

Brown; 'I would thank God that He had punished her!' And he's the only man in London who doesn't know what she was. She was a barmaid, you remember, as common as the bar she served, when he married her. Lord, but there are some fools about!"

"Is that the story?" asked Simple Simon, quietly.

"I think that's everything. We haven't found the jewelry. There's no reason to suspect any other man in the case. The facts are all against Haramzada Swamy, and his six-cylinder double-action lying doesn't help him."

"How was she killed?"

"There is a large open fireplace in the room. He had caught up the poker, and brained her. It was lying by the body, with blood on it."

"So you rest your case there?"

"All right, my lord!"

"Oh no! I'm for the defense," said Simon Iff. "Here are some facts quite incompatible with the theory that Haramzada Swamy committed the murder. Only last month I happened to be reading his book on Buddhism." Jack Flynn threw a laughing glance at the Police Commissioner, as much as to say, "now the fun begins."

"In this book," pursued the mystic, "he conclusively proves himself innocent of this murder. I will not distress you with the details, but the main argument of the book is that the Buddha was a hedonist, that he called pleasure the greatest good. This argument is based on one fact only; this, that the Buddha declared everything to partake of the nature of sorrow (which is just one-third of the truth) and that his whole system is therefore devoted to the escape from this Everything.

"But pleasure has nothing to do with this. Sensation is only the second of the 'Skandhas' in Buddhist psychology; at the very second gate on the path, pleasure and pain must be recognized as illusions, and rooted out of the mind. Why, desire in any form is the very cause of all sorrow and evil in the Buddhist system.

"Now, gentlemen, we are none of us Buddhists; we may dislike Buddhism very much; and we may call it too abstract, too remote, too barren, too bitter, too ascetic, too formal, too metaphysical, too almost anything you please. We may abuse the Buddha as an Atheist, as a nominalist, as a rationalist, as a sceptic; no one can do more than argue the contrary. But if we represent the Buddha as a high-priest of pleasure, and his religion as a religion of pleasure, we should be shut up in an asylum — or, if not, realize that we have given ourselves away. For there is only one type of sane man who can fail to recognize the elevated morality, the self-abnegation and nobility, the lofty compassion, the almost unthinkable passion for renunciation, which mark Buddhism. To this day the Bhikkhus, or rather Poonggis, of Burma, where alone the true canonical doctrine has been preserved free from corruption, are men of the most exalted virtue. They are often ignorant by our standards; but of their sincerity, their purity, their general morality, there is only one opinion. Even the missionaries, whose one chief task is to slander the people among whom they live, have failed to destroy the reputation of these noble men. I lived among them myself for three years; I might have joined their ranks, had I felt myself worthy to do so. My lord and gentlemen of the jury, I confidently leave the fate of my unfortunate client in your hands."

"Heaven help me!" cried Broughton, "he's never mentioned the murder at all!"

"Ah that's what you think — and what I think"; laughed Flynn; "but in reality he has torn your case to pieces!"

"If you're not convinced of his innocence," retorted Simple Simon, "I really despair of human reason. However, let us get a few fresh facts. What, besides this book on Buddhism, which I have dealt with so effectively, do we know of his antecedents?"

"As it happens," said Jack Flynn, "I can tell you a lot. It's an ugly story, too, and I'd hang him on that alone, if I were judge and jury. It's not evidence — like what the soldier said — but this being a psychological investigation, it is pertinent. Broughton has told us how he might have done the murder; I will prove to you that he was just the sort of man who would have done it. And I am assuming that the little lecture on Buddhism was intended to prove that he was the sort of man who would not."

"Precisely," said the mystic.

"Well, he had a side to his nature which he did not put in his book."

"Impossible," said Iff. "Men's books are always artistic images of themselves. Of course, this thing has no creative genius at all, and he's a hopelessly bad critic, absolutely incapable of discerning greatness, just as a fly, whose time-sense is extremely rapid compared to ours, cannot perceive movement in a body which travels more slowly than about a yard a minute, or as an amoeba could not understand generation or even gemmation. But, such as his mind is, he must put it into every page he writes."

"I'm going to show you he has a criminal mind."

"We're listening," acquiesced the old magician.

"When he was at the University of London, there was a small scandal, which rather shows the man's quality. He made friends with a man, who confided to him the secret of a love-affair with a woman of the streets. Haramzada Swamy tracked the girl, and tried to buy his friend's letters to her, to blackmail him. The girl was loyal and told her lover, who horse-whipped the Eurasian soundly. Shortly after taking his degree he married an Englishwoman. I should like here to make the point that she was a sex-degenerate, like his mother; for all white women who marry colored men must be classed as such."

"I agree."

"I agree."

"She was quite crazy about him — 'too fond of her most filthy bargain' — and they were happy for awhile. Then the snake entered Eden in the shape of a little music-teacher, another degenerate, again a case of heredity, for she was marked with Hutchinson's Teeth. You know what that means?"

Both men nodded gravely.

"The Swamy and his wife were great on preaching Free Love. The snake — and she had the temper of a Russell's Viper! — agreed entirely. A few weeks later she became Haramzada Swamy's mistress. She was so passionate and jealous that she resolved to upset the marriage; this decision was confirmed by necessity, for she became enceinte, and the Swamy, who hated the idea of children, showed every sign of throwing her off. She actually had the nerve to go to his wife with her story! After various violent scenes, a divorce was decided upon. The Swamy, who has no will of his own, was