

SWAMI RAM'S REINCARNATION

By FRANK BLIGHTON

CHAPTER I.

The Wreck of the Limited.

Tom Davenport's curiosity overcame his discretion. He jumped from the cab of the giant Atlantic-type locomotive and ran over toward the disused freight shed beside the Lordsburg station. Five minutes before he had been an irreproachable, well-poised railroad passenger engineer; but the suspicious, oft-repeated trips of a diminutive, septa-colored man carrying milk between the station restaurant and the old shed excited him to a pitch where rules, regulations and even demerits counted for nothing.

There was something peculiarly furtive and wary about the little brown man's stealthy look around—a mysterious, unexplained air of watchfulness—as if guarding some secret, the nature of which Davenport could not imagine. "Why should that sneaky-looking little devil be carrying milk into that shed?" Tom asked himself at the first trip. "Why don't he drink it in the restaurant if he's so all-fired fond of it, or go back in the diner and guzzle it down until he busts—if that's his game?"

The second journey between the two points was even more mystifying to the engineer. As the door to the ramshackle structure closed behind the milk-bearer Tom itched to follow him. "It'll be a 'dobe dollar to a centavo he ain't drinking it himself," he grunted, sliding from his seat to the roomy gangway between the boiler and the tender. "But somebody's drinking it—that's a cinch. He ain't buying milk down in this desert country to spill it around promiscuous like. But if he ain't drinking it himself, who is? And if somebody else is drinking it, why is he hiding out in that old shack?"

The stoical figure was padding back again toward the restaurant, evidently intent on procuring still more lacteal fluid. Then it was that Tom dropped to the ground and shot over to the disused building.

He popped his head into the open door and withdrew it with a celerity which would have made his train on a straightaway two-per-cent down-grade resemble a handcar climbing a hill propelled by a lone section hand.

His freeman, Patrick Mahoney, from the opposite side of the great machine observed Davenport's action with profound amazement. It was not only against the rules—it was unprecedented, unheard-of.

"What's matter?" demanded Mahoney, as his obese chief climbed back into the cab with a speed as marvelous as unwonted.

Davenport swung to his seat without deigning a reply. His face was very pale. He did not look toward his running mate—instead, his horrified gaze might be said to have been frozen to the door of the old freight shack, allowing, of course, for the intervening distance.

He intently watched the return of the brown-skinned atom of humanity with something between apprehension and awe and studied him intently as he again entered the tumble-down building for the third time.

The conductor emerged from the telegraph office, clutching a train order simultaneously with the reappearance of the septa-colored gentleman from the former freight house. Tom saw that he was now carrying a small, round, covered basket of odd shape.

Not until then did the engineer seem to rouse from the fascination which the little brown man had thrown over him, and even as he waited the starting signal he leaned from the cab window so far, as he followed the stranger with his eyes, that Mahoney feared he would fall out.

As he turned to look across the cab at the freeman Davenport did not have the appearance of a man who is still possessed of curiosity; but what he had seen was evidently had no intention of revealing.

"Give her the gun, Paddy," said he in a harsh, unnatural voice. "We're fifteen minutes late now, and if we don't want to be dancing on the carpet in the super's office in El Paso we've got to make up that time if we burn out a crown sheet to do it."

Mahoney nodded as he reached for the firing-valve and shot another powerful jet of oil against the sides of the "wrinkle-belly" firebox, while he opened the blower to its fullest capacity. He was debating what had come over his phlegmatic superior.

The thick, black smoke roared out of the short stack as Tom leaned again from the window, wondering why he did not get the starting signal. The conductor was standing expectantly on the platform fidgeting with his watch. Impatiently the engineer was reaching for his detention card to note the new loss of time as a partial measure of self-protection, when a tall, lithe, athletic young man rushed across the platform and leaped up the steps of the Pullman. Simultaneously the air- whistles sounded, and Tom yanked his starting-lever with obvious disgust.

He was now eighteen minutes behind his schedule, and his whole run was over one of the worst railroad divisions in America—so difficult, in fact, that the crews covering it had dubbed it the "Stormy."

The Pacific Limited trailing behind him—crack train of the great transcontinental system—was usually a sight to behold. Today it was seven, and all Tom Davenport's fitness as a locomotive engineer had been called upon to make Lordsburg with only a quarter-hour delay.

Up to Mesquite he had climbed from Tucson, then dropped down a terrific grade around "Dead Man's Curve," into Benson; up again the sharp ascent into Dragon, then down through Cochise and San Simon upon the only few miles of straight track the entire division boasted.

Once more Davenport set his teeth as he jammed the cut-off lever far down in the corner and nursed his train up through Stein's pass, over the summit, and down again into Lordsburg.

He had still one hundred and forty-eight miles to go in two hundred and fourteen minutes, besides making up that lost eighteen, to maintain his schedule.

