

# THE ADVENTURES OF KATHLYN

By HAROLD MAC GRATH.

### SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Kathlyn Hare, believing her father, Col. Hare, in peril, has summoned her, leaves her home in California to go to him in Allaha, India. Umballah pretender to the throne of that principality, has imprisoned the colonel, named by the late king as his heir, because he fears the American may insist on his royal rights. Upon her arrival in Allaha, Kathlyn is informed by Umballah that her father, being dead, she is to be queen, and must marry him forthwith. Because of her refusal she is sentenced to undergo two ordeals with wild beasts.

John Bruce, an American and fellow passenger on the boat which brought Kathlyn to Allaha, leaves her side. The elephant which carried her from the scene of her trials becomes frightened and runs away, separating her from Bruce and the rest of the party.

After a race filled with peril she takes refuge in a ruined temple. The holy men and villagers, believing her to be an ancient priestess, raise from the tomb, allow her to remain as the guardian of the sacred fire. But Kathlyn's haven is not to last, she is found by a band of slave traders, who bring her to Allaha to the public mart. She is sold to Umballah, who, finding her still unsubmitive, throws her into the dungeon with her father.

Bruce and his friends effect the release of Kathlyn and the colonel. Umballah's attempt to recapture them is unsuccessful, and the fugitives are given shelter in the palace of Bala Khan.

Supplied with camels and servants by that hospitable prince, the party endeavors to reach the coast, but, are overpowered by a band of brigands, and the encounter results in the colonel being delivered to Umballah. Kathlyn and Bruce escape from their captors and return to Allaha, where Kathlyn learns that her father, while nominally king, is really a prisoner.

Kathlyn's resourcefulness and bravery are the means of rescuing her father and once more they steal away from Allaha, but return broken hearted when they learn that Winnie, Kathlyn's young sister, has come to India. Umballah makes her a prisoner. She is forced to enter the palace and in turn is crowned queen of Allaha.

One attempt to get Winnie out of the closely guarded palace almost costs Kathlyn her life, but the second plan succeeds, and Kathlyn and Winnie, their father, and Bruce find a hiding place in the home of their Indian friend, Ramabai, and his wife Pundita. The latter is the lawful queen of Allaha and public sentiment in her favor is growing. The people at last, weary of Umballah's misrule, rise against him, with Ramabai, at their head, and the colonel and Bruce fighting under him. Kathlyn has been left at home, but when tidings that the revolutionists have been defeated reach her she rushes out and assumes command of the scattered forces. She saves the day for them. Umballah flees for his life.

Umballah has crept back to the city, and, with one of the women of the harem as an accomplice, murders the poor old king. It is arranged to have Pundita, a member of the royal house and wife to Ramabai, crowned queen. But Umballah, having secured the priesthood, the great power in Allaha, as ally, comes back to the palace with absolute authority. His first official act is to imprison Kathlyn, Winnie, the Colonel, and Bruce.

(Copyright: 1914: By Harold MacGrath.)

### CHAPTER XXVI.

It was Ahmed's suggestion that they in turn should bury the filigree basket. He reasoned that if they attempted to proceed with it they would be followed and sooner or later set upon by Umballah and the men he had won away from the village chief. The poor fishermen were sold and at present not accountable for what they did or planned to do. He advanced that Umballah would have no difficulty in rousing them to the aid of murder. Umballah would have at his beck and call no less than twenty men, armed and ready. Some seventy miles beyond was British territory, and wherever there was British territory there were British soldiers. With them they would return, leaving the women in safety behind.

"The Commissioner there will object," said the Colonel.

"No, Sahib," replied Ahmed. "The Memsahib has every right in the world to this treasure. You possess the documents to prove it, and nothing more would be necessary to the Commissioner.

"But, Ahmed," interposed Bruce, "we are none of us British subjects."

"What difference will that make, Sahib?"

