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MYNHEER JOE.

BY ST. GEORGE RATHBORNE.

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CHAPTER I.

[Continued.]

"When the time came to land, in order to save the city from the mob, Arabi being defeated, I found myself drawn in the company of one who was a stranger to me. He came from a British warship. Liked his looks from the first, and side by side we went through the streets of Alexandria. Firing all around us—got in numerous little engagements; was once surrounded by a pack of howling native troops, who thought they could whip us out. Mr. Grimes, you missed the sight of your life in failing to see how Gordon's friend stood off those cuss. Bless my soul! I can shut my eyes and look on the whole thing yet. I never saw such a fire-eater in action, and yet in repose Joe is as meek as a lamb.

"After that I froze to him. We saw some weeks in company—weeks I have never forgotten, because I loved that man. Then I was ordered to watch the Italian operations about Abyssinia, while Joe went to find Chinese Gordon. I lost track of him, but have to my cousin to feel the deepest interest in his work, as an explorer see, and only to Stanley and Emin Pasha. Now, you can understand my intense delight upon hearing that the man we are going to see is no other than my comrade in Alexandria, Mynheer Joe."

This is about the longest consecutive sentence Mr. Grimes has ever heard Sandy give utterance to, which marks the power of that magical name. On his part, the silver king does not prove an eavesdropper. He speaks of the man who interests them both as though acquainted with his past, but whether he has personally met him, Sandy finds it impossible to say.

Meanwhile, they have been making progress in the direction of the river. A light of some sort is positively needed in these streets after nightfall, moon or no moon, on account of the peculiar erection of buildings.

The houses, as a general rule, are three stories in height. As the street is only four or six feet, barely ten feet in width and each story of the houses projects beyond the one below it, it is an easy matter to touch hands from the neighboring roofs. Even this small space is often covered with mats to keep out the much light of day, which, reflected upon the white walls, dazzles the eyes.

In these narrow streets men stand in groups engaged in discussion or barter, now and then gently pushed aside by the rush of some turned advancing silently, the result of the desert, for, besides the donkey, the only burden-bearer allowed in the native section.

Here and there a Bab is seen moving along, as some sheik proceeds by sword but, as a general thing, darkness hangs over the street. In many of the houses, no doubt, gayety is conducted but Arab and Moor believe in keeping their houses sacred from the profane, and only large piles of whitened dust lie on every side.

As yet they have met with no adventure, and the distance between the second square and the river has been diminished by half. This savors of no good luck, for it is not always safe, a Frank, can traverse this region, as such are, unmolested.

Cairo abounds in rascals who do not fear the English law, however much they may respect the native kourbash and shocks. It is not a sin or a crime to rob a foreigner unless caught in the act. That is the way they look at it.

Sandy knows this, if his companion does not happen to be so thoroughly posted with regard to the customs of the city on the Nile. He continues to keep his eyes about him, and does not let the Arab who carries the flambeau get beyond his reach, knowing that in all probability in case of an attack the first act of the dusky rascal will be to fly and leave them in darkness to meet the foe. They have scarcely cut down the distance to a fourth and soon the light will fall upon the waters of the river, when the war correspondent bends suddenly forward and snatches the torch from the hand of the astonished carrier.

CHAPTER II.

THE MAN WHO SAW BRAVE GORDON FALL.

Mr. Grimes sees the action and does not appear to be at all surprised. Indeed, he rarely deviates from the steady repose that marks him as a wonderfully nervy man.

Something clinches in his hand—it is a revolver, and the light gives the blue steel a chill as well as a cold look. Evidently the stout tourist is ready to take care of himself.

Sandy has recovered the torch, which he now holds above his head. Half a dozen ragged forms have sprung into view beyond. Perhaps some arch has secreted them until now. There can be no mistaking their intentions, for quickly they advance, spreading out as if to prevent the Franks, who have thus wandered into their net, from escaping.

