect of securing a little much-needed rest, only a few chance remarks by McGlory prevented them from having an encounter with Grattan, Pardo, and Bunce, who were lurking beside the walk. And at that same moment the faithless Sam Wing was engineering his stealthy theft in the darkened passenger coach.

So stirring events were forming, all unheeded by the boys.

Upon reaching the hotel they proceeded immediately to the room which they occupied, hastily disrobed, and crept into their respective beds. In less than five minutes the room was resounding with McGlory's snores. Matt remained awake long enough to review the events of the day and to congratulate himself that he and his cowboy pard were finally rid of the "hoodoo" gem and the "hoodoo" Chinaman who had been looking for it. Then the king of the motor boys himself fell asleep.

It was McGlory's voice that aroused Matt.

"Sufferin' thunderbolts!" Matt awoke with a start and turned his eyes toward the other side of the room. The cowboy was sitting up in bed. "Talk about your shocking times, pard," he went on, "why, I've been jumping from one shock into another ever since I hit this mattress. Thought I was chased by a blind idol,

twenty feet high, and sometimes that idol looked like Grattan, sometimes it was a dead ringer for Tsan Ti, and sometimes it was its own wabble-jawed, horrible self. Woosh! And listen"—McGlory's eyes grew wide and he became very serious—"the idol that chased me had *red hair!*"

"What difference does that make, Joe?" inquired Matt, observing that the sun was high and forthwith tumbling out of bed.

"What difference does it make!" gasped McGlory. "Speak to me about that! Don't you know Matt, that whenever you dream about a person with red hair, trouble's on the pike and you've got up your little red flag?"

"Oh, gammon!" grunted Matt. "Pile out and get into your clothes, Joe. We're taking the eleven a. m. boat for the big town, and we haven't any too much time to make our 'twilight,' help ourselves to a late breakfast, and amble down to the landing."

"Hooray!" cried McGlory, forgetting his dream in the prospect called up by his chum's words. "We're going to have the time of our lives in New York, pard! All I hope is that nothing gets between us and that eleven a. m. boat. Seems like we never make a start for down the river but Johnny Hardluck comes along, jolts us with an uppercut, and faces us the wrong way. Look here, once."

"Well?"

"If you get a letter from Tsan Ti, promise me to say 'manana' and give it the cut direct."

"What chance is there of our receiving a letter from the mandarin? He's on his way West with the Eye of Buddha, and Grattan is on his way no one knows where with a glass imitation. Both of them are satisfied, and I guess you and I, Joe, haven't any cause

for complaint. The mandarin is too busy traveling to write any letters."

"Well," insisted McGlory, "give me your solemn promise you won't pay any attention to a letter from the mandarin if you receive one. If you're so plumb certain he won't write, why not promise?"

"It's a go," laughed Matt, "if that will make you feel any easier in your mind."

"It does, a heap. I'd rather have measles than another attack of mandariniculis, complicated with rubeosis, and—"

"Oh, splash!" interrupted Matt. "We've been well paid for all the time we were ailing with those two troubles. Give your hair a lick and a promise, and let's go down to breakfast. They'll be ringing the last bell on us if we wait much longer."

"Lead on, Macduff!" answered McGlory, throwing himself around in the air and then striking a pose, with one arm up, like Ajax defying the lightning. "Remember Monte Cristo like that, pard?" he asked. "'The world is mine!' That's how I feel. Us for New York, with fifteen hundred of the mandarin's *dinero* in our clothes! Oh, say, I'm a brass band and I've just got to toot!"

The cowboy "tooted" all the way downstairs and into the office; then, as they passed the desk on their way to the dining room, the rejoicing died on the cowboy's lips.

"Just a minute, Motor Matt!" called the clerk, leaning over the desk and motioning.

"Lightning's going to strike," muttered McGlory; "I can see it coming."

He followed Matt to the desk. As they lined up there, the clerk fished a small box out of the office safe.

"This was left here for you last night, Matt," went on the clerk. "I was told to hand it to you this morning by the night clerk when he went off duty."

The little box was placed on the counter. Matt and McGlory stared at it.

That was not the first time they had seen that small receptacle. With the counterfeit ruby inside, it had first come into Matt's hands by express, direct from Tsan Ti; then, by a somewhat devious course of events, it had gone into the possession of Philo Grattan.

Why should Grattan have returned the box to Matt? How *could* he have returned it when, as Matt and McGlory believed, he was at that very moment hurrying to get out of the country and escape the law?

"Shock number one," shuddered McGlory.

"Not much of a shock about this—so far," returned Matt, picking up the box.

"Wait till you see what's inside."

"We'll open it in the dining room," and Matt turned away.

"I'll bet a bowl of birds'-nest soup against a plate of sharks' fins it's going to spoil your breakfast."

They went in and took their usual places at one of the tables. All the other guests had breakfasted, and the motor boys had the big dining room—with the exception of two or three waiters—wholly to themselves.

"Open it quick," urged McGlory.

Matt sawed through the string with his knife, pulled out the lid of the box, and dropped a gleaming red object on the tablecloth.

"Sufferin' snakes!" exclaimed McGlory. "The Eye of

Buddha, or I'm a Piute! How in blazes did old Tsan Ti get the thing back to us? When I saw that last it was in a silk bag around the mandarin's neck."

"It can't be the Eye of Buddha, Joe," said Matt. "It looks to me more like the bogus gem than the real one."

"How can you tell the difference?"

"From the fact that the real stone could not by any possibility get into our hands again."

"Neither could the bogus gem—if it's where we think it is."

"I guess here's something that will explain," and Matt drew a piece of paper from the box.

"Who's it from?" queried McGlory, in a flutter.

"From Grattan," answered Matt grimly. "Listen," and he read:

"Motor Matt: You don't know what a tight squeak you and McGlory had to-night—not aboard the *Iris*, but after you were put ashore. Pray accept the inclosed piece of glass with my compliments. I don't think you knew, any more than I did, that it was counterfeit. If Tsan Ti gets into any more difficulties, you take my advice and let him weather them alone.

Grattan."

"Shocked?" muttered McGlory. "Why, I feel as though somebody had hit me with a live wire. So Grattan found out the ruby was an imitation! And he found out in time to send that back to you last night! Say, that fellow's the king bee of all the crooks that ever lived. Present the jewel to one of these darky waiters, and let's you and I get busy with the ham and eggs. I'm glad we're for New York by the eleven-o'clock boat, and that the mandarin isn't worrying us any more."

The cowboy threw the box under the table, and would have reached for the gleaming bit of glass had not Matt grabbed it first and dropped it into his pocket.

CHAPTER IV.

SHOCKS TWO AND THREE.

The motor boys were very much in the dark concerning Philo Grattan's movements and intentions.

"He was right," observed Matt, referring to Grattan's note, "when he said I was in the dark as much as he was concerning that piece of glass. He wasn't fooled very long."

"There's good advice in that note," said McGlory, who was beginning to have apprehensions that he and Matt were not yet done with the Eye of Buddha. "I mean where he says that if the mandarin gets into any more difficulties we'll be wise to let him get out of them alone the best way he can."

"That's more than a piece of advice, Joe. If I catch the true meaning, it's a threat."

McGlory at once saw a light in the general gloom.

"Then, if it's a threat, pard, Grattan must be ready to make another try for the Eye of Buddha!"

"That's the way it strikes me."

"But what can Grattan do? Tsan Ti ought to be whooping it up pretty well to the west by now. He's got a good long start of Grattan in the run to 'Frisco."

"What Grattan can do," said Matt reflectively, "is as hard to understand as what he has already done. We know he has discovered that this red jewel is a counterfeit, we know he sent some one here to return the piece of crimson glass to me, and it's a fair inference that he's going to make another attempt to

recover the real ruby. How he has managed to do all this, however, or what he can possibly accomplish in overhauling Tsan Ti, is far and away beyond me."

"We're out of it, anyhow," remarked McGlory, with an airy confidence he was far from feeling. "You've promised not to pay any attention to any four-eleven alarms you receive from the mandarin, and I'd feel tolerably comfortable over the outlook if—if—" He paused.

"If what?" queried Matt.

"Why, if I hadn't seen that red-headed idol chasing me in my sleep. I had two good looks at it. One look means trouble, two looks mean double trouble. Call me a Piegan if I ever knew it to fail."

Matt laughed.

"Never trouble trouble," he admonished, "till trouble troubles you."

"Fine!" exclaimed McGlory; "but it's like a good many of these keen old saws—hard to live up to. I'll bet the inventor of that little spiel died of worry in some poorhouse. I'm always on my toes, shading my eyes with my hat brim and looking for miles along the trail of life to see if I can't pick up a little hard luck heading my way. Can't wait till I come company front with it. Well, maybe it's all right. Life would be sort of tame if something didn't happen now and then to make us ginger up. But we're for New York at eleven o'clock, no matter what happens!"

A few minutes later they finished their breakfast and went out into the office. As Matt pushed up to the desk to ask the amount of his hotel bill, and settle for it, the clerk shoved a yellow envelope at him.

"Telegram, Matt. Just got here."

"Shock two," groaned McGlory, grabbing at the edge

of the desk. "Now what? Oh, tell me!"

Matt tore open the envelope, read the message, stared at it, whistled, then read it again.

"Somebody want us to run an air ship or go to sea in a submarine?" palpitated McGlory. "Sufferin' tenderhooks, pard! Stop your staring and whistling, and hand it to me right off the bat."

Matt caught McGlory's arm and conducted him to a corner where there were a couple of easy-chairs.

"It's from the mandarin," he announced.

"Sufferin' chinks!" breathed the cowboy. "Didn't I tell you? Say, *didn't* I? What's hit him now?"

"I'll read you the message, Joe."

"Go ahead. All I want you to do, pard, is just to remember what you promised me."

"Esteemed friend," read Matt, "and highly treasured assistant in time of storm—"

"Speak to me about that!" grunted the disgusted McGlory. "His word box is full of beadwork."

"Again I call from the bottomless pit of distress," continued Matt, "and from this place named Gardenville announce the duplicity of Sam Wing, who suddenly absented himself from the train with my supply of cash and the Eye of Buddha. Having no money, I have requested of the honorable telegraph company to receive pay from you. If—"

"He's lost the ruby!" gasped McGlory, "and Sam Wing is the guilty man! Oh, Moses, what a throwdown! Why, I had a notion Sam Wing thought the sun rose and set in Tsan Ti. And Sam Wing lifted the ruby and the mandarin's funds and hot-footed it for parts unknown! Well, *well!*"

"If," continued Matt, continuing the reading, "I cannot recover the priceless gem, then nothing is left for me but the yellow cord. Hasten, noble youth, and aid in catching the miserable Sam Wing.' That's all, Joe," finished Matt, with a frown.

"Then drop it in the waste basket and let's settle our bill and start for the landing. It's a quarter to eleven. While you're paying up I'll go to the room after our grips."

The cowboy started impatiently to his feet. Matt continued to sit in his chair, frowning and peering into vacancy.

"Mosey!" urged Joe.

"It seems too bad to turn Tsan Ti down in such cold-blooded fashion," said Matt.

"There you go! That's you! Say, pard, the mandarin thinks he's got a mortgage on you. What's the good of helping a chink who's so locoed he totes a fifty-thousand-dollar ruby around with him rather than hand it over to the express company for transportation? Take it from me, you can keep helping Tsan Ti for the next hundred years, and he'll never get out of the country till he separates himself from the Eye of Buddha and let some one else take the risk of getting it to Canton. Are you going?"

"The poor old duffer," continued Matt, "is always right up in the air when anything goes wrong with him. We know what the safe return of that ruby to the Honam joss house means to him, Joe. The ruler of China has sent him a yellow cord—a royal invitation for him to strangle himself if the ruby is not found and returned to the forehead of the idol."

"Look here," snapped McGlory, "time's getting scarce. Are you going down the river with me, pard, or have I got to go alone?"

Before Matt could answer, a well-dressed man hurried into the lobby from the street and rushed for the desk as though he had something on his mind.

"That's Martin," said Matt, looking at the man.

Martin was proprietor of the local garage and had been of considerable assistance to the motor boys during the first days of their stay in Catskill. It was Martin who owned the two motor cycles which had been stolen from Matt and McGlory by Bunce and a pal. The boys had had to put up three hundred dollars to settle for that escapade, but Tsan Ti had made the amount good.

Martin talked excitedly with the hotel clerk for a moment, and the clerk leaned over the desk and pointed toward the corner where the motor boys had seated themselves. Martin, a look of satisfaction crossing his troubled face, bore down on the corner.

"Look out for shock number three," growled McGlory. "Sufferin' hoodoos! We've taken root here in Catskill, and I'll bet we won't be able to pull out for the rest of our natural lives."

The cowboy, apparently discouraged with the outlook, dropped down into his chair and leaned back in weary resignation.

"Matt!" exclaimed Martin, "you're just the fellow I want to find."

"What's wrong, Mr. Martin?" inquired Matt.

"A three-thousand-dollar car was stolen out of my garage last night. The night man was attacked, knocked over the head, and then bound hand and foot. It was a most brazen and dastardly piece of work."

"Too bad," spoke up McGlory, "but things like that will happen occasionally. Think of Matt and me getting done out of those two motor cycles of yours."

"But I'll have to put up ten times what you fellows did for the motor cycles—that is, if we can't get the car back."

"*We!*" boomed McGlory, starting forward in his chair. "If *we* can't get the car back! Are Motor Matt and Pard McGlory mixed up in that 'we'?"

"Well, I thought when you knew the circumstances that—"

"Don't hem, and haw, and sidestep," cut in McGlory keenly. "You're in trouble, and whenever anybody in the whole country stumbles against something that's gone crosswise, then it's 'Hurrah, boys,' and send for Motor Matt. I wish I had words to tell you how inexpressibly weary all this makes me. Didn't you ever stop to think, Martin, that, off and on, the motor boys might have troubles of their own?"

"But listen. You haven't heard the facts."

"What are the facts, Martin?" asked Matt.

"Why, the night man recognized one of the scoundrels who struck him down. The rascal was dressed in sailor clothes and had a green patch over one eye."

"Bunce!" exclaimed Matt, starting up.

"That's it," cried Martin, glad of the impression he was making. "I knew you and McGlory had been mixed up with that sailor, and I naturally thought you'd be glad of a chance to help nab him."

"About what time was the car stolen?" asked Matt, quieting McGlory with a quick look.

"About half-past two," answered Martin. "I've got a car ready to chase the scoundrels. Have you any notion which way that car ought to go?"

"You're a trifle late taking up the pursuit," remarked

Matt. "Here it is nearly eleven, and the automobile was stolen at half-past two—more than eight hours ago."

"I was up at Cairo," explained Martin, "and didn't get back till ten o'clock this morning."

"I've something of a clue," said Matt, "but it may be too late to follow it."

"Where does the clue lead?"

"To Gardenville."

"Then we'll make a fast run to Gardenville. Will you go along?"

"Yes," said Matt. "Come on, Joe."

And McGlory dutifully went. As he, and Matt, and Martin passed out of the hotel, the down-river boat from Albany whistled for Catskill Landing. The cowboy looked at it.

"We'll never get to New York," he murmured; "not in a thousand years. We're out for two different kinds of trouble, and we'll be into both of 'em up to our eyes before we're many hours older."

CHAPTER V.

A HOT STARTER.

Motor Matt disliked any further entanglements with Tsan Ti and the fateful ruby fully as much as did his cowboy pard, and he was greatly perturbed over the unexpected developments which had again drawn him and McGlory into the plots and counterplots hovering around the valuable gem. But it was impossible for the king of the motor boys to turn his back upon an appeal from any one in distress when it was in his power to be of help. Nevertheless, Matt might have cut loose from the mandarin, for he did not like his Oriental methods, but his temper was stirred by that half-veiled threat in the note from Grattan.

Matt and Grattan had been at swords' points ever since the motor boys had been in the Catskills. It was largely a battle of wits, with now and then a little violence thrown in for good measure, and up to that moment neither Matt nor Grattan had scored decisively.

Through Matt's intrepid work, Tsan Ti had recovered the stolen ruby, but, as in the case where he had lost the counterfeit gem, Matt's success had been merely a fortunate blunder. On the other side of the account, Grattan could be charged with a theft of the two motor cycles and with sundry other sharp practices which had gone too much "against the grain" for Matt to overlook. The daring theft of the automobile from the garage pointed the way not only for Matt to help Martin recover the machine, but perhaps, also, to recover the motor cycles, to worst Grattan, and to be of some assistance to Tsan Ti.