The grade was not so nerve-racking into El Paso, and once at Separ, the summit, Tom calculated on the long, gradual drop down through the valley of the Rio Grande to the terminal to aid him in considerably exceeding the usual running time of a mile in a minute and a third, which was the average of his particular schedule for the entire division.

Back in the swaying, lurching Pullmans a realization of the unusual speed began to communicate itself to the minds of the passengers, now streaming forward to the dining car in response to the first call for dinner.

Buchanan Williams, whose hurried rush across the platform at Lordsburg had enabled him to make a connection which saved an eight-hour delay, stopped in the vestibule of the diner to pass his ticket to the conductor.

"Some class to this," he chuckled as he tendered the bit of pasteboard. "Do you think we'll make El Paso on time?"

"Within a few minutes of it," smiled back the other reassuringly. "Tom Davenport's up ahead, and he hates to make explanations at either end of the division. Going to Chicago, Buck?"

"No; Mexico. Trouble down Culligan way. Another revolution; and every man in my mine, I suppose, is out trying to make himself president with a shotgun instead of using a direct primary to get the nomination. Wish they'd settle down. The El Tigre is beginning to pan out big—but we need men to work it."

"Some mine, that El Tigre, according to the talk of the boys coming out of that section."

"Fair," drawled Buck, with a whimsical smile. "She paid out more than a half-million last year, and we've only scratched her back so far. Wait until we get down to the five-hundred-foot level and drift. Then we'll make Johnny Rockefeller's wig take on a marcel-wave effect."

He swung into the diner and seated himself in the only vacant chair. Opposite sat a small, dark, unobtrusive little man whose skin was a trifle too tawny for either a Mexican or an Indian.

His coal-black hair, large, luminous brown eyes, and general appearance of intellectuality were unusual, but offered a strange contrast to a certain humility of manner, Williams thought rather contemptuously.

Buck scanned the card while the waiter brought the meal his vis-a-vis had previously ordered. The mining man's interest in his fellow passenger increased as he noted that his meal consisted wholly of vegetables and that he drank nothing but milk.

The Limited was snorting up the grade toward Separ when his own dinner was brought in.

Williams ate voraciously, as only an American can whose life is spent in combat with the apparently sterile and antagonistic country which they were traversing.

He glanced curiously over at his traveling companion. The brown eyes seemed to take on a half-melancholy, brooding look, as if the owner were peering into a future pregnant with events.

He laved his hands in the silver finger-bowl, wiped them carefully, and, while waiting for the check, drew from his pocket a sheet of paper and began to peruse it.

"Traveling far?" queried Buck, with the bluff heartiness of the West.

"To New England, sar," smiled back the little man.

"You don't belong in these parts, then," laughed the miner, scrutinizing the brown atom of humanity with a half-humorous, half-pitying expression.

"I am from Bombay, sar," was the polite reply.

"Oh, India. I was wondering what country you hailed from. May I ask your name?"

"I am called Jalisingrao Jitendra, sar," he said in a low voice, but singularly clear. "And yours?"

"Buck Williams," smiled back the stalwart chap across the table. "Sorry I'm leaving at El Paso, I should like to talk with you about your country—some day I hope to visit it. It must be very interesting, from what I have heard."

"Yes," The monosyllable suggested more than mere acquiescence, especially when combined with the enigmatical smile which flitted over the Oriental's intelligent face, then vanished, leaving his features emotionless save for an expression of polite inquiry.

"I've heard some wonderful stories about India," observed the mining man reflectively. "Some of them strongly resembled conscientiously told tripe, plated lies; but they were endorsed by persons who I knew were usually conservative. For instance, is it true that in your country people can disappear and reappear almost instantly miles away?"

Jitendra's answer came hesitatingly. "There are many things, sahib, which I may not discuss save with those who have prepared themselves by the Hatha-Yoga or the Hingah-Yoga. The wisdom of our people is old—very old. Their ways are not your ways, sahib, and what they practice is for some purpose which we are taught is right and in necessary preparation for our next reincarn—"

His unfinished sentence was drowned in a horrible, grinding roar. The dining car, directly behind the swaying engine, seemed to rear up in the front and fold back upon itself.

Buck Williams caught sight of the calm, untroubled face of Jitendra peering over the top of the table above him. Simultaneously he was catapulted backward to the rear of the car.

The roar died down into a sickening, slithering crash, as the balance of the cars in the rear impinged against the wooden end of the diner, crushing it resistlessly against the heavy steel tender of the locomotive in front.

In the first moment of utter silence except for the hissing of the levitation of steam now quivering, but stationary, ahead, Buck picked himself up from the vestibule of the car.

"God bless the man who invented steel platforms," he whispered to himself as he contemplated the wreckage in front. Then he leaped through the open space to the Pullman behind and tumbled to the right of way.