"Backsheesh!" they clatter like a lot of monkeys, holding out begrimed hands and scowling.

There is only one way to treat these rascals—if you comply with their demands they grow more and more importunate, until they finally proceed to openly rob their victim.

"Stand back!" cries Sandy with a roar, as he swings the flambeau around his head.

They understand enough English to know what he is saying at any rate, his actions are doubly significant—but, believing they can rule the ranch by mere force of numbers, the ragged beggars continue to push forward, thus forcing the two whites in.

Although small in point of stature, Sandy is a warrior, every inch of him, and, as might be expected from his nervous manner, possessed of an inflammable temper. When the nearest of the rogues pushes within reaching distance and clutches at him with busy fingers, the newspaper man brings the flaming torch, with a resounding thump, against the top of the beggar's head. It does not affect the link, beyond sending forth a shower of sparks, but the unfortunate recipient of the blow, finding sparks in his long hair, utters vociferous shouts and dances with the fervor of a dervish.

This is deemed a signal for a general assault all along the line, and for the space of sixty seconds there is seen a spectacle rarely equaled in the narrow streets of old Cairo.

At first the two foreigners are averse to using their firearms, and endeavor to inspire terror in the breasts of their enemies by a generous exhibition of muscle.

When Sandy has to dodge a fiendish blow from a wicked dagger he thinks it about time they proceeded to sterner measures.

Sandy opens on the ragtag and bobtail crowd, as he terms them, seeking to inflict wounds and create a diversion. He is immediately backed up by his companion. His strong, white teeth hold fast to his cigar, and even as he lets drive at a dark faced fellah who seeks to cleave him with an Algerian yataghan, the silver king puffs out a small cloud of smoke. Talk about coolness! Here you have it in a human bodyguard. Sandy feels the breath where nobody is but one enemy companion, and wonders whether he would show excitement in the heat of battle.

This sort of a reception is hardly to the liking of the cowardly curs who have appeared during simply because their numbers gave them confidence.

At the first sled most of them began to glance over their shoulders. This is a sure sign of a desire to retreat. Then comes better work. Sandy no longer waits for them to come, but with his revolver in one hand and the flaming torch whirling about his head, he leaps toward the footpads.

This is enough for them—they break and fly with cries of terror, some springing up the street while others go down in the direction of the river.

In a marvelously short space of time the street is empty save for one poor fellow, who, shot in the leg, is hopping off as fast as his good leg will carry him, calling on Mohammed to save him from the foreign tigers.

In any under city under the sun such a commotion at dead of night would create an immense excitement. Not so in Cairo. The white walls shut them in, pierced by minute windows that allow little chance of street gazing. Those who hear the sounds of war are discreet enough to know that it is none of their business, and they will be better off away.

"Look out behind you, sir!" calls Sandy, and the silver king turns suddenly to cover a creeping figure that has advanced from a darkened archway, whereupon the most piteous jargon is heard, and behold the suspected assassin turns out to be their torch bearer, who, having witnessed the battle affair from a place of security, is now crawling back to resume his interrupted duties.

They welcome him gladly, and Sandy relieves himself of the flambeau, glad to be rid of it. As there are no more footpads in view to give them battle, they again take up their line of march for the river, fortunately close at hand.

Mr. Grimes has had explicit directions from Mr. Turner how to reach the boat, and a suspicion has already entered his head that the ambuscade into which they ran could have been arranged by the sons of the origin, sight to relieve the rich engineer of his glittering wealth. These Arabs and natives are up to all manner of tricks to gain filthy lucre, and old travelers become so accustomed to treachery that they are surprised at nothing, and begin to depend upon themselves exclusively.

Heaven knows the left as it seems to bring to bear, very decidedly there is a strong element of probability about it, and in the same breath severe that if the occasion offers, he will sift [illegible] the rascals and [illegible] old rule if [illegible] to extract the truth.

The party calls out their guides in his native tongue, and the two answer the call next to new interest, as they remember why they have come here.

