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**MISS YOUGHAL'S SAIS**

Some people say that there is no romance in India. Those people are wrong. Our lives hold quite as much romance as is good for us. Sometimes more.

Strickland was in the police, and people did not understand him, so they said he was a doubtful sort of a man and passed by on the other side. Strickland had himself to thank for this. He held the extraordinary theory that a policeman in India should try to know as much about the natives as the natives themselves. Now, in the whole of upper India there is only one man who can pass for Hindoo or Mohammedan, chaman or fakir, as he pleases. He is feared and respected by the natives from the Cher Kathri to the Jamma Masjid, and he is supposed to have the gift of invisibility and executive control over many devils. But what good has this done him with the government? None in the world. He has never got Simla for his charge, and his name is almost unknown to Englishmen.

Strickland was foolish enough to take that man for his model, and, following out his absurd theory, dabbled in unsavory places no respectable man would think of exploring—all among the native riffraff. He educated himself in this peculiar way for seven years, and people could not appreciate it.

His crowning achievement was spending 11 days as a fakir in the gardens of Baba Atal at Amritsar, and there picking up the threads of the great Nisaban murder case. But people said, justly enough, "Why on earth can't Strickland sit in his office and write up his diary and recruit and keep quiet, instead of showing up the incapacity of his seniors?"

So the Nisaban murder case did him no good departmentally, but, after his first feeling of wrath, he returned to his outlandish custom of prying into native life. By the way, when a man once acquires a taste for this particular amusement, it abides with him all his days. It is the most fascinating thing in the world, love not excepted. Where other men took ten days to the hills, Strickland took leave for what he called shikar, put on the disguise that appealed to him at the time, stepped down into the brown crowd and was swallowed up for awhile. He was a quiet, dark young fellow—spare, black eyed—and, when he was not thinking of something else, a very interesting companion. Strickland, on native progress as he had seen it, was worth hearing. Natives hated Strickland, but they were afraid of him. He knew too much.

When the Youghals came into the station, Strickland—very gravely, as he did everything—fell in love with Miss Youghal, and she, after awhile, fell in love with him because she could not understand him. Then Strickland told the parents, but Mrs. Youghal said she was not going to throw her daughter into the worst paid department in the empire, and old Youghal said, in so many words, that he mistrusted Strickland's ways and works and would thank him not to speak or write to his daughter any more.

"Very well," said Strickland, for he did not wish to make his lady love's life a burden. After one long talk with Miss Youghal he dropped the business entirely.

The Youghals went up to Simla in April.

In July Strickland secured three months' leave on "urgent private affairs." He locked up his house—though not a native in the province would wittingly have touched Estreekin Sahib's gear for the world—and went down to see a friend of his, an old dyer, at Tam Taran.

Here all trace of him was lost, until a sais met me on the Simla mail with this extraordinary note:

DEAR OLD MAN—Please give bearer a box of cheroots—supers, No. 1, for preference. They are freshest at the club. I'll repay when I reappear, but at present I am out of society. Yours,  
E. STRICKLAND.

I ordered two boxes and handed them over to the sais with my love. That sais was Strickland, and he was in old Youghal's employ, attached to Miss Youghal's Arab. The poor fellow was suffering from an English smoke and knew that whatever happened I should hold my tongue, till the business was over.

Later on, Mrs. Youghal, who was wrapped up in her servants, began talking at houses where she called of her paragon among saises—the man who was never too busy to get up in the morning and pick flowers for the breakfast table and who blacked—actually blacked—the hoofs of his horse like a London coachman! The turnout of Miss Youghal's Arab was a wonder and a delight. Strickland—Dulloo, I mean—found his reward in the pretty things that Miss Youghal said to him when she went out riding. Her parents were pleased to find she had forgotten all her foolishness for young Strickland and said she was a good girl.

Strickland vows that the two months of his service were the most rigid mental discipline he has ever gone through. Quite apart from the little fact that the wife of one of his fellow saises fell in love with him and then tried to poison him with arsenic because he would have nothing to do with her, he had to school himself into keeping quiet when Miss Youghal went out riding with some man who tried to flirt with her, and he was forced to trot behind carrying the blanket and hearing every word! Also he had to keep his temper when he

was stung in "rasenmore" pen by a policeman—especially once when he was abused by a Naik he had himself recruited from Isser Jang village, or, worse still, when a young subaltern called him a pig for not making way quickly enough.