On the way to the garage with Martin, Matt explained these matters to McGlory.

With the whistle of the New York boat still sounding in his ears, the cowboy listened to his chum, at first, with intense disapproval; but, at the back of McGlory's nature, there was as intense a dislike for being worsted by such a crook as Grattan as there was at the back of Matt's.

Cleverly the king of the motor boys harped on this chord, and aroused in his chum a wild desire to do something that would curb, finally and effectually, the audacious lawlessness of Philo Grattan. To such an extent did Matt influence McGlory that the latter began to wonder how he could ever have thought of leaving the Catskills while Grattan was at large.

"Sufferin' justice!" exclaimed the cowboy. "Grattan is trying to bluff us out of helping the mandarin. That's as plain as the pay streak in a bonanza mine. He must have been with Bunce when the bubble was lifted, and if we chase the chug cart we can hand the boss tinhorn a black eye by getting back the machine and landing the thieves in the skookum house. Say, that would be nuts for me! The mandarin and his idol's eye can go hang—it's Grattan we're after this trip."

Matt left his chum with that impression, well knowing that if Grattan could be captured, the affairs of the mandarin would adjust themselves satisfactorily.

The night man at the garage, his head bandaged, was lingering in the big room, watching one of the day men give a final wipe to the lamps of a six-cylinder flyer that was to take the trail after Grattan. The night man's face flushed joyfully when he saw Matt and McGlory.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "I guess there'll be something doing in these parts, now that Motor Matt is going to

help in the chase."

"You're the man who was on duty when the automobile was stolen?" inquired Matt.

"Don't I look the part?"

"Martin says you identified one of the men as the old sailor who wears a green patch over one of his eyes."

"Seen him as plain as I do you, this minute."

"What did the other thief look like?"

"Didn't have a chance to tell, the attack was that sudden an' unexpected."

"You are sure there were no more than two of the thieves?"

"I could take my solemn Alfred on that."

"All aboard!" called Martin, from the car. "I'm going to let you do the driving, Matt. You can forget more about automobiles than I ever knew."

Matt stepped to the side of the car and drew on a pair of gauntlets that lay in the driver's seat; then he climbed to his place, McGlory got in behind, and the car was backed around and glided out through the wide door of the garage.

With Martin indicating the way, the machine slipped rapidly out of Catskill and darted off on the Gardenville road.

"What sort of clue is taking us to Gardenville?" asked Martin, as they weaved in and out among the tree-covered hills, catching occasional glimpses of the sparkling waters of the Hudson.

Matt informed Martin briefly of Tsan Ti's predicament and of Grattan's persistent attempts to get hold of the ruby.

"You think Grattan has gone to Gardenville to

intercept Tsan Ti?" asked Martin.

"It would be like Grattan," Matt answered, "to hire Sam Wing to steal the ruby from the mandarin. I don't know that Grattan has done that, but it would be like him. If he did, then he would travel toward Gardenville to pick up Sam Wing."

"This looks too much like guesswork," muttered Martin, "and not very bright guesswork, either."

"I think the same way, Martin; but it's the only clue we have. Grattan and Bunce certainly had an object in view when they stole the motor car. The theft, happening at the time it did, rather inclines me to think that Grattan is beginning a swift campaign to recover the Eye of Buddha."

"Since half-past two he has had oceans of time to reach Gardenville and pick up Sam Wing and the ruby—if that was his game."

"Exactly," returned Matt. "I was telling you the same thing back at the hotel. What sort of a car was it that was stolen?"

"It was a blue car, six cylinder, and had a tonneau and top. It belonged to a man from New York. He's been telegraphing and telephoning all through the mountains. If the thieves didn't get away last night, they'll have a hard time doing it to-day."

Matt was watching the road. It was a popular highway for motor-car owners, and the surface bore evidence of the passage of many pneumatic tires. Half a dozen cars passed them, going the other way, and inquiries were made as to the blue car. The stolen automobile had not been seen or heard of. At least two of the passing drivers had come from Gardenville, and their failure to have seen anything of the stolen machine promised ill for the success of the pursuers when they should reach their destination.

"I guess I'm up against it, all right," growled Martin. "This Grattan is a clever scoundrel, and he'll know what to do to keep from getting captured."

"What's that place ahead there?" asked Matt.

What he saw was a spot where the road curved a little to one side in a valley between two hills. There were two or three hitching posts planted beside the road, and from one of the posts swung a tin bucket.

"That's a spring," said Martin, "and it furnishes ice-cold water in the very hottest part of the summer. People stop there to water their horses—and to get a drink themselves if they're thirsty."

"Let's stop, pard," called McGlory, from the tonneau. "I'm dryer than a sand pile and my throat's full of dust."

"We're only three miles from Gardenville," spoke up Martin, his words significant of the fact that there would be plenty of drinking water to be had in the town without delaying the journey at the spring.

"We'll only be a minute," said Matt, swerving to the side of the road and bringing the car to a halt.

All three jumped out, and Martin led the way to a small pool, shaded by overhanging trees. From beyond the pool came a tinkle of falling water.

"Horses are watered from this basin," remarked Martin. "The water falls from the rocks, farther on, and we'll find a cup there."

A well-worn path followed the rill that supplied the pool, and the three continued onward along the path in single file. Half a dozen yards brought them to the rocky side hill where the water welled from a crack in the granite and fell in a miniature cataract to a bowl-shaped depression at the foot of the wall.

A man was standing beside the spring when Martin, Matt, and McGlory emerged from the tangle of brush and vines. The man was just lifting himself erect after filling a tin cup that was chained to the rocks. Startled into inaction, the man stood staring at the three newcomers, the filled cup in his hand.

The surprise, it may be observed, was mutual.

The man by the spring was a Chinaman—a lean, hatchet-faced individual whose blouse and baggy trousers gave evidence of rough work in the undergrowth.

"Sam Wing!" yelled McGlory.

Yes, it was the treacherous Celestial, there was not the slightest doubt about that.

Simultaneously with his shout, McGlory leaped forward, closely followed by Matt. Sam Wing awoke to his peril not a second too soon. Casting the cup of water full in the cowboy's face, the Chinaman gave vent to a defiant yell, whirled, and vanished among the trees.

McGlory sputtered wrathfully as he shook the water out of his eyes. Matt bounded on in frantic pursuit of the fugitive.

"Come back!" cried Martin, thinking of nothing but the stolen car. "What's the use of chasing the chink?"

"You freeze to the automobile, Martin," the cowboy paused to answer. "Matt and I will put the kibosh on this yellow grafter and then we'll rejoin you. We'll not be gone long."

The words faded in a rattle and crash of violently disturbed bushes, and McGlory had vanished along his chum's trail.

CHAPTER VI.

M'GLORY IS LOST—AND FOUND.

This unexpected encounter with Sam Wing was certainly a "hot starter" in the matter of the stolen ruby, although of apparently small consequence in the matter of the stolen car. But Motor Matt was not particular as to which end of the double thread fortune wafted his way. He followed Sam Wing just as zealously as he would have followed Philo Grattan, had it been the white thief instead of the yellow who had fled from the spring.

The cold spring water had run down the cowboy's face, under his collar, and had glued his shirt to his wet skin.

"Speak to me about that!" he breathed angrily, as he labored on. "If the rat-eater hadn't slammed that water into my face, I'd have had him by his yellow throat in a brace of shakes! Wow, but it's cold! I feel as though I was hugging an iceberg. Where's Matt?"

McGlory had not seen his chum since he had plunged into the bushes, but had followed blindly in a course he believed to be the right one, trying only to see how much ground he could cover.

Now, realizing suddenly that he might be on the wrong track, the cowboy halted, peered around him, and listened intently. The timber was thick and the bushes dense on every side. There were no sounds in any direction even remotely suggesting the Chinaman's flight and Matt's pursuit.

"I'm off my bearings and no mistake," reflected the cowboy, searching the ground in vain for some signs of

the course taken by Sam Wing and Matt. "Matt will have a time overhauling the chink in this chaparral, and the two of us are needed. But which way am I to go?"

McGlory had been hurrying along the side hill that edged the valley and the road. He swept his eyes across the narrow valley, and then up the slope toward the top of the hill.

"It's a cinch," he ruminated, "that Sam Wing wouldn't go near the trail, but would do his level best to get as far away from it as he could. That means, if I'm any guesser, that he climbed the hill and tried to lose himself beyond. Me for the other side," and the cowboy began pawing and scrambling up the steep slope.

Ten minutes of hard work brought him to the crest, and here again he halted to peer anxiously around and to listen. He could neither hear nor see anything that gave him a line on Matt and the Chinaman.

"Whoop-ya!" he yelled at the top of his lungs. "Matt! Where are you, pard?"

A jaybird mocked him from somewhere in the timber, and a frightened hawk took wing and soared skyward.

"Blamed if this ain't real excitin'!" growled the cowboy. "I'm going to do something to help lay that yellow tinhorn by the heels, though, and you can paste that in your hat. If Matt came over the hill, then it stands to reason he went down on this other side. I'll keep on, by guess and by gosh, and maybe something will happen."

McGlory kept on for half an hour, floundering through the bushes, making splendid time in his slide to the foot of the hill, and from there striking out on an erratic course that carried him toward all points of the

compass. He climbed rocky hills and descended them, he followed ravines, and he sprinted across narrow levels, yelling for Matt from time to time, but receiving no answer. Then he discovered that something had happened—and that he was lost.

Trying to locate himself by the position of the sun, he endeavored to return to the road. Instead of calling for Matt, he now began whooping it up for Martin. The sun appeared to be in the wrong place, and the road and the spring had vanished. The farther McGlory went, the more confused and bewildered he became. At last he dropped down on a boulder and panted out his chagrin and disgust.

"Lost! Me, Joseph Easy Mark McGlory, Arizona puncher and boss trailer of the deserts and the foothills! Lost, plumb tangled up in my bearings, clean gone off the jump—and in this two-by-twice range of toy mountains where Rip Van Winkle snoozed for twenty years. I wonder if Rip was as tired as I am when he laid down to snatch his forty winks. Sufferin' tenderfoot! I've walked far enough to carry me plumb to Albany, if it had all been in a straight line. Matt!" and again he lifted his voice. "Martin!"

The lusty yell echoed and reverberated through the surrounding woods, but brought no answer.

Then, suddenly, the cowboy was seized from behind by a pair of stout arms, pulled backward off the boulder, and flattened out on the ground by a heavy knee on his chest.

It had all happened so quickly that McGlory was dazed. He was a moment or two in recovering his wits and in recognizing the sinister face and mocking eyes that bent down over him.

"Grattan!" he gasped.

"Ay, messmate," gibed a voice from near at hand;

"Grattan and Bunce. Don't forget Bunce."

The cowboy turned his head and saw the sailor. The green patch decorated one of the sailor's eyes, but the other eye taunted the luckless prisoner with an exultant gleam.

McGlory struggled desperately under Grattan's hands.

"Stop it!" ordered Grattan.

As McGlory had made no headway with his frantic struggles, he decided to obey the command.

"What are you doing out here in the woods?" inquired Grattan.

"Ease up on that throat a little," wheezed the cowboy. "Want to take the breath all out of me?" The thief's fingers relaxed slightly. "I left the road a spell ago," proceeded McGlory, "and went wide of my bearings somewhere—I don't know just where."

"Lost, eh?" laughed Grattan. "Well, my lad, you've been found."

"How did you happen to find me?"

"How?" jeered Bunce. "You was makin' more noise than a foghorn. The way you was askin' Motor Matt for help, it's a wonder they didn't hear you in Catskill."

"Tie his hands with something, Bunce," said Grattan.

Bunce looked taken aback for a space, then whipped his knife laniard from about his neck, removed the knife, doubled the cord, and contrived a lashing that was strong enough to answer the purpose.

Grattan heaved the cowboy over upon his face and pulled his wrists behind him. In less than a minute the cord was in place, and the prisoner was freed of Grattan's gripping hands and allowed to sit up, his

back against the bowlder.

"This meeting," grinned Grattan, "was entirely unexpected, and a pleasant surprise."

"A pleasant surprise for you, I reckon," grunted McGlory. "What did you jump onto me for like this? What good is it going to do you?"

"What benefit I am to derive from this encounter," replied Grattan, "remains to be seen. Tell me, my lad, are you and Motor Matt looking for Tsan Ti?"

An angry denial was on the cowboy's lips, but he thought better of the words before they were spoken.

"Never you mind who we're looking for, Grattan," said he.

"It's for Tsan Ti, I am sure," went on Grattan. "He's somewhere in this section, for he left Gardenville on foot, early this morning, preceded by his man, Sam Wing. I don't know exactly what's up, but I'm rather inclined to think that the mandarin is afraid of me, and is trying to get back to Catskill and place himself under the wing of his estimable protector, Motor Matt. You and Matt heard he was coming and advanced to meet him. The same man who told me the fat Chinaman was in the hills must have given you boys the same information."

"Who was the *hombre*, Grattan?" queried McGlory, secretly delighted to think Grattan's speculations were so wide of the mark.

"A man in a white runabout with a red torpedo beard."

"I wouldn't know a red torpedo beard from a Piute's scalplock, but I do recollect a shuffer in a white car."

This white runabout was one of the cars Matt, Martin, and McGlory had passed on the road, and the

driver was one of those of whom they had made inquiries. The inquiries, of course, had been all about the stolen automobile and not about the fat Chinaman. If Grattan had been in the stolen car when asking the man in the white runabout for news of Tsan Ti, then why hadn't the runabout driver remembered the blue car and told Matt something about it?

"Where were you," went on the cowboy, "when you hailed the man in the white car?"

"On foot, by the spring," answered Grattan genially.

He was an educated man and usually good-natured—sometimes under the most adverse circumstances. That was his way, perhaps on the principle that an easy manner is best calculated to disarm suspicion.

"Where was the car you and Bunce stole from the Catskill garage?" asked the cowboy.

"We tucked it away in a pocket of the hills that my friend Pardo knew about," explained Grattan, tacitly admitting the theft and, in his customary fashion, not hesitating to go elaborately into details. "We failed to finish the work that took us to Gardenville last night. When we learned at the railroad station in that town that the fat Chinaman had started south on foot, about break of day, following another of his countrymen, we rushed the car back into an obscure place. It is not advisable, you understand, to make that car too prominent. We shall have to use it by night. Bunce and I rode to the spring on our motor cycles for the purpose of watching the road. The white runabout came along, and the driver told us, he had passed Tsan Ti, walking this way. We waited for him to pass the spring, but he did not. Thinking he had taken to the rough country, Bunce and I returned our wheels to the place where we have pitched temporary camp and began prowling around in the hope of finding the

mandarin. Then, quite unexpectedly, I assure you, we heard you calling. We came to this place, guided by the sound of your voice. You know the rest, and—"

Grattan bit off his words abruptly. From a distance came a hail, so far off as to be almost indistinguishable.

"Motor Matt!" exclaimed Grattan, with a laugh. "He's looking for you, McGlory. If this keeps up, we're going to have quite a reunion. Put a hand over his lips, Bunce," he added to the sailor.

McGlory tried to give a desperate yell before the hand closed over his mouth, but he was not quick enough. Grattan, leaning against the boulder, threw back his head and answered the distant call.

The voice in the woods drew closer and closer.

"Call again, excellent one!" came the weary voice from the scrub. "I heard you shouting some time ago, and you were calling the name of an esteemed friend for whom I am looking. Speak loudly to me, so that I may come where you are."

The three by the boulder were astounded.

"Tsan Ti," muttered Grattan, "or I don't know the voice. Luck, Bunce! Whoever thought this could happen? The mandarin heard McGlory calling for Motor Matt—and now the mandarin is looking for McGlory and is going to find *us*." A chuckle came with the words. "Lie low, Bunce, and watch McGlory. Leave the trapping of Tsan Ti to me."

CHAPTER VII.

"POCKETED."

For the cowboy pleasant fancies were cropping out of this surprising turn of events. He reflected that Grattan did not know Sam Wing had stolen the ruby from Tsan Ti. By entrapping Tsan Ti, Grattan was undoubtedly counting upon getting hold of the Eye of Buddha.

