

## THE NABOB'S ELEPHANT!

An Amazing Episode in the Career of Herlock Sholmes, the World's Worst Detective, recorded by his faithful friend, Dr. Jotson.



**T**ING-a-ling-a-ling-a-ling!  
Herlock Sholmes and I were seated in the consulting-room as the telephone-bell rang.

I laid aside the guinea-pig I was in the act of skinning and took off the receiver. The familiar voice of our butcher came floating over the wire.

"Our old friend, Briskett!" I remarked to Sholmes. "He wants to know about that back end of gammon and the—"

"Tell him I'll set my bloodhound at him if he doesn't ring off!"

Hardly had I set the receiver up and resumed my studies when the bell burst forth again.

Sholmes leaped out of his armchair and snatched up the receiver.

"Oh, go and chop coke and eat chips, you aggravating cow-carver! I'll—"

Sholmes stopped suddenly, and listened while his voice and face underwent a startling change.

"Oh, by all means, your supreme Highness! Needless to say, my few remarks were addressed to the lady telephonist. I'll be with you in a few minutes!"

Sholmes hung up the receiver, and then he tripped lightly from the telephone and danced me round the room.

"Put on your hat, my dear Jotson!" cried he. "We are about to make an important appointment at the Splitz Hotel."

"The Splitz!" I spluttered.

"Even so—the most luxurious super-hotel in London, and our host will be his supreme Highness the Nabob of Bhunpor!"

"Great porous plasters!" I gasped. "The most wealthy prince who ever came out of India!"

We went downstairs and out into Shaker Street. Taking a taxi, Sholmes and I drove up in style to the Splitz Hotel. The native retainers of the illustrious Indian prince were awaiting us, and escorted us to the nabob's sumptuous apartments.

The Nabob of Bhunpor, wearing wonderful jeweled robes and a green turban encrusted with sapphires, emeralds, rubies, topaz, diamonds, and moonstones, was seated, looking worn and worried, in a magnificent gold chair upholstered in purple plush.

Herlock Sholmes coughed.

"Ahem! Your supreme Highness sent for me?"

The nabob waved us to be seated.

"I did, Sholmes sahib," he said. "I have lost little Loola!"

"One of your wives?" I said. "But surely, your supreme Highness, the loss of but one little wife is hardly—"

"Bah! You are talking through your honourable hat, Dr. Sahib!" said the nabob. "Loola was my esteemed elephant!"

At great length the Nabob of Bhunpor explained matters. He had come from Bombay to Tilbury in the steamship Sea Beaver. On board were a number of animals, birds, and reptiles, conveyed from the East on the order of Otto Bagstein, the well-known animal dealer of the Wapping Road.

THE POPULAR.—No. 316.

On board also was the nabob's pet elephant, Loola.

As the nabob paused for breath, Sholmes put his first question.

"Tell me, your supreme Highness, when did you mislay this elephant of yours?"

"When I was leaving the honourable ship," replied the nabob, "Casandra Chan Ram, Bojum Bottlewalla, my secretary, had been looking after Loola. But Casandra, he did not know where she was. Loola was mislaid."

"Tut, tut!" I said, thinking, it time I made a remark.

"We hunted everywhere for the esteemed Loola on the honourable ship," said the nabob. "We looked on all the decks. We made inquiries everywhere. Some men said that the animal had been landed. Casandra himself said that he had arranged for this to be done. He had spoken to the honourable Bill Gudger, who was landing the esteemed animals for the illustrious Otto Bagstein. Then we discovered that among the animals sent from Tilbury were three elephants. These esteemed animals arrived at Fenchurch Street. Then poor Loola vanished into thin air, and neither we nor the honourable police can find her."

"Good gracious!" said Herlock Sholmes. "An elephant vanish into thin air! It scarcely seems possible, your supreme Highness! Were there any special points or marks about your elephant to distinguish it from others of the species?"

"Yes, Sholmes sahib. On one of its tusks was carved a crown, on the other an anchor. Find the esteemed Loola, and I will give you all the gems in my esteemed turban!"

"Half will do, your Excellency!" said Sholmes.

I rose as Sholmes went forward and kissed the dusky monarch's toe.

Suddenly remembering something, Sholmes borrowed a tenner of the nabob, and led me from the apartment.

Taking a taxi outside the hotel, Sholmes ordered the driver to proceed to Fenchurch Street Station. There he made a series of inquiries of ticket-collectors, porters, jumpers, bookstall clerks, newsboys, and refreshment-room waitresses. The result was that he discovered that three elephants had reached that station in a special train at seven o'clock on the previous evening. A fleet of lorries had been lined up in the station approach to receive the cages containing the creatures. Three elephants had been put into three separate lorries and driven away.

