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## BREAKING A RECORD.

BY OWEN HALL.

Author of "The Track of a Storm."

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SYNOPSIS.

The story is related by the author, who has taken his bicycle on a hill picnic to the cave temples of Murishabad in India. The party is composed mostly of military men and their wives, and the author is the only one mounted on a wheel. While returning to the cantonments, the bicyclist notices that the party is being watched by a sinister-looking man who is following them. He reports this to Colonel Maitland and the latter, without raising alarm, gathers the party to-gether. After lutcheon the party starts forward, the wheelman ahead. Before long he sees the strange man again and turns back to warn his friends. As he does so be is fired upon but missed. moment later the baggage wagons in front are fired upon by a number of men. The party retires to an old fort near by where they will be able to repulse the at-

### PART III.

The ladies, a little pale and tremu-lous at the sight of bloodshed, had been assisted from their saddles and the horses led into the rulnous-looking courtyard of the fort, and yet we had heard no more of the enemy. It is the pause after danger and exertion that is the trying time, especially if the next act in the drama is doubtful. I think; or at any rate is seemed to me, as I stood a little apart, look-Ing out through the gateway and watching the strange effect of the blaze of the western sun as it fell on the two white hears that lay still and motionless among the ferns and flowers that encroached upon the road,

'We have all to thank you, Mr. Hall, for a most important service very ably carried out," said the colonel, coming up behind me.

"Don't speak of it, colonel," I said; it is really my machine that deserves the thanks. I guess you'll have to inroduce the bicycle into India for military purposes."

For some purposes I can see it would be invaluable," he answered, gravely. As he spoke I could see that his eye dwelt anxiously on the limited view before us,

"What do you supose these fellows will do next, colonel?" I asked, after a moment's pause. "Do you suppose they will attack us here?"

No; certainl not with any idea of storming the place," he said, decidedly . "Indeed, I am utterly at a lose to understand the business. I can only imagine they want plunder or ransom, and yet nowadays that kind of thing is almost unknown." As he spoke he turned away and crossed the courtyard to where a little group of officers were standing, discussing the situation in low tones. My eyes glanced absently along the edge of the ment there was a sharp "ping" in the air close to me and a bullet struck the

stone arch just over my head. exclaimed the colonel, "I thought so, gentlemen. In the meantime, Mr. Hall, pray come under shelter-there seems to be more fair shots

I adopted the suggestion and strolled over towards the little party of perhaps a dozen men with whom the colonel the first words I heard were from one of the yonger officers. "Excuse me, Colonel Maitland, but it would be quite impossible; surely one of ourselves-" The colonel glanced aroung quickly as if to impose silence on the group, and to have these were as good as any, then turning to me as I came up. There was a look of annoyance and anxiety on his frank, soldierly face, as he said: "Forgive me, Mr. Hall, for introducing your name behind your back in a matter like this. It is more than due you that I should take you into my confidence at once. The fact is, I am in a serious difficulty, as you can see. We must communicate with the troops at once, but the difficulty is how to do it. These fellows won't attack us here-at any rate not in daylight-and they probably rely upon starving us into some kind of terms. It is important not only that we should be relieved, but that this kind of thing should be put an end to at once for all. A single ompany, or at the most, two, would do it in half an hour, if we could only let them know."

"I'll ride down, colonel," said the young man who had spoken before, eagerly: "my horse is only too fresh nd he'd do it in two hours at the out-

Your horse, Mr. Chambers, is a gray, I am not mistaken-what chance do suppose either you or he would of getting through? No! I have

ghe pf all that, and am convinced is hardly possible on horseback. hope would be on foot, orand here the colonel paused uneasily 'I guess the bicycle would have a better chance, still, wouldn't it, colonel?"

"That was the very remark I was then you came up, Mr. Hall, of us are inclined to think

hat all honors of war should to the honors, colonel, I'm

ular about them; but it

TTCHING

strikes me we're all in the same boat and the point is who has the best chance of getting to shore. When all's said and done, colonel, I guess that's