If Bunce had known how little love McGlory had for the mandarin, he would not have been at so much pains to keep a hand over his lips. Just at that moment nothing could have induced the cowboy to shout a warning to the approaching Chinaman.

Kneeling behind the boulder, Grattan lifted his voice for Tsan Ti's benefit. Presently the mandarin was decoyed around the side of the boulder, and his capture expeditiously effected.

He was a badly demoralized Chinaman. His usually immaculate person had been eclipsed by recent hardships, and he was tattered and torn and liberally sprinkled with dust. His flabby cheeks were covered with red splotches where thorny undergrowth had left its mark. He was so fagged, too, that he could hardly stand. At the merest touch from Grattan he tumbled over. A most melancholy spectacle he presented as he sat on the ground and stared at Grattan with jaws agape.

"Oh, friend of my friend," wheezed Tsan Ti, passing his gaze to McGlory, "was it you who shouted?"

"First off it was," answered McGlory; "after that, Grattan took it up."

"And you are a prisoner?"

"I wouldn't be here if I wasn't."

"I'm the man for you to talk to, Tsan Ti," put in Grattan grimly. "It's me you're to reckon with."

"Evil individual," answered the mandarin, "my capture will not help you in your rascally purposes. Is not my present distress sufficient, without any of your unwelcome attentions? Behold my plight! What more can you do to make me miserable?"

"I can take the ruby away from you, for one thing."

A mirthless smile crossed the mandarin's fat face. A chuckle escaped McGlory.

Grattan stared hard at the Chinaman, and then flashed a quick glance at the cowboy.

"What are you thinking of, McGlory?" he demanded.

"I'm thinking that you're fooled again, Grattan," answered McGlory. "You know so much that I wonder you haven't heard that the mandarin has lost the ruby."

"Lost it?" A look of consternation crossed Grattan's face. "I'll never believe that," he went on. "Tsan Ti knows where the Eye of Buddha is, and there are ways to make him tell me."

"Ay, ay," flared Bunce, with a fierce look, "we'll make him tell if we have to lash him to a tree and flog the truth out o' him."

"Wretches," said the mandarin, "no matter what your hard thoughts may counsel, or your wicked hands contrive, you cannot make me tell what I do not know."

Grattan would not trust Bunce to search the mandarin, but proceeded about the work himself. Two

chopsticks, a silver cigarette box, an ivory case with matches, a bone-handled back scratcher, a handkerchief, a fan, and a yellow cord some three feet long were the results of the search.

There was no ruby. Grattan prodded a knife blade into Tsan Ti's thick queue in his search for the gem, and even ripped out the lining of his sandals, but uselessly.

"You know where the ruby is," scowled Grattan, giving way to more wrath than McGlory had ever seen him show before; "and, by Heaven, I'll make you tell before I'm done with you."

Tossing the yellow cord to Bunce, Grattan drew back and ordered the sailor to secure the mandarin's hands in the same way he had lashed the cowboy's.

Tsan Ti seemed to accept the situation philosophically. But that he was in desperate straits and hopeless was evidenced by his remark when Bunce was done with the tying:

"Despicable person, I had rather you put the yellow cord about my throat than around my wrists."

"You'll get it around the throat when we get back to the pocket," said Grattan brutally. "Take charge of McGlory, Bunce," he added, "and come with me."

Tsan Ti was ordered to his feet. Thereupon, Grattan seized his arm and pulled him along through the woods.

McGlory would have given something handsome if he could have had the use of his hands for about a minute. Bunce would have been an easy problem for him to solve if he had not been hampered by the knife laniard. As it was, however, the cowboy was forced to get to his feet and, with the sailor as guard, follow after Grattan and Tsan Ti.

Captors and captives traveled for nearly a mile through uneven country, thick with timber, then descended into a ravine, followed it a little way beyond a point where it was crossed by a wagon road, and came to a niche in the gully wall.

Perhaps the term "cavern" would better describe the place where Grattan, Pardo, and Bunce had pitched their temporary camp. The hole was an ancient washout, its face covered with a screen of brush and creepers.

In front of the niche, standing in a place where it had been backed from the road on the "reverse," was the blue automobile. Leaning against the automobile were the two motor cycles; and from the tonneau of the car, as Grattan and Bunce approached with their prisoners, arose the form of Pardo.

"Well, well!" exclaimed Pardo, thrusting his head out from under the top. "If we haven't got visitors! Where did you pick up the mandarin, Grattan?"

"Between here and the Gardenville road," answered Grattan. "It was easy work. Both the chink and the cowboy were kind enough to yell and tell us where they were."

Pardo, understanding little of what had really occurred, opened his eyes wide.

"Tell me more about it," said he.

"After I get the prisoners in the pocket. Bunce, bring a rope. Hold McGlory, Pardo, while he's doing it."

Pardo jumped down from the automobile and caught the cowboy's arm.

"I guess you're a heap easier to deal with than your friend, Motor Matt," was his comment.

"No guess about it," said McGlory, "it's a cinch. But

I'm not fretting any."

The cowboy's eyes were on the stolen car. What a pleasure it would have been to snatch that automobile out of Grattan's clutches, leaving him and his rascally companions stranded in the hills! But that was a dream—and McGlory had already had too many dreams for his peace of mind.

Tsan Ti was shoved by Grattan through the bushes, under the trailing vines and into the washout. Pardo dragged McGlory through, close on their heels.

"Sit down, both of you," ordered Grattan, when the prisoners were in the gloomy confines of the niche.

Tsan Ti and McGlory lowered themselves to the bare earthen floor. Bunce came with the rope, and it was coiled around the cowboy's ankles, and then around the mandarin's.

"I've taken you in, McGlory," observed Grattan, to the cowboy, "for the purpose of finding out what Motor Matt is doing; and I've captured the mandarin with the idea of getting the ruby. I'm a man who hews steadily to the line, once he marks it out. I'll have my way with both of you before I am done. Mark that. You can't get away from here. Even if you were not bound hand and foot, you'd have to pass the automobile in order to reach the road—and Pardo, Bunce, and I will be in the automobile. We're all heeled, which is a point you will do well to remember."

Having eased his mind in this manner, Grattan went out of the niche, Bunce and Pardo following him. They could be heard climbing into the automobile, and then their low voices came in a mumble to the ears of the prisoners.

"Fated friend," gulped the mandarin, "the ten thousand demons of misfortune are working sad havoc with Tsan Ti."

"Buck up!" returned McGlory. "We're pocketed, all right, but matters might be worse."

"What cheering thoughts can I possibly have?" mourned the mandarin. "The Eye of Buddha has escaped me, gone I do not know where, in the possession of that Canton dog, Sam Wing, who—"

"Hist!" breathed McGlory, in a warning voice. "Grattan doesn't know who has the ruby, and it may be a good thing if we keep it to ourselves. Don't lose your nerve. Motor Matt is around, and you can count on him to do something."

"Motor Matt is both notable and energetic," droned the mandarin, "but for him to secure the ruby from Sam Wing is too much to hope for."

"There you're shy a few, Tsan Ti. I'll bet my scalp against that queue of yours that Matt has already captured Sam Wing and recovered the Eye of Buddha."

Tsan Ti stirred restlessly.

"Do not deceive me with hope, honorable friend," he begged.

"Well, listen," and McGlory proceeded to tell Tsan Ti what had happened at the spring.

Tsan Ti's hopes arose. He had been ready to grasp at anything, and here McGlory had offered him undreamed-of encouragement.

"There are many brilliant eyes in the plumage of the sacred peacock," he murmured, "but by them all, I vow to you that there is no other youth of such accomplishments as Motor Matt. And, by the five hundred gods of the temple at—"

"Cut it out," grunted McGlory. "You've got Matt and me into no end of trouble with your foolishness. When you get that ruby into your hands again, stop fumbling

with it. Pass it over to some one who knows how to look after it, but don't try the job yourself. This is first-chop pidgin I'm giving you, Tsan Ti, and I don't know why I'm handing it out, after the way you hocused my pard and me with that piece of red glass. But it's good advice, for all that, and you'd better keep it under your little black cap."

Tsan Ti relapsed into thoughtful silence. The mumble of voices continued to creep in through the swinging vines and the bush tops, but otherwise the quiet that filled the "pocket" was intense.

The mandarin was first to speak. Leaning toward the cowboy, he whispered:

"There's a chance, companion of my distress, that we may be able to make our escape."

"What's the number?" queried the cowboy.

Thereupon the mandarin began revealing the plan that had formed in his mind. It was the fruit of considerable reflection and promised well.

CHAPTER VIII.

SPRINGING A "COUP."

Stripped of its ornamental trimmings, the mandarin's plan was marvelously simple. McGlory was to roll over with his back to him, and he engaged to gnaw through the knife laniard. When the cowboy's hands were free it would be only a few moments until he removed the ropes from his ankles and set Tsan Ti at liberty.

This accomplished, McGlory was to set up a racket, calling Grattan, Bunce, and Pardo into the pocket. As they crashed through the brush in one direction, the mandarin would crash through it in another, reach the motor cycles, and rush away on one before Grattan or his companions had an opportunity to use their firearms.

"H'm," reflected McGlory. "That's a bully plan, Tsan Ti—for you. You're the boy to look out for Number One, eh? This surprise party you're thinking of springing reminds me of the way you unloaded that imitation ruby on Motor Matt, and then sat back and allowed Matt and me to play tag with Grattan."

"What is the fault with my plan, generous sir?" asked the mandarin.

"Of course," went on the cowboy, with fine sarcasm, "I don't amount to much. I kick up a disturbance in here, and when Grattan, Pardo, and Bunce rush in on me, you make a run for one of the motor cycles. In other words, I hold the centre of the stage and make things interesting for the three tinhorns while you burn the air on a benzine bike and get as far outdoors

as you can. Fine!"

"Pardon, exalted friend," demurred Tsan Ti, "but you overlook the point that I will be pursued."

"I don't think I overlook a blessed point, Tsan Ti. But just answer me this: What's the good of escaping? Grattan will have to let us go sooner or later. If we put up with these uncomfortable ropes for a spell, we'll both get clear and without running the risk of stopping a bullet."

"Accept my excuses, noble youth, and please remember Grattan made some remarks about choking me with the cord in case I did not reveal the whereabouts of the ruby. That would not be pleasant."

"Sufferin' stranglers!" exclaimed McGlory; "I'd forgotten about that. Can't say that I blame you for thinking twice for yourself and once for me. I'll help on the game." The cowboy rolled over with his back to the mandarin. "Now get busy with your teeth," he added, "and be in a rush. There's no telling when the pallaving outside will be over with, and if those fellows get through before we do, the kibosh will be on us and not on them."

The logic of this last remark was not lost upon the mandarin. He grunted and wheezed and used his teeth with frantic energy. While he panted and labored, both he and the cowboy kept their ears sharp for the mumble of talk going on outside.

Fortunately for the *coup* the prisoners were intending to spring, the talk continued unabated. The laniard was gnawed in half, and McGlory sat up, brought his hands around in front of him, and rubbed the places where the mandarin's sharp teeth had slipped from the cord.

"You've turned part of the trick, Tsan Ti," commended the cowboy; "now watch me do my share."

With his pocket knife he slashed through the coil that held his feet, and he would then have treated the yellow cord about the mandarin's wrists in like manner had he not been stopped by a quick word.

"The yellow cord, illustrious one," said the Chinaman, "must be untied. It is a present from his imperial highness, my regent, and I may yet be obliged to use it in the customary way."

"Oh, hang your regent!" grumbled McGlory, but yielded to the mandarin's request and began untying the cord with his fingers.

This was slow work, for McGlory's fingers were still numb from the effects of his own bonds. In due course, however, the cord was removed, and the Chinaman lifted himself to a sitting posture. The cowboy used the knife on the rope that secured Tsan Ti's feet, while the latter was solicitously coiling up the yard of yellow cord and putting it away in his pocket.

"Now, courageous friend," whispered the mandarin, getting up noiselessly and stepping to the swinging green barrier at the mouth of the niche, "we are ready."

"You know how to manage a motor cycle?" queried McGlory, suddenly stifling the roar that was almost on his lips.

"Excellently well, superlative one."

"Then good luck to you. Here goes."

Above the fearsome commotion McGlory made, the words "Help!" and "Hurry!" might have been distinguished. Startled exclamations came from the automobile, followed by a sound of scrambling as the three thieves tumbled out. Then there was a crashing among the bushes and the vines, and McGlory rolled back at full length and shoved his unbound hands under him.

"What's the matter?" cried Grattan, who was first to enter the pocket.

"Mandarin tried to knife me!" whooped McGlory. "Why didn't you take his knife away from him? I might have been sent over the one-way trail if I hadn't yelled."

All three of the men were in the niche by that time.

"Where is the chink?" shouted Grattan.

The poppety-pop-pop of a motor in quick action came from without.

"He's tripped his anchor and is makin' off!" yelled Bunce.

"Stop him!" fumed Grattan, and instantly he followed Bunce and Pardo back through the swinging screen of vines and bushes.

Chuckling with delight, McGlory leaped erect, sprang to the vines, and parted them so he could look out.

Tsan Ti, his motor working splendidly, was streaking down the ravine toward the road. Bunce, who had led in the rush from the pocket, had mounted the other motor cycle and was coaxing his engine into action with the pedal.

"Catch him, Bunce!" bellowed Grattan.

Bunce's answer was lost in a series of explosions as his motor got to work. As he whirled away, Grattan and Pardo ran after him to watch the pursuit as long as possible.

And thus it chanced that good luck came McGlory's way, after all. He had pretended, when Grattan and the other two came into the pocket, that he was tied, and the excitement following Bunce's discovery that the mandarin was escaping prevented any examination of

the cowboy's bonds. Now McGlory had the neighborhood of the pocket to himself, and within a dozen feet of where he stood was the blue touring car, unguarded!

A daring plan rushed through the cowboy's head. Why not crank up the automobile's engine and rush down the ravine?

There was a chance that he could reach the road. If Grattan or Pardo got in his way, he could run them down; if they drew off to one side and fired at him, he could trust to luck.

"Nothing venture, nothing win!" muttered the reckless cowboy, and pushed through the vines and bushes and jumped for the front of the car.

An angle of the ravine hid Grattan and Pardo. One look made McGlory certain on this point, and another look showed him the rough surface which the automobile had to get over. There was a fine chance to blow up a tire or come to grief against a jutting rock, but the cowboy had staked everything on a single throw, and he was not to be frightened by difficulties.

He gave the crank a couple of turns, and the engine answered with a fierce sputter and an increasing rattle of explosions.

That sound, if Grattan and Pardo were near enough to hear, advertised plainly what McGlory was about. He lost not a moment in scrambling into the driver's seat and getting the car to going.

The automobile started with a jump, and lurched and swayed over the uneven ground like a ship in a storm. Bending to the steering wheel, McGlory nursed the car onward with the spark.

The machine rounded the turn. The road was in plain view—but so were Grattan and Pardo.

Consternation was written large in the faces of the two thieves. The car was being hurled toward them, plunging and buck-jumping as it met the high places, and the two men had to throw themselves sideways to clear the path.

"Stop!" roared Grattan, drawing a revolver.

McGlory's answer was a defiant yell. As the car rushed by Pardo he made a jump for it—and was knocked roughly back toward the ravine wall.

Bang!

That was Grattan's weapon, echoing high about the racket of the unmuffled motor. Something ripped through the rear of the top and crooned its wicked song within an inch of McGlory's head.

But the cowboy laughed. He hadn't blown up a tire or smashed any of the machinery, he was turning into the road, and Grattan and Pardo were behind him!

"We've knocked the hoodoo galley west!" McGlory exulted. "Oh, what do you think of this! *What* do you think of it!" and he let the sixty champing horses under the bonnet snatch him along the road at their best clip.

CHAPTER IX.

MOTOR MATT'S CHASE.

Meanwhile, the king of the motor boys, without the remotest idea as to what was happening to his cowboy pard, was exacting his own tribute from the realm of exciting events.

When he started after Sam Wing, Matt had no time to give to any one else. He supposed that McGlory was following him, but was altogether too busy to look behind and make sure. It was a trifling matter, anyhow. The main thing was to catch Sam Wing, and Matt threw himself into the pursuit with ardor.

