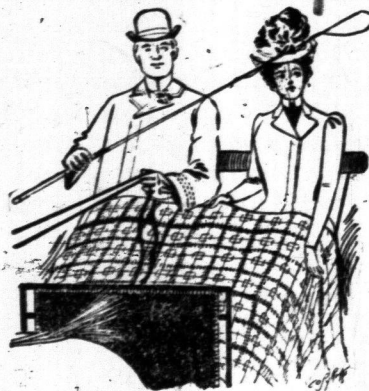


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**THE MESSENGER
FROM KHARTOOM**

BY ST. GEORGE RATHBORNE.

Author of "Dr. Jack," "Dr. Jack's Wife," "Miss
Caprice," Etc., Etc.

The Russian gives him a look that means much.

"Never fear, Monsieur Lamar; I am equal to the occasion."

They drop the subject and knock the balls about for some time longer. It is evident, however, that the baron's letter has broken up his style, for he plays like an amateur and finally drops his cue in disgust, excusing himself to his friend.

He hardly knows how to pass the time away until evening, and the hours must seem like an eternity to his impatient soul.

During the afternoon he has callers at his rooms, several of them come to confer with him in a mysterious way. It is evident that the baron has connections here in Bombay with a powerful clique. This makes it doubtful whether the clever little scheme of the Americans can be made a success, for some one of these elements may happen upon the game and discover the truth. Still, such things as Myneer Joe and Mr. Grimes can be trusted to stand up against all comers and hold their own.

Thus the day draws to a close, and the moments which creep over the city on the sacred river—a night that will be fraught with great events to several of our characters.

All hail the coming of evening with joy, for the hours have dragged at the last. Even the natives rejoice at the setting of the sun. Some of them are worshippers of the great fire-god, and can be seen doing reverence to his descent behind the watery horizon. There are Mohammedans on their knees with their faces toward distant Mecca, oblivious of all save their prayers, accompanied by the most fantastic bending of the body.

These sights are so common in all Eastern countries that the old traveler fails to notice them beyond a casual glance.

Baron Popoff, after his dinner, proceeds to make an elaborate toilet, gives always something of a dandy, but on this particular night he waxes his mustache with particular care, so that the ends stand out like needles.

When ready to sail forth, he surveys himself in the glass, smiles with satisfaction, as though personally well pleased with his appearance, gives a last twist at his mustache and then leaves the house.

Already he has seen to his preparations, and a shigram is waiting at the door, managed by one of his own men. The baron is suspicious by nature and likes not the idea of being driven about the dark streets of Bombay by one in whom he puts no confidence.

"Kito, you have your orders," he says in English, which language most Hindoos speak.

"Oh, yes," says the hotel; it is all right," replies the Hindoo driver, who has been brought, body and soul, with Russian gold.

Away they go; and on route the baron chuckles to himself a dozen times as he pictures the consternation and jealous rage of his Yankee rival at finding him so favored by the fair American.

He caresses the scented note from time to time, and has read it so often that each word comes distinctly before him, thus:

"The writer begs leave to inform the baron that he will receive him at eight this evening and be at home to no one else. Regarding the proposition contained in his letter, the near future can decide better than the present."

What can he make of this other than a willingness to surrender? How the cunning diplomat, who in times past has met and successfully wrestled with the most masterly questions of the day, now finds little god Cupid, who throws dust in his eyes and temporarily blinds him.

At the appointed time the vehicle pulls up before the hotel, and Baron Popoff alights. He bows to several people, looks at his time-piece, smiles to note the exactness of his arrival; for the diplomat is a great stickler at punctuality, and, if going to his execution, would want the volley fired at the proper time to the second.

Then he enters the carvansary and gives his card to a waiter. Presently that functionary returns with the information that the lady is in the parlor, and conducts the baron thither.

He finds Molly and her father in the small parlor, quite alone. The presence of the senator is not exactly to the liking of this ardent lover; but since the game seems to be playing into his hands, he does not see how he can feel very badly about it. He believes he has won by virtue of his name, and the father as well as the daughter favors his suit.

No one knows better how to carry himself in the drawing-room than the baron, for he has mixed much with royalty in his own land and other countries where he has been sent as Russia's agent.

He apologizes to Demosthenes Tanner for the scene in Cairo, and hopes it has been quite forgotten. At this the giant from Illinois laughs good-naturedly and declares that all parties ought to be satisfied; at least, as he and the baron came out of the small end of the horn together, there is no reason they should be foes.