The colonel turned to me and held out his hand cordially, "I knew you'd say so," he said, "and I thank you from my soul, sir. Of course there is danger -great danger, I'm afraid, even with your bicycle-but there cannot be a doubt that it gives you a vast advantage over any of the rest of us, and I believe on my soul that you'll do it.' Unwilling as I could easily see all the thers were to surrender to me the

post of danger, the truth of this view

was so evident that, after a little demur on the part of several of them, it was tacitly agreed that I should make the attempt. Under ordinary circumstances, as the colonel explained, the plan adopted would have been to trust to one of the native servants finding his way through, but in this case we had no one to send, as not one of them had been mounted, and therefore they must either have been taken or dispersed at the first alarm. It was clear that I had a better chance on my bicycle than anyone could have on foot, as in either case we must have kept to the track or road, being wholly unequal to finding a way through the jungle. I confess, however, that the more we discussed it the less promising it appeared. It was clear that I must wait for night to come on, as it would be impossible to run the gauntlet of the road in daylight, but even then the dangers seemed hardly less. A good part of the road was through open forest such as we had met with during the morning's journey, but part of it ran through a gorge or cleft in the mountains where the jungle was thick, and which we heard, as we came up, had been the scene of a good many accidents with tigers of late, I found myself mentally noting the various arrived at the most critical stage of my points of danger, and I confess they seemed formidable. There was first the road close at hand where I must run | might be the signal for a volley from the gauntlet of no one could say how many enemies; then, if I passed them, there was the risk—by no means a and gradually—inch by inch—raised triffing one in the dark—of losing my myself to my full height—still there way; and even if all went well so far, there seemed an excellent prospect of I did my best to peer into the heavy

of the table land. The colonel's expectations had so far been justified, for, excepting an oc-casional shot at any of the party who exposed himself, no attempt had been a darker hade, and showed a dim outmade to attack us. Little by little the line against the heaven. With one last remainder of the afternoon slipped quick glance around me I mounted the lookout. At the same moment Col. Maitland came hastily out of the large apartment which had been allotted to the ladies. "I believe they're going to try it after all. Have you a rifle, Hall?"

'No, colonel, but this is good enough, and I know what I'm doing with it," I replied, as I crossed the yard at his was talking. As I came nearer them side. There were already some half dozen men under the arched gateway, each armed with a gun of some sort Most of them, it is true, were sporting guns of one kind or another, but at such close quarters as we were likely

"Stand back!" the colonel cried, "and don't fire till they're close to the gateway." We drew back to the inside of the short, arched passage, and it was well we did so, for almost instantly a hot fire was poured into the mouth of the entrace by a wide circle of marksmen who sprung up among the shrubs and ferns on the tangled edge of the jungle. Suddenly it ceased, and the colonel's voice said, quietly: till I give the word!" We had only a second or two to wait, for with a rush and a cry a number of men with dark faces and white turbans hurled themselves at the mouth of the gateway. They surged into the passage till they eemed to be almost upon us. 'Now," he said, "fire!"

We fired, every man straight before him, into the leaping, struggling, yelling crowd of evil-looking, dark faces. Then, clubbing the guns, we rushed in upon them. How it happened I don't know, but they seemed to melt away before us as we rushed forward. One or two were partly down and struck fiercely at those of us who were nearest to them, and were in turn beaten to the ground with the gun stocks, but one of the others waited. They were yards in front of us as we emerged rem the gateway.

"Back!" shouted the colonel, "back!" We fell back just in time, for a number of shots were fired and two of our party were slightly wounded before we had regained the shelter of the

ld arched passage. We waited, somewhat breathlessly, for a renewal of the assault, but none With all the characteristic rapidity of the trophics the light waned. now that the sun had gone down, and the shadows closed in, soft and mysterious, on the forest and jungle. We had examined the little heap of bodies in the gateway, but none of them appeared to have any life left to care We dragged the bodies to one side, so as to leave a passage, and, having done so, we waited for the

PART IV.

"I won't attempt to conceal from you, Mr. Hall," the colonel said to me quietly, as we stood in the dark courtyard perhaps an hour after the attack, either the danger or the importance of this venture of yours. I think, even if we are attacked again, that we shall beat them off, but as you see, without relief we are practically at their mercy in the end, as we have no food, though, thank God, we shall have

olenty of water from the well."
"Look here," I said, "colonel, I think can pretty well guess what the risks are, and I'm willing to take the chances for the sake of the ladies, even if it wasn't about the best chance for myself as far as I can figure it up, so don't trouble about that. I may get through

odds are a shade on the wrong side, but you give me just seven hours— that's three to go and four to come oack before you try anything else. If onel-but somehow I don't think it'll come to that."

The old man put out his hand to me in the dark, and I gripped it hard. "It's though I cannot say that I saw them time I was going now," I added. "Say good-by for me to the ladies, colonel, was nearing the spot where the two and expect me back soon after day-

I gave his hand another shake, and led my bicycle through the gateway, keeping clear of the side where we had nyself to make out the heap in the dark, and I pushed on to get past it. The colonel followed me to the entrance, and stood under the heavy shadow to see me off. I crept cau-tiously out into the grayer darkness, and the last thing I heard was the colonel's whispered farewell: "Good-by We'll look for you in the morning."

