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A COOL HAND.

A GLORIOUS summer evening in Lower Egypt, with the last glow of sunset dying away from the minarets of Cairo and the clustering towers of Mehemet Ali's citadel; a broad, shadowy, far-extending colonnade, such as Martin would have delighted to paint, skirting a basket of broad-leaved tropical plants, rich in all the splendour of southern colouring; a man pacing restlessly to and fro; looking at his watch about twice every five minutes. The colonnade in question is the piazza of the Hotel du Nil; the man is its latest arrived guest—myself.

To be kept waiting for dinner is notoriously the one injury which no Englishman can forgive; but when one travelled all night, climbed the Great Pyramid in the morning, and tramped all round Cairo in the afternoon, the infliction becomes simply unendurable. Yonder, at the upper end of the colonnade, stands the long table, with its hanging lamps and full-dinner paraphernalia; but not a sign of food as yet. I am just beginning to work myself into a highly British and patriotic rage (such things, of course, never happening at home), when a man approaches me from behind, and says in fluent Italian, though with a foreign accent: 'Can you oblige me with a light for my cigar?'

The voice is one which, once heard,

is not easily forgotten. I seize the new-comer by both wrists (to his no small amazement), and drag him to the light. The moment our faces become visible, there is a simultaneous shout:

'The Stoic, sure enough!'

'Old Diogenes, by jove!'

In this wise do I and my old college chum, Montacute Hardy, meet once more. Since we shook hands on the pier at Southampton, three years ago—he heading westward, and I eastward, on the course of travel which has proved much longer and infinitely more adventurous, than either of us foresaw—we have had no word of each other; and I am startled to note that the long wanderings and strange adventures which have altered me almost beyond recognition, and made me feel as though I had lived twenty lives in one, have left my old companion just as I remember him in the days of lectures and wine-parties. The same 'thoroughbred' look from head to heel; the same slight elastic figure; the same quiet, thoughtful, delicate face; and, above all, the same wonderful composure, which the maddest excitement of a boat-race, or the hottest fury of a town-and-gown, had never once disturbed. The venerable head of our college, had once commended Hardy as 'an admirable realization of the ideal Stoic;' and the