"Quite enough. England is not in the habit of protecting anybody but her own subjects. We should probably be held up till everything was verified at Allaha, and the priests there would not hesitate to charge us with forgery and heaven knows what else. Let us bury the basket, by all means, return for it and carry it away by piecemeal. To carry it away as it is, in bulk, would be courting suicide."

Ahmed scratched his chin. Trust a white man for logic. "And, besides," went on Bruce, "the news would go all over the orient and the thugs would come like flies scenting honey. No; this must be kept secret if we care to get away with it. It cannot be worth less than a million. And I've known white men who would cut our throats for a handful of rupees."

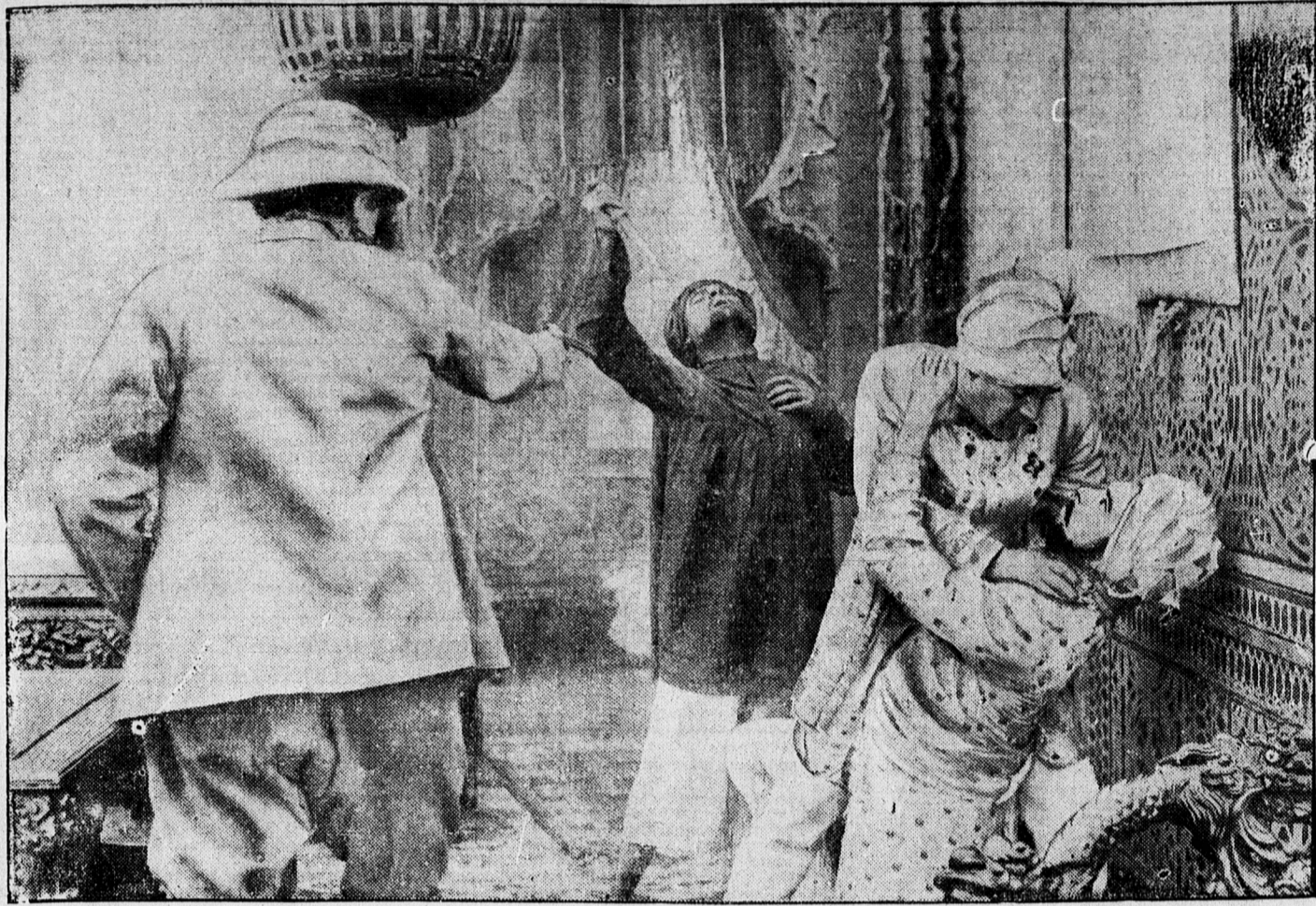
For the first time since the expedition started out the Colonel became normal, a man of action, cool in the head, and foresighted.