It was dark-the soft, mellow darkness of the tropical night. I could see the road that led up to the fort, like a grayer belt stretching down the slope before me, hedged in by the darker shade of the overgrown wilderness on each side. Would it be safe to mount? Not yet, I thought, as I looked anxiously around me. The slope, I felt sure, was a place of danger, because there if anywhere, a watch was sure to be kept, and the slope might at any moment bring me against the sky line from the point of view of some watcher. I determined to wait till I reached the botom although I knew that I must by that means lose all the assistance which the slope would have given me. I bent myself almost double as I crept on: I drew the blcycle towards me till it too seemed to creep along the

The stillness was intense. breath of air seemed stirring, not a ound rose up under the silent heaven. I held my breath as I went, and yet the beating of my heart made a sound in my ears that seemed as loud as a drum. For the moment all my faculties seemed absorbed by that of hearing. On and on-a single step at a time, with a pause after each, till at last I reached the bottom. I waited a moment to listen. My fancy conjured up dark figures everywhere I turned my eyes, but there was not a sound. Should I mount now? Once more I decided against it. I looked ahead and I could just make out the dim gray riboon of the path stretching up into the darkness. I crouched and followed it. I had no idea it had been so long. I

could have sworn it had taken me an hour to climb the slope down which I had seemed to myself to fly only two or three hours before, but at last I had reached the top. I felt that I had journey. I must mount now, and for anything I could tell my mounting the guns of my unseen enemies. With a long breath I drew myself together, was not a sound. I looked around me; adding one more tiger tragedy to the shadow that lay like a pall over the ill-omened jungle that filled the long scene. I could see but little. Behind gorge leading out of the higher levels | me the iregular outline of the ruinous fort stood out against the soft purple sky; on either side varue shadowy

roused by a shout from overhead where ward, that I might keep to the dim two of the party were stationed as a path, I threw my weight on the pedals and they seemed to respond like living things. Away! And in another minute and trembled in the scarcely percep-

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and again I may not. Perhaps the I could feel that we were on the downward grade once more. Silently, but momentarily faster, I could feel that the wheels were turning, though in the elinging darkness I could see nothing you don't hear of me by that time you but the gray shadow of what I knew may reckon I've got into trouble, col- must be the path. Darker, and darker yet. The shadows crouched low and

black on either side, as if preparing to spring out upon me as I passed-I felt roads joined. The cliff was rising higher and higher on the right hand, throwing a still blacker shadow on the road, but I felt that I knew it now and it was with a feeling of triumph that I piled the bodies, though I seemed to bent forward and guided the machine in its free sweep round the wall of rock and into the wider and clearer road.

I could see more clearly now. The gray shadow of the road was more distinct, and I could even feel as if the trees that streatched their boughs over the road made a sort of corduroy of shadows on the track before me. But what was that in front? Something that glowed with a soft crimson halo in the darkness and made the end of the long vista down which I was looking seem like a cavern; something that sparkled and gleamed, and flashed with an intermittent light as I came nearer. It was the glow of an unseen For a moment my heart grew Had I come so far only to fail? cold.

thought of the last sight I had aught of the wagons just before the shots were fired, and I seemed to know that this was the spot chosen for an outpost of the enemy. It was beyond the bend of the road, and as I thought of it, the picture of that bend seemed to rise before me as I had seen the place on the way up some days before. could remember that the road swept and with a bold curve and fell to no time to hesitate. Already, while these thoughts were passing through my mind, I was close to the spot. Already I could fancy I saw the fire of the quick flashes of greater and lesser light that streamed out into the road by which I was silently approaching. I even thought I could hear strange voices, and catch the sounds of something like a laugh. It was now

tightly in my hand-I bent over my wheel-with my lips pressed tight and my teeth clenched I shot around the bend and into the full glare of the fire-I had not been mistaken. The wagons were there, drawn to one side of the road, and there, too, in the full light of the blaze, were eight or ten dark turbaned figures, standing or lying, their dark faces fixed in terrified astonishment their white eyeballs gleaming and startled at the apparation as I

or never. I gripped my revolver

swept out of the shadow above and plunged into that below them. One sharp, astonished cry, that sounded like a wall, was all that I heard, and I was past them and the road sped be fore me like the entrance of some black cavern. For some moments I held my breath, still expecting to feel the sting of a bullet or at least to hear the report of a gun. I did neither. The glow that followed me died away. I had passed the outpost and was free. It had been a near thing and it was

ometime before I had fully recovered myself. By the time I could think calmly once more of what lay before me I felt that I must have put several the most part given place clumps of bamboo, graceful, drooping palms of a dozen sorts, and great plumed masses of jungle grass that bent

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tible night breeze. It flashed into my which I had heard such great gorge tales. With the thought a cold feeling passed down my spine, and involuntarily I threw a quick, startled glance over my shoulder-tigers!

