

Hylde? Had the public got a hint of the true story of her flight, in spite of all Windlehurst had done? Was Hylde's name smirched, now, when all would be set right? Had everything come too late, as it were?

"There's two ways that his lordship's death concerns Claridge Pasha," answered Soolsby shrewdly, for though he guessed the truth concerning Hylde and David, his was not a leaking tongue. "There's two ways it touches him. There'll be a new man in the Foreign Office—Lord Eglinton was always against Claridge Pasha; and there's matters of land betwixt the two estates—matters of land that's got to be settled now," he continued, with determined and successful evasion.

The Duchess was deceived. "But you will not tell Claridge Pasha until I have told her ladyship and I give you leave? Promise that," she urged.

"I will not tell him until then," he answered. "Look, look, your grace," he added, suddenly pointing towards the southern horizon, "there he comes! Ay, 'tis Our Man, I doubt not—Our Man evermore!"

Miles away there appeared on the horizon a dozen camels being ridden towards Assouan.

"Our Man evermore," repeated the Duchess, with a trembling smile. "Yes, it is surely he. See, the soldiers are moving. They're going to ride out to meet him." She made a gesture towards the far shore where Kaïd's men were saddling their horses, and to Nahoum's and Kaïd's dahabieh, where there was a great stir.

"There's one from Hamley will meet them first," Soolsby said, and pointed to where Hylde, in the desert, was riding towards the camels coming out of the south.

The Duchess threw up her hands. "Dear me, dear me," she said in distress, "if she only knew!"

"There's thousands of women that'd ride out mad to