

Cairo magician who claimed to have under his control the jinns, or non-human spirit beings. Once I met a similar man, and the events which followed were so startling that I cannot, however, dismiss them as some trick of imagination nor can I believe in all that my own eyes saw. I wonder whether you would agree in putting them down to the jinns also. Really, it is a case for a 'jin-nologist', if such a type of researcher exists!

"A fakir visited me and asked me to join with him in an experiment involving these jinns. He belonged to the Himalayan people called Garhwalis. I did not care for that sort of experiment, however, and refused to have anything to do with it. But for several days he continued to press me, although still without success. Finally, he said that he would insist on carrying it out whether I consented or not. His explanation was that he had been associated with a jinn for many years. It had been in his service throughout that time. Now, however, he wished to renounce magic, or sorcery, as you might call it, and take to the higher path of a spiritual Yoga. To accomplish this he would have to give up the jinn and separate from it. The jinn replied that it would never agree to leave him unless he got it transferred to a suitable master. The fakir therefore went in quest of such a person who could relieve him of the jinn. For some reason which I never knew he picked on me. But I continued to tell him that I would have nothing to do with such sorcery.

"One night about two o'clock I seemed to awake with a terrible start. A feeling of suffocation overwhelmed me as though the bedroom were full of smoke and flames. Actually I was in a state midway between sleeping and waking. Then a voice, apparently within my ear, said, 'You shall pay for your obstinacy!' The choking sensation got worse and I felt that my last moments on earth had come. Fortunately I had the presence of mind to remember my Master, who was a great Hindu Yogi living in the Kangra Mountains. I prayed silently to him and begged for his protection. My Master's power eventually manifested, a sense of reassurance returned to me, the smoke seemed to clear away and the feeling of being suffocated gradually disappeared.

"Next day the strange fakir visited my house again. His very first words were: 'Do you know why you had that experience of suffocation last night? I shall tell you. My jinn was so angry with you for refusing to become its master that it tried to punish you. But your own Yogi-Master interfered and saved you. I am sorry it attacked you and wish I could have prevented it. Unfortunately, I have now lost much of my own control over the spirit and I was almost helpless. That day I attempted to transfer the jinn to your service without your knowledge. Had I succeeded it would have

helped your material affairs to an extent which you can hardly guess. But something went wrong with the magical ceremony which I performed. I left out one of the essential precautions, either through carelessness or forgetfulness. The result was that I could not control the jinn any more. Now that it has failed owing to the protection of your Master, the jinn has turned an evil attention towards me. It declares that it will kill me before the next new moon. I live in fear that I shall pass away from this world soon.'" The Prince stops his narrative to catch his breath.

"Such was the weird story I heard from the fakir," continued Prince Mussooree a minute later. "To me the whole thing seemed too utterly fantastic. With my modern education I was sceptical and could not credit his explanation. I preferred to believe that I had been the victim of an ordinary nightmare. But wait. . ."

"Pardon me, but are you sure you had not told the fakir about the experience before he attempted to explain it?"

The Prince is most emphatic.

"Not a single word. Not even to anyone else. The man knew all about it before his arrival. It was astounding. But listen to the sequel. I know that this will sound like a tale from the enchanted days of the *Arabian Nights*, but you have had enough experience of the Orient by now to know that these incredible marvels may have been and perhaps still are possible."

My companion pauses; a grave expression flits over his face.

"Very soon afterwards the fakir was attacked by that dread disease of galloping consumption. Eighteen days later he was dead. His end came exactly one day before the new moon—just as the jinn had threatened!"

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Another slow-footed day passes. Another turn of this restless rotating globe of ours. Another pleasant excursion with my Nepalese friend.

We descend a forest-covered gorge to a depth of a hundred and fifty feet or so and then, holding to the tree-trunks, make a horizontal deviation along a trail through the tangled undergrowth for some distance.

We proceed along the path for about half a mile. Then we make an abrupt turn to the left, and start a precipitous descent down the thickly-wooded sides of a deep gorge. The trees are chiefly sombre firs, with occasional clumps of sturdy oaks and a sprinkling of flowering rhododendrons here and there. Our journey begins to take on the colouring of a hasty flight from some wild beast, owing to the sharp gradient affording us no firm foothold and compelling