A BID FOR FREEDOM.

By Guy Boothby.

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(Continued.)

understood his meaning. He was afraid lest the girl's destination might be discovered through his association with me. It was evident that he had no desire to imperil his own dirty hide with his master.

"And now I will bid you 'good-night.' Farewell, Excellency: may Allah be with you."

To this speech I returned no answer, but setting my horse going went down the road at a sharp trot.

"Brute, brute!" I muttered to myself, "you deserve the worst tortures that the villainy of man can invent."

Once more I had a sleepless night, wondering how I could abandon my mission and yet elude the vengeance of the Sultan. So far as I could see there seemed no way of getting out of it. If I did not do it, I should break the oath I had given, and probably find myself back in the Kasbah to be tortured, and die a lingering death under peculiarly painful conditions. Then again, there were my two friends the spies to be reckoned with, and knowing what I did about them I was very certain that there was not much they would stick at. If I ran away, they would be sure to track me down, and the consequences would be just the same. I could certainly destroy myself; but life is sweet to almost every one, and I had no wish to go out while there was a chance of finding my way out of the difficulty. Hour after hour I racked my brains in order to discover that way, but the notion would not come.

Laceby's stay in town was a protracted one, indeed our tenancy of the hunting-box had only a week to run when he reappeared. Two days before that auspicious event I dined at the Hall, where I had of late been a frequent visitor. It was a wet, dreary night, and, though I tried not to let my hostess and host see it, I was in the lowest possible spirits. Whether they guessed it or not, I cannot say. I do not fancy so, however.

"How much longer are you staying at The Retreat, Gavesson?" asked the Duke, when we were sitting together over our wine.

"Our tenancy terminates next Tuesday," I replied. "Unfortunately our landlord wants it for himself, so that we can't renew."

"May I ask what your plans are?"

"As a matter of act, I haven't formed any," I remarked. "I may travel, I may do anything."

"I don't know whether my daughter has told you," he went on, "that we leave for the Mediterranean on Friday in the steamer Nyanza. Could you not curtail you stay here and accompany us? It would be very pleasant to have some on we knew on board. We shall break the journey at Gibraltar, where an old friend is in command and then go on to Sorrento. After which we shall proceed to Cairo and probably go up the Nile."

When he mentioned the word Gibraltar I gave such a start that I came within an ace of upsetting my port. The room seemed to swim round with me. Fate was driving me forward, and it looked as if I were doomed to carry out my task after all. Though it could not have been more than half a minute before I found my voice, it seemed like an eternity before I could answer.

"I should like to immensely," I managed to say. "That is, of course, provided you would really like me to come."

"I am quite sure we should all be very pleased," was his courteous rejoinder. "Do you think you can manage to be ready by Friday?"

"Oh, yes," was my laughing reply. "I am an old traveller and am accustomed to being off to any given place at a moment's notice."

"Then we will consider it settled. We shall make a very jolly little party. And now let us go and join the ladies."

I accompanied him to the drawing-room, though how I walked the distance I do not know. I felt as if my legs were giving way under me. How I should look Lady Ollivia in the fact I could not think.

"Mr. Gavesson has consented to join us on the Nyanza," said the old gentleman, crossing to the fireplace and warming his hands as he spoke. "It will be very pleasant. What do you say, Livy?"

I stole a glance at her face as she answered.

"Very pleasant indeed," she said, and then with a laugh and with the evident intention of turning the matter off, she added — "I trust you are a good sailor, Mr. Gavesson?"

"A fairly rough experience has made me one," I answered. "I presume you are?"

"I don't see why you should presume it, but as it happens I am. Poor mamma, however, is usually confined to her cabin for the first few days."

The old lady sighed resignedly.

"Alas!" she said, "for the first week I find little or no pleasure in life."

At half-past ten I bade them "good-night," and went out to my cart. "I am afraid you will have a miserable drive home," said the Duke, while I was donning my mackintosh and preparing myself for the ordeal. He little thought how true his words were; miserable indeed it was likely to be with such thoughts as mine to keep me company.

It was a terrible night indeed. If the storm had been bad when I drove over, it was now infinitely worse. The rain was coming down in torrents, lashing the earth with a severity that was almost tropical. The lightning flashed at intervals and the thunder crashed.