"Ahmed, spread the men around the camp," he ordered briskly. "Instruct them to shoot over the head of any one who approaches; this the first time. The second time, to kill. Bruce has the right idea; so let us get busy. Over there, where that boulder is. The ground will be damp and soft under it, and when we roll it back there will be no sign of its having been disturbed. I used to cache ammunition that way. Give me that spade."

At a depth of three feet the basket was lowered, covered, and the boulder rolled into place. After that the Colonel stooped and combed the turf where the boulder had temporarily rested. He showed his woodcraft there. It would take a keener eye than Umballah possessed to note any disturbance. The safety of the treasure ultimately, however, depended upon the loyalty of the keepers under Ahmed. They had been with the Colonel for years; yet . . . The Colonel shrugged. He had to trust them; that was all there was to the matter.

A sentinel came rushing up—"one of the keepers. 'Something is stampeding the elephants!'" he cried.

Ahmed and the men with him rushed off. In Ahmed's opinion, considering what lay before them, elephants were more important than colored stones and yellow metal. Without the elephants they



Ramabai and Umballah met upon the parapet in a struggle which promised death or the treadmill to the weaker.

would indeed find themselves in sore straits. "Let us move away from here," advised Bruce, picking up the implements and shouldering them. He walked several yards away, tossed shovel and pick into the bushes, tore at the turf and stamped on it, giving it every appearance of having been disturbed. The Colonel nodded approvingly. It was a good point and he had overlooked it.

They returned hastily to camp, which was about 200 yards beyond the boulder. Kathlyn entered her tent to change her clothes, raised, soiled, and burnt. The odor of wet burnt cloth is never agreeable. And she needed dry shoes, even if there was but an hour or two before bedtime.

Only one elephant had succeeded in bolting. In some manner he had loosed his peg; but what had started him on the run they never learned. The other elephants were swaying uneasily, but their pegs were deep and their chains stout. Ahmed and the keepers went after the truant on foot.

The noise of the chase died away. Bruce was lighting his pipe. The Colonel was examining by the firelight a few emeralds, which he had taken from the basket. Ramabai was pleasantly gazing at his wife. Kathlyn and Winnie were emerging from the tent, when a yell greeted their astonished ears. The camp was surrounded. From one side came Umballah, from the other came the mutineer. Kathlyn and Winnie flew to their father's side. In between came Umballah, with Bruce and Ramabai and Pundita effectually separated. Umballah and his men closed in upon the Colonel and his daughter. Treasure and revenge!

Bruce made a furious effort to join Kathlyn, but the numbers against him were too many. It was all done so suddenly and effectually, and all due to their own carelessness.

"Kit," said her father, "our only chance is to refuse to discover to Umballah where we have hidden the basket. Winnie, if you open your lips it will be death—yours, Kit's mine. To have been careless like this! O, Kit, on my honor, if Umballah would undertake to convey us to the seaport I'd gladly give him all the treasure and all the money I have of my own. But we know him too well. He will torture us all."

"I have gone through much; I can go through more," calmly replied Kathlyn. "But I shall never wear a precious stone again, if I live. I abhor them!"

"I am my father's daughter," said Winnie. "But the howdah on the two elephants," Umballah ordered.

The men obeyed clumsily, being fishermen by occupation and mahouts by compulsion. Kathlyn tried in vain to see where they were taking Bruce and the others. Some day, if she lived, she was going to devote a whole day to weeping; for she never had time to do this in her life. The thought caused her to smile, despite her despair.