From the front of the diner, which was twisted and doubled back upon itself, arose an agonized shriek. The negro cooks and waiters, penned in or close beside the tiny kitchen, were shrieking for aid—such as them as still remained alive.

The locomotive stood half sidewise on the embankment, the broken driving-rod which had caused the disaster driven far in the earth. The desert wind swirling around the curve of the hill dropped a piece of paper of strange texture at Buck Williams' feet.

Involuntarily he picked it up and read, drawn by an impulse which he could not fathom:

"Beloved: "Until long after I had crossed the sacred water of the Ganges, with its burden of true believers progressing to their next incarnation, and lived among the people of this far-off country; I never understood the meaning of true love; but now, after your many sacrifices for me, I believe I do.

"As I have knelt before the shrine of the Blue Buddha, I have learned the meaning of such devotion as yours; come, therefore, to me and speedily. I write in English that you may see how I have improved."

"INDIRA."

Buck thrust the missive into his pocket and turned to the twisted tangle of the wrecked diner. He regretted that he had read the note through on the impulse of the moment, for the intimate affairs of a chance traveling companion were surely no business of his.

The texture resembled that of the paper which Jitendra had been reading at the beginning of their conversation. The peculiar style and idiom of the communication left little doubt that it was the same and had somehow escaped from him at the instant of the crash.

A sinister jet of flame spiraled up from the splintered fragments. The trainmen were already heaving frantically at the debris, and presently a negro crawled painfully through the orifice they made, dragging a broken leg.

Another followed, then another, his face grimed with the smoke of the fast rising fire which, in spite of desperate efforts, seemed destined to consume the demolished car.

But of Jitendra the mining man saw no sign, and he smothered an impression at the exasperating slowness of the crew, as he wrenched an ax from one of them and attacked the pile at another point.

CHAPTER II.

Rescuing a Hindu.

"Everybody's out, Buck!" protested Conductor Martin, running over to him.

"No!" shouted the fair-haired, blue-eyed giant. "There's a passenger stuck somewhere beneath this mess—the little dark chap who was sitting across the table from me in this car."

The blaze, fed from the incandescent coils of the diner's cooking range, obstinately refused to be extinguished.

The varnished fragments of the car yielded eagerly to the darting tongues of flame which ran along the ground under the debris or hissed against the pitifully inadequate water which was futilely poured on the wreckage from above, as volunteers hurried back and forth from the engine with pails.

Hewing desperately, Williams at last cleared a small opening above which the wreckage piled itself in such shape as to form a triangular orifice. Buck dropped to his knees and peered beneath. The fast increasing fire volleyed forth a great cloud of smoke through the new hole, which only appeared to create a better draft for its more rapid progress.

The American wormed himself into it, twisted, and writhed forward.

"Come back, Buck!" cried Martin, grasping his leg. "He's only a guinea, anyway—not worth the risk."

But the American obstinately jerked himself free and disappeared into the mass of steel and splinters. A little way ahead, to the right of him, he could discern a small, inert, chocolate-colored body, unconscious of the reeking smoke which already thinly enshrouded his calm face.

Buck grasped him. The body yielded easily, as if destiny itself had arched over it a protection. Very slowly he worked his way back through the dense, stifling atmosphere. A shower of sparks swept down his neck, burning him bitterly; but Buck was heedless of it.

Obstinately propping himself now on one hand and knees, and again pushing himself backward as he flattened out, he never relaxed his grip on the unconscious diminutive figure. Eager hands dragged them both from the opening.

As the American emerged and the others caught sight of the limp body he had rescued, the passengers broke into a cheer.

"Cripes!" gasped Williams, beating at his scorched neck until the smoldering around the collar of his coat was extinguished. "Somebody get me some vaseline or engine oil!"

He laved his burns eagerly, then knelt to examine the motionless body he had dragged to safety.

"Give me some water, will you?" he commanded, reaching for his hip-pocket with the words. With his own hands he washed the blood from the little man's head and bound it round with his handkerchief, after tearing it in twain and knotting the ends together.

(To be continued next week.)

"Man is the more intellectual of the sexes, and his will must prevail," vociferously proclaimed a curbatene orator to a bunch of downtrodden, browbeaten and furtive looking auditors. His wife had just died.



-but its pelt is bringing the highest prices ever known.

