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## THE MESSENGER FROM KHARTOUM

BY ST. GEORGE RATHBORNE.

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

"Really, my dear fellow, you have me. There would be but one course for me to pursue, and that to cast his slur in his teeth, as a brave man like Mynheer Joe has done."

"Exactly! I knew it! Then blame him no more, but rather honor his daring. When this cur had given the insult—what then?"

"Every eye was turned on Mynheer Joe, for we all understood what was meant. I saw him shut his teeth hard, but only a slight frown passed over his bronzed face. Leaning over the table he looked the baron full in the eye and said calmly: 'I return the compliment, baron. That flag could never wave over the land that harbors a Siberia.' And quick as a flash he emptied his wine glass full in the other's face."

Sandy's face glows with enthusiasm. He is proud of his countryman. He looks at the explorer, and does not see that Joe is impressed with the danger into which he has been thus drawn by circumstances.

"I have great confidence in his ability, and his lucky star seems in the ascendant," he remarks, at which the officer says in a low tone:

"Privately, between us, Sandy, I earnestly hope he will do the baron. Besides the regard we feel for him as a cousin from across the water and the man who avenged Gordon, you understand that we have no love for the Russian, whose mission to India we can suspect."

"Yes, and it's my private opinion that when he runs against Joe he'll wish he had taken some other course."

It is a good thing to have a sanguine friend, but Sandy does not deceive himself from the company. They understand his going, and do not wonder at it. Any man who may be called upon at sunrise to face the Russian duelist would be a fool to stupefy his senses by lingering at a banquet table.

He is immediately joined by Sandy and the pseudo silver king, and the three walk out under the stars to talk. Joe is soon informed with regard to all that Mr. Grimes has learned.

The three presently bring up at the gymnasium, for it is the wish of the latter gentleman that the explorer shall show what he can do, so a comparison may be drawn and a decision rendered as to what Joe's course must be when he receives the challenge expected.

A very few persons are present. Mr. Grimes speaks to the man in charge, and they are made welcome as friends of the officers. The same professor with whom the baron played is present, and with pleasure he agrees to fence with the American, no doubt believing he will have a chance to recover his prestige, lost in the bout with the baron that day.

When Mynheer Joe takes off his coat and vest and puts a belt around his waist, he is ready for the affair. Upon his feet he has drawn a pair of rubber foot holds that will keep him from slipping.

He bares his right arm, and Sandy sees the professor glance at his superb biceps as though pleased. Then the man of folk takes his wrist and feels it.

"A wonderful arm, monsieur," he says, with kindling eyes. "With practice you would be a magnificent swordsman."

"So old Duval used to tell me," replies Joe.

"Ah, sacre! You take lessons from him, ze greatest master in Paris. For haps I shall not be able to have ze revenge after all."

Meanwhile Joe rolls up his left sleeve in the same way, an action the professor regards with concern, but which Mr. Grimes takes to mean what he has fondly hoped.

"Ready, professor?"

The foils click and begin to writhe like snakes, passing in an out with the rapidity of thought. Sandy and Mr. Grimes stand near by. They have a deeper interest in this engagement than appears on the surface.

After looking on for a minute Mr. Grimes heaves a sigh of relief.

"He'll do, Sandy. I'll stake my all on him even against the Russian. Watch the magnificent play of the wrist. Heavens! I've seen a man wield a sword before, but never like that. Hark! What does he say—that he finds himself rusty and sluggish. Deuce take it, what can he do when in trim, then? Note the poor professor. He actually looks scared. His revenge doesn't pan out very well, does it? I think I'll have to give him a turn myself to make him feel good."

Thus the usually taciturn Mr. Grimes rattles on, while Sandy can hardly keep quiet.

"Jove! He tosses his weapon into his left hand. Again he is at the professor like a tiger. The poor devil has had the button against his heart a dozen times. What d'ye think of that left-handed play, old fellow?" laughs Sandy. His companion squeezes his hand, for once showing excitement.

