

# The Home Reading Circle

## The Secret of Buddha

By OWEN HALL

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Light shall rest upon the secret place where lie the hidden treasures of the beloved one."

"And that's the lot it is?" I asked, as Crawford laid down the piece of leaf, or whatever it was.

"Yes, and come to look at it fairly—from an Indian point of view, that is—I don't know that you could expect more than that. It really is plain enough, so far as it goes."

"It may be," I remarked, "but I'm hanged if I can see it—plain as it is. What do you make of it yourself?"

"Well, of course, the place of the slumber of Sondavalla, is only Fall for his grave. Everybody knows that the moon is either Queen or Regent of the Night, according to taste in this part of the world. I have a sort of idea that her highest throne is only an expression thrown in to signify along with her uncovered face, the height of the full moon, and it is pretty plain that the moonlight falls on the spot where the treasure is hidden, or was hidden when this was written. It seems all plain sailing enough if we can only find the hill which is, no doubt, an old Buddhist temple."

PART I.

We had been traveling all day—that is to say, all but a two-hour's halt to rest ourselves and horses while the sun stood overhead and the stagnant air of the forest path had grown too hot and stifling for the free use of European lungs. We had started early while the eastern sky was lighting to the first rosy blush of the dawn, with our little party of four mounted men and two pack horses. Following our Mahomedan native guide, we had plunged into the dim depths of the jungle. Hour after hour we had journeyed on through the lonely forest path, our horse-hoofs making scarcely a sound on the mossy track, our spirits depressed by the solemn silence of the primeval forest, our voices, when we did speak, hushed almost to a whisper by the influence of the scene.

ltered round their base. This one showed no signs of fortifications, but the dark and frowning mass that rose nearly two hundred feet above the surrounding land irresistibly suggested the purpose to which in a bygone age of violence it must naturally have lent itself.

At last I turned to Crawford, who was still studying the scene, with the question, "Well, do you think this is the place?"

"Yes," he replied, without taking his eyes from the landscape, "this is Minihiri Rama, and these must be the ruins of Aranapura."

I glanced round once more and then



"IF WE DON'T DO IT TONIGHT, WE CERTAINLY SHALL NOT IN A WEEK."

I suggested that it would be well to find a camping ground for the night before the sun went down. My suggestion was accepted, and within a very short time we had got our tent pitched and our simple arrangements completed. It was not until this had been done, and we had seated ourselves while we waited for our tea-kettle to boil, that the subject which occupied our minds came to the fore.

"Now," said Crawford, when he had settled himself to his own satisfaction and lighted his pipe, "now, old fellow, out with it. I see you've been looking to give me the benefit of your feelings for the last half hour. What's the matter now?"

ground for miles. Man's work was represented only by decay, but nature had been kind; vast trees shot up from amid the ruins of ruined masonry, their pyramids of leaves glittering in the level flood of golden light; each crumbling wall was draped with a luxuriant wealth of leaf and flower; each shapeless mound of rubbish was clothed with a living carpet of green creepers. From the spot where we had pitched our tent we could readily trace the course of what looked like one of the great thoroughfares of the city of the past, the irregular avenue which led the eye incessantly onwards and upwards to the frowning mass of overshadowing black rock whose shadow fell threateningly across the plain.

Gradually the heat had increased as the sun rose higher and higher overhead. There was not a breath of air stirring in the jungle path, not the faintest breeze stirred the canopy of leaves through which, here and there, the hot sunshine fell in great splashes of gold upon the path.

My friend Crawford was just behind our guide, whose turban could be seen gleaming some way ahead among the jungle shrubs that fringed the path, and I and the other native attendant, who led a pack horse bearing our tent, followed the last of our party. It was in a bad temper, and perhaps I had some excuse. I was tired; I was hot; I was more than a little disposed to accuse myself of being a fool to allow myself to be persuaded into going on a wild-goose chase to ruins. Crawford, I thought, had just passed through my mind when a sudden hail from my friend in front arrested me. "Come on, Hall," he shouted; "here we are at last!"