And then Sholmes made a startling discovery. A smart newsboy had noticed the names on these lorries. Two lorries had borne the well-known name of Tibbett & Sons, while on the other was painted "Woggs Bros."

Sholmes handed the bright lad a cigarette-card, and jumped in the taxi again.

"To Bagstein's," he said.

The cab rattled and banged its way to the Wapping Road. We dismounted outside the world-famous premises of Bagstein, the animal dealer. Going into the great yard at the back of the shop, we found Otto Bagstein himself, feeding a giraffe with macaroni. He paused in his task upon learning the name of his distinguished visitor.

"Herlock Sholmes," said he, "if I can be of any assistance to you, pray command me!"

"Firstly, sir," said Sholmes, "I should like to view the two elephants which were sent to you yesterday."

The animal dealer ordered the two lumbering animals to be brought forward, and Sholmes examined their tusks. Neither of them was marked with a crown and anchor. Having satisfied himself upon this point, Sholmes made inquiries with regard to the man employed by Bagstein to superintend the unloading of animals at Tilbury.

"He was my assistant, William Gudger," said he. "Strangely enough, he has not been home since he was at Tilbury yesterday."

"Ah!" exclaimed Sholmes. "Now, tell me

how many elephants have you had on order—that is, how many customers have you on your books for these quadrupeds?"

"Three," answered Mr. Bagstein. "Two for the London Zoo, and one for the Duke of Duckswede, of Dilwater, Hampshire. These two elephants here at present are for the Zoo. I was unable to obtain another specimen among the last lot imported for the duke's private collection."

Thanking Otto Bagstein for his help, Herlock Sholmes left the premises of the animal dealer. I followed at his heels. Once more we entered the taxicab.

"Drive to Wobbs Bros., the cartage contractors of Hoxton Road!" he ordered.

Sholmes stopped the cab some couple of hundred yards from the premises of the cartage contractors.

As it happened, a big lorry, marked "Woggs Bros.," was standing some little distance away from the cartage place. No one was in attendance, and Sholmes quickly scrambled inside. I followed him.

Taking out his magnifying-glass, he made a swift examination of the wooden sides of the lorry.

"Marks of elephant's tusks!" he muttered.

"And look!" I exclaimed excitedly. "Here is a piece of grey leather stuck in the crack of this door!"

Sholmes looked at the object.

"No, my dear Jotson," said he; "this is a bit of the elephant's ear. The poor mammal was unfortunate enough, apparently, to catch its ear in the crack of the door."

Leaping out of the lorry, he examined the wheels.

"See?" he said. "These blue-grey splashes above the mudguards are quite freshly made. Mud of exactly that colour is found in only one county in England—Hampshire. The Duke of Duckswede has Loola, or I never hope to touch one of those gems from the nabob's turban!"

Together we returned to Shaker Street, but not before Sholmes had sent a telegram to the duke inquiring if the elephant had been delivered to him. The prepaid reply reached us in a little less than three hours:

"Yes; elephant delivered here yesterday by lorry.—DUCKSWEDE."

Jubilant, Sholmes rushed me to the Hotel Splitz. We roused the nabob, who was taking his afternoon siesta.

"Loola is found!"

A few minutes later Sholmes, the nabob, and I were bowling down to Dilwater, in Hampshire, in the nabob's sixty-horse-power Rolls velocipede.

The duke's palatial country residence proved to be some three miles outside Dilwater village. The duke himself received us, and Sholmes explained the situation.

"You have been the victim of a gross fraud, sir," he said. "Some time ago you placed an order with Otto Bagstein for your private Zoo?"

"That's so," said the bewildered Duke.

"Recently you were informed by Bagstein's assistant, William Gudger, that an elephant had been obtained for you. Doubtless Gudger collected a handsome sum from you on account of that fact?"

"I gave him five hundred pounds," said the duke, "and he delivered the elephant to me yesterday."

"And he himself has disappeared," said Sholmes. "The elephant which Gudger sent to you did not belong to Otto Bagstein. It was the property of this gentleman, the Nabob of Bhunpor."

"Bless my heart!" said the duke.

"Show me Loola," cried the nabob, "and I will repay you the five hundred pounds willingly, honourable sir!"

Hastily the duke led the nabob to his very fine back garden, a part of which was laid out as a menagerie. There, staked in the garden, was a fine young elephant with its tusks carved with a crown and anchor.

"Loola!" cried the nabob.

"Br-r-rmph!" trumpeted the elephant.

The meeting touched the hearts of all concerned. Then the duke touched the nabob for the five hundred pounds. Sholmes, in turn, touched the selfsame prince for a few of the jewels from his turban. It only remains to say that the swindler, William Gudger, was captured in Wigan on the following day, and eventually touched for twelve months in the lock-up.

THE END.