"You had better let us put you up for the night," called the Duke from the warm and brilliantly lighted hall. "You will never get home on such a night as this."

"Thank you very much, sir," I replied. "But I think I can manage it, if the horse will only face it."

At that moment a vivid flash of lightning seemed to cut down within a few paces of us, causing the frightened animal to rear and plunge violently. It was fortunate that I had him well in hand, otherwise the consequences might have been serious. As it was, we went down the drive at what a sailor would call "the rate of knots." What Dickson, the groom, thought of it I canot say; but the wildness of the pace and the dangers of the darkness combined with the storm were just in keeping with my humor. I could even have found it in my heart to have made the animal go faster had there not been another in the cart besides myself. I don't suppose the distance had ever been completed in so short a time. When we drew up at the front door I don't know which was the more out of breath, I from holding him or he from his exertions.

"Sharp work that, sir," said Dickson. "I thought when we turned that corner by the bridge that we was over."

"Did you?" I asked laconically, and then turned to go into the house. But my conscience smote me, and I wheeled round on him and bade him come in for a hot drink when he had put the horse up.

"Thank ye kindly sir," the man replied. "I do feel as if I should like a drop of something hot. This here rain chills ye to the marrow."

He then took the horse away, and I let myself in. If the manufacturers of that waterproof stood in need of an advertisement they could have had it from me that night, for heavy though the rain had been, not one drop had penetrated through that serviceable article.

To think of bed with what I had on my mind would have been absurd, so I went to the smoking-room and, having mixed myself a hot grog and lighted a cigar, sat down to think over the events of the evening. At one moment I was inclined to write and refuse the Duke's invitation on any pretext whatsoever; the next I had made up my mind to go. If I smoked one cigar over the subject I must have consumed half a dozen, until the room was filled with smoke to such a degree that it was almost impossible to see across it. Outside the storm was still lashing down and the wind howling round the corners of the house. I could not help wondering what my Madraporé friends thought of it after the exquisite climate of their own country. At least, if they were annoying me, it was not all unmixed happiness for them. At last, under the influence of a good dinner, tobacco and hot grog, to say nothing of the rain, which always exercises a somnolent effect on me, I fell asleep in my chair and, like Pharaoh's chief cook and butler, I dreamed a dream. I saw myself in the Sultan's favorite room in his palace at Madrapore. My hands were bound behind me. But I had other companions. Lolling on his cushions in the attitude that I knew so well, with a sneering smile upon his cruel sensual face, was that potentate himself, while, worse than all, kneeling before him, and pleading for mercy for herself and for me, was Lady Olivia. Tears streamed down her beautiful face, and her voice was broken with sobs. All this time I writhed in impotent fury, powerless to help her or avenge her.

At last, seeing that her pleading was useless and that no mercy was to be expected, she leapt to her feet and with a gesture of infinite scorn, plucked a dagger from her dress and plunged it into her bosom. With a little cry, she fell dead at my feet.

Then I woke up with a cold sweat upon my forehead to realize that it was but a dream.

CHAPTER VIII.

Shopping on the Rock.

But though I had spoken so boastfully to the Duke concerning my powers of organization and preparation, on this occasion I was destined to find that all my time was taken up in the three days allowed me—for I had determined to join the vessel at Plymouth on the Saturday instead of in London on the Friday—in arranging matters. There was the question of getting out of the house, the sale of the horses and stable fittings, the disposal of the dog-cart, to say nothing of the packing of my own things. Laceby and I parted with mutual regret. He was a nice boy, and we had invariably got on well together.

"By Jove, I envy you," he said, when I told him the news. "I've a very good mind to book a passage in her myself. There are dozens of fellows in town who would give their ears for your opportunity. Fancy being cooped up on board ship with Lady Olivia! You don't seem to appreciate your luck."