"I feel as jolly as if an old uncle had died and left me his fortune. The baron will mean his match. It will be a royal battle. No danger of our Joe getting hurt. Yes, no matter how well he uses the firearms, I shall recommend swords. The other way both may be killed; here, wounds are more possible. Swords are gentlemen's weapons truly. Look! He hunts the professor—he has him utterly demoralized—he throws down his foil and holds up his hand! Enough, gentlemen!"

It is as Mr. Grimes has said. The Frenchman has been rattled until he can no longer use his weapon. He laughs and naturally.

"Monsieur must have his little joke. He is ruddy this night. 'What of me?' he exclaims, shaking Joe's hand."

They chat for a short time, anecdotes of the famous sword master of the Rue de Sevres being in order. Then they sauntered over to the shooting gallery, while Mynheer Joe does some good work. Although he knows how to handle a revolver in a way few men can equal, Mr. Grimes does not change his mind. With the sword Joe is absolutely safe, and as much can never be said concerning pistols.

He is pleased to note, however, that at twenty paces, Joe is at his best, though inferior to the baron on either side of this figure.

Then Mr. Grimes meets the prof. sec. who has as much fun with him as he is afforded Joe. The stout, red-faced traveler is not built for a swordsman, and soon tires of being driven into a corner like a rat at bay; but he has put the professor into a good humor.

The three friends pass out into the night and head toward Shepherd's close by. Again is the grand square illuminated and the clattering of many tongues heard. It is about the same, day and night, here, at times more noisy than at others, but only comparatively quiet from midnight until morning, which period the countless curs of the city select for their serenade, baying the moon, if there be one, snarling and fighting in the public square and carrying on like a pack of hyenas let loose.

As they enter the hotel, a pair of eyes fasten upon them, and a man starts forward. Mynheer Joe recognizes a French officer. It is the same whom Mr. Grimes watched in conversation with the baron the morning before. He holds something in his hand—a letter, judging from its appearance.

"Now we have it," mutters Sandy, as he and Mr. Grimes purposely fall back a pace.

The courteous French officer bows. "Pardon! Am I addressing Monsieur Miner?"

"That is my name, sir," replied Joe, calmly.

"I have something for you, monsieur."

"Thank."

He tears it open, glances at it, smiles in a careless way, and passes it to Mr. Grimes.

"You are Captain Faintout, I presume?"

"Oui, monsieur, at your service," bows, in.

"Captain Faintout, my friend Colonel Grimes. He will second me. All arrangements made with him will stand. Good evening," and Mynheer Joe walks complacently away, followed by an admiring glance from the Frenchman, who, under his breath, mutters:

"Parbleu! A brave man, deserving of a better fate than a dog's death at his hands; but it is the decree of fortune shrugging his shoulders."

He and "Colonel" Grimes walk aside to make all necessary arrangements. This is the first time the American has been a second in a duel, but he has a pretty fair idea as to what his duties are, and always carries a clear head upon his shoulders.

The arrangements are soon made. Joe, as the challenged party, has the choice of weapons, time and place. Swords are selected, and the officer promises to have a pair on the ground so exactly alike, that Joe shall pick his own first.

It is also arranged that the meeting occur on the Mokattam Hills above Cairo, an hour after sunrise on the following morning. Noticing the Frenchman's look of wonder at such haste, "Colonel" Grimes adds quietly:

"My principal sails for India on Saturday, and cannot delay for any by-play such as this. To-morrow it must be."

"Advise him not to be too hasty in ordering his state room, second. There's many a slip betwixt the cup and the lip," says the Frenchman with significant meaning.

"Don't worry about Mynheer Joe. I know he is able to hoe his own row. Monsieur le Capitaine. 'We meet then at daybreak on the Delhi wharf.'"

"Yes—the boats will be in readiness. I shall have two, because my principal may have scruples about returning alongside his victim."

Mr. Grimes laughs quietly at this thrust. He imagines there may be a surprise in store for Captain Faintout as well as the baron, and the pseudo silver king is a firm believer in the old maxim that he laughs, lest he should be laughed at.

