

CHAPTER XV.

In which the Bag of Bank-notes is lightened by some Thousands of Pounds more.

Passe-partout was the first to alight from the train; Mr. Fogg followed, and helped out his fair companion. Phileas had counted upon proceeding directly to the steamer, so as to settle Mrs. Aouda comfortably on board. He was unwilling to leave her so long, as she was on such dangerous ground.

As Mr. Fogg was leaving the station a policeman approached him, and said, "Mr. Phileas Fogg, is it not?"

"It is," replied Phileas.

"And this is your servant?" continued the policeman, indicating Passe-partout.

"Yes."

"Will you be so good as to follow me?"

Mr. Fogg did not appear in the least degree surprised. The policeman

was a representative of the law, and to an Englishman the law is sacred. Passe-partout, like a Frenchman, wanted to argue the point, but the policeman touched him with his cane, and his master made him a sign to obey.

"This young lady can accompany us?" said Mr. Fogg.

"Certainly," replied the policeman.

Mr. Fogg, Mrs. Aouda, and Passe-partout were then conducted to a "palkighari," a sort of four-wheeled carriage, holding four people, and drawn by two horses. They drove away, and no one spoke during the twenty minutes' drive.

The carriage passed through the "Black Town," and then through the European quarter, which, with its brick houses, well-dressed people, and handsome equipages, presented a marked contrast to the native town. The carriage stopped before a quiet-looking house, which, however, did not appear to be a private mansion. The policeman directed his prisoners--for so we may term them--to alight, and conducted them to a room, the windows of which were barred.

"At half-past eight," he said, "you will be brought before Judge Obadiah." He then went out and locked the door.

"So we are prisoners," exclaimed Passe-partout, dropping into a chair.

Mrs. Aouda, turning to Mr. Fogg, said tearfully: "Oh sir, pray do not think of me any longer. It is on my account that you have been arrested. It is for having saved me."

Phileas Fogg calmly replied that such a thing was not possible. It was quite out of the question that they could be arrested on account of the suttee. The complainants would not dare to present themselves. There must be some mistake, and Mr. Fogg added that in any case he would see the young lady safe to Hong Kong.

"But the steamer starts at twelve o'clock," said Passe-partout.

"We shall be on board before that," replied the impassible Fogg.

This was said so decidedly that Passe-partout could not help muttering, "That's all right then, we shall be on board in time no doubt." But in his soul he was not so very certain of it.

At half-past eight the door opened, the policeman entered, and conducted the friends into an adjoining room. This was the court, and was pretty well filled by Europeans and natives. The three companions were allotted seats on a bench facing the magistrate's desk. Judge Obadiah, followed by the clerk, entered almost immediately. He was a fat, round-faced man. He took down a wig from a nail and put it on.

"Call the first case," he began, but immediately putting his hand to his head he said, "This is not my wig."

"The fact is, your honour, it is mine," replied the clerk.

"My dear Mr. Oysterpuff, how can you expect a judge to administer justice in a clerk's wig?"

The exchange was made. All this time Passe-partout was boiling over with impatience, for the hands of the clock were getting on terribly fast towards noon.

"Now, then, the first case," said the judge.

"Phileas Fogg," called out the clerk.

"Here I am."

"Passe-partout."

"Here."

"Good," said the judge.

"For two days we have been awaiting you."

"But of what do you accuse us?" cried Passe-partout impatiently.

"You are going to hear," said the judge quietly.

"Your honour," said Mr. Fogg, "I am a British citizen, and I have the right--"

"Have you not been properly treated?" asked the judge,

"Oh yes, but--"

"Very well, then. Call the plaintiffs."

As the judge spoke the door opened, and three Hindoo priests were introduced by an usher.

"It is that, after all," muttered Passe-partout. "Those are the fellows that wanted to burn our young lady."

The priests stood erect before the judge, and the clerk read aloud the complaint of sacrilege against Phileas Fogg and his servant, who were accused of having defiled a place consecrated to the Brahmin religion.

"You hear the charge," said the judge to Phileas Fogg.

"Yes, your honour," replied the accused, looking at his watch, "and I

confess it."

"You admit it?"

"I admit it, and I wait to see what these priests in their turn will confess respecting their doings at the Pagoda of Pillaji."

The priests looked at each other. They evidently did not understand the reference.

"Of course," cried Passe-partout impetuously, "at the Pagoda of Pillaji, where they were about to burn their victim."

The priests looked stupefied, and the judge was almost equally astonished.

"What victim?" he asked. "To burn whom? In Bombay?"

"Bombay!" exclaimed Passe-partout.

"Of course. We are not talking of the Pagoda of Pillaji but of the Pagoda of Malabar Hill at Bombay."

"And as a proof," added the clerk, "here are the shoes of the profaner of the temple;" and he placed a pair of shoes upon the desk as he spoke.