When the elephants were properly coddled with the howdahs, Umballah gave his attention to the prisoners. He halted them jovially. They were old friends. What could he do for them?

"Conduct us to the seaport," said the Colonel, "and on my word of honor I will tell you where we have hidden the treasure."

"He!" jeered Umballah, arms akimbo. "I'd be a fool to put my head into such a trap. I love you too well. Yet I am not wholly without heart. Tell me where it lies and I will let you go."

"Cut our throats at once, you beast, for none of us will tell you under any conditions save those I have named. Men," the Colonel continued, "this man is an ingrate, a thief, and a murderer. He has promised you much gold for your part in this. But in the end he will cheat you and destroy you."

Umballah laughed. "They have already had their earnest. Soon they will have more. But talk with them—plead, urge, promise. No more questions! Well, then, listen. Reveal to me the treasure and you may go free. If you refuse I shall take you back to Allaha—not publicly, but secretly—there to inflict what punishment I see fit."

"I have nothing more to say," replied the Colonel. "No? And thou, white goddess?"

Kathlyn stared over his head, her face expressionless. It stirred him more than outspoken contempt would have done.

"And you, pretty one?" Umballah said to Winnie speculatively.

Winnie drew closer to her sister, but she was all eyes for her father. Allaha shall be, without a meddling Ramabai; back to the gurus who love you so!" He dropped his banter. "You call me a murderer. I admit it. I have killed the man who was always throwing his benefits into my face; who brought me up not as a companion but as a play-thing. He is dead. I slew him. After the first, what are two or three more crimes of this order?" He snapped his fingers. "I want that treasure, and you will tell

me where it is before I am done with you. You will tell me on your knees, gladly! Now, men! There is a long journey before us."

The Colonel, Kathlyn, and Winnie were forced into one howdah, while Umballah mounted the other. As for the quasi-mahouts, they were not particularly happy behind the ears of the elephants, who, with that keen appreciation of their under stood instinctively that they had to do with novices. But for the promise of gold that dangled before their eyes, threats of violent death could not have forced them upon the elephants.

They started east, and the jungle closed in behind them. As for Umballah, he cared not what became of the other prisoners.

They were being held captive in one of the village huts. The chief had pleaded in vain. He was dishonored, for they had made him break his word

and the other to labor. It took half an hour to push back the boulder and dig up the basket. After this was done Bruce and Ramabai and Ahmed the indefatigable carried the gold and precious stones to the especially made saddlebags. All told, it took fully an hour to complete the work.

With water and food, and well armed, they began the journey back to Allaha, a formidable cortege and in no tender mood. They proceeded in forced marches, snatching what sleep they could during the preparation of the meals.

Many a time the impulse came to Bruce to pluck the shining metal and sparkling stones from the saddlebags and toss them into the jungle, to be lost till the crack of doom. There were also moments when he felt nothing but hatred toward the father of the girl he loved. For these trinkets Kathlyn had gone through tortures as frightful almost as those in the days of the inquisition. Upon one thing he and Ahmed had agreed, despite Ramabai's wild protest; they would leave the treasure with Balakhan and follow his army to the walls of Allaha. If harm befell any of their loved ones not one stone should remain upon another. And Bruce declared that he would seek Umballah to the ends of the earth for the infinite pleasure of taking his black throat in his two hands and squeezing the life out of it.

Eventually and without mishap they came to the walled city of the desert, Balakhan's stronghold. Balakhan of necessity was always ready, always prepared. Before night of the day of their arrival an army was gathered within the city, fierce and lean bodied men who asked nothing better than to go to paradise, where they had but to select what hour they would be happy eternally. For Balakhan's army was wholly Mohammedan; and so long since was it they had fought that they romped Allaha with the spirit and effervescence of puppies.

Ramabai sat in his howdah, sad and dispirited. He himself had always been an honorable man, had never acted treacherously to any, had been a banker but never a usurer. In his heart he knew that he still held the love of his people; but they dwelt in the shadow of superstition.