That was because he did not know everything! However, I had decided to go because I had at last come to a decision with myself, and for that reason the afternoon of the Saturday following found me steaming out on the tender to where the Nyanza was lying in the shelter of the breakwater. Lady Olivia and the Duke, who had joined her at Tilbury, were leaning over the rail of the promenade deck as we came alongside, and both nodded friendly greetings to me. I should be beneath contempt if I were to suggest that I thought myself any more important on account of my association with such famous people, but to be just I must declare that I was proud of being the friend of one who was almost universally considered the most beautiful woman in England. They declared that they had an excellent passage down Channel, and that for once the Duchess had proved herself a good sailor. Alas! she was destined to make up for it when we entered the Bay. But of that in due course.

Begging them to excuse me after we had conversed together for a short time, I went to inspect my cabin and to discover whether my baggage had been brought aboard. The cabin itself was very satisfactory, and the steward was in the act of stowing away the luggage when I entered. As it appeared, the lower berth would not be occupied until the vessel reached Naples, so that I should have the cabin to myself until we left her at Gibraltar, a fact for which I was by no means sorry. We sailed punctually at six o'clock, and as I stood by Lady Olivia's side and watched the lights of Plymouth fade away I wondered whether it would fall to my lot ever to see the dear Old Land again.

"You are very quiet, Mr. Gavesson," said my companion, when I had not spoken for some minutes.

"I am afraid I am very discourteous," I answered, "but for some reason I am always like this when I leave a place of which I am fond."

"Then in spite of all your roamings you are fond of your native land?" she continued, with a touch of sarcasm.

"For a time," I answered. "But I am dreadfully afraid that I must have gipsy blood in my veins, for I can never settle down anywhere for very long. The desire to do what the Australian blacks call 'a walk about' comes over me, and I am powerless to resist it. You would understand this if you had been roaming about the world for so many years as I have. It's a dangerous disease to have."

"Is there no cure for it"

"None that I ever heard of, save, to use an Irishism, 'the cure that kills.'"

"Upon my word, Mr. Gavesson, you grow more cheerful every minute. I think it is about time you took a sea voyage."

From that moment she set herself to cheer me up, with the result that by the time we went down to dress for dinnr I was quite myself once more.

How can I describe to you how beautiful she looked as she sailed up to the saloon to take her place at the table that had been reserved for us? Every head was turned to look at her, and an audible murmur of admiration came from those present, who, at any other time, would have deemed such an act a gross offence against good taste. However, she was too much accustomed to admiration to pay any attention to it. One who has been accustomed to the life of Courts and to queening it amongst the highest society of Europe is not likely to be rendered uncomfortable by such a minor matter. As good luck had it, we left Plymouth with smooth water and carried it with us until we were into the Bay, where it broke up and a heavy swell set in, under the influence of which the unfortunate Duchess, who had been congratulating herself that she had no longer anything to fear, immediately succumbed.

"Poor mamma is terribly ill," said Lady Olivia, when she had joined us on deck after breakfast. "I have been giving her champagne, but it does not seem to do her much good. The doctor suggests bromide, but I don't think the two medicines would harmonize, and as I was first called in I have defied the poor young man and sent him away in a state of terrible confusion."

"I must go down and see her," said the Duke, after a little time. "Though I am afraid I shan't be able to do her any good." He presently departed, whereupon, though the ship was rolling heavily, his daughter suggested that we should walk.

"Are you quite sure that you can manage it?" I asked, for no one else was attempting such a thing, but for the most part lay or sat in their deck chairs, muffled up in rugs and looking the pictures of misery.

"I am sure of it," she replied, "and if you will come along I will give you a proof."

We accordingly set off, and to my surprise she adapted herself to the swaying deck with an ease that I had never before seen equalled. Only once did she approch disaster, and in her attempt to save herself she clutched my arm. A thrill passed through me like an electric shock. Then we proceeded on our way once more.

On the third day out an incident occurred that gave me food for serious reflection, and certainly upset me more than I can say. The Duke was playing whist in the smoking-room. Lady Olivia was reading to her mother in her cabin; so, wanting something to do and having a distinct liking for that amiable breed of men, I went along to make a call upon the purser, a bluff, genial man, with a fund of the most humorous stories and a way of telling them that was inimitable. We smoked together for upwards of an hour, and then he suggested that I might like to see the ship.

"Of course," he said, "I am quite aware that you have seen any number before, but this boat is bran new, and she has one or two of the latest improvements that might interest you."