"Shubert" Wants Oregon Furs

ALL YOU CAN SHIP And Will Pay These Extremely High Prices GET A SHIPMENT OFF—TODAY

	NO. 1 EXTRA LARGE	NO. 1 LARGE	NO. 1 MEDIUM	NO. 1 SMALL	NO. 2
COYOTE	30.00 to 25.00	22.00 to 18.00	15.00 to 12.50	10.00 to 8.50	10.00 to 5.00
Winter Open or Hidden	22.00 to 18.00	15.00 to 14.00	12.00 to 10.00	8.00 to 6.00	8.00 to 4.00

	NO. 1 EXTRA LARGE	NO. 1 LARGE	NO. 1 MEDIUM	NO. 1 SMALL	GOOD UNWASHED
MUSKRAT	15.00 to 12.00	11.00 to 9.00	8.50 to 8.00	7.50 to 7.00	7.00 to 3.50
Winter	10.00 to 9.00	8.50 to 7.50	7.25 to 6.75	6.50 to 5.50	6.00 to 3.00
Fall	7.50 to 6.50	6.25 to 5.75	5.00 to 4.50	4.00 to 3.50	3.50 to 1.50
	5.00 to 4.00	3.50 to 3.00	2.75 to 2.25	2.00 to 1.50	1.50 to .75

	NO. 1 EXTRA LARGE	NO. 1 LARGE	NO. 1 MEDIUM	NO. 1 SMALL	GOOD UNWASHED
SKUNK	15.00 to 12.00	11.00 to 9.00	8.50 to 8.00	7.50 to 7.00	7.00 to 3.50
Black	10.00 to 9.00	8.50 to 7.50	7.25 to 6.75	6.50 to 5.50	6.00 to 3.00
Short	7.50 to 6.50	6.25 to 5.75	5.00 to 4.50	4.00 to 3.50	3.50 to 1.50
Narrow	5.00 to 4.00	3.50 to 3.00	2.75 to 2.25	2.00 to 1.50	1.50 to .75
Broad					

A shipment to "SHUBERT" will result in "more money" "quicker."

SHIP ALL YOUR FURS DIRECT TO
A. B. SHUBERT INC.
THE LARGEST HOUSE IN THE WORLD DEALING EXCLUSIVELY IN
AMERICAN RAW FURS
25-27 W. Austin Ave. Dept 1965 Chicago, U.S.A.

We Are Not Wholesalers But We Sell Retail Cheaper than Wholesale

Our Policy—Underbuy—Undersell—Always Bargains

30 DAYS Only **Weinstein's** **30 DAYS Only**

Store of BARGAINS LAWEN and SERVICE

Tell This To Your Neighbor **Safety First** Don't Keep It a Secret

Means when you are buying from the Weinstein Mercantile Co. you are safe to get the most for your money. You are safe to get the best Merchandise for less money than you buy from competitors. You are safe to satisfy yourself; also your banker by making your account grow with the big savings when buying from us. We don't cut the price on one article and then make it up on another. We give you cut prices on all Merchandise, as we are fighting the high cost of living. Come and see for yourself and help us fight the high cost of living.

.. BEST ..

FLOUR

Hard Wheat Fancy Patent At Lawen, per bbl. \$11.50

Wigwam \$10.65

At CRANE, per bbl.

Corn Meal	10 lbs 60c
Steel Cut Oats	9 lbs 70c
Oat Meal	9 lbs 70c
Rolled Oats	9 lbs 85c
Germea	9 lbs 85c
Farina	9 lbs 85c
Pancake Flour	9 lbs 80c
Hominy	9 lbs 80c
Rye Flour	9 lbs 80c
Rice Flour	9 lbs 80c

BOSS OF THE ROAD

Overalls, Striped Hickory.....\$1.65
Heavy Weight Overalls..... 3.10
Khaki Coveralls 2.45

Men's Dress and Work Pants at a Reduction

Mackinaws, Regular Price \$15.00, now \$12.00
Regular \$12.50, now \$10.00

Shepherd's Shoes

Regular Price, \$9.00, at this time\$5.50

Men's English Walking Shoes Regular Price, \$10.00, now \$6.00

Dress Shoes

Regular Price\$6.00
Now\$4.25
Regular Price\$7.00
Now\$5.50
Regular Price\$9.00
Now\$6.50

Work Shoes

Regular Price \$9.00 and \$8.00
Now\$6.00

Anything we do not carry in stock we will be glad to order for you without extra charge, at wholesale prices.

Beans

lima, per lb.....	12c
White Navy, per lb.....	8c
Mexican Red, per lb.....	9c
Bayo, per lb.....	9c
Rice, broken, per lb.....	10c
Macaroni, per lb.....	12 1/2c

Stock Salt, at Crane, per ton\$24.50

Sugar

At Lawen
At Crane

M. J. B. Coffee 42c
Per lb. bulk

Folgers Tea 45c
Per lb.

Tree Tea 45c
Per lb.

GHIRARDELLI'S 42c
Sweet Chocolate, per lb.

HERSHEY'S Cocoa 50c
Per lb.

Instant Postum 45c
Large size

Royal Baking Powder

Full 5 lbs.\$2.50
Full 2 1/2 lbs.\$1.25
Small size 45c

K. C. Baking Powder

5 lb can 75c
3 lb can 45c
SODA Per Package 10c