McGlory, it will be remembered, had worked upon the theory that the Chinaman, eager to get as far from the road as possible, had gone over the hill. But this was incorrect. Sam Wing hustled along the hillside slope, his course paralleling the valley and the road.

Very early in the chase the Chinaman lost his grass sandals, and a little later his stockings, but loss of his footwear seemed to help rather than diminish his speed.

Motor Matt was "no slouch" as a long-distance runner, but Sam Wing proved a handful for him. From time to time Matt would gain, coming so close to the hustling Celestial that he shouted a call for him to stop, but the Chinaman, gathering himself together for a spurt, ducked away to his usual lead, and the chase went merrily on.

Once Matt nearly had him. A section of treacherous bank broke away under Sam Wing's feet, and the pursued man flung up his arms and dropped straight

downward. Matt paused on the brink and looked below for three or four yards to a little shelf gouged from the bankside. Sam Wing, scarred and apparently senseless, was lying sprawled on the shelf.

Matt slipped and slid downward, fairly certain that he was at the end of his exciting trail; but, just as his feet struck the shelf, the Chinaman rolled over the edge and carromed away in a break-neck descent that finally plunged him into the road.

This was the identical road that led past the spring, and Matt and Sam Wing were somewhere between the spring and Gardenville. Where Martin was with the automobile, Matt did not know, but if Martin had been at that point in the road when the Chinaman rolled into it, an easy capture could have been made.

There was some one in the road besides Sam Wing, however, and the traveler was an old colored man, riding toward Gardenville on a mule. The mule and the colored man were about a hundred feet away from Wing when he got to his feet. As soon as the Chinaman's eyes rested on the long-eared brute and its aged rider, he started at speed in their direction.

Matt jumped into the road with less than twenty-five feet between himself and Sam Wing. Once more he deceived himself with the idea that the chase was narrowing to a close.

The mule, throwing its head and swinging its long ears, was ambling leisurely along the way. The old darky appeared to be in a doze.

Matt, divining Sam Wing's intentions, gave vent to a warning yell. The darky aroused himself and flung a look over his shoulder. But it was too late, for Wing had already grabbed him by one of his dangling feet. Another moment and the negro had been roughly pulled into the road. Wing scrambled to the mule's

back and dug into the animal with his naked heels. Probably the mule was as startled as his former rider, for he broke into a lumbering lope.

The chase, just then, took on a hopeless outlook for Motor Matt. If Martin had only happened along in the automobile, the fleeing Chinaman could have been brought up with a round turn, but Matt, with only his feet under him, could not hope to overtake the galloping mule.

The darky, as Matt came up with him, was gathering in his ragged hat and climbing to an upright position. He wore a look of puzzled astonishment.

"Ain't dat scan'lous?" he cried. "Ah done been slammed into de road by er Chinymum! En he's got mah mu-el! He's er runnin' erway wif mah Gin'ral Jackson mu-el. By golly, whaffur kind ob way is dat tuh treat an ole moke lak me?"

"It was pretty rough, uncle, and that's a fact," replied Matt, smothering an inclination to laugh at the ludicrous picture the old negro presented. "If we had another mule, I could catch the rascal, but it is too much of a job for me with nothing to ride."

"You chasin' dat 'ar Chinymum, boss?" inquired the darky.

"Yes."

"Has he been up tuh somefin' dat he hadn't ort?"

"He has."

"Den yo' lis'en heah, chile," and a slow grin crept over the wizened, ebony face of the negro. "Erbout er mile ahead dar's a bridge ovah a creek, en dat 'ar Chinyman ain't gwine tuh ride Gin'ral Jackson ovah dat bridge."

"Why not?"

"Case dat fool mu-el won't cross no bridge if yo' doan' cotch his off eah en give hit a pull. Mu-els is mouty queer daterway, en Gin'ral Jackson is a heap queerer dan any othah mu-el yo' most evah see. He's skeered ob a bridge, en pullin' his off eah done takes his min' off'n de bridge, lak, en he goes ovah wifout mistrustin'. Now, dat yalluh Chinimum trash doan' know dat, en ef he try to mek Gin'ral Jackson cross de bridge wifout pullin' his off eah, dar's suah gwine to be doin's, en—"

Just at that moment a boy came along on a bicycle. He was evidently making a long journey, for he had a bag strapped to the handle bars.

"Wait a minute!" called Matt to the boy.

The bicycle halted, and the lad rested one foot on the ground and looked inquiringly at Matt.

"I wish you'd lend me your wheel for a few minutes," said Matt. "A Chinaman just stole this old darky's mule, and I believe I can overhaul the thief if you'll let me take your bicycle."

"Gee!" exclaimed the boy. "How much of a start has the Chinaman got?"

"About three minutes. The darky says there's a bridge a mile ahead, and that the mule won't cross the bridge unless he's coaxed. Perhaps I can come up with the thief at the bridge."

"There you are," said the stranger generously, getting out of the saddle and holding the wheel for Matt.

"Much obliged," returned Matt. "You and the darky come on to the bridge, and perhaps you'll find me rounding up the mule and the Chinaman."

"We'll do it," was the answer.

Matt mounted easily, thrust his toes into the toe clips, and got under way. When he turned an angle of the road, and vanished behind a screen of timber, he was going like a steam engine.

It had been a long time since Matt had ridden an ordinary bicycle, but he had by no means forgotten the knack. He was not long in coming within sight of the bridge, and there, sure enough, were the Chinaman and the mule at the bridge approach.

The Chinaman was having trouble. General Jackson would not cross the bridge, and he was braced back, immovable as the rock of Gibraltar. Sam Wing was using his heels and the flat of his hand in a furious attempt to force the brute onward. General Jackson did not budge an inch, but, from the way he wagged his ears, it was evident that his wrath was growing.

Matt remained silent and bent to the pedals. While Sam Wing was busy urging the mule, Matt was planning to come alongside and treat the Celestial as he had treated the old negro.

This design might have been successfully executed had not General Jackson interfered with it. The mule's temper suddenly gave way under the rain of kicks and blows, and he put his head down between his forelegs and hoisted the rear half of his body into the air. The manœuvre was as sudden as it was unexpected, and Sam Wing went rocketing into space.

The bridge was merely a plank affair, without any guard rails at the sides, and after the Chinaman had done a couple of somersaults in the air he landed with a thump on the bridge, close to the unprotected edge. He started to struggle upright, and the hurried movement caused him to slip over the brink.

He vanished from before Matt's eyes just as he had disappeared from the caving bank—there was a flutter,

a yell, a splash, and Sam Wing was gone.

Matt threw on the brake, jumped from the wheel, and, after leaning the machine against a tree, rushed to the bridge.

The creek was narrow, but seemed to be deep, and the Chinaman was floating down with the current.

There was no time for Matt to linger and explain events to the bicyclist and the negro. Each would recover his property, however, and that ought to satisfy both of them. Springing from the bridge approach, Matt hurried down the bank of the little stream.

The Chinaman, the king of the motor boys thought, must have been made of india rubber to bear so well the series of mishaps that had come his way. He came out of every one with astonishing ability to keep up his flight.

Matt's rush down the creek bank was not continued for long. Sam Wing saw him and made haste to effect a landing on the opposite bank. He emerged, a dripping and forlorn spectacle, and left a damp trail up the bank and into the woods.

Matt did not care to swim the creek in his clothes, and a tree, fallen partly over the stream, afforded him an opportunity to cross dry-shod. The tree was not a large one, and there was a gap of water at the end of it, where the trunk had been splintered and broken away.

With a clear, steady brain and sure feet the king of the motor boys passed to the end of his swaying, insecure bridge; then, with a leap, he cleared the stretch of water and landed on the bank. The force he had put into the jump displaced the tree and caused it to tumble into the creek. It had served its purpose, however, and Matt, without a backward look, tore away along the watery trail of the Chinaman.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHASE CONCLUDED.

When Matt came near enough to see Sam Wing, it seemed plain that the Celestial was yielding to the "blows of circumstance." His flight dragged. Time and time again he cast a wild look over his shoulder at the relentless pursuer, and tried in vain to increase his pace.

His random course crossed a road through the timber with a line of telegraph or telephone poles on one side of it. After a moment's hesitation, Sam Wing chose the road. It was easier going, no doubt, and for that reason probably appealed to him in his fagged condition.

But if it was easier for Sam Wing, so was it for Matt. Now, at last, the eventful chase was certainly approaching its finish.

As the pursuit went on, Matt resolutely closing up the gap between him and the Chinaman, the timber suddenly broke away to give a view of a farmhouse and a barn. Between the house and barn stood a farmer with a rake.

Sam Wing, at the end of his rope and apparently determined on making a last desperate stand, swerved from the road and ran in the direction of the barn.

"Hi, there!" shouted Matt, waving his arms to attract the attention of the farmer, "head him off!"

It was not difficult for the farmer to understand enough of the situation to make him useful in the emergency, and he started energetically to do what he

could. Swinging the rake around his head, he hurried toward a point which would intersect the path of the Chinaman.

Sam Wing, even though he was weary and almost spent, continued "game." A small, V-shaped hencoop stood close to the point where he halted and confronted the farmer.

"By Jerry," threatened the farmer, "yew stop! Don't yew try no shenanigin with me, or I'll comb out your pigtail with this here rake. What yew— Gosh-all-hemlocks!"

It was absolutely necessary for Sam Wing to do something if he did not want to be trapped between the farmer in front and Matt, who was hurrying up behind. Calling upon all his strength, Wing stooped, grabbed the small coop, and hurled it at the farmer's legs.

The coop struck the farmer's shins and doubled his lank frame up like a closed jackknife. He went down, rake and all, and Wing passed around him and lumbered on toward the open barn door.

The farmer's ire was aroused. Getting up on his knees, he began calling, at the top of his lungs: "Tige! Here, Tige!"

Tige, a brindled bulldog, came scurrying from the direction of the house.

"Take 'im, Tige!" bellowed the farmer, pointing toward Sam Wing with the rake.

The Chinaman's Waterloo was close upon him. He had time to give one last frantic look behind, and then Tige caught him by the slack of his dripping garments and pulled him down.

"Don't let the dog hurt him!" yelled Matt.

"Watch 'im, Tige!" cried the farmer. "Good dorg, Tige! Watch 'im!"

The farmer got up and gave the hencoop a vicious kick.

"Jee-whillikins, mister," said he, "what's that slant-eyed heathen been up to, hey? He looks like he'd dropped outen a wet rag bag."

"He's a thief," answered Matt.

"He barked my shins somethin' turrible with that hencoop. But yew got him now, an' don't yew fergit it. That Tige is the best dorg fer tramps an' sich yew ever seen."

Together they walked to the place where Tige, growling savagely and showing his teeth, was standing over the prone Chinaman.

Sam Wing dared not make a move. Had he so much as lifted a finger, the bulldog would have been at his throat.

"Order the dog away," said Matt to the farmer. "I want to talk with the Chinaman, and we'll take him into the barn where we can both sit down on something and rest a little. We've had a hard chase."

The farmer spoke to the dog and the animal slunk away, still keeping his glittering eyes on Sam Wing.

"Looks purty meachin', don't he?" muttered the farmer, peering at the prisoner.

"He's a bad Chinaman," returned Matt, "and he knows it. Get up, Sam Wing," he added, "and go into the barn. Don't try to do any more running. You haven't strength enough to go far, and it won't be best for you."

With wary eyes on the dog, Wing got up and moved toward the barn door. When they were all inside, Matt

took down a coil of rope that swung from a nail and started toward the prisoner.

"What yew goin' to do, friend?" asked the farmer.

"Tie him," replied Matt.

"That ain't necessary. Tige is better'n all the ropes that was ever made. All I got ter do is ter tell him ter watch the heathen, an' yew can bet a pair o' gum boots he'll do it."

The farmer spoke to the dog, that had followed them into the barn, and the animal drew close to Sam Wing and sat down within biting distance. Matt, satisfied with the arrangement for the time being, dropped the rope and seated himself on the tongue of a wagon.

"Sam Wing," said the king of the motor boys severely, "you're a mighty bad Chinaman."

"Me savvy," answered Wing, whose English was far from being as good as the mandarin's.

"You stole the ruby from Tsan Ti," went on Matt.

Sam Wing had strength enough left to show some surprise.

"How you savvy?" he inquired.

"I know it, and that's enough. You're a treacherous scoundrel to turn against the mandarin as you did."

"All same," answered Sam Wing, in extreme dejection. "Ten thousand demons makee heap touble fol Wing. Me plenty solly."

"You ought to be sorry. Tsan Ti trusted you with his money and had a lot of confidence in you. And you betrayed that confidence."

Sam Wing groaned heavily and caressed his numerous bruises. One of his hands finally reached the breast of his torn blouse, and he fished from it a very

wet alligator-skin pouch.

"Here Tsan Ti's money," said he, offering the pouch to Matt. "Me velly bad Chinaman. You takee money, lettee Sam Wing go?"

"I'll take the money," and Matt suited his action to the word, "but I can't let you go until you give up the ruby."

"No gottee luby," came the astonishing assertion from Sam Wing.

"You took it from the mandarin, didn't you?" demanded Matt.

"My takee las' night, no gottee now."

"Where is it?"

"Me losee when me makee lun flom spling. No savvy where me losee—p'laps where me makee fall down bank, p'laps on load, p'laps in cleek—no savvy. Luby gone, me no gottee Eye of Buddha."

It seemed strange to Matt that Sam Wing could carry the alligator-skin pouch safely through all his varied adventures and yet not be able to retain the most valuable part of his cargo—the part which, presumably, he would take care to stow safely.

"Don't tell any lies, Sam Wing!" said Matt sternly.

"No tellee lie—all same one piecee tluth!" protested the Chinaman.

"I'll have to make sure of that," went on Matt.

He searched carefully through the Chinaman's torn and waterlogged apparel, but without discovering anything of value—much less the missing gem.

"Where did you have it?" he asked.

Sam Wing showed him the inside pocket where the ruby had been placed.

"Where have you been since you took the ruby?"

A wave of emotion convulsed the Chinaman's features.

"Evel place," he murmured. "My stay in Galdenville one piecee time, makee tly keepee 'way flom Tsan Ti. Bymby me makee lun fol countlee. Tsan Ti makee see, makee lun, too. My makee hide in hills, foolee Tsan Ti so he no ketchee. My heap hungry, heap thirsty. Findee spling to takee dlink. You come."

Sam Wing shook his head sadly.

"You had the ruby when you were at the spring?" inquired Matt.

The Chinaman nodded.

"And you lost it while I was chasing you?"

Another nod.

Matt, oppressed with what he had heard, and which he felt instinctively was the truth, resumed his seat on the wagon tongue.

The ruby might be lying anywhere over the wild course Sam Wing had taken in his flight. Perhaps it was mixed with the loose earth of the side hill where the Chinaman had fallen, or it might be under the leaves in the woods, or in the dust of the road, or in the bottom of the creek.

Of one thing Matt was sure, and that was that to retrace the exact line of Sam Wing's flight would be impossible; and, even if it were possible, finding the red gem would be as difficult as looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack.

The Eye of Buddha seemed to be lost irretrievably. This was like to prove a tragic event for Tsan Ti.

It was strange what ill luck had attended upon all in

any way connected with the idol's eye; and doubly strange was this final loss of the precious stone.

While Matt was busily turning the catastrophe over in his mind, the farmer suddenly gave a shout and pointed through the open barn door and along the road.

"Great sassafrass!" he exclaimed. "I never seen sich a day fer Chinamen! Look there, will yew?"

Matt looked, and what he saw staggered him. Two motor cycles were coming down the road. Bunce was riding one and Tsan Ti the other. Here was another flight and pursuit, for the sailor was pushing hard upon the heels of the mandarin.

For only a moment was Matt at loss. Gathering up the coil of rope which he had taken from the nail in the barn wall, he called to the farmer to watch the prisoner and ran out of the barn and toward the road.

CHAPTER XI.

A DOUBLE CAPTURE.

Matt was bewildered by the strange turn events were taking. Encountering Sam Wing at the spring was odd enough, in all truth, and the weird happenings during his pursuit had been as novel as they were thrilling; but here, in a most inexplicable way, came the mandarin and the mariner on motor cycles, wobbling down the road, Tsan Ti in a panic and Bunce aggressive and determined.

Matt shouted, but the two on the motor cycles were so deeply immersed in their own efforts that they paid no attention to the call.