Conversation becomes general, and the diplomat exerts himself to make a good impression on the stout legislator and his daughter. He has a large bump of conceit, and believes that as the evening passes he draws nearer his goal.

Several times he finds an opportunity to whisper to Molly. She blushes beautifully and holds a warning finger up, saying:

"Not yet, baron. You must wait until we know each other better."

Then the courteous Russian bows and smiles and mentally puts his shoulder as he sees victory in the near future.

Baron Popoff, so the mighty Samson of old may have congratulated himself when making love to Delilah, never dreamed that he would awaken to find his head snored and his strength gone.

So many another giant in the history of the world has been brought to his Waterloo by means of the blinding god Cupid.

One thing gives the baron the keenest delight. He decides the secret cup to be—drugs. While engaged in an animated conversation with Molly, as he describes the glories of the Russian capital in winter, he chances to glance toward the end of the little parlor.

Here a fine mirror is set in the wall, for the furnishings of the room are superb. It is in this glass he sees what chagrin him.

A man stands in the large drawing-room—a man he has good reason to remember, since it was his sword that pierced the baron's shoulder under the palms on the bank of the Nile. Myneer Joe makes no move to advance.

He seems to have come upon the scene by accident, and he rooted to the spot. The wily diplomat sees his opportunity. He will now proceed to put the weapon more painful than a sword into the Yankee's heart.

"If you will pardon me for taking your hand, Miss Tanner," pleaded the baron, "I will explain to you how the ladies are supposed to act when being presented to the czarina, as I hope ere long you will have that pleasure."

She allows it, of course, although half understanding his motif. That is the picture Myneer Joe gazes upon—his hated rival in the act of raising Molly's sweet hand to his lips.

All the while the baron has one eye on the mirror. He sees the look of fury upon Joe's face, notes that he presses a handkerchief to his brow, as though struck a blow, and, turning, rushes out of the room.

Then the diplomat smiles. He no longer feels the pain in his shoulder. It has been wiped out by this last clever stroke of fortune, since he believes he has given better than he received—a Roland for an Oliver.

The Russian's cup is full to overflowing. He thinks fortune has turned to smile upon him again. It is like a to-begotten slide—one has to toil up the hill, but the exhilaration of the descent pays for the trouble.

In that descent, so speedy and grand, all obstacles must be swept out of the way. Since Myneer Joe is one of these obstructions he will find himself hurled through space perhaps before he knows what is wrong.

Little does the wily baron suspect that all this affair is a deep laid scheme, which has for its foundation the desire to rid the little company of his hated presence. They find it impossible to be in the same air as the diplomat, and hence there must be an exodus on the part of someone.

Like everything else in this world, the evening must come to an end, although the baron makes no note of the lapse of time. He finds the old senator yawning frequently with a noise like the rushing of a mighty wind through the forest, and wonders why he does not betake himself off; but the legislator shows no signs of doing it. Evidently the senator must content himself with the progress already made, and leave the balance for another time.

He makes an engagement for the following morning—immediately after breakfast he will be on hand with a palkee gharry to take Miss Tanner and her father to meet some of the highest dignitaries of India, just at this time, charming to be in Bombay. The American girl accepts the invitation in a way that at another time might excite a little suspicion in the brain of the diplomat, but just now he is too intoxicated by love to notice it. This is what Miss Molly says:

"We will be ready to go with you, when you come, baron. Eight o'clock, remember."

"To the minute," he responds, bowing low over her hand and even daring to press it.

The young girl smiles as she bids him good night, while Demosthenes bubbles over in his effusive way. Both are thinking of the same thing, that at eight o'clock on the following day Baron Popoff in order to keep his engagement may have to walk over miles of green water, unless the carefully laid plans of the plotters fail (Cope's).

The next hour will tell. It is fraught with deep suspense for Molly. The senator retires, but she continues to keep her seat in the parlor, awaiting news.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The baron finds his vehicle awaiting him just outside the hotel. His driver is on hand, and with his usual form shows the nobleman to the carriage. Some jocular remark is made by the baron, who is in such a decidedly jolly humor that he can even notice a meenal.

Just as they are about to move off, a man gives a signal, and the baron stops the vehicle while he holds a low consultation. The driver sits like a statue. If he hears, he gives no evidence of it; at any rate, the talk must be a sealed book to him, for the men converse in Russian.