"My shoes!" exclaimed Passe-partout, who was surprised into this incautious admission.

One can imagine the confusion which ensued. The incident at the pagoda in Bombay had been quite forgotten by both master and man, and it was on account of that that they were both detained.

The detective Fix had seen at once the advantage he could derive from that contretemps; so, delaying his departure for twelve hours, he consulted with the priests at Malabar Hill and had promised them a large reward, knowing very well that the English Government would punish with extreme severity any trespass of such a description. Then he had sent the priests by train on the track of the offenders. Owing to the time spent by Phileas Fogg and his party in releasing the young widow from the suttee, Fix and the Hindoo priests had reached Calcutta first, but in any case Mr. Fogg and his servant would have been arrested as they left the train in consequence of a telegraphic despatch which had been forwarded to Calcutta by the authorities. The disappointment of Fix may be imagined when he heard on his arrival that Fogg had not reached Calcutta. He thought that his victim had stopped at one of the intermediate stations, and had taken refuge in the southern provinces. For four-and-twenty hours Fix had restlessly paced the railway station at Calcutta. What was his joy when that very morning he perceived his man descending from the train in company with a lady whose presence he could not account for. He had immediately

directed a policeman to arrest Mr. Fogg, and that is how the whole party came to be brought before Judge Obadiah.

If Passe-partout had been less wrapped up in his own business he would have noticed the detective seated in the corner of the court, watching the proceedings with an interest easy to be understood, for at Calcutta, as heretofore, he still wanted the warrant to arrest the supposed thief.

But Judge Obadiah had noticed the avowal, which Passe-partout would have given the world to recall.

"So the facts are admitted," said the judge.

"They are," replied Fogg coldly.

"Well," continued the judge, "inasmuch as the English law is intended to protect rigorously, and without distinction, all religions in India, and as this fellow, Passe-partout, has confessed his crime, and is convicted of having violated with sacrilegious feet the Pagoda of Malabar Hill at Bombay during the day of the 20th of October, the said Passe-partout is condemned to fifteen days' imprisonment and to pay a fine of three hundred pounds."

"Three hundred pounds!" exclaimed Passe-partout, who was scarcely conscious of anything but the amount of the fine.

"Silence!" shouted the usher.

"And," continued the judge, "seeing that it is not proved that this sacrilege was connived at by the master, but as he must be held responsible for the acts and deeds of his servant, the said Phileas Fogg is sentenced to eight days' imprisonment and a fine of one hundred and fifty pounds. Usher, call the next case."

Fix, in his corner, rubbed his hands to his satisfaction. Phileas Fogg detained eight days at Calcutta! This was fortunate, by that time the warrant would have arrived from England. Passe-partout was completely dumbfounded. This conviction would ruin his master. His wager of twenty thousand pounds would be lost; and all because he, like an idiot, had gone into that cursed pagoda.

But Phileas Fogg was as cool and collected as if he were in no way concerned in the matter. At the moment the usher was calling on the next cause, Phileas rose and said, "I offer bail."

"That is within your right," said the judge.

Fix's blood ran cold; but he revived again, when he heard the judge say, that as the prisoners were strangers, a bail of a thousand pounds each would be necessary. So it would cost Mr. Fogg two thousand pounds, if he did not put in an appearance when called upon.

"I will pay the money now," said that gentleman; and from the bag which Passe-partout still held, he drew bank-notes for two thousand pounds, and placed them on the clerk's desk.

"This sum will be restored to you, when you come out of prison," said the judge. "Meantime you are free on bail."

"Come along," said Phileas Fogg to his servant.

"But I suppose they will give me back my shoes?" said Passe-partout angrily.

They gave him back his shoes. "They have cost us pretty dearly," he muttered, "more than one thousand pounds apiece, without counting the inconvenience to myself;" and with the most hang-dog appearance, Passe-partout followed his master, who had offered his arm to the young lady. Fix was still in hopes that his prey would not abandon such a sum as two thousand pounds; so he followed Mr. Fogg closely.

Phileas took a fly, and the whole party were driven down to the quays. Half-a-mile from the pier the Rangoon was moored, the "blue-peter" at the mast-head. Eleven o'clock was striking, so Mr. Fogg had an hour to spare. Fix saw him put off in a boat, with Mrs. Aouda and his servant. The detective stamped with rage.

"The rascal!" he exclaimed; "he is going then. Two thousand pounds sacrificed. He is as reckless as a thief. I will follow him to the end of the world, if necessary; but at the rate he is going, the stolen money will soon be spent."

The detective was not far wrong. In fact, since he had left London, what with travelling expenses, "tips," the money paid for the elephant, in fines, and in bail, Phileas Fogg had already disbursed more than five thousand pounds, so that the percentage upon the sum likely to be recovered by the detective (as he imagined) was growing small by degrees and beautifully less.