To stop the motor cycles was the first step, and the young motorist went about it in his usual resourceful way. Swiftly he secured one end of the rope to a telegraph pole at the side of the road; then, bounding back, he took a turn with the free end of the rope around a convenient tree. Hanging to the cable that was to form a blockade for the charging wheels, Matt once more gave his attention to Bunce and Tsan Ti.

The pursuit of the mandarin had reached a crisis. The sailor had come close enough to reach out and grab the Chinaman's flying queue, and he was hauling rearward, pulling the mandarin back until his hands had left the handle bars.

"Stop!" shouted Motor Matt, laying back on the end of the rope.

The command was useless, for pursuer and pursued were obliged to halt in spite of it.

The mandarin's swaying motor cycle was first to hit the rope. Before the machine could topple over, Bunce crashed into it. There followed a rasping volley of gasoline explosions, a roar from the sailor, and a chattering yell from the mandarin. The two were on the ground, tangled up with each other and with the motor cycles.

Dropping the rope, Matt rushed at the struggling pair, seized Bunce by the shoulders, and hauled him out of the mix-up.

A revolver had fallen from the sailor's pocket. Matt sprang to secure it, and then faced Bunce, who was on his knees and staring about him dazedly.

"Noble friend!" cried the mandarin, carefully extricating his head from the frame of one of the motor cycles, "you have again preserved the wretched Tsan Ti! The evil personage yonder would presently have caught me!"

Bunce, having finally decided that the situation was one that boded him no good, started to get up and remove himself from the scene.

"I don't believe you'd better leave us just yet, Bunce," called Matt, waving the revolver. "Stay right where you are. This is a complication which you can help the mandarin explain."

"By the seven holy spritsails!" muttered Bunce, falling back in his original position and looking at Matt and then at the farmer. "How, in the name o' Davy Jones," he cried, his gaze returning to Matt, "do you happen to be cruisin' in these waters?"

"Never mind that, for the present. What I want to know is, where have you and the mandarin come from? And why were you chasing him?"

"I have escaped, highly appreciated friend whose

kindness is much reciprocated," babbled the mandarin, coming blithely to Matt's side and carefully knocking the dust out of his little black cap. "I have made a never-to-be-forgotten escape from the hands of evil-minded enemies. It was your friend from the cattle districts who helped me."

So far, all that Matt had heard and seen had merely bogged him the more deeply in a mire of misunderstanding. At the mandarin's mention of McGlory, his speculations went off at a wild tangent.

"Did Grattan and Bunce capture the other car?" he demanded. "Where did you find Joe and Martin? Where are they now? What's happened to them?"

"Peace, distinguished youth," said the mandarin, putting on his cap and fluttering his hand reassuringly. "I know nothing about any car except the blue one by the pocket."

"Blue car? Did you see a blue car?"

"Even so, my amazed friend. And beside the blue car leaned those go-devil bicycles. McGlory—faithful assistant in my time of need—helped me beguile Grattan, Pardo, and Bunce into the pocket, whereupon I secured one of the go-devil machines and fled swiftly. The one-eyed sailor followed. Which way we came I do not know. Wherever I saw another road I turned into it. How long we raced is too much for my disturbed faculties to understand. We went, and went, and at last we were here, and I found you! Oh, loyal defender of the most wretched of mandarins, to you I owe my peace, my happiness, and my life! May the six thousand peri of the land of enchantment afford you joy in the life to come!"

"Well, by gum!" muttered the wide-eyed farmer, shifting his rake to the other hand and rubbing a palm against his forehead. "I never seen a heathen that

could talk like that before. Some remarkable now, ain't it?"

Matt was too deeply concerned with what Tsan Ti had said to pay much attention to the farmer. He kept his watchful eyes on Bunce, however, while seeking to get deeper into the perplexing situation that so suddenly confronted him.

"Let's begin at the beginning, Tsan Ti," said he, "and try and smooth out the knots of this amazing tangle with some sort of system. McGlory and I received your telegram. What happened to you after Sam Wing stole the ruby?"

"I awoke from my dreams in great fright, inquiring friend," responded the mandarin, "and found the ruby gone, and Sam Wing gone. There was but one thing for me to think, and I thought it. The train was at a station, and I jumped from the steps. I looked for Sam Wing, but he had vanished; then I sent my telegram and waited until you might arrive. In the gray dawn that came into the east, I saw Sam Wing suddenly flash by the open door of the railroad station. I shouted and ran after him, but he evaded me. Ah, the dreary heart-sickness in my breast as I pursued the traitor!" The mandarin clutched at his frayed yellow blouse and wrung a fold of it in his fat fingers. "Who can tell of that? I followed the wagon road through the mountains, looking and listening. Then I heard some one, afar off, shouting the name of Motor Matt. Hope leaped high within me, for that name, notable sir, has a magic of its own. I turned from the road, climbed many rocks, and crushed through thick growths of prickly bushes, striving to reach the one who had shouted. Also, I shouted myself, and presently, to my great but mistaken delight, other shoutings were returned to me. I went on, in my deceived state, and came to a place where I was captured—made a

prisoner by Grattan and that contemptible mariner of the single eye! Your friend of the cattle districts was likewise a prisoner."

"McGlory—captured by Grattan!" gasped Matt. "How did that happen? Why, I thought he was with Martin."

"Not so, deceived friend. He had tried to follow you in the pursuit of Sam Wing, and he had lost knowledge of his location, and was shouting to hear some speak and tell him where he was. That is what I heard. Before I could reach your friend, Grattan and Bunce had also heard him, and made him a prisoner. Then they heard me, and made *me* a captive. Verily, the ten thousand demons have had me under the ban."

"I'm beginning to get at this," said Matt grimly. "Where did you and Grattan come from, Bunce, that you were placed so handily for entrapping McGlory and the mandarin?"

"We'd made port in the hills," replied Bunce, "an' was out lookin' for Tsan Ti an' the ruby."

"They, miserable creatures," resumed the mandarin, with a glance of contempt at Bunce, "had the blue car and the go-devil bicycles in a gashed-out spot among the mountains. A cavern, named by them a pocket, was in the wall of the rough valley. There were McGlory and I taken and bound. While Grattan, Bunce, and Pardo, birds of evil feather, were plotting in the blue car, I gnawed the cord that secured your unfortunate friend's hands, and he freed himself and me. After that McGlory raised a great clamor. Grattan, Bunce, and Pardo came hastily to observe what might be the trouble, and I went out of the pocket as they came in. Then I took the motor cycle, as I have said, and moved away, followed by the mariner. Is the matter clear, esteemed friend?"

"I'm beginning to understand it," answered Matt. "It's the queerest mix-up I ever heard of. Strange that you and Joe should fall into the hands of Grattan and Bunce, as you did, and that you should happen to lead Bunce this way when you fled on the motor cycle."

"Matter-of-fact youth," remarked the mandarin earnestly, "do you not realize how strange events happen swiftly in the wake of the Eye of Buddha? The ten thousand demons are doing their worst continually, and their powers for evil are vast beyond imagining!"

"We'll pass over that phase of the matter," said Matt dryly, "and try to get at something that will benefit McGlory. Can you take me to this 'pocket,' as you call it?"

"Not so," replied the mandarin. "I have no recollection how I came from it, or what roads I took. The roads were many, and the way was long, and my mind was too greatly disturbed to pay attention."

"Where's the pocket, Bunce?" asked Matt, addressing the sailor.

"I know, messmate," scowled Bunce, "but I'm not showin' ye the course."

Matt was in a quandary. He could not understand why Grattan had captured McGlory, but he was not intending to let his chum remain any longer in the hands of the thieves than was absolutely necessary. A way would be found to make Bunce lead him to the pocket.

"Generous and agreeable friend," spoke up Tsan Ti, "did you succeed in capturing Sam Wing?"

"I did," replied Matt.

"Then may I request of you the Eye of Buddha?"

"I'll take you to Sam Wing and you can request it of him," said Matt. "Get up, Bunce," he ordered, "and start yourself for the barn. Will you," and Matt shot a glance at the farmer, "kindly remove that rope from the road and set the motor cycles upright in a place where they will be safe?"

"Glad to do anythin' fer yew that I can," answered the farmer, dropping his rake and getting busy with the rope.

Matt, face to face with the ordeal of acquainting Tsan Ti with the fact that the ruby was irretrievably lost, was wondering, as he drove Bunce toward the barn, what the result of the catastrophe was to be.

CHAPTER XII.

ANOTHER SURPRISE.

Bunce was accepting his hard luck with all the complaisance he could muster. His pursuit of the mandarin had led him into difficulties undreamed of, but he still indulged a hope that the resourceful Grattan might come to his aid. He went into the barn, and recoiled a little as a savage growl struck on his ears. Tige was still guarding Sam Wing.

"Sit down," said Matt, to Bunce, nodding toward some bags of ground feed lying on the barn floor. "The dog won't molest you; he's looking after Sam Wing."

Bunce, plainly uncomfortable, seated himself, watching Tige warily.

The instant Tsan Ti came through the barn door and saw Sam Wing, a cry of rage burst from his lips, and he flew at his treacherous servant. Matt grabbed the angry mandarin and held him back.

"That won't do, Tsan Ti," said Matt. "Sit down and take things calmly. There's your money," and he pointed to the alligator-skin pouch which lay by the wagon tongue. "Sam Wing turned it over to me. You'd better count it and make sure it's all there. Hereafter, it would be wise for you to take care of your money yourself."

Tsan Ti glared at Sam Wing, then stooped down, and recovered the pouch. The receptacle was filled with soggy banknotes, and, while the mandarin was fingering them over, he kept up a running fire of talk in Chinese. The condemnation must have been of the most scathing sort, for the wretched Sam Wing

shivered as he listened.

Presently Sam Wing himself began to talk. He spoke at length, and must have been acquainting the mandarin with the dread fact that the Eye of Buddha was lost, for, suddenly, Tsan Ti dropped the alligator-skin pouch and the wet bills and reeled back against the barn wall. His eyes became glassy and his face turned white.

Presently he sank down on the barn floor, listless and staring.

"Has he told you about the ruby, Tsan Ti?" asked Matt, his pity for the mandarin rising paramount to any other feeling he may have cherished against him.

Tsan Ti did not answer; in fact, he did not seem to hear. He had suffered a blow that paralyzed his faculties.

"Blow me tight!" breathed Bunce, astonished. "Hasn't he got the ruby?"

"Didn't Grattan search him?" returned Matt.

"Ah, he looked through his pockets and his sandals, and even tried to find the Eye of Buddha in his queue, but it wasn't there. For all that, we thought the chink knowed where the stone was an' could be made to tell."

"He knew where it was—Sam Wing had it."

"Hocused it?"

"Stole it—then lost it!"

"Shiver me!" exclaimed Bunce, aghast. "Then Tsan Ti ain't got the ruby, an' Grattan won't never be able to put hands on it!"

"It's gone for good," answered Matt. "Now you can see, Bunce, just how much good Grattan's trickery and double-dealing has benefited him. You and he stole the

ruby from the Honam joss house and brought it to America; Tsan Ti followed you, under orders from the regent of China to recover the idol's eye or else to strangle himself with the yellow cord; the ruby was recovered for Tsan Ti here in the Catskills, but Grattan kept up his wild scheming and committed one piece of lawless villainy after another in his attempts to get the ruby away from Tsan Ti; now we're at the end of the whole business, and neither Grattan nor Tsan Ti has the ruby, or will ever have it."

Just at that moment the farmer came into the barn.

"I got them machines where they'll be safe," he announced, "an'— Gosh all Whittaker! What's the fat Chinaman doin'?"

Matt turned to look at Tsan Ti. He had the yellow cord around his throat, rove into a running bowline, and was pulling at the loose end.

The king of the motor boys hurried to him and jerked his hands from the cord with a quick movement.

"That will do, Tsan Ti!" cried Matt sternly. "Can't you be a man? You're not going to strangle yourself while I'm around!"

"There is no hope for Tsan Ti," mumbled the mandarin. "The august decree of my regent—may his years be many and glorious!—calls for my quick dispatch."

Matt pulled the cord from the mandarin's neck.

"Listen, Tsan Ti," said he; "don't give up until you know the case is really hopeless. We can go back over the ground Sam Wing covered while I was chasing him, and it is possible we can find the ruby."

"Not possible, deluded friend," answered the mandarin. "The contemptible Canton dog says the gem

may be in the water, or in many other places where its recovery is out of the question. The blandishments of hope pale into the heavy darkness of my certain destruction. Present me with the cord, I beg of you. Tsan Ti, mandarin of the red button, is not afraid to join his exalted ancestors in the country dear to true believers."

"Wrong in the upper story, ain't he?" put in the farmer.

"In a way," replied Matt.

"He sure had himself goin' with that piece o' yellow string. Them heathens is queer, anyway."

"I'll not give you this cord, Tsan Ti," declared Matt, "until I can look over the course followed by Sam Wing and make an attempt to find the ruby."

"There are other means for performing the quick dispatch," said Tsan Ti calmly. "I prefer the cord; it is an honor to use an instrument direct from the regent's hands; but, if the cord is not at hand, other means will avail me, ungenerous youth."

Matt studied the mandarin for a few moments. In his eyes he read determination. Matt, matter-of-fact American lad that he was, could not understand the Oriental custom now exemplified by Tsan Ti—he could not understand the thousands of years' usage which had made the custom part of a Chinaman's faith, and he had nothing but contempt for the exhibition the mandarin was making of himself.

"Get the rope, please," said Matt to the farmer. "I think we'll use it."

The farmer brought the rope, and Matt, with his assistance, tied Tsan Ti's hands and feet. The mandarin yielded passively.

"This will not serve," was all he said; "the time for

my dispatch will arrive, in spite of you."

"If you keep on acting in this foolish way, Tsan Ti," answered Matt, "I'll lose all the respect I ever had for you. Face the music, can't you? There's no merit in throwing up your hands and quitting just because you have run into a streak of hard luck."

"You don't understand, ignorant one."

"I understand, fast enough, that you can't hurt yourself while you're tied up."

He turned away.

"Do you think Tige can watch two prisoners?" he asked of the farmer.

"Yew bet he can," answered the farmer enthusiastically, "two 'r a dozen. Why, that dorg's quicker'n chain lightnin'."

"Then," went on Matt, "just give Tige to understand that he's to watch the sailor, as well as that other Chinaman."

The farmer spoke to the dog, and the animal took up a position between Sam Wing and Bunce. The sailor tried to draw back, but Tige stopped the movement with a savage snarl and a half move as though he would bite.

"Keelhaul me!" cried Bunce. "Is this what ye call treatin' a feller white? Why, I wouldn't treat a Hottentot swab like this!"

"I've got you, Bunce," said Matt grimly, "and, no matter what becomes of Grattan and Pardo, the law won't be cheated entirely."

"What've I done that ye can send me to the brig for? Tell me that!"

"Isn't the theft of the ruby enough to send you to

jail?"

"That happened in Chiny, an' we're in America now."

"Well, putting that aside, there remains the criminal work you did at the Catskill garage last night. You can be sent to the penitentiary for that, Bunce."

That was a blow that left Bunce gasping.

"Grattan done that," he cried; "it wasn't me planned it."

"You helped Grattan, Bunce, and you were recognized by the night man. There's a clear case against you, and you'll deserve all the punishment you receive."

"Say," said Bunce, with a sudden inspiration, "if ye'll let me go, I'll take ye to that pocket where McGlory is! I'll do more'n that, sink me if I won't! You let me slip my hawse and slant away clear o' these hills, an' I'll help ye git McGlory away from Grattan an' Pardo. What d'ye say, mate? It ain't a job ye could do alone, an' it ain't a place ye can find onless I show the way. What's the word?"

"I've had enough experience with you, Bunce," returned Matt, "to know that you're not to be depended on. You'd play some treacherous trick that would—"

Here a voice—a very familiar voice—came floating through the open barn door.

"Whoop-ya! Any one around? Show up, somebody, and tell me where I am and how to go to get to the spring on the trail from Catskill to Gardenville! Who-ee!"

"Woods is full o' strangers to-day, seems like!" exclaimed the farmer.

Matt bolted past him through the door, then halted,

and gazed spellbound at a blue automobile with Joe McGlory in the driver's seat.

This might have been considered the culminating surprise of the day's events. And it was a mutual surprise, too, judging by the way McGlory acted.