Move on, Kito," comes the order. The stranger has not entered the vehicle, and yet, when the driver casts a look behind, he fails to see him. Of



THE LIGHT THAT SAVES.
One dark night during the siege of Santiago Harbor a Spanish Torpedo boat darted out under cover of darkness to launch its deadly missile against an American war vessel. If she had been struck she would have gone to the bottom. What saved her? Was it her big 13-inch guns? No, it was her search-light: the dazzling white beam of light that shot straight out like a sword-thrust through the darkness, revealed the approaching danger.

What is it that saves thousands of men from death every day in the year when the deadly foe of disease is creeping unsuspected upon them? It is the white light of science; the educated understanding that reveals the source of danger and indicates the exact point of attack.

While the ordinary doctor gropes around, with the feeble tallow-candle light of stereotyped, conventional, routine treatment, a physician like Dr. R. V. Pierce, of Buffalo, N. Y., instantly illuminates the subject with the clear day-light ray of practical knowledge; the irresistible search-light of advanced and life-sustaining science.

"I was afflicted for four years," says John F. Zingsheim, Esq., of No. 4 Lark St., Amsterdam, N. Y., in an earnest letter to Dr. Pierce. "My suffering was extreme and the trouble gradually increased notwithstanding the fact that I tried many different kinds of treatment. After becoming physically incapacitated and unable to work at all, and after much hesitation, I wrote you. I am very happy to state that your advice has done me great good. You advised Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, and also his 'Pleasant Pellets.' I must here state that they have cured me of my trouble, and I am most heartily for what you did for me. All suffering has vanished and I have gained about twenty-five pounds in weight. I used only one bottle of 'Golden Medical Discovery' and one vial of the 'Pellets.'"

Do not hesitate to write to Dr. Pierce. He will send confidential advice absolutely free. Send 30-cent stamps to cover cost of customs and mailing only, for paper-covered copy of the Common Sense Medical Adviser. Cloth-binding 50 stamps. Address: Dr. R. V. Pierce, Buffalo, N. Y.

course, the shadows are dense about the trees near the hotel, and it may be he has secreted himself among these. Again it is possible he hangs on behind the vehicle.

Away they go, in a cloud of dust, in the direction of the city proper, where lights still abound, and there is no sign of sleep, such as would be falling upon an American city at this hour.

The baron leans back in his equipage and gives himself up to delicious reflection. He has won many diplomatic victories in the past, but, really, for the life of him, he cannot remember one that has given him half as much genuine pleasure as this, signal conquest.

To be Continued.

CHARING CROSS.

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Byes returned home Monday evening from being on their honeymoon to Woodstock and eastern points. Their many friends wish them a happy and successful life.

A number of the young people of the city, attended the ball given at Cedar Springs Wednesday last.

Miss Fanny Walker is visiting friends in Blenheim.

John Pardo purchased a valuable team from Peter Scott this week.

Wm. Walker is making preparations for his ice bee in the near future.

The Misses Robinson, of St. Thomas, are visiting relatives in this village.

The house of Leckard Pardo, Middle Road, was destroyed by fire Tuesday evening. Most of the contents were saved with the exception of a few clothes. The fire started from a defective chimney from the fireplace.

We are pleased to learn that Charles Hawlett is recovering from an attack of typhoid fever.

Mrs. John Pardo is in Blenheim, attending her mother, who is seriously ill with pneumonia.

E. B. West met with a mishap to upset a load of hay in the ditch, while on the way to the village on Tuesday.

Dr. R. Edwards, our school teacher, is slightly indisposed.

F. W. Drewery left Saturday morning to visit relatives in Belmont.

The Charing Cross Gun Club intend holding their next shoot on Saturday next.

IN TIME OF PEACE.

Hipworth—I'd like to make a bargain with you.

Sykes (of the next flat)—What?

Hipworth—If you won't give your boy a horn on Christmas I won't give mine a horn.

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Positively cured by these

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Small Pill. Small Dose. Small Price.

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Insist and demand

Carter's Little Liver Pills.

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The holiday presents have to be bought—you will find a good assortment of Fancy Lamps and Chiga. Also a full line of Dinner Sets, \$5.50 and upwards, Tea Sets \$2.50, Chamber Sets \$1.80. They are low in price. Call and see them.

Our New Fruits are in:

3 lb. Selected Raisins..... 25c
3 lb. New Currants..... 25c
1 lb. Mixed Peel..... 20c
Pure Lard, per lb..... 9c
Mixed Candy 7c lb., 4 lbs. for..... 25c

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John McConnell

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