A minute later and they stand upon the edge of the Nile. Just here the bank is high, and at this season of the year the water reaches its lowest stage to the south, though at Cairo there is always plenty.

Below them they can see lights upon numerous vessels, some anchored out in the river others fast up at the docks. Voices too, come over the water from the west, men are seated on some of the corsairs that ascend the river from the Mediterranean. All the typical boats seen upon this great sea can be found on the lower Nile. Here are schooners, brigs, ships, men-of-war, the baggala, felucca, xebec, settee and even a patamer from India, while numerous smaller craft and dahabeahs stand to travel on the Nile or the surface of the river by day, making a scene worth remembering.

Our two friends can discern nothing of this now since darkness rests like a pall over the water, relieved only by the riding lights and lamps on board the numerous craft. Their attention is directed at once to a point immediately below, where the glimmer of several lights betokens the presence of a boat.

As they advance, they can see the clean-cut model of a new dahabeah and can see the dark-skinned Egyptian sailors squatted on deck forward while aft, the cabin, painted snow white, is easily distinguishable.

The boat is tied to a dilapidated dock, but, for some reason, it is anchored a dozen feet away. A long gang plank leads from the shore on board. Sandy orders the torch bearer to lead the way, and in order to make sure of the fellow's attendance when they have need of his services, he neglects to pay him.

Thus they trip across the plank and reach the roof of the cabin, where the captain meets them, a man with grizzled beard, white turban and flowing robes. Upon his face Sandy sees a look of perplexity and disappointment, and from this moment he knows the truth that they really owe their adventure to the rogues, who, believing millionaire Franks would come to the dock, arranged to have his pockets tapped while en route.

These captains all talk fairly good English, although their latinized for the foreigner seems to be an abortion of quality. Outwardly they may appear jolly and as meek as lambs, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

Sandy has a habit of pushing himself forward, not that he means to be rude, but it is a characteristic of his unusual energy. To his credit be it said the same thing was done him in times of danger. He is always found in the van.

"This boat is the Alice?" he asks briefly.

The captain removes the stubby pipe from his mouth and answers in such a jargon that Sandy is sure he has found an American, and, to whom you are chained for the season."

Another salaam and

"Unable to see Kimberly, [illegible] me to see the man [illegible] the man who [illegible] my friend."

The native expresses his [illegible] cheerily, as though [illegible] just where he should place Sandy. Then he smiles (deeply) as Sandy sees his hand.

"I has friends there more. I have suffered at the hands of El Mahdi, and he were [illegible] to the Lord's Prophet [illegible] Sandy."

Sandy complies, and gives the old rogue such a Freemason grip that it wrings a groan from the dark-skinned owner of the dahabeah Alice.

"Now lead us to your guest. We are in haste," he says, with the assumption of authority that for one centuries to designate, for, despite his lack of muscle, the proportions he will compel obedience. It is not [illegible] to command. It is not [illegible] makes a leader the New West.

"Follow, gentlemen," says the native, with a [illegible] wave of the hand.

They obey willingly. The deck of the cabin is closed by [illegible] are the steps leading to the [illegible] on the roof over which a awning is stretched, for it is hot like the nether lies during the day, [illegible] the cabin beginning and [illegible] extends to the stern. When the [illegible] they behold a splendid interior. Money has not been spared in fitting out the Alice, and only a millionaire like Turner could [illegible] such a lovely craft for the season.

A lamp is turned low, and [illegible] things of a dimness [illegible] the interior, but the [illegible] have already discovered the [illegible] of a man upon a divan.

"Dinner, gentlemen," says the old man.

Straight [illegible] the [illegible] rises to the light, which [illegible] to [illegible] to send [illegible] of time. [illegible] the [illegible] from [illegible] longer, [illegible] the [illegible] of the Nile [illegible] one arm [illegible] that [illegible] [illegible] there with [illegible] them.

[illegible] though [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]