Leaning over the steering wheel, the cowboy gazed like one in a trance.

"Matt!" he shouted at last, "is this a dream, or the real thing? Say something, you old hardshell. Sufferin' tenterhooks! I can't tell how nervous you make me."

CHAPTER XIII.

BAITING A TRAP.

"Is that the New York man's automobile, Joe?" asked Matt, "the one that was stolen from Martin's garage last night?"

"It's the one, pard," jubilated the cowboy. "I've come through a-smoking with it from that place where Grattan had me pocketed with the mandarin. It's queer I stopped here, although I'm off my bearings, haven't the least notion where I am, and this is the first farmhouse I've seen for a dozen miles; but it won't seem quite so queer when I tell you that I saw those machines leaning against the corncrib, and that the familiar look of 'em brought me in to stir up the natives and ask a few questions."

McGlory pointed toward a corncrib off at the rear of the barn. The two motor cycles were leaning against the structure, just where the farmer had left them.

"I see," said Matt.

"Are those motor cycles the ones that belong to Martin, that were stolen from us and that we bled a hundred and fifty apiece for?"

"They're the ones."

"Well, now!" chuckled McGlory, "what sort of a day's work would you call this, pard? We get back the stolen automobile and both motor cycles. I'm ready to hear the whistle blow."

"There's something else to be done before we finish this piece of work, Joe."

"Tell me about it."

"Sam Wing is in the barn, there—"

"Whoop! Then you *did* get the kibosh on him, after all!"

"And Tsan Ti," proceeded Matt, "and Bunce."

"Better and better; but I'd almost guessed that just from seeing the motor cycles. What have you been doing since we went two different ways from the spring?"

The king of the motor boys sketched rapidly the main points of Sam Wing's flight and the pursuit, following with the blockade of the road and the capture of Bunce.

"And Tsan Ti is in the barn this minute," finished Matt, "roped hand and foot to keep him from taking his own life on account of the lost ruby. If possible, I'd like to go over the course of Wing's flight and look for the Eye of Buddha."

"Might as well look for a nickel in the Pacific Ocean," scowled McGlory.

"It looks like a hopeless case, I'll admit, but I can't leave the poor old mandarin without trying to do something for him."

"You're too easy with the crafty old heathen."

"You'd be sorry for him, too, Joe, if you could see what a plight he's in."

"He was as hard-looking a sight as I ever saw when he fell into Grattan's clutches a few hours ago. If you're bound to go rainbow-chasing after the Eye of Buddha, why, of course I'm in on the deal. We'll have to be about it, I reckon, while we've got daylight to help."

"We can use this car for a part of the work. Wing

came along the road from that direction."

Matt pointed as he spoke.

"Why," said McGlory, "I came from that direction myself. I don't reckon it's safe to go back that way."

"Not safe?" echoed Matt. "Why isn't it safe?"

"Mainly for the reason, pard, that Grattan and Pardo are trailing this car. They didn't like to lose it. That hole through the back"—and McGlory turned to point it out—"was made by a bullet that Grattan sent after me. I've been traveling roads that automobiles never took before, and the marks this car left would make easy trailing."

"Do you know positively that Grattan and Pardo are following the car?"

"Well, yes, if you want to pin me down. One of the electric terminals got loose when I was a short distance away from the pocket, and I had a time finding out what was wrong. While I was groping around, I saw Grattan and Pardo chasing toward me. They were a good ways off, but if you want a picture of a chap in a hurry you ought to've had a snapshot of me! I was lucky enough to find the loose wire just in time to screw it to the post, crank up, and fly. The tin horns were within a hundred feet of the blue car when we jumped away on the high speed. And that's how I know Grattan and Pardo are after me. Besides, now that the motor cycles are gone, those fellows need the blue car to help them make a dash out of the hills. Jump in, though, if you want to take chances, and we'll go looking for that hoodoo ruby."

But Matt was not in so much of a hurry now. Leaning against the side of the car, he fell into a brown study.

"What's to pay?" asked McGlory. "Something else on your mind?"

"Well, yes," laughed Matt; "I'd like to use you and the blue car in baiting a trap."

"Oh, well, I don't mind. Grattan used me for bait in trapping Tsan Ti, so I'm getting used to it. But what sort of a trap is it?"

"If Grattan and Pardo are really following you," said Matt, "why couldn't you go back down the road, stop the car, and pretend you had a breakdown?"

"Bee-yu-ti-ful!" rapped out McGlory. "I could do all that, pard, and Grattan and Pardo could show up and gobble me, blue car and all. Fine! Say, you're most as good a hand at planning as the mandarin."

"But suppose," supplemented Matt, "that two or three fellows were hid in the tonneau of the car and that they jumped out at the right moment and made things interesting for Grattan and Pardo?"

McGlory lifted his clinched fist and brought it down emphatically on the steering wheel.

"Speak to me about that! I might have known you had something up your sleeve. I think it would work, pard, but who's to hide in the tonneau? You, for one, of course, but who else?"

"The farmer who lives here seems to be rather handy and to have plenty of courage, and he's got a bulldog that's a whole team and something to spare. I guess the farmer, and I, and the dog will be enough."

"Keno! Trot out the Rube and the kyoodle and we'll slide back down the road with a chip on our shoulder."

Matt went into the barn for a talk with the farmer. He listened attentively while Matt gave him a résumé of events and a synopsis of the plan he had evolved.

"I'm with yew," cried the farmer, slapping his hands, "but yew'll have to wait till I tell Josi' where I'm goin'."

If we take the dorg away from the barn, Josi' ought to watch these fellers till we git back."

"We'll put ropes on the sailor and that other Chinaman," said Matt, "but it will be a good idea to have them watched, just the same."

The farmer got some spare halters and helped with the tying. When it was finished, he hurried away to find "Josi'" and to tell him what he was to do. In ten minutes he was back, bringing a long, spare individual clad in a "wamus" and overalls.

"Here's the fellers yew're to watch, Josi'," said the farmer, waving a hand toward Tsan Ti, Bunce, and Sam Wing. "Don't yew let 'em git away, nuther."

"If they git away, by jing," answered Josi', pushing up the sleeves of his wamus, "they'll have to walk over me to do it. You be kerful, Zeke Boggs. 'Pears mighty like you had the hot end o' this job."

"Don't yew fret none about me," answered Boggs. "I wasn't born yestiddy."

He called the dog, and he, and Matt, and Tige left the barn and crawled into the tonneau of the blue car.

"How far down the road am I to go, pard?" queried McGlory, getting out to turn over the engine.

"Oh, a mile or two," answered Matt.

"Maybe there'll not be anything doing," said Joe, as he climbed back to his seat. "Grattan and Pardo may have become discouraged, and given up the trail. Even if they hung to it, we'll have to wait some time for them."

"They'll come," said Matt. "I never had a day pan out so much excitement as this one has given us. Events have been crowding our way so thick and fast that they're not going to stop until we have a chance at

Grattan and Pardo."

"I'm agreeable," expanded McGlory. "Anything from a fight to a foot race goes with *me*. After the way I starred myself by getting lost in this little bunch of toy mountains, I'm hungry to square myself by doing something worth while."

"You've squared yourself already by getting back the blue car," returned Matt.

"Not so you could notice. Tsan Ti helped me along with that move. The chance jumped up when I wasn't expecting it, and hit me square between the eyes. Anyone could have turned that trick."

McGlory was pushing the blue car back along the road at a lively clip. Matt stood up to look ahead, in the vain hope of getting track of the red jewel.

"I know what you're looking for, pard," remarked the cowboy, "and you're not going to find it. A good many peculiar things have happened to-day, and no mistake; but picking that red stone out of a couple of square miles of country would be too uncommon. Good luck won't strain itself to that extent. Think we're far enough?"

"This will do," answered Matt, and McGlory halted the blue car in about the loneliest spot in the Catskills.

There was a marsh on one side of the road, bordered with stunted trees and matted bushes. On the other side was the timber.

"Maybe," suggested McGlory, "I'd better head the car t'other way? That's how I was going when Grattan and Pardo saw me last, and—"

He cut short his remarks abruptly and peered off along the road.

"What's the matter, Joe?" asked Matt.

"Car coming," was the reply. "I don't reckon many cars take this road, and it's possible Grattan and Pardo borrowed one from somebody who wasn't looking and are using it to hunt for the blue automobile. Lie low, Matt, you, and Boggs, and the dog. Here's where I begin to pretend—listen while I tinker."

"If we have a fight," said Boggs, as he and Matt crouched down in the tonneau, "by gum, I want yew to let me do my share."

"We'll all have plenty to do, Mr. Boggs," answered Matt, well pleased with the farmer's spirit, "if those fellows who are coming are the ones we're after. Don't make a move, though, and don't let Tige loose until I give the word."

Silence fell over those in the tonneau. McGlory could be heard pottering around with a wrench, and presently the hum of the approaching car could be heard.

"I don't like the looks of things," called the cowboy, in a guarded tone, from the front of the blue car.

"Why not?" asked Matt.

"Can't tell yet. You fellows stay where you are and keep mum."

The noise of the other automobile had grown to proportions which proved that it was almost at hand. McGlory said something, but it was impossible for Matt or Boggs to hear what it was.

The other car stopped so close to the blue automobile that the mud guards almost scraped. Matt, from the depths of the tonneau, caught sight of a high-powered roadster with two business-like appearing men on the seats. But they were not Grattan and Pardo.

"That's the car, sure as shooting!" declared one.

"Get out, Gridly," said the second man, "and look at the number."

Gridly jumped down from the roadster and hurried to the rear of the touring car.

"We've won out, Banks!" he called. "The number's eighty-one-two-sixty-three."

"What's the matter?" inquired Matt, rising in the tonneau and looking out from under the top.

"Matter?" grinned Banks. "Nothin' much, only I'm the sheriff and all you fellows are arrested. You stole this car from Martin's garage in Catskill last night. Jest be peaceable, and everythin' 'll be fine: but try to make trouble and there'll be warm doings."

"Sufferin' Jonah!" laughed McGlory. "Wouldn't this rattle your spurs, Matt?"

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW THE TRAP WAS SPRUNG.

Matt remembered that Martin had said the New York man who owned the stolen car had sent telegrams and telephone messages all through the hills. Perhaps, if there was any wonderment to be indulged in, it should have been because McGlory had escaped the officers as long as he had.

The king of the motor boys opened the tonneau door and stood on the footboard, facing Banks.

"You've made a slight mistake, Mr. Banks," said Matt.

"From your point of view," answered the sheriff, "I guess maybe I have. There happens to be five hundred dollars in this for me an' Gridly, though, and we ain't takin' your word for it that there's a mistake. This car answers the description of the one that was stolen, right down to the number."

"This is the car, all right," proceeded Matt, "but we're not the fellows who stole it."

"Caught with the goods," jeered Gridly, "an' then deny the hull job! Nervy, but it won't wash."

"Where'd the car fall into your hands if you ain't the ones that stole it?" asked Banks.

"My chum, there, got it away from the thieves."

"Oh, that's what your chum did, eh?"

"You're to get five hundred dollars for recovering the car?" said Matt.

"*And* capturin' the thieves," returned Banks.

"Was one of the thieves supposed to be a sailor with a green patch over one eye?"

Gridly and Banks must have experienced something of a shock. For a moment they gazed at each other.

"Somethin' *was* said in that telegraft about a sailor with a green patch over one eye, Banks," observed Gridly.

"That's a fact," admitted Banks reflectively. "But we've got the car and there ain't no sailor with it. I guess that part of the telegram must have been a mistake."

"There's no mistake about it," said Matt. "We have captured the sailor, and he's at the farm of Mr. Boggs, here."

Matt drew to one side so the officers could see the farmer.

"Well, if it ain't Boggs!" exclaimed Banks, startled.

"Zeke Boggs an' his brindled bulldog!" added Gridly.

"What the young feller says is straight goods, Banks," declared the farmer. "The sailor with the patch over his eye is up to my place in the barn. Josi's watchin' 'im."

"What're you doin' here? That's what I want to know," said Banks.

"Come out to help these young fellers spring a trap."

"What sort of a trap?"

"Why," put in Matt, "a trap to catch two pals of the sailor—one of them is the man who helped the sailor take this car from Martin's garage."

Banks helped himself to a chew of tobacco.

"Jest for the sake of bein' sociable, an' gettin' at the nub of this thing," he remarked, "you might tell us who

you are, young feller, an' what you happen to be doing in this part of the hills?"

"My name's King, Matt King—"

"Otherwise," cut in McGlory, "Motor Matt. Maybe you've heard of Motor Matt?"

"I have," said Banks; "he's been doing things around Catskill for the last few days."

The sheriff passed his shrewd eyes over the king of the motor boys as he balanced himself on the footboard. There was nothing in the lad's appearance to indicate that he was not telling the truth.

"I'm not doubting your word at all, young feller," remarked Banks, "but I'll feel a lot more like believing you if you tell me about this trap you're arrangin' to spring."

Matt told how McGlory had run away from the pocket, and how Grattan and Pardo had followed him. He finished by describing the manner in which Grattan and Pardo were to be lured into the vicinity of the blue automobile and captured.

"That sounds like a play of Motor Matt's, right enough," said Gridly.

"Anyhow, I don't think it'll work," announced Banks.

"Why not?" asked Matt.

"You can't be sure Grattan and Pardo are follerin' the car; an', if they *are* follerin', maybe they've got off the track."

"That's possible, of course; but the chances for success, though slight, are worth waiting and working for, don't you think? If the plan fails, we'll be out nothing but our time."

"Two boys, a farmer, an' a dog ain't enough to make

the play if it should come to a showdown," declared Banks. "Gridly and I will be in on it, I guess. I'll take this machine up the road and tuck it away in the bushes, then I'll come back, an' Gridly an' I will crowd into the tonneau with the rest of you. If the game works, I'll be capturin' one of the men I'm arter; if it don't work, then, as you say, all we'll be out is a little time. I'll be back in a minute. Pull the crank, Gridly."

The roadster flashed up the road, and Matt could see Banks forcing the machine into the bushes at the roadside. In a little while the sheriff was back at the touring car.

"The back part of that machine will be a little crowded," said he, "but we'll have to stand it if we make the play you've laid out, Motor Matt."

"Suppose you and Gridly get into the tonneau," suggested Matt, "and leave Boggs, and me, and the dog to hide in the bushes at the edge of the marsh? We'll be close enough to help if anything happens, and won't interfere with you if you should have to work in a hurry."

There remained in the sheriff's mind a lingering suspicion that this idea was launched with some ulterior purpose in view, but a look into Motor Matt's face dispelled the unworthy thought.

"That's a good suggestion," said Banks. "Get in here with me, Gridly."

"You'd better turn the car around, Joe," went on Matt, as soon as the officers were in the car.

McGlory started the engine and threw on the reverse, backing the blue car until he had it headed the other way.

"Now we're ready for whatever's to come," said Banks.

"And it can't come too quick, either," supplemented Gridly.

Matt, Boggs, and the dog retired to the edge of the marsh and made themselves comfortable among the bushes.

The king of the motor boys was well pleased with the way the encounter with the sheriff had turned out. There had been, for a few moments, the promise of a serious complication, but Banks had proved reasonable and there was nothing more to worry about.

Matt's hope now was that Grattan and Pardo would fall into the trap that was laid for them. If they did, the motor boys' account with the unscrupulous Grattan would be settled for all time. They would always have some regrets on account of the poor old mandarin, but after they had looked carefully over the course of Sam Wing's flight, they would have done everything possible to help Tsan Ti.

"By gum," remarked Boggs, while he and Matt were waiting, "I never knowed yew was Motor Matt!"

"I didn't suppose you'd ever heard of Motor Matt, Mr. Boggs," answered the young motorist.

"I take a Gardenville paper, and that had a lot to say about what yew been doin' down to Catskill. Yew've given things quite a stirrin' up in that town. Is that fat chink the one that come from Chiny to get holt of the idol's eye?"

"He's the one."

"Well, I'm s'prised; I am, for a fact! Jest to think all this took place right on my farm! Josi' won't hardly know what to think, and the—"

"Quiet in there, pard!" came the low voice of McGlory. "They're coming."

"Grattan and Pardo?" returned Matt.

"Sure, and they walk as though they were tired. Now I've got to rustle around and pretend to be so busy I don't see 'em."