To fill in the time I willingly consented, and away we went from the foc's'le for'ard to the second class quarters aft, down into the steerage, and brought up at last in the third class.

"She is very well arranged, is she not?" asked my companion, as we were preparing to leave.

I didn't answer him, for the simple reason that I had just been the recipient of a shock that, to use a slang expression, "fairly staggered me." The door of one of the cabins was open, and lying in their bunks were the two men who had been sent by the Sultan to shadow me. One was asleep, but the individual who had stopped me on the road at the Gipsy's Corner was awake, and I could see that he recognized me. Now, how had those two men become aware that I was sailing in the Nyanza, for in order that they shouldn't get wind of it, I had sent up a registered letter which could not have been tampered with? The only thing I can suppose is, and it seems the most reasonable explanation, that they had discovered that Lady Olivia was travelling in her, and had then made inquiries at the office in order to find out whether I had also booked a passage in her.

"Confound them!" I muttered, as we ascended to the purser's office once more, "I shall never shake them off. However, it's got to be done, if I have to employ an amiable gentleman at the Gib to knife them."

Their presence on board was far from adding to my peace of mind. Nobody likes to be spied upon, still less under circumstances such as mine. However, I was determined to outwit them at any cost to myself.

Once out of the Bay, the weather began to improve, and by the time we were off Lisbon it was almost as smooth as it had been in Plymouth Harbor. With this happy change the last of the invalids began to show themselves on deck, and, as is usual in such cases, immediately became more nautical than those who had not succumbed at all. Every day the weather was growing warmer. Finally the bull board, and the quoit peg, and the cues for deck billiards made their appearance and became in general request. It was a pretty sight to see Lady Olivia at the quoit peg: it is a game that lends itself admirably to the exhibition of a graceful figure and a shapely foot and ankle. Whenever she played she was sure of an appreciative audience, much, I fear, to the chagrin of other less favored ladies, who, I believe, amongst themselves ascribed the attention that was paid to her to the fact that she was a duke's daughter. However, one must make allowances, and human beings are human beings after all.

Every hour was bringing us nearer to our port of call, and also nearer to the execution of that plan that I had hit out for myself. I will not spoil my story, such as it is, by anticipating. The two spies gave no trouble—I did not suppose they would; but it was unpleasant when strolling round the deck, and coming to the after end, to see them watching us with keen eyes but expressionless faces. At last we turned the corner, passed Tarifa, and in a very short time were at anchor in the harbor. The commander-in-chief, with whom the Duke and his family were to stay, came off in his launch to welcome his guests, and after a short interval I had the honor of being presented to him. I had intended going to an hotel, but the hospitable soldier would not hear of it. As I was travelling with his friends he insisted that I should be his guest; then turning to Lady Olivia, he said with a smile, "Next to my wife, my dear, you must remember that I am all-powerful here."

"I shall tell Lady Brenderton what you say," she replied, laughing, "then you will get what schoolboys call——"

"A wigging," put in the General, with a chuckle. "And now shall we go ashore? Mr. Gravesson, if you will point out your luggage to one of my men, it will be brought up with the rest."

I did so, and then we descended to the launch and steamed ashore.

As we cut our way through the still water we overhauled a shore boat in which were seated my two rascally shadowers. They were losing no time in getting ashore. With what purpose, I wondered? To communicate with their infamous master? I looked at the beautiful girl seated opposite to me, and felt like a murderer of the worst kind.

On reaching the wharf we found carriages awaiting us, and in them drove direct to Government House. Good Heavens! what recollections the place conjured up! It had been so intimately associated with my past that it was almost like coming home to a native place to visit it again. As we drove along I had an uneasy feeling that I might be recognized by some of my old associates, and told myself that I had been a fool to accept the Commander-in-Chief's hospitality. However, in for a penny, in for a pound, and having gone too far to turn back there was nothing left but to risk it.

Had Lady Olivia received admiration upon the Nyanza she received twice as much now. The Commander-in-Chief possessed several handsome young aides and secretaries, while there were the officers of the garrison, who were all prepared to pay her homage. Had I possessed the right I should probably have felt jealous, but as it was I could only look on and recall the pleasant days we had spent together on the steamer. Needless to say, we "did" the regulation sights, visited the galleries, explored the town, and inspected the market. There was a dance at Government House, and another given by the officers of the garrison. At the latter I was fortunate enough to be permitted a square by Lady Olivia.