The shudder was followed by a quick

rush of blood that tingled all over me from head to foot, and I shook myself to throw off the feeling, which I knew be one of fear. I partly succeeded but it was creepy still. The moonlight, on which I had been congratulating myself so heartly only a few moments before, seemed now to make it worse The gray, livid light had something about it that was surely ghastly; the little trembling shadows that were thrown by the gray clumps and palms suggested something alive; there was something ghostly in the whisper of the night air through the leaves. As the thought passed through my mind I started—I hardly knew why, but yet started, and again that cold shiver ran down my limbs-nothing, that is but the moving panorama of leaves and grasses-nothing to be heard but the soft sigh of the night wind. I lis-Listened with the intensity which is impossible except in moments when the nervous tension is almost too great for endurance is almost too great for endurance. Yet there was surely something-there must have beenknew it, though I could see nothing and couldn't even fancy I had heard any zuspicious sound. There was something-some

thing that was not so much alarming as strange-a soft, low, rustling sound that was not the movement of the tall bamboos, nor the whisper of the breeze in the jungle grass. My heart stood still for a moment, but it was for a moment only. Then the hot swift blood rushed through my veins in a fiery tide. I didn't think, but I knew a long smooth descent like a great that my one hope of escape lay in the avenue between the trees. There was myself that I might do wonders if I chose on a track, but no racing track could possibly have held out such a rize as was before me now.

I bent forward over the wheel, strained each nerve and sinew to its utmost tension, and still each nerve and fiber of my body seemed to listen. I could hear it still-swift, stealthy untiring, cruel as death, it seemed to flit through the jungle-no sound-only a soft brushing sound, but more ter rible in its stealthy quietness than the loudest and most startling noise. On! on! The slope was down hill and I eemed even to myself to fly, but was I really going at a rate that could hope to outstrip that pursuit? Suddenly or the right where the higher ground came down to the side of the road a great clump of jungle grass that looked livid in the pale light waved with a quick motion. There was a flash-it might have been the light from living eyes or only the light from the shaken grass-and a bar of something dark shot out of the jungle with a low, fierce, hissing snarl. I crouched together instinctively, as if I had been struck, and at the same instant something passed me. I seemed to feel a sudden warmth upon my shoulder, and it was gone. rushed on at the same headlong speed, and yet as we went I heard a soft crash on my left-the tiger had sprung, and he had missed!

I hardly know what followed my es cape. I have a vague remembrance of enduring the fierce strain of a long effort-a sense of overpowering relief miles between me and the spot. I had when I was met by the first challenge made splendid progress, and now the as I reached the edge of the cantoncad was clearly visible in the new ment at Koondewalla, I can remember white light that filled the eastern sky- the astonished face of Colonel Gibson the moon was rising. By its light I as he looked from me to the note I had glanced absently along the edge of the fringe of jungle which bounded the view, when suddenly they were arrested by the glimmer of something white ed by the glimmer of something white edge of the saway. The sun sank lower and lower towards the western horizon until at last its rim was dipping behind the dense fringe of forest that bounded soft gliding motion of the wheel I felt the acustomer towards the western horizon until at last its rim was dipping behind the dense fringe of forest that bounded soft gliding motion of the wheel I felt the acustomer towards the western horizon until at last its rim was dipping behind the dense fringe of forest that bounded soft gliding motion of the wheel I felt the acustomer towards the western horizon until at last its rim was dipping behind the dense fringe of forest that bounded soft gliding motion of the wheel I felt the acustomer towards the western horizon until at last its rim was dipping behind the dense fringe of forest that bounded soft gliding motion of the wheel I felt the acustomer towards the western horizon until at last its rim was dipping behind the dense fringe of forest that bounded soft gliding motion of the wheel I felt the acustomer towards the western horizon until at last its rim was dipping behind the dense fringe of forest that bounded soft gliding motion of the wheel I felt the acustomer towards the western horizon until at last its rim was dipping behind the dense fringe of forest that bounded soft gliding motion of the wheel I felt the acustomer towards the western horizon until at last its rim was dipping behind the dense fringe of forest that bounded soft gliding motion of the wheel I felt the acustomer towards the western horizon until at last its rim was dipping behind the dense fringe of forest that bounded soft gliding motion of the wheel I felt the acustomer towards the western horizon until at to tall | nice business! We mustn't lose a moment; but ask the doctor to look after Mr. Hall-I'm afraid he has overdone

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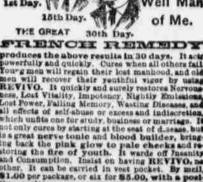
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