"And about time, too," I replied, as I dealt my sluggish pony a kick in the ribs to encourage him to a rather livelier pace. In two or three minutes I had reached them where they had come to a standstill at the edge of the forest, and found my companion eagerly examining the view that lay before him. My first impulse was to follow his example, and my attention was instantly arrested by a great sheet of water which appeared to occupy most of the foreground. Behind it and on either side there rose the higher range of the western hills, now throwing shadows across both land and water at their feet. The land itself seemed to wind among their hidden recesses, while on the left the hills descended abruptly into the water. On the side nearest to where we stood, however, the slope was very gradual for perhaps half a mile from the margin of the lake. An object standing near the middle of the slope was clear and prominent. It was one of those abrupt masses of rock frequent on the southeast coast of the



"COME ON, HALL, HERE WE ARE AT LAST!"

Indian peninsula, which have usually been converted into citadels to protect or overawe the cities that have clung to their bases.

The other day a New Yorker started across Broadway. He was in the heyday of ambitious, vigorous youth. A puff of wind blew an insignificant, almost invisible atom of dust in one of his eyes. It blinded him. He clapped his hands over his eyes and staggered on, only to be run down and killed by a cable car. That man's death was due to an insignificant trifle, an atom of dust that was barely visible under the microscope. It is thus with health. Men find that they are suffering from a trifling disorder of the digestion. It doesn't amount to anything, they think, and time is precious. They don't stop to correct it, but stagger blindly on and are run down in the heyday of ambitious youth by death.

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I was a sufferer five or six years from indigestion. I writes E. F. Holmes, of Gateway, Spartanburg Co., S. C., "also from sore stomach and constant headache. I then saw Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery and Pleasant Pellets, which in a few days gave me permanent relief."

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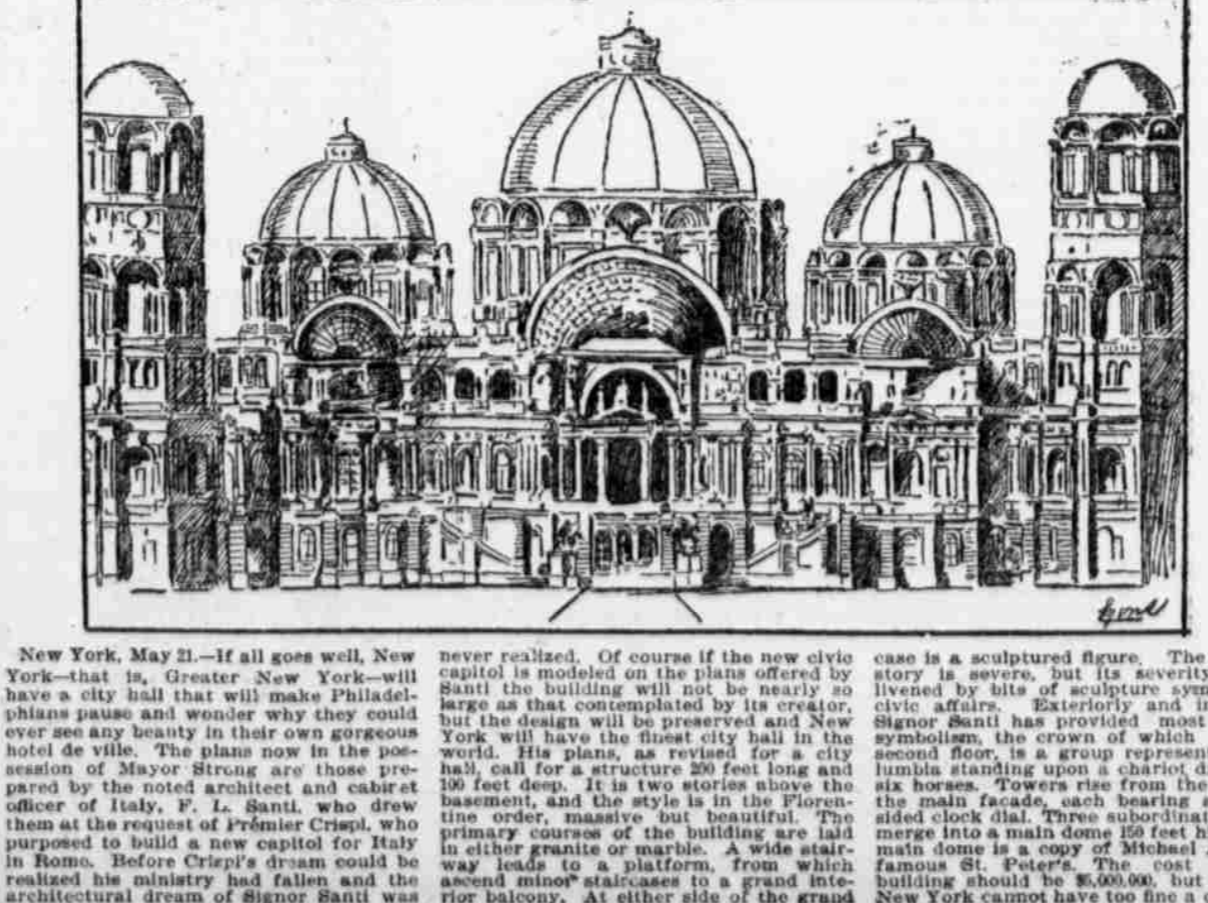
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"Well," he said, holding it up so as to get the full benefit of the fading light upon it, "it's not a great Fall school, but this is as nearly correct as I can get it, and I fancy it's near enough for all practical purposes. In the place of the slumber of Sondavalla, when the Regent of the Night shall be seated on her highest throne, and shall gaze with uncovered face upon the world, in the black and ancient hall where Buddha dwells, the glance of the Queen of