"Shall we sit it out?" she asked. "I am a little tired."

I, of course, acquiesced, and we made our way to one of the little bowers that had been constructed for the use of those who did not care to dance. We seated ourselves, and she lay back and languidly fanned herself. The night was warm, and it was easy to see that she was tired. The colette that encircled her slender throat rose and fell to her gentle breathing, while the perfume of her hair was as intoxicating as the rarest wine.

"Mr. Gavesson," she said, when we had been seated there about a minue, "I want to ask you a question, and I want you to answer it candidly."

"I will endeavor to do so," was my reply. "Pray, what is it?"

"I want you to tell me how I have offended you?"

"Offended me, my dear Lady Olivia?" I hastened to reply. "What can have made you think that? I assure you on my honor you have done nothing of the kind. On the other hand, I had an idea that you were angry with me."

"You are quite wrong," she said. "I might put forward the same argument as yourself. What possible reason could I have for being angry with you?

"Well, then, as poor Grenville used to say, let us shake hands and be friends."

She held out her little gloved hand to me with the most charming frankness, and I took it in my great paw as if it were glass and I might break it. I cannot tell you how I felt at that moment. I can only say that I was almost glad when the time came for me to take her back to the ball-room. The memory of that dance, or perhaps I should say of those minutes, will remain with me as long as I can remember anything.

On the day following we lunched on board the flagship, and afterwards ran for a short distance down the coast in the Admiral's launch. A dinner party at Government House brought the day to a conclusion.

Next morning I made an excuse and escaped into the town. There was a man I particularly wanted to see, and I had no desire to be accompanied by any one from Government House. As I strolled along the picturesque main street, with its wealth of color and extraordinary variety of population, I thought of the men with whom I had visited it in days gone by. Where were they all now? There was Jack Rickards, who was killed on the Afghan frontier; Dick Mallin, who went down in a trading schooner off the West Coast; Harry Durnfield, who, when I last heard of him, was running a sheep station in Quensland; and Tom Gurney, one of the best of us all, who went home to England, married a wife, and settled down as a peaceful country squire.

I had almost reached my friend's office when something, I cannot say what, led me to believe that I was being followed. I turned sharply round, but there was no one there save a small Moor boy who was marching along sucking industriously an orange which he held in both hands. I resumed my walk, but the belief would not be disturbed. Once more I turned sharply round. The only person near me was the same boy. Reaching my destination, I turned into the patio and crossed it to the door I knew so well of old. In response to my knock a cheery voice called upon me to enter, and I did so.

"Goodness gracious, Gavesson! can it be you?" cried my old friend, springing from his chair and hastening forward to greet me with outstretched hand. "I understood that you were in England, hunting in the shires, and enjoying yourself generally."

"So I have been, but I tired of it, and, as some of my friends were coming down to the Mediterranean, I thought I would accompany them."

"You haven't tired of the old love, then? I can remember the time when you used to vow that if ever you got away from this part of the world nothing would induce me to come back to it. Where are you staying? At the old place?"

I laughed. "My dear fellow," I said, "I beg you won't insult me. To my shame be it said, I am no end of a swell now. I am staying with the Commander-in-chief, consorting with dukes and such like."

"I thought you had turned over a new leaf, and were going to be respectable," he remarked. "That is the result of your trip to England. You will be marrying a lady of title next."

I winced as if he had struck me. My mood changed immediately.

"Look here, Maxwell," I said, "I want you to do me a favor if you can."

"Anything in reason, my dear fellow," was his reply. "What is it?"

"You remember Muley Hassan and his brother Ibrahim?"

"I should think I do," he said. "A pair of the most unmitigated scoundrels on earth. What about them?"

"Only that they are on the Rock. As you may have heard, I got into trouble with the Sultan over the way some months ago. He shoved me in the Kasbah, but released me on condition that I would do some dirty business for him. Knowing what would happen if I did not consent, I gave in and started for England."

"Ah! Now I begin to understand. I don't want to be rude, old fellow, but I rather wondered where the money came from. But go on."