The cowboy opened the hood and fell to tinkering with the wrench. All was quiet in the tonneau, but there was a load of danger for Grattan and Pardo in that blue car had they but known it!

Peering from the bushes, Matt and Boggs saw the two men come swiftly and silently along the road. McGlory, with steady nerves, kept at his work.

Pardo crept up behind the cowboy and caught him suddenly about the shoulders.

"I guess that puts the boot on the other leg!" exulted Pardo, drawing McGlory roughly away from the machine.

"The fellow that laughs last," cried Grattan, "laughs best. You've given us a good hard run of it, McGlory, but we just *had* to have this car. It means everything to Pardo and me. What's the trouble with it?"

"Loose burr," answered the cowboy, with feigned sullenness. "It's been bothering me ever since I left the pocket. If it hadn't been for that, you'd never have caught me."

"Probably not," said Grattan. "Small things sometimes lead to big results. Show me the loose burr and I'll tighten it. After that, McGlory, we'll bid you an affectionate farewell and show these mountains our heels."

"The wrench I've got isn't large enough," went on McGlory. "You'll have to get another out of the tool box."

This was a clever ruse on the cowboy's part to draw

the thief to the footboard of the car—placing him handily for Banks and Gridly.

The tool box was open. Grattan, entirely unsuspecting, went back around the side of the car and stooped over to get the wrench.

The next moment Banks had thrown himself on top of him, Gridly had dropped out the other side of the car, McGlory had whirled on Pardo, and Matt, Boggs, and Tige were rushing out of the bushes.

The trap had been sprung, and sprung so neatly that neither Grattan nor Pardo had the slightest chance of getting out of it or of using their firearms.

CHAPTER XV.

BACK TO THE FARM.

The skirmish—for it amounted to little more than that—was over with in short order.

Grattan resisted stoutly, but Boggs went to Banks' assistance, while Matt and Gridly went to McGlory's. In almost less time than it takes to tell it, handcuffs were snapped on the wrists of the prisoners and they were loaded into the tonneau with the two officers.

"It worked as slick as greased lightning, Motor Matt!" cried the delighted sheriff. "Those two crooks never suspected a thing!"

Pardo was exceedingly bitter.

"Now, see what your confounded plans have done for me, Grattan!" he cried angrily. "I was a fool to ever tie up with you."

"If we'd been successful," returned Grattan coolly "and secured the ruby, you'd have talked the other way. Where's your nerve, Pardo?"

Pardo, still dazed by the suddenness of the capture, sank back into the corner of the tonneau, muttering.

"This is your work, is it, Motor Matt?" inquired Grattan, leaning over the side of the car and fixing his gaze on the young motorist.

"I helped plan it," said Matt.

"He was the whole works," spoke up McGlory. "Maybe it wasn't *quite* so clever as the way you played it on me and Tsan Ti, Grattan," and a tantalizing grin accompanied the words; "but I reckon it'll do."

"The more I see and learn about Motor Matt," declared Grattan, "the more I admire his shining abilities. He's a wonder. We've matched wits several times, and he's always had a shade the best of it. Will you answer a civil question, my lad?"

"What is it?"

"Where's Tsan Ti and the ruby?"

"Tsan Ti and Bunce are at a farm near here, but—"

"So that old idiot has got tangled in the net, too!"

"But the ruby," finished Matt, "has been lost."

"Lost?" Grattan showed considerable excitement. "How was it lost?"

"Sam Wing stole the ruby from Tsan Ti, on the train, and jumped off at Gardenville. The mandarin discovered his loss in time to leave the train at the same station."

"Oh, thunder!" exclaimed Grattan disgustedly. "So *that* was why Tsan Ti followed Sam Wing out of Gardenville!"

"And you thought the mandarin was afraid of you, and that that was his reason for hot-footing it into the hills," derided Pardo.

"Where and how was the ruby lost?" went on Grattan, paying no attention to Pardo.

"I started out with Martin to look for this automobile," said Matt, "and we found Sam Wing at the watering place on the Gardenville road. McGlory and I followed him, but my chum got lost and I was left to keep up the chase alone. It was somewhere along the course Sam Wing led me that the ruby was lost."

"Sam Wing is fooling you!"

"I think he's telling the truth, Grattan."

"Bosh! The chink has hidden the ruby and is trying to make you believe he lost it. If you let him go, he'll find the stone and get away with it."

"Why not turn him loose, an' then follow him?" suggested Banks.

Matt shook his head.

"I'm positive Sam Wing is giving the straight of it," he declared.

"Well," laughed Grattan, but with an undernote of regret, "I hope he is. If I can't have the ruby that I've worked for so long, I'm glad to think that no one else will have it. Where are we bound for, gentlemen?" and Grattan turned to Banks and Gridly.

"To the Boggs farm to pick up the sailor," Banks replied, "then for the Catskill jail."

"Very pleasant outlook," observed Grattan.

"Can you drive a motor car, Matt?" asked Gridly.

"*Can* he?" exploded McGlory. "Say, pard," he added, turning to Matt, "do you know a spark-plug from the carburetor?"

"No offense," proceeded Gridly hastily. "I was only going to ask Matt if he would bring our roadster along."

"Boggs and I will come in the roadster," said Matt. "You take the blue car to the farm, Joe."

"On the jump, pard!" came heartily from McGlory.

"You motor boys are a great team!" exclaimed Banks.

"They're hard to beat," put in Grattan. "If it hadn't been for them, I should have been in Paris about now, in very comfortable circumstances."

Matt waited for no more, but, accompanied by Boggs and Tige, hurried along the road to the place where

Banks had left the roadster. Matt was cranking when McGlory whirled past on his way to the farm. Two minutes later the roadster was crowding the touring car hard, and Matt was honking for the cowboy to make better time.

"Everybody seems to be your friend, Motor Matt," said Boggs, "even that there thief."

"Grattan is a strange fellow, Boggs," answered Matt. "He's as talented a chap as you'll find anywhere, but he'd rather steal for a living than work honestly."

"Some folks is that way," ruminated Boggs. "They'll waste more brains an' elbow grease pullin' off a robb'ry that'll bring 'em in a thousand dollars than they'd need for makin' ten thousand honestly. Look at me, scrubbin' along on a stony farm, raisin' garden truck for the hotels, when I might go out with a drill an' a jimmy, an'—"

"Make a nice comfortable home for yourself in a stone house with iron doors and barred windows," laughed Matt. "There are lots of worse places than a stony truck farm, Boggs."

"I guess yew're right."

At that moment the touring car turned in at the farmyard and came to a halt near the barn. The roadster followed and stopped alongside.

Leaving Gridly to take care of Grattan and Pardo, Banks accompanied Matt and Boggs into the barn. Josi' met them at the door.

"What luck, Zeke?" he asked.

"Best kind, Josi'," replied Boggs. "Got our men, too easy for any use. The sheriff, here, and his deputy, Gridly, come along jest in time to help. They want one o' the prisoners we left yew to take keer of."

"They're all here, you bet," said Josi', with laudable pride. "The' wa'n't any of 'em could git away from *me*."

Banks cast his eyes over the three men.

"What's to be done with the two Chinamen?" he asked.

"I think they ought to go to Catskill, too," said Matt.

"We can carry the sailor in the tonneau of the big car, and there's room for one of the Chinamen on the seat alongside McGlory. T'other chink could go with you, in the roadster. Which is the mandarin that got robbed of the ruby?"

Matt pointed to the dejected figure of Tsan Ti.

"What is he roped for?" asked Banks.

"So he can't put himself out of the way," said Matt. "The regent of China sent him a yellow cord, and told him that if he did not recover the ruby in two weeks he was please to strangle himself. I had to tie the mandarin in that way to keep him from obeying orders."

Banks was not a hard-hearted man, and something in the mandarin's plight touched him. Perhaps it was the Celestial's hopeless air, coupled with his torn and dusty garments.

The sheriff stood for a few minutes in front of Tsan Ti, looking down at him and shaking his head.

"They're a queer lot, these chinks," he commented finally. "Their ideas are not ours, by a long shot, but I don't know as that's anything against them. Do you want to take the mandarin with you in the roadster, Matt?"

"I think I'd better."

Matt bent down and removed the rope from Tsan

Ti's ankles. The mandarin did not want to get up or make a move, but Matt and Banks lifted him to his feet and succeeded in getting him out of the barn.

As they stood beside the roadster, the mandarin slumping limply in their supporting hands, a cry came from the road.

"Well, by golly! If dar ain't de man whut got ole Gin'ral Jackson back fo' me. Ah's monsus 'bliged tuh yo', boss, Ah is, fer er fac'."

Matt looked around and saw the old darky ambling toward the barn on his mule.

"That's Neb Hogan," spoke up Boggs. "He's got a cabin down beyond about half a mile. Do you know him, Motor Matt?"

Although old Neb Hogan did not look it, yet he was, at that moment, engaged upon one of the most important missions of his life.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

"What can I do for you, Neb?" asked Matt, facing the darky as he pulled his mule to a halt.

"Ah dunno as yo' can do nuffin' fo' me, boss," answered Neb. "Ah reckons yo's done about all fo' dis moke dat he can expec'. Yo' done got Gin'ral Jackson back fo' me, an' dat odder feller found his bicycle, too. Ah 'lows yo' must hab been in er hurry, 'case yo' didn't wait fo' me to tell yo' Ah was obliged fo' whut yo' done. Lucky Ah seed yo' while Ah was passin' Mars Boggs' place. Close tuh where dat white boy found his bicycle dar was somefin' right on de aidge o' de bridge. Ah gaddered it in, en Ah thought mebby yo' was de one whut drapped hit. Ah was wonderin' en mah ole head how Ah was gwine tuh diskibber whedder what Ah found belonged tuh you—en heah, right when Ah was gittin' clost tuh home, Ah done sees yuh! Ain't dat fine? Somefin' strodin'ary 'bout dat."

A faint hope was rising in Motor Matt's breast, but it was very faint. The foundation of it was almost too preposterous for belief.

"What did you find, Neb?" he asked.

"Ah don't know whedder hit amounts to nuffin' er not, but Ah reckons yo' kin tell."

Thereupon Neb shoved one hand into a pocket of his tattered coat and brought out, mixed in his yellow palm with two nails, a fishline, and a piece of chewing tobacco—

The Eye of Buddha!

It was almost sunset, and the early shadows were beginning to fly over the eastern borders of the Catskills, but there was enough light to strike sparkling crimson gleams from the fateful gem that lay in the old darky's hand.

"Does dat 'ar thing b'long tuh yo', boss?" said Neb Hogan.

"Hold it just that way for a minute, Neb," returned Matt.

Then quickly he slipped the cords from the mandarin's wrists.

"Look up, Tsan Ti," went on Matt. "See here a minute."

Apathetically the mandarin raised his head. His gaze fell on the red gem, glittering amid the poor treasures which the old negro "toted" in his pocket.

The mandarin's body stiffened, his hands flew to his forehead, and he gazed spellbound; then, with a hoarse cry, he caught the ruby from Neb's hand, pushed it against his breast, and fell to his knees, muttering wildly in his native tongue.

"Well, by thunder!" exclaimed Banks. "Is that the idol's eye, Matt?"

Matt nodded.

"You found that red jewel at the edge of the bridge, you say, Neb?"

"Dat's whar Ah done picked it up. What is dat thing, anyhow? By golly, dat Chinymum ack lak he done gone crazy."

"It's a ruby, Neb," explained Matt, "and very valuable. The Chinaman who stole your mule had taken the ruby away from this other Chinaman, and was trying to escape with it. General Jackson wouldn't

take the bridge, and the Chinaman on his back kicked and pounded him so that the mule bucked and tossed him to the edge of the bridge. Before the Chinaman could save himself he fell into the creek. The ruby must have dropped out of his pocket upon the planks of the bridge. I didn't see it, though, and it remained for you to pick it up."

"By golly!" breathed Neb. "Ain't dat a mos' 'sprisin' purceedin'? Ah done finds de ruby fo' de feller whut got mah mu-el back fo' me. Is we squar' now, boss?"

"Square?" laughed Matt. "Why, Neb, we're a whole lot more than square. How much do you think that ruby's worth?"

"Kain't be hit's worf mo' dan ten dollahs, I reckons," he guessed.

"It's worth thousands of dollars, Neb!"

"Go 'long wif yo' foolishness! Dat red thing kain't be worf all dat money, nohow. Yo's foolin' de pore ole make."

"It's the truth, Neb."

Tsan Ti, jabbering wildly, arose from his bended knees and pulled his alligator-skin pouch from his blouse.

"Excellent stranger of the dusky race," said he, "I gather from what I hear that I am in your debt for the recovery of the Eye of Buddha. Will it insult you if I offer, of my goodness of heart, five hundred dollars?"

Neb Hogan nearly fell from General Jackson's back.

"Whut's dat he's er-sayin' tuh me?" he asked, rolling up the whites of his eyes. "Talkin' 'bout five—five hunnerd dollahs, en 'bout insultin' me wif it. By golly, Ah's brack, but Ah don't 'low no yalluh trash tuh mek spo't ob me. Somebody hole mah mu-el twill Ah climb

down. Five hunnerd dollahs! Ah won't 'low no Chinymun tuh say no such thing. Ah—Ah—"

Words died on the old negro's lips. Tsan Ti had pushed a bundle of money up in front of his face, and Neb was gazing at the bills like one demented.

"Accept of my gratitude, illustrious one," chanted the mandarin. "You are worthy—it is little enough."

The darky tried to talk, but the words stuck in his throat. Mechanically he took the bills, smoothed them out in his hands, and finally pushed them into his pocket.

"Ah reckons dishyer's a dream," he managed to gasp finally. "Ah reckons Ah'll wake up tuh heah Mandy buildin' de fiah fo' breakfus. Eider dat, or Ah's suah gone crazy."

Then, turning General Jackson, Neb Hogan rode out of the gate, looking back fearfully as long as he was in sight, wondering, no doubt, if those he had left were not the phantoms of his disordered imagination.

This little scene had been enacted under the eyes of McGlory and the prisoners in the blue touring car. Grattan's feelings, perhaps, may be imagined better than described. McGlory was "stumped," as he would have expressed it.

"Now that Tsan Ti has got the ruby again, pard," called the cowboy, "I move we pack him in a box, idol's eye and all, and turn him over to the express company for safe transportation to Canton. If we don't, something is sure going to happen to him."

"Nothing will happen to him now," said Matt. "The men he had to fear are in the custody of the law, and from now on Tsan Ti will experience no more trouble."

"Esteemed friend," palpitated the overjoyed mandarin, "I shall yet deposit the ruby in the express

company's care as soon as I get to Catskill. The lessons I have had are sufficient."

"That's the talk!" approved the cowboy.

"What shall we do with Sam Wing?" asked Matt.

For an instant a flash of rage drove the happiness from the mandarin's eyes. But the flash died as swiftly as it came.

"Have you a knife, illustrious youth?" inquired the mandarin.

"Better keep it, pard!" warned McGlory. "Tsan Ti's going to do for Wing!"

But Matt believed otherwise. Taking his knife from his pocket, he handed it to Tsan Ti and the latter went into the barn. He reappeared in a few moments, and Sam Wing, freed of his ropes, accompanied him.

Harsh words in Chinese broke from Tsan Ti's lips. He talked for perhaps two minutes steadily, the harshness leaving his voice as the torrent of speech flowed on. When he had finished, he reached into his alligator-skin pouch, brought out some money, and placed it in Sam Wing's hand; then, sternly, he pointed toward the road.

"What a fool!" growled Grattan.

"Why didn't he send the thief over the road?" muttered Pardo.

"Speak to me about this!" cried McGlory.

"Looks like there was a few things we could learn from the chinks," pondered Banks.

"You're right, Mr. Banks," said Matt. "Tsan Ti is the right sort, and I'm glad I did what I could to help him. Let's start for Catskill—I suppose Martin is back there, by this time, and wondering what has become of Joe

and me. Ready for New York in the morning, Joe?"

"I'm ready," was the prompt response, "but will we go?"

"I believe we will," said Matt, climbing into the roadster. "We've seen the last of the hoodoo. Get in, Tsan Ti, and we'll hit it up between here and Catskill. You're to ride with me."

THE END.

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HUDSON AND THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE.