"Balakhan, we have been friends, and my daughter was your good friend."

"It is true."

"Will you do a favor for the son?"

"Yes, if the Colonel Sahib and his daughter live. If they are dead, was to your people, son of my friend, I have given my word to the Memsahib. I have made a threat before my men and must fulfill it if I would hold them hereafter. If the Colonel Sahib and his daughter live, ask what you will."

Ramabai bowed.

"I will set my camp five miles beyond your walls and wait. When I see the Memsahib I will salaam, turn right about face, and go home. Now, to you, Bruce Sahib: Leave not your treasure within my walls when I shall be absent, for I cannot guarantee protection. Leave it where it is and bring it with you. Save myself, no one of my men knows what your saddlebags contain. Let us proceed upon our journey—or our war!"

Umballah reached the ancient gate of Allaha at the same time Bruce stopped before the walls of Bala Khan's city. He pulled the curtains of the howdahs and threatened death if they called out. From time to time he gave directions to the weary men astride the elephant's neck. The thought of gold was not as tempting as it had been. There was fear in his heart. This false Holy One was or had been the most powerful man in all Allaha. Here he would be among friends. And the man who had but recently been a peaceful fisherman felt intermittent hot flashes about his throat.

Umballah had no intention whatever of making his presence known in Allaha. He determined to wring the secret from either the Colonel or his daughter, return for the treasure, and depart for Egypt down the Persian gulf. He could have tortured his captives on the way, but he was oriental; he wanted to feel all the luxuries he had formerly known, to enjoy himself physically as well as mentally. He missed the exhilaration of his king's peg.

He made a wide detour and came out at the rear of his house. No one was in sight. He dismounted and entered, found three or four of his willom slaves, who when he revealed his identity felt the old terror and fear of the man. His prisoners were brought in. A slave took the elephants to the stables. He wanted to run away and declare Umballah's presence, but fear was too strong.

Ironically Umballah bade the fishermen to enter, to eat and drink what they liked. Later he found them in a drunken stupor in the kitchen. That was where they belonged.

Umballah cast his prison in into the secret chamber. Then he gave himself up to the luxury of a bath, had his hair and beard combed, his body anointed with perfumes, and put on his finest rai-

and the other to labor. It took half an hour to push back the boulder and dig up the basket. After this was done Bruce and Ramabai and Ahmed the indefatigable carried the gold and precious stones to the especially made saddlebags. All told, it took fully an hour to complete the work.

With water and food, and well armed, they began the journey back to Allaha, a formidable cortege and in no tender mood. They proceeded in forced marches, snatching what sleep they could during the preparation of the meals.

Many a time the impulse came to Bruce to pluck the shining metal and sparkling stones from the saddlebags and toss them into the jungle, to be lost till the crack of doom. There were also moments when he felt nothing but hatred toward the father of the girl he loved. For these trinkets Kathlyn had gone through tortures as frightful almost as those in the days of the inquisition. Upon one thing he and Ahmed had agreed, despite Ramabai's wild protest; they would leave the treasure with Balakhan and follow his army to the walls of Allaha. If harm befell any of their loved ones not one stone should remain upon another. And Bruce declared that he would seek Umballah to the ends of the earth for the infinite pleasure of taking his black throat in his two hands and squeezing the life out of it.

Eventually and without mishap they came to the walled city of the desert, Balakhan's stronghold. Balakhan of necessity was always ready, always prepared. Before night of the day of their arrival an army was gathered within the city, fierce and lean bodied men who asked nothing better than to go to paradise, where they had but to select what hour they would be happy eternally. For Balakhan's army was wholly Mohammedan; and so long since was it they had fought that they romped Allaha with the spirit and effervescence of puppies.

Ramabai sat in his howdah, sad and dispirited. He himself had always been an honorable man, had never acted treacherously to any, had been a banker but never a usurer. In his heart he knew that he still held the love of his people; but they dwelt in the shadow of superstition.