"Well, to keep me up to the mark, the old scoundrel put these two fellows on my track to shepherd me and to acquaint him of my movements. They clung to me like barnacles. I couldn't shake them off, try how I would."

"And they followed you here?"

"Don't I tell you they're in Gibraltar? They travelled in the Nyanza. Though what the next move is going to be is more than I can say."

He looked me straight in the face.

"Look here, Roger, old fellow," he said: "I am not going to ask you what the business was. But since you say that it was dirty, I gather that you have failed to carry it through. Is that so?"

This time it was my turn to look him fair and square in the face.

"Yes," I said slowly and deliberately, for my mind was fully made up. "You are quite right. I have failed. I am afraid in the past I have not been over-scrupulous, but there are some things I cannot do, and this happens to be one of them."

"I am glad to hear it," he remarked, and held out his hand to me. "Now what am I to do to help you?"

"I want you to tell me if Manalaki is in the town, and if so where I can find him."

"He was here a week ago; but whether he is still in the town I cannot tell you. May I ask what you want with him?"

"I have made up my mind, as I had sworn to do so, to return to Madrapore and surrender myself to the Sultan, and tell him he can do his dirty work himself."

"But, good Heavens, man! that will be certain suicide. Your life would not be worth a moment's purchase."

"Let that be as it may. I am going. But I want to see the old rascal before those other two devils catch his ear."

"And how do you propose to do that?" he inquired. "It would be difficult, for they are as slippery as eels and as crafty as cats."

"Let me find Manalaki, and I think it can be arranged."

Again and again he endeavored to dissuade me from what he called my suicidal policy of once more placing myself in the Sultan's clutches; but I had an account to settle with my honor, and at any cost to myself I was determined not to draw back.

"Well, if you are determined to be obstinate I'll see what I can do for you. I'll have inquiries made, and if I can find out where he is, word shall be sent you at once. Won't you stay and lunch with me? It is a long time since we have met."

"Thanks, very much; I am afraid it is impossible," I said. "They will expect me at Government House."

"Ah! I had forgotten you were among the swells," he remarked, with a laugh.

I bade him "good-bye," and having thanked him for his kindness left the office and passed through the patio into the street. Across the road, leaning against the wall, was the same little Moor boy who had followed me down the street before. Once more he was sucking an orange, and, so far as a casual observer could judge, was oblivious of everything save that. What did it mean? I felt convinced in my own mind that he was watching me, though why he should do so passed my comprehension. I pretended, however, not to notice him, and strolled on up the street. Reaching a sharp turn in the street, I quickened my pace a little, and slipped into a dark entry. A few moments later he pattered by in hot pursuit. Having given him time, I, in my turn, set off in pursuit, and reached Government House without seeing anything of him. The Commander-in-Chief was absent at an inspection, but the Duke and Duchess were seated in the verandah. Lady Olivia was not with them. It appeared that she had gone into the town to make some purchases, accompanied by an aide-de-camp and one of the private secretaries. Shortly after one o'clock our host appeared, but still there was no sign of the other three.

"Olivia must surely be buying up the whole town," said her father. "I hope she won't keep us waiting for lunch."

"We will forgive her if she does," replied the General. "I am afraid she will be horribly cheated in the so-called shops."

Luncheon was announced punctually, but still there was no sign of them. For my part, I was beginning to grow horribly nervous. All sorts of thoughts came into my mind. At ten minutes to two, just as the Duchess was endeavoring to persuade her host to wait no longer, Walkley, the aide-de-camp, who was one of three, made his appearance in a cab. One had only to look at his face to see that something was wrong.

"Where is Lady Olivia?" asked the General, rather sharply, I fear.

The poor young fellow looked greatly distressed as he replied—"We cannot find her, sir."

"Cannot find her?" cried his superior. "What on earth do you mean by that? How did you come to lose sight of her? Tell me that!"

"She went into a shop, sir, and as it was a ladies' shop we thought we had better not follow, so we waited outside. And then, thinking we had time, we went into a shop close by to obtain some tobacco. We were not more than five minutes, and when we came back we waited for three quarters of an hour outside. Then, as Lady Olivia did not make her appearance, I went inside in search of her, only to find she had left. The man did not know in which direction she had gone. Mr. Mercer and I visited all the shops of a similar kind in the street, but could not discover her anywhere. Mr. Mercer is searching now, but I thought I had better come up and tell you, sir."