Never realized. Of course if the new edifice is modeled on the plans offered by Santini the building will not be nearly so large as that contemplated by its creator, but the design is preserved and New York will have the finest city hall in the world. His plans, as revised for a city hall, call for a structure 225 feet long and 130 feet deep. It is two stories above the basement, and the style is in the Florentine order, massive but beautiful. The primary courses of the building are laid in either granite or marble, a wide stairway leads to a platform, from which ascend minor staircases to a grand interior balcony. At either side of the grand

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### The Death of the Flowers.

The melancholy days have come, the saddest of the year,  
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and sere;  
Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the autumn leaves lie dead;  
They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's tread;  
The robin and the wren are flown, and from the shrubs the jay,  
And other noisy notes that ring the crow through all the gloomy day.

### The Last Leaf.

I saw him once before,  
And he passed by the door,  
The patient stones resound,  
As he totters o'er the ground  
With his cane.

### The Wind-flower and the violet.

The wind-flower and the violet, they perished long ago,  
And the briar-rose and the orchis dies amid the summer glow;  
But on the hill the golden-rod, and the aster in the wood,  
And a yellow pansy by the brook in autumn beauty stood.

### The snow had begun in the gloaming.

The snow had begun in the gloaming,  
And busy all the night,  
Had been heaping field and highway  
With a silence deep and white.

### The First Snow Fall.

Every pine and fir and hemlock  
"Wee-ermin" too deep for an ear,  
And the poplars' furrows of snow birds,  
Were ridged in deep with pearl.

### On a Bust of Dante.

See, from this counterfeit of him  
Whom Fortune's breath has blown away,  
How stern of frown, how grim,  
The fates of Tuscan song;  
There, but the burning sense of wrong,  
The look of suffering, and the small friendship for the lordly throng;  
Distrust of all the world beside.

### Bedouin Song.

From the Desert I come to thee  
On a stallion shod with fire;  
And the winds are left behind  
In the speed of my desire.

### On a Bust of Dante.

Faithful if this was image be,  
No dream his life was—but a fight!  
Could any Beatrice see  
A love that had no start or end?  
To that cold Ghibelline's gloomy sight,  
Who could have guessed the visions came  
Of truth, veiled with heavenly light,  
In circles of eternal flame?

### Hymn.

By the rule bridge that arched the flood,  
The shaft rose to April breeze unfurled;  
Here once the embattled farmers stood,  
And fired the shot heard round the world.

### To Helen.

Helen, thy beauty is to me  
Like those Nemean barks,  
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,  
The weary, wayward wanderer bore  
To his own native shore.

### The Arrow and the Song.

I shot an arrow into the air,  
It fell to earth, I knew not where;  
For so swiftly it flew, the sight  
Could not follow it in its flight.

### The Doorstep.

The conference mooring through at last,  
We boys around the vestry waited,  
To see the girls come tripping past,  
Like snow birds willing to be mated.

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