Thus he served faithfully as Jacob served for Rachel, and his leave was nearly at an end when the explosion came. He had really done his best to keep his temper in the hearing of the flirtations I have mentioned, but he broke down at last. An old and very distinguished general took Miss Youghal for a ride and began that specially offensive "you're only a little girl" sort of flirtation most difficult for a woman to turn aside deftly and most maddening to listen to. Miss Youghal was shaking with fear at the things he said in the hearing of her saisi, Dulloo—Strickland—stood it as long as he could. Then he caught hold of the general's bridle, and, in most fluent English, invited him to step off and be heaved over the cliff. Next minute Miss Youghal began crying, and Strickland saw that he had hopelessly given himself away and everything was over.

The general nearly had a fit, while Miss Youghal was seething out the story of the disguise and the engagement that wasn't recognized by the parents. Strickland was furiously angry with himself and more angry with the general for forcing his hand, so he said nothing, but held the horse's head and prepared to thrash the general as some sort of satisfaction, but when the general had thoroughly grasped the story and knew who Strickland was, he began to puff and blow in the saddle and nearly rolled off with laughing. He said Strickland deserved a V. C., if it were only for putting on a saisi's blanket. Then he called himself names and vowed that he deserved a thrashing, but he was too old to take it from Strickland. Then he complimented Miss Youghal on her lover. The scandal of the business never struck him, for he was a nice old man, with a weakness for flirtations. Then he laughed again and said that old Youghal was a fool.

Strickland let go of the cob's head and suggested that the general had better help them, if that was his opinion. Strickland knew Youghal's weakness for names and high official position. "Rather like a 40 minute farce," said the general, "but, begad, I will help, if it's only to escape that tremendous thrashing I deserved. Go along to your home, my saisi policeman, and change into decent kit, and I'll attack Mr. Youghal. Miss Youghal, may I ask you to canter home and wait?"

About seven minutes later there was a wild hurroosh at the club. A saisi, with blanket and head rope, was asking all the men he knew, "For heaven's sake lend me decent clothes!" As the men did not recognize him, there were some peculiar scenes before Strickland could get a hot bath, with soda in it, in one room, a shirt here, a collar there, a pair of trousers elsewhere, and so on. He galloped off, with half the club wardrobe on his back and an utter stranger's pony under him, to the house of old Youghal.

The general, arrayed in purple and fine linen, was before him. What the general had said Strickland never knew, but Youghal received Strickland with moderate civility, and Mrs. Youghal, touched by the devotion of the transformed Dulloo, was almost kind. The general beamed and chuckled, and Miss Youghal came in, and, almost before old Youghal knew where he was, the parental consent had been wrenched out and Strickland had departed with Miss Youghal to the telegraph office to wire for his kit. The final embarrassment was when an utter stranger attacked him on the mall and asked for the stolen pony.

So, in the end, Strickland and Miss Youghal were married, on the strict understanding that Strickland should drop his old ways and stick to department routine, which pays best and leads to Simla. Strickland was far too fond of his wife just then to break his word, but it was a sore trial to him; for the streets and the bazaars and the sounds in them were full of meaning to Strickland, and these called to him to come back and take up his wanderings and his discoveries.

Some day I will tell you how he broke his promise to help a friend. That was long since, and he has, by this time, been nearly spoiled for what he would call shikar. He is forgetting the slang, and the beggar's cant, and the marks, and the signs, and the drift of the undercurrents, which, if a man would master, he must always continue to learn.

But he fills in his departmental returns beautifully.—Rudyard Kipling.

**Making It Easy.**

An American tourist recently tramping through Cornwall met some members of a village church choir returning from rehearsal. He asked one of them what music they had been singing. The answer was "Handel." "Well," said he, "but don't you find Handel rather difficult?" "Why, no, sir," replied the Cornishman, "not very. You see, we alters him."—New York Tribune.

—Mail which has just been received here from Tonquin says that a French column, in a fight with pirates at Punal recently, lost forty men killed and had over a hundred wounded.

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