So he bids the Frenchman bon soir and resumes his talk with Sandy, while Faintout walks out of the hotel, looking back at the red-faced American, whose eccentricities, no doubt, have made him believe the other a bizarre specimen.

So it is all arranged.

Each principal is to have a second and an additional friend. The Frenchman has suggested bringing a doctor, at which Grimes smiles.

"We expect to have no need of one; but who knows? My principal would not like to have a human life on his hands, especially a white man's. Yes, bring your doctor along, with plenty of lint and bandages, for sword wounds are sometimes ugly things."

In this way he declares, he gave the other a Roland for an Oliver, and broe even. Sandy takes it all in eagerly. As a newspaper man, he has seen many strange sights, but yet has never had the luck to be present at a duel. The nearest he came to it was when he endeavored to see the Bennett-May affair across the water, and arrived on the duellist ground just in time to see the

There is no argument so good as an absolute, plain, truthful statement of fact. There is nothing so interesting as fact. In the true happenings in the everyday life of every-day people are materials for most thrilling novels. These are every day stories of heroism, suffering and the final triumph of good over evil—of happiness finally crowning endeavor. Here is a case in point:

In the county of Escambia in Alabama is the little town of Plomaton and there lives Mrs. Mollie Grimes. She was a good wife and mother but several years ago she found her health slipping away from her. She realized that this meant the inevitable nervousness and irritability that would surely lose for her the affection of her children and husband, and that as her health declined discord and misery would appear in her home. She was filled with the loving motherly instinct, but two miscarriages in succession almost broke her heart. She had almost lost hope when the clouds rolled away and the light of health and happiness returned.

She tells her story in these words: "I was almost heart-broken to think I could not raise any more children by miscarriages and I fully expected to lose another when, in August 1897, I learned of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription and took it up."

After taking Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription and took it up. It after being born in November. With my other children I had suffered everything that flesh could suffer but this time I was in perfect health and had a very easy time of it. I was only a short time. I cannot praise Dr. Pierce's medicine enough for I believe they certainly saved my baby's life and maybe my own life as well. I took the 'Favorite Prescription' and also the 'Pleasant Pellets.' The 'Pleasant Pellets' act like a charm."

carriages drive hastily away. It begins to look as though he may now have the desired opportunity, and he means to make the most of it, as such affairs are not an everyday occurrence in these degenerate times.

Mr. Grimes, having been made a master of ceremonies, has a weight of responsibility resting on his shoulders; but he knows the best he can do at present is to see that Joe gets a decent night's sleep and is up betimes.

The pseudo silver king has a watch of peculiar make, with an alarm that can be set for any time, just like a clock. Placed under his pillow, it will make noise enough at the designated hour to arouse a light sleeper such as himself. He has depended on it many a time and not been disappointed.

Mynheer Joe has found Molly in the hotel parlors, and seems to be well content to pass the balance of the evening in her company, drinking the intoxicating cup of love from her clear gray eyes.

Mr. Grimes leaves him alone. This will not make his arm nervous in the morning or his eye unsteady. Better to be in her company listening to her songs than drinking with convivial companions, as the baron is doing at this same hour, playing baccarat.

The news has gone abroad—strange how such things do travel, as might the mist that comes silently in from the sea and spreads over the land like magic. People pretty generally know that the insult has been passed between the Russian baron and the American traveler who was with Gordon in the Sudan. Knowing also the reputation one of these men has as a duelist, it is set down as certain that a meeting must take place soon.

to be Continued.

### SIXTH CONCESSION, DOVER.

Our friend, Miss Clark is teaching in the Richmond school. A great number of people attended the debate last Wednesday evening.

Some of the town boys have a beaten track through the field to the Buldon.

D. R. Burr and R. Grant are busy cutting logs.

Fred Fosy is thinking of going to the States.

James Jack and sons are keeping batch.

E. Payne has been appointed trustee for the next three years. Mr. Loney is going to board the teacher.

We are sorry to learn that our friends, Mrs. Robert Gray and family, are going to leave us.

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