"Balakhan, we have been friends, and my daughter was your good friend."

"It is true."

"Will you do a favor for the son?"

"Yes, if the Colonel Sahib and his daughter live. If they are dead, was to your people, son of my friend, I have given my word to the Memsahib. I have made a threat before my men and must fulfill it if I would hold them hereafter. If the Colonel Sahib and his daughter live, ask what you will."

Ramabai bowed.

"I will set my camp five miles beyond your walls and wait. When I see the Memsahib I will salaam, turn right about face, and go home. Now, to you, Bruce Sahib: Leave not your treasure within my walls when I shall be absent, for I cannot guarantee protection. Leave it where it is and bring it with you. Save myself, no one of my men knows what your saddlebags contain. Let us proceed upon our journey—or our war!"

Umballah reached the ancient gate of Allaha at the same time Bruce stopped before the walls of Bala Khan's city. He pulled the curtains of the howdahs and threatened death if they called out. From time to time he gave directions to the weary men astride the elephant's neck. The thought of gold was not as tempting as it had been. There was fear in his heart. This false Holy One was or had been the most powerful man in all Allaha. Here he would be among friends. And the man who had but recently been a peaceful fisherman felt intermittent hot flashes about his throat.

Umballah had no intention whatever of making his presence known in Allaha. He determined to wring the secret from either the Colonel or his daughter, return for the treasure, and depart for Egypt down the Persian gulf. He could have tortured his captives on the way, but he was oriental; he wanted to feel all the luxuries he had formerly known, to enjoy himself physically as well as mentally. He missed the exhilaration of his king's peg.

He made a wide detour and came out at the rear of his house. No one was in sight. He dismounted and entered, found three or four of his willom slaves, who when he revealed his identity felt the old terror and fear of the man. His prisoners were brought in. A slave took the elephants to the stables. He wanted to run away and declare Umballah's presence, but fear was too strong.

Ironically Umballah bade the fishermen to enter, to eat and drink what they liked. Later he found them in a drunken stupor in the kitchen. That was where they belonged.

Umballah cast his prison in into the secret chamber. Then he gave himself up to the luxury of a bath, had his hair and beard combed, his body anointed with perfumes, and put on his finest rai-

ment. Then he drank his peg. As for his prisoners, he did not visit them again that day, nor yet that night. The initial torture of suspense was always excellent. One thing annoyed him, however, not a murmur from these calm eye'd white people who were about to face death. He aged against this lack of feeling, for it robbed him of half his pleasure. He liked his victims to whine and beg and beg for mercy.

Like many rich Asiatics, Umballah had his own menagerie. He had inherited it along with the demi-palace when the king's sister died several years before. There were four sides to this court, and in the center of each side were bars, and behind these bars tigers or leopards or lions or wild boar—whatever pleased the owner's fancy. Many a royal bat had been waged in this court, sometimes between tigers, or a tiger and a lion, a leopard and a boar.

Umballah, after his bath, asked if the old boar was still alive. The heaven born was told that the animal had died in the cage a few days ago. Umballah shrugged. He had had in mind a fight between the boar and a leopard, to start his circulation, as it were.

He ordered his prisoners to be brought into the Court of Death and left there. Meditation was excellent for the end. A parrot ran round the court, and from there Umballah could see everything below. His victims entered the court without struggling. They merely stood closely together in a center.

"You see?" said Umballah. "Now, where have you hidden the treasure?"

Kathlyn walked over to one of the cages and peered into it. A sleek tiger trotted up to the bars and purred and invited her to scratch his head. She did not accept the invitation, however, knowing the species tolerably well. Usually these courts of death had solid steel doors which could be drawn up or lowered at will. The animal dens were more like cages.

With no little curiosity she noted a singular arrangement of the three central bars. The removal of these three bars left an opening sufficiently wide for the egress of the largest tiger or lion.

"I am not answered," said Umballah. A click resounded from the four sides, and a bar disappeared from each of the cages.