"My dear Duke," said the General, "I would not have had this happen for a thousand pounds. I cannot tell you how grieved I am."

"It is not your fault, General," replied the old gentleman. "Where can she have got to"

"She was always venturesome from a child," said her mother plaintively.

"I shall go down myself and make inquiries," said the Commander-in-Chief.

"And if you will allow me I will accompany you," said her father.

"I should also like to do so," I said. "I have known the town for years, and may be of considerable assistance to you."

"Come along by all means,' said the General.

And we all got into a cab, the wretched aide-de-camp accompanying us, and drove off.

In my own mind I felt certain, or nearly so, that the two Hassans were at the bottom of the mystery, and that the boy who had so persistently followed me that morning was employed by them to keep an eye on me, and to warn them should I approach the place where they intended to carry out the deed. What would my fellow-occupants of the carriage have said had they known what was passing in my mind I should have been an outcast for ever—as I deserved to be. Heaven help them if they injured a hair of her head. If I had to follow them to the end of the earth, I would be revenged upon them. Sitting in my corner of the carriage, I swore to myself that I would devote all my energy to finding her.

CHAPTER IX.

£600. Reward.

As we passed the Hotel Oriental, which is situated halfway down the principal street, the same in which Lady Olivia had been lost, the General ordered the carriage to be stopped. He had seen Mercer, his private secretary, hurrying along the pavement.

"What news, Mr. Mercer?" he inquired anxiously. "Have you heard anything?"

"Nothing at all," he answered in a voice that showed how deeply his feelings were stirred by the sad occurrence. "I have searched everywhere, and, accompanied by the police, have inquired at almost every shop in the street. I feel deeply to blame for having left the shop door for a moment."

"Are you quite sure that she is not in the shop now—concealed somewhere upstairs? Forgive me, my dear Duke, for talking in a way I know must be harrowing to your feelings, but I know these rascals so well, and I don't believe there is any villainy they wouldn't be prepared to accomplish at a moment's notice, if it were to their advantage to do so."

"Say anything," answered the old gentleman, "if only by so doing we can find her."

"We'll find her yet, sir, never fear," I said, in the hopes of comforting him, though I must confess I was by no means so sanguine myself.

(To be Continued.)

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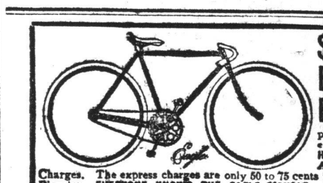

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HOW IT FEELS TO BE RICH.

"What good does your money do you, Mr. Armour?" a friend once asked Mr. P. D. Armour, according to the Washington Star.

"That is a question," Mr. Armour replied, "I often ask myself. I was raised a butcher boy. I learned to love work for work's sake. I must get up early now, as I have done all my life, and when 9 o'clock comes, no matter what's going on at home, I must get to bed. And here I am. Yes; I have large means, as you say, I but I can't eat as much as yonder clerk. I can't sleep as much, and I can hardly wear any more clothes than he. The only real pleasure I can get out of life that yonder clerk with his limited means cannot get is the giving now and then to some deserving fellow, without a soul knowing it, $500 or $1,000, giving him a fresh start upward, without making the gift a hurt to him. That's the only real pleasure I get out of life. And as to possessions, the only thing I sometimes feel I really own are my two boys and my good name. Take everything else from me, leave me them, and I would yet be rich. I wouldn't care a snap for the rest. We would soon together make enough to keep the wolf a long way from our door."

OOM PAUL FAILING FAST.

MENTONE, France, April 29.—While it is difficult to ascertain the exact state of the health of Mr. Kruger, former president of the Transvaal, it is stated on good authority that symptoms of a cerebral affection are apparent and that consultation of physicians has been held. Mr. Kruger is now extremely weak and constant care is necessary.

CHURCHILL AND FREE TRADE.

NEW YORK, April 30.—The Liberal Association of the northwest division of Manchester has unanimously adopted Winston Churchill as its candidate on a free trade platform at the next general election, says a despatch from London