

THE ST. JOHN EVENING TIMES, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1904.

## Hemming, The Adventurer

BY  
THEODORE  
ROBERTS

(Continued.)  
The thick voice of the colonel made reply in spluttering oaths.  
"No more of that," said Hemming, severely.  
Marion heard the crunch of his heels on the path as he wheeled. Cuddiehead held his breath, the better to hear, and a quotation about a nation divided against itself came imperfectly to his mind.  
The heavy footsteps of the native officer were heard retreating. Presently Hemming rounded the bridge of roses, and stood by the fountain. By the faint starlight the watchman saw that he was smiling. He lit a cigarette with deliberate care, and dropped the match into the shallow basin of the fountain. He lit another match and looked at his watch. He had the air of one keeping a tryst. Santosha came out of the shadows beyond, booted and spurred. The two men shook hands and whispered together. Their backs were turned square upon the companions of the bench. Then Hemming produced a long packet of papers and gave them to Santosha.

"Mr. Tetsen has signed them all," he said, "and the major will see to the business part of it. Impress the importance of the matter upon him, and then hurry back, for I'm afraid these idiots intend making this unpleasant for us. And now, old man, good luck and God bless you. It is a fine night for a ride."

"A beautiful night," replied Santosha, "and on such a night I must either make love to my friends or trouble for my enemies."

"He turned on his heel and clanked away."

All this time Marion had sat as one spellbound. Now she looked toward the other end of the stone seat. Cuddiehead had gone. She called to Hemming. He started at the sound of her voice. "You here?" he said.

"Yes, and so was Mr. Cuddiehead a moment ago. But he sneaked off the little cat."

"Did he see the papers?" he asked.

"Yes, I'm sure he did," she replied. "You had better run into the house," he said. "I'll look for the spy."

Marion hastened indoors, and told Hicks all she knew about the trouble. The young man looked deeply concerned.

"I wish Hemming had come to us a year ago," he exclaimed.

"Could he have helped it?" she asked.

"I believe he would have opened our eyes, dear, before things got into such a awful mess," replied her lover.

"But surely we are not in any danger," she urged. "Surely Mr. Hemming and father can quiet them."  
"Our lives are safe enough, but the little fools may break some windows. You see, dear, the President and I have not watched them as we should. We have let them rob us right and left, and now, when Hemming tries to spoil their game, and force them to divy up, they evidently want to bully us. It's in their blood, you know—this revolution business."

Having thus unbosomed himself, Hicks leaned weakly back in his chair.

"Dearest," he said, presently, "will you bring me my Winchester—it's in the boot closet—and that bag of cartridges on my writing-table."

The girl brought them, and Hicks aimed the breach of the rifle.

A few minutes later the President and Mrs. Tetsen entered the secretary's sitting-room. They found that gentleman sorting out heaps of cartridges, while their daughter sat near him busily scrubbing sections of a Colt's revolver with a toothbrush. The President's face displayed shame and consternation.

"God help us! we are ruined," he said, looking from one to another with bloodshot eyes.

He produced a yellow cigar from a shabby case, and seated himself close to the window. Suddenly he stood up and looked out.

"Who's that?" he asked.

"Hemming," came the faint reply. A rifle cracked, and the bullet splintered the slats of the shutter. The President retired into the room and turned off the lights.

"Hemming was right. They mean to force me," he exclaimed.

Hicks tottered to the window, rifle in hand. The sounds of a violent scuffle arose from the flower-beds. Hicks could just make out a rolling, twisting mass below.

"Hold your fire," gasped a voice which he recognized as Hemming's. Presently the mass ceased its uneasy movements and divided itself into two equal parts, one of which continued to lie among the crushed flowers, while the other staggered along the wall of the house and entered the dining-room by a window. The President, carrying a revolver awkwardly, hurried downstairs. Presently, he returned, and his pale face was streaked with dust and sweat. Blood dripped from his left sleeve. His monocle was gone.

Mrs. Tetsen, if you'll tie up my arm—I'll show you how—I'll be fit as a fiddle," he said, and sank into a chair.

"Gus?" queried Hicks, who knelt by the window, with his rifle on the sill.

"Knife," replied Hemming. Marion cut away the sleeve of his jacket. "Surely Mr. Cuddiehead did not carry a knife," she said.

"I don't think so; I jumped on the wrong man. Heard some one crawling silently and stole back to the deserted house. During their short absence, all the native servants had run away."

Smith, who seemed devoid of fear, burst the door open in the flower-bed upon which he had fallen. Doctor Scott joined the garrison toward morning, and was both relieved and surprised to find that the Tetsens had disappeared safely.

"A corporal," said Hemming. "He was behind me when you spoke. I didn't know—any one—was near. He'll never—fire another—shot."

Then the commander-in-chief fainted on Valentine's bed, and Smith brought him around with cold water and brandy. Then Smith stole away from the villa toward the barracks. It was close upon dawn when he returned.

"They think they'll kidnap the President and the ladies, and take them away up-country and hold them for a ransom; it is the stranger's idea," he informed them.