"That will be all for the present," said Umballah. "Food and water you will not require. Tomorrow morning another bar will be removed."

And he left them. Overhead the blue sky was growing bluer and the shadows in the Court of Death a deeper black.

Early the next morning the army began to soothe in the squares. Bala Khan's army lay encamped outside the city! Those who possessed treasures dug pits for them in the cellars of their houses. Within the great temple there was a flutter among the nobles. What could they do? They knew not where the goddess was, nor Umballah. They dispatched peace messengers to the camp, but the messenger was sent back before he had passed the outposts.

When Bruce, Ramabai, Pundita, and Ahmed had led their elephants before the temple they were greeted by the now terrified priests, who begged to be informed what Bala Khan proposed to do.

"Deliver to us the Memsahib. The priests swore by all their gods that they knew nothing of her."

"He speaks the truth," volunteered Ramabai, as the chief priest fell before one of his gods. "Umballah has doubtless entered secretly."

"What would you advise? For God's sake, think of something Ramabai! He may be torturing them!"

"Let us enter the temple," said Ramabai. "Ahmed, bring the treasure and leave it in the care of the priests." A few moments later Ramabai addressed the assemblage. "Bala Khan is hostile, but only for the sake of his friends. He lays down this law, however—obey it or disobey it: The Colonel Sahib and his daughters are to go free, to do what they please with the treasure. Pundita, according to the will of the late king, shall be crowned. Obey or disobey. I warn you that these are not my dictates, but Bala Khan's."

"Peace, peace!" The cry rose from all directions, even from the priests themselves.

The high priest held up his hand for silence. "We obey, on one condition—that the new queen shall in no manner interfere with her old religion or attempt to force her new religion into the temple."

To this Pundita agreed.

"Ramabai, soldiers! To the house of Umballah! We shall find them there," cried Ahmed.

Umballah sat upon his cushions on the terrace. The second bar had been removed. The beasts were pressing their heads against the openings, and growling deep challenges.

"Once more, and for the last time, will you reveal the hiding place of the treasure?"

Not a word from the prisoners. If they told or did not tell it would have made no difference with the man above. He was drunk.

"But it did not stir."

"The third bar, remove it!"

The slave who had charge of the mechanism which operated the bars refused to act. Perhaps his refusal saved the lives of the Colonel and his daughters. The batinato was ordered for the poor, disobedient wretch. Then he was thrown out into the street.

And there Bruce found him and learned what was toward.

The events which followed were of breathless rapidity. Ramabai and Umballah met upon the parapet in a struggle which promised death or the treadmill to the weaker. At the same time Bruce opened the door to the Court of Death as the final bar dropped in the cage. At the sight of him the Colonel and his daughters rushed to the door. Roughly he hurled them outside, slamming the iron door, upon which the infuriated tigers flung themselves.

The young newspaper man to whom Winnie was engaged and the grizzled Ahmed sat on the steps of the bungalow in California one pleasant afternoon. The pipe was cold in the hand of the reporter and Ahmed's cigar was dead, which always happens when one recounts an exciting tale and another listens. Among the flower beds beyond two young women wandered, followed by a young man in possession of a panama set carelessly upon his handsome head, his face brown, his build slender but round and muscular.

"And that, Sahib, is the story," sighed Ahmed. "And Kathlyn gave the treasures to the poor of Allaha? That was fine."

"You have said."

"She should have hanged this Umballah. No, Sahib. Death is grateful. It is not a punishment; it is peace. But Durga Ram, called Umballah, will spend the remainder of his days in the treadmill, which is a concrete hell, not abstract. Always found his ankles there will be from the galls of the night-chains. Always his wrists shall be bruised and torn; for sometimes he will lose his step and hang by his wrists. So much for ingratitude; so much for the blindness of revenge."

"Do you think England will ever step in?"

"Perhaps. But so long as Pundita rules justly, so long as her consort abets her, England will not move. Perhaps, if one of them dies. . . . There! I have made her calling you. And I will go and brew the Colonel Sahib's tea."

THE END.