A short time ago the newspapers announced that a feat which for four hundred years stout ships and bold crews have been attempting had been accomplished by a little Norwegian vessel of forty tons and seven men.

Long ago, the news would have thrilled the harbors of England and Holland with joy and keen expectancy. Coming in the twentieth century, it has created little sensation. Perhaps, of all those who read the announcement, only the few to whom "the Northwest Passage" was a name full of history and heroism and romance realized what an interesting achievement had been made. For the practical value of the discovery had long since been discounted, and no "merchant adventurer" of the present day would have sunk half his fortune in equipping an expedition to solve the riddle that puzzled the brains of the men of long ago.

For the search for the Northwest Passage was from the first a business affair. It was a mercantile question. The whole inquiry arose out of a trade competition between the northern and southern seafaring nations.

This was the situation: Spain and Portugal had been first in the field, as regards over-sea discovery; they had found the way to the treasure house of Asia, and the unspoiled riches of the New World. The Portuguese held the monopoly of maritime trade with India—the Venetians had long governed the overland route, and grown wealthy thereby—and the Spaniards looked upon South America as their private property.

Of the two, the Spanish settlements on the American coasts with the mines behind them drew the eyes of

the adventurer, who secured his prizes at the sword's point, but Asia was the more tempting to the trader. The former dreamed of the sack of opulent cities; the latter dreamed of bustling wharves, and barter, and English ships coming home laden with spices and silks, the peaceful spoils of the market place and the tropical forest and the shark-haunted seas.

How to reach India "by a quick route, without crossing the sea paths of the Portuguese and the Spaniards," this, in a word, was the origin of the long and arduous search for the Northwest Passage.

It was the general belief that America was an island, but the size and shape of it was still only imperfectly known. That there was a water way round the southern end of the great continent had been proved by Magellan, who, in his voyage round the world, had passed through the straits that bear his name. The question now was, did a similar waterway exist at the northern end?

They believed that America tapered to a point northward, as it did southward. They little realized how the northern continent spread itself out into the cold Arctic seas, and with what a network of islands and ice floes it ended.

And so they sent out ships to search for a water way through those inhospitable seas, and the first to go was an Englishman, Martin Frobisher.

Greatly did he dare. We in these days of perfectly appointed ships, built of steel and driven by steam, can appreciate the hardihood of this hero and his crews, setting forth in two tiny craft of twenty-five and twenty tons burden, respectively, to solve the riddle of the northern seas! They sailed away—Queen Elizabeth herself waving them adieu from the windows of her palace at Greenwich—on June 12th, 1576, and a month later they were off the coast of Greenland.

Then came stormy weather. A pinnace with her crew of four was sunk, and Frobisher found himself alone—one ship among the never-ending ice. For his consort had gone home, discouraged by the forbidding outlook.

But almost immediately after this disappointment there came a gleam of hope. He beheld what appeared to be a passageway trending westward. It seems that this is still called Frobisher Bay. As he sailed through he thought that he had Asia on one side and America on the other. It was but a happy delusion. The projecting corner of Asia was far away; he was only abreast of what has since been named Baffin's Land.

Frobisher's second voyage, made in 1577, was rather a gold quest than a journey of discovery. A lump of stone (probably iron pyrites) had been brought home by one of the sailors as a souvenir of the first voyage. The particles of gold in it fired the fancies of some Londoners with the idea that Eldorado might perhaps, after all, be among the northern ice.

So Frobisher's ships went out again, and brought home something like 200 tons of the black stone. A third time they made the voyage, no less than fifteen ships taking part in the expedition, the object of which was to establish a sort of settlement for the working of the supposed "gold mine." But nothing came of the attempt. Bewildering fogs and perilous storms and threatening icebergs beset the puny fleet; sickness followed hard upon the exposure and privations long endured by the poor fellows who manned it, and at last the scheme was abandoned.

Yet in this disappointing third voyage Frobisher had unknowingly come very near the discovery which originally he had in view! For, in the words of the writer before quoted, "the truth was that Frobisher's foremost ships had got farther to the south than was

realized, and unwittingly he had discovered what is now known as Hudson's Strait—the sea gate of that very Northwest Passage on which his waking and sleeping thoughts so long had brooded."

He had been carried some sixty leagues up the strait, but as he knew nothing as to whither it led he reaped no advantage.

Several years went by without another attempt being made to solve the problem, of the Northwest Passage, but at last, in the summer of 1585, some English merchants planned a fresh expedition.

Two ships were fitted out—one the *Sunshine*, of London, fifty tons; the other the *Moonshine*, of Dartmouth, thirty-five tons. The command was intrusted to a young Devonshire sailor, Captain John Davis, whose name is familiar to all schoolboys who have drawn maps of the northern parts of North America.

Though the records of the voyage abound with incidents relating to the various encounters that Davis' men had with spouting whales and basking seals, uncouth Eskimos, and Polar bears, the actual achievements of this expedition were not great. The ships traversed part of what is now called Davis Strait, and went some way up Cumberland Gulf, but by the end of September they were back in Dartmouth.

Davis set forth again, next summer, with three ships and a pinnace. The latter and one of the ships were dispatched up the east coast of Greenland, while the commander, with the two other vessels, sailed northwest. He got as far as Hudson Strait and farther. And in a third voyage he reached a headland not far from Upernavik. The hardihood and pluck displayed in these attempts to penetrate the ice-encumbered seas were splendid, but the results did not throw much light on the question of how to get northwest by sea to the

Indies.

Soon after this the kindred question of a Northeast Passage forced itself upon the seafaring people of Holland, and the city of Amsterdam fitted out four ships, and sent them forth under William Barents, in the June of 1594. The story of this and subsequent expeditions cannot, however, be told here, though it is full of heroism and strange adventures.

It was the idea of a Northeast route which first laid hold of Henry Hudson, the intrepid Englishman whose name figures so prominently on the map of North America. Like Barents, he made his way to Nova Zembla, but, baffled by the seemingly insuperable difficulties to the eastward, he turned westward in his third voyage, and again when he set forth on his fourth and last voyage.

Some of his men were evidently less stout of heart than their commander, and when there began to be real prospects of being caught in the ice, the spirit of mutiny got the upper hand. On June 21st, 1610, with a cowardice that was happily in strange contrast to the usual behavior of English crews, it was decided to get rid of the captain. Next morning he and his little son, a loyal-hearted sailor (the ship's carpenter), and half a dozen sick and helpless members of the crew, were put over the ship's side into one of the boats, and left to their fate.

The years went by. Other expeditions were fitted out and sent northward, but the old reasons for finding out the Northwest Passage were fast disappearing. The Portuguese monopoly of the sea-borne trade with India and the supremacy of Spain on the ocean highways were things of the past. The ships of other nations had no longer to skulk past these aforetime kings of the sea.

Arctic exploration went on, but the idea of reaching

the North Pole was beginning to take the place of the idea of "making" the Northwest Passage. That old problem, however, was in prospect of being solved by the attempts made to solve the former. So that by the year 1853 Collinson was able to sail so far that he came within fifty-seven miles—a mere pin prick on the map—of accomplishing the Northwest Passage.

Finally, in 1906, the Passage, which, like a mountain tunnel, had been worked at from both ends, was penetrated from one opening to the other by the little *Gjøa*, a Norwegian sloop of forty tons, which sailed from Christiania on June 1st, 1903.

She was under the command of Captain Roald Amundsen, of that city, and his right-hand man was Lieutenant Godfred Hansen, of the Danish navy; the crew numbered seven. She had not been built with a view to Arctic work, so that before she went north into the realm of the ice king she had to be fortified somewhat. An ice sheathing of two-inch oak planks added greatly to her resisting power, and her petroleum motor of 13 horse power enabled her, when she put to sea, to attain a traveling speed of three knots in smooth water. But the *Gjøa* trusted chiefly, like the stout little barks of other days, to the skillful handling of her sails.

The winters of 1903 and 1904 were spent in harbor on the shores of King William's Land. Only the premature closing in of the ice prevented the little vessel from achieving the Passage in 1905.

THE DEATH BITE.

"Well, Ed, let us hear from you to-night. You are always talking of strategy, flanks, and other soldiering knickknacks. Now tell us a story."

The boys drew their chairs about the roaring fire, which cast its ruddy glow about the room, while without the north wind held revelry in the branches of the trees.

Ed looked over the top of his paper, and smiled.

"What's that you say, Bib? I can't tell much of a story."

Ed drew his chair to the fire. A chorus of supplications came from all parts of the room, and Ed laid aside his paper.

"In the early spring of 1863 we were encamped near the Pamunky River, about the time they were undermining the enemy's fort on the other side of the river. One rainy night a party of us were formed and marched out. It was well known the enemy was not far off, and I felt anything but pleasant. The rain poured down in a deluge, and we picked our way through the woods by the blinding flashes of lightning which now and then illumined the forest. The heavy rains had transformed the ground into a swamp. Near the edge of the forest we halted and separated in squads of five.

"By good luck I had charge of one squad. From under our overcoats we drew our spades and waited for the rain to slack.

"Now, Ed,' said the lieutenant, 'you take your men and select a spot and dig a rifle pit, and if anything comes in your way bang away at it, for things are

getting hot.'

"A few minutes more and the lieutenant and his party were gone. Between two huge trees we began to dig, and in a few hours we had finished our pit. The boys tumbled in and all were soon asleep, except Barry; he was a down-Easter and had been through most of the campaigns.

"The rain ceased falling, and no sound reached us save the pattering raindrops as the wind dislodged them from the trees.

"I had scarcely taken forty winks, when Barry poked me in the ribs. I awoke immediately.

"'Look there!' he whispered.

"I looked over the pit and saw a small light swaying to and fro. I thought at first it was a will-o'-the-wisp.

"'Will I fire at it?' asked Barry.

"'You know your orders, don't you?' I replied. 'Let us both fire at it.' Both of our muskets were shoved over the top of the pit, and taking a hasty aim, we fired.

"A loud yell followed the reports, and we saw the light fly upward and fall to the ground; then all was darkness, and the same quietness returned.

"'I wonder is he dead?' was the question that arose; and then the boys returned to their corners and slumbered on.

"Soon the faint gray streaks of morning began to light up the east; and as I felt very thirsty I took my canteen, and clambered out of the pit, and started off. A few minutes' walk brought me to a small creek, and I filled my canteen and stooped to drink. The snapping of a twig caused me to look up; and my hair fairly raised, for not two yards from me stood a powerful man dressed in gray; he had pistols, a musket and an

ugly-looking toothpick. A low chuckle came from his lips, and I gave myself up for lost, as I had not even so much as a penknife with me. In my eagerness to get water I forgot all. The Confederate seemed to read me through, for he said:

"Well, Yank, have you got enough water?"

"I managed to say 'Yes'.

"Well," he said, 'get away from here, and think yourself lucky.'

"It did not take me long to get away from that spot. Then I noticed, for the first time, that our pit was dug on the top of a little hill. A few yards off on the other side of the creek stood a large barn. I could see forms walking about from where I now stood. The man I had met walked toward the barn. The boys in the pit saw him, and the muzzles of their guns frowned over the top in a minute. At that moment a detachment of men came to relieve us. They had hardly reached us, when from behind the barn a party of soldiers hove in sight, dragging a small fieldpiece, and in a moment more a crashing iron ball came tearing in our midst. With whoops and yells the enemy dashed on our little party, and we were soon engaged hand to hand. I felt myself hurled to the ground and a hand tightening about my throat. Then the fear of death stole upon me, and the strength of a Hercules took possession of my limbs. I turned my assailant over and placed my knee on his breast.

"In vain I looked about for something to put an end to the struggling man whom I held, but could find nothing. In his belt I saw the handle of a knife. I seized it with one hand, but in doing so my grasp relaxed upon his throat, and before I could prevent it he had my finger in his mouth, and his teeth closed upon it. I fairly howled with pain and drove the knife into his

heart several times. His jaws grew rigid in death and his teeth cut slowly to the bone and partly bit that, too. How I yelled! If it had been taken off at once the pain would have been nothing, but being bitten slowly off was intense. I had to pry open his jaws with the knife to get my finger out of his mouth."

Ed paused and the boys crowded about him, and the second finger was minus an inch. We all dispersed that night thinking there has been many an adventure that befell the brave boys of which the public will never know anything.

MIGRATION OF RATS.

In nearly all countries a seasonal movement of rats from houses and barns to the open fields occurs in spring, and the return movement takes place as cold weather approaches. The movement is noticeable even in large cities.

More general movements of rats often occur. In 1903 a multitude of migrating rats spread over several counties of western Illinois. They were noticed especially in Mercer and Rock Island Counties. For several years prior to this invasion no abnormal numbers were seen, and their coming was remarkably sudden. An eye-witness to the phenomenon informed the writer that as he was returning to his home by moonlight he heard a general rustling in the field near by, and soon a vast army of rats crossed the road in front of him, all going in one direction. The mass stretched away as far as could be seen in the dim light. These animals remained on the farms and in the villages of the surrounding country, and during the winter and summer of 1904 were a veritable plague. A local newspaper stated that between March 20 and April 20, 1904, F. U. Montgomery, of Preëmption, Mercer County, killed three thousand four hundred and thirty-five rats on his farm. He caught most of them in traps.

In 1877 a similar migration occurred into parts of Saline and Lafayette Counties, Mo., and in 1904 another came under the writer's observation in Kansas River Valley. This valley for the most part was flooded by the great freshet of June, 1903, and for about ten days was covered with several feet of water. It is certain that most of the rats in the valley perished in this flood.

In the fall of 1903 much of the district was visited by hordes of rats, which remained during the winter, and by the following spring had so increased in numbers that serious losses of grain and poultry resulted.

No doubt the majority of the so-called migrations of rodents are in reality instances of unusual reproduction or of enforced migration owing to lack of food. In England a general movement of rats inland from the coast occurs every October. This is closely connected with the closing of the herring season. During the fishing the rodents swarm to the coast, attracted by the offal left from cleaning the herring, and when this food supply fails they hasten back to the farms and villages.

In South America periodic plagues of rats have taken place in Parana, Brazil, at intervals of about thirty years, and in Chili at intervals of from fifteen to twenty-five years. These plagues in the cultivated lands follow the ripening and decay of the dominant species of bamboo in each country. The ripening of the seed furnishes for two or more years a favorite food for rats in the forests, where the animals multiply greatly; when this food fails they are forced to the cultivated districts for subsistence. In 1878 almost the entire crops of corn, rice, and mandioca in the State of Parana were destroyed by rats, causing a serious famine.

An invasion of black rats in the Bermuda Islands occurred about the year 1615. In a space of two years they had increased so alarmingly that none of the islands was free from them. The rodents devoured everything which came in their way—fruit, plants, and even trees—so that for two years the people were destitute of bread. A law was passed requiring every man in the islands to set twelve traps. In spite of all efforts the animals increased, until they finally disappeared with a suddenness which could have resulted only from a pestilence.

SOME GREAT CATASTROPHES.

"It is the general opinion that earthquakes constitute the most terrible of the world's catastrophes, both as regards loss of life and destruction of property," says an English writer. "This, however, is not so. The convulsion in southern Italy killed not less than two hundred thousand people, and in this respect it is easily the most dreadful occurrence of its kind. The historic Lisbon earthquake, which ranks next below it in regard to the number of fatalities, caused fifty thousand deaths in that one city alone and about an equal number elsewhere. The South American one of 1867 was responsible for thirty thousand. That which destroyed Aleppo in 1822 slew twenty thousand. These are the four worst earthquakes concerning which anything like reliable statistics are obtainable, and the total combined loss of life, it will be observed, did not, at any rate, exceed three hundred and fifty thousand.

"But when the Yellow River burst its banks in September, 1887, more than seven million people were drowned in the resultant great flood, which covered to an average depth of six feet a populous Chinese province the size of Scotland. Thus, in this one catastrophe, more lives were lost than in all the earthquakes recorded in the world's history. Then, again, there is pestilence. The black death killed in China, where it broke out, thirteen million people; in the rest of Asia, twenty-four million, and thirty million in Europe, or sixty-seven million in all. In India alone, and that within the past twelve years, bubonic plague has slain over six million people, and the epidemic still rages.

"Famines run plagues a close second. The one that raged in Bombay and Madras in 1877 slew five million people; and that which prevailed in northern China in the same year, and which was due to the same climatic causes, cost nine million five hundred thousand lives."

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