The President turned a shade paler and glanced apprehensively at his wife and daughter. Hicks swore. Hemming sat up and said his feet to the floor.

"They are fools," and Cuddiehead must be mad," he exclaimed. Tetsen went over to his wife.

"Can you forgive me, dear?" he asked humbly. For answer she kissed him.

The villa was left undisturbed all the following day. Again darkness came. The gardens were deserted. Smith had crawled around the house four times without hearing a sound or attracting a shot. The troopers were crowded together on and about the verandas of the officers' quarters, listening to the heated discussions of their superiors. Cuddiehead was with the officers, he and the colonel pouring their whiskey from the same decanter. A dark silent procession moved from the President's villa down to the river, where the little steamer lay with her boilers hot. Mr. Tetsen carried a small bag filled with sovereigns and a basket of food. Marion and Mrs. Tetsen and two maids followed with wraps, baskets and firearms. Smith scouted ahead. Hemming and Hicks walked feebly behind, armed and alert. The things were passed smartly aboard. The mooring-line was cleared. Hicks steadied himself by Mrs. Tetsen's arm.

"We will soon follow you," he said. "Then you will think better of me than if I were any."

CHAPTER XI.  
The Colonel's Ultimatum.

The little garrison breakfasted before sunrise. They had been busily occupied all night, securing doors and windows against any midnight attack. Smith made the secretary a huge bowl of beef tea, much to that warlike invalid's disgust.

"See, here, Smith," he said, "if I can fight, I can eat."

"Miss Tetsen's orders, sir," replied the man gravely.

The doctor laughed boisterously, and Hicks blushed. While breakfasting, Hicks retired to another room, out of sight of temptation. The poor fellow felt that seven eggs and a plate of muffs would be as nothing in his huge emptiness. He opened one of the upper front windows, and knelt by the sill, rifle in hand. His thoughts were gloomy. The beef tea had only sharpened his appetite and dampened his spirits. Outside, the dawn was quickly strengthening, filling the beautiful gardens with magic, varying light. He thought of the little fountain in front of the bench, and of the lonely crane. Suddenly he heard the brick padding of boots on the drive, and the colonel,

They were very close together, and the others were all busy crawling under the dirty awnings, or saying good-bye.

"I am poor as Job's turkey," he said. "And my father is ruined," she replied.

"When will you marry me?" he asked.

"As soon as you come for me in Perthshire, or New York, or—anywhere," she answered. Then she kissed him, and at the touch of her tear-streaked face his heart leaped as if it would leave its place in his side to follow her.

The little steamer swung into the current, and drifted awhile with out sound. Presently a red crown of sparks sprang from the stack, and like a thing alive it darted away down the sullen stream. Hemming, Hicks, and Smith turned silently and stole back to the deserted house. During their short absence, all the native servants had run away.

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followed by a trooper, rode up to the great steps.

With pardonable caution, Hicks protruded his head from the window, and addressed the Brazilian politely.

The stout horseman saluted, and spoke thus, in what he fondly considered to be English: "Senor, a good morning to you, my friend. I here have a letter, humbly which I wish a delivery in the hands of General Hemming."

He smiled up at the man in the window, evidently vastly pleased with his speech. It was not often that he attempted the language of these allies.

"If you will kindly request the gentleman with you to poke the letter under the door, I shall be delighted to deliver it to the general," replied Hicks, with a wan grin.

The colonel blinked sleepily, for he had been up late, assisting at the writing of the letter, and emptying bottles. "Have no trouble, senor," he said, "for see—I am as a sheep."

"I know nothing of sheep, colonel," replied Hicks, "and all is not wool that looks gray." The soldiers below, looked puzzled, and Hicks felt very sorry that they were his only audience.

Presently the colonel spoke to his man in Portuguese, and passed him a long, white envelope. The little trooper advanced upon the doorway.

"Thank you, sir," cried Hicks, and bowed, as he turned from the window. But the colonel called him back.

"A moment, senor," he said: "I will inquire of the conditions of the ladies, with most respectable regards."

"Thank you, they are very well," said Hicks, and hurried away.

When Hicks gave the letter to Hemming, that self-possessed gentleman and the doctor were smoking, with their chairs pushed back, and Smith was eating muffs with surprising rapidity.

"A letter to you?" queried Scott. "Then they must know of Tetsen's escape."

"Possibly," said Hemming, and opened the paper. At first he smiled, as he read, then, of a sudden, he wrinkled his brows, stared, and looked up.

"What is that stranger's name?" he asked, sharply.

"Cuddiehead," said Smith, promptly.

"I doubt it," retorted the other. "For I have reason enough to remember this handwriting."

To explain the remark, he opened the sheet on the table, and pointed to where a line had been crossed through and rewritten in a cursive, very different to that of the body of the manuscript.

"He seemed harmless enough, whatever he is, from what I heard of him," remarked Hicks.

"He's a sneaking cat," said Hemming hotly, "and has more devil in him than you could find in the whole of that rotten battalion put together. His real name is Penhouse, and, by god, no wonder he kept out of my sight!"

"May we read the letter, asked the doctor, calmly.

(To be continued.)

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