

A King in Babylon

(Continued from page 33.)

in the last thing, after the coffin had been sealed up in the sarcophagus, so the roof must have been built to stand without it. Of course the weight of the sand that is heaped up over it now may make a difference, but I'll take down just enough to let the coffin past."

"You'll not try to bring out the sarcophagus?"

"Oh, no; that's too big for me to handle—besides, it isn't of much value, since it isn't decorated. I'll turn it over to the government."

We found it quite dark when we emerged from the tomb; and we hurried up the steps and across to the tents, where we found Ma Creel anxiously awaiting us.

"I thought you were never coming!" she said. "I was just going to send after you."

"Nothing wrong, is there?" asked Creel. "How is the Princess? Did she wake up?"

"No," said Ma Creel; "she didn't wake up—she just turned over and went to sleep."

"But she was asleep."

"No, she wasn't—it wasn't sleep—and it wasn't a faint. I know—I've seen too many women in fainted. It was something different—more serious. But she's sleeping now, like a log."

"What was it happened?" asked Davis, who had been listening closely. "You didn't tell me anything . . ."

"I didn't think of it," said Creel. "Mlle. Roland had some hard scenes, this afternoon, and played them magnificently, for all she was worth. We ended with the burying-alive scene—I told you yesterday, you know; and she played it so well that the natives got all worked up and broke loose and tore the wall down the minute the last stone was in place. You must have heard the racket."

"I did," nodded Davis; "I supposed that was what you were doing. I was too busy to look out. Well, what then?"

"When I got through the opening, I found Mlle. Roland in a heap on the floor. The strain had been too much for her."

"Ah!" commented Davis. "And Jimmy—did he faint, too?"

"Faint?" I burst in. "I should say not! He walked away the moment it was over, without waiting to see whether the girl was dead or alive."

"He had no reason to think her dead," Davis commented. "But he has evidently got past the fainting stage."

"Yes, he boasts of it!" I said. "He told me he would never be afraid again. But I didn't think him so cold-blooded . . ."

I broke off for want of the proper words to finish the sentence.

"Where is he now?" asked Davis.

"He's in his tent," said Ma Creel. "He came in about an hour ago, and went into the tent without saying a word, and I haven't seen him since. I suppose he's asleep . . ."

"Go and see, Billy," said Creel, and in a minute I was at Jimmy's bedside.

He had thrown himself on his cot without removing even his shoes, and lay on his back with his hands behind his head and his ankles crossed. His eyes were closed and he was breathing with a slow, deep regularity which told of profound slumber.

"He's sleeping like a log," I reported. "And you say Mlle. Roland is sleeping, too?" asked Davis, who was scrabbling thoughtfully at his beard.

"She's sleeping as though she would never wake up," Ma Creel answered. "Great, deep breaths, as regular as clock-work."

"And she didn't come out of her faint? She didn't say anything?"

"Not a word; she didn't even open her eyes. I was sitting right there bathing her forehead, when all at once she seemed to relax; then she stretched out and crossed her ankles and put her hands behind her head, and went off to sleep—what in heaven's name is the matter now, Billy?"

"Why," I stuttered, "why that's just the way Jimmy is sleeping—ankles crossed, hands behind his head . . ."

"Well, what of it?" Creel broke in, with what seemed to me quite unnecessary violence. "Didn't you ever hear of anybody sleeping like that before! I'm tired of these hysterics! Let's have dinner; I'm nearly starved!" And he stalked away to the tent.

I remember thinking, as I looked after him, that he wasn't so very far from hysterics himself. Then I noticed that Davis was still scrabbling thoughtfully at his beard.

CHAPTER XXIV.

NEITHER Jimmy nor Mlle. Roland was present at dinner that evening. They were sleeping peacefully on, and Davis, who had taken a look at both of them, advised against awakening them.

"I am something of a doctor, you know," he said, as we sat down to table; "got to be, out here in the desert—and my advice is to let them have their sleep out. They have been exhausted by the day's work—they need sleep more than food. They can eat when they wake up. Besides, to wake a person who is sleeping as soundly as they are is always a shock. And they've had shocks enough."

"Jimmy didn't have any shocks," objected Creel. "He just stood around sneering."

"We burn up more nerve force sometimes holding ourselves in than letting ourselves go," Davis pointed out. "From what you told me, I judge Mlle. Roland let herself go pretty completely."

"She just cut loose," said Creel. "It was gorgeous! She almost overpowered Digby and Mustafa, when they tried to chuck her into the tomb. Digby nearly had apoplexy—and I had to plaster Mustafa's arm with a ten-dollar bill, after it was all over."

"Yes, he was over here," said Ma Creel, "and I dabbed some iodine on it and dressed it for him. I was just going to ask you what happened to him. He wouldn't tell me, but it looked like a bite—a deep bite right through his forearm."

"It was a bite!" I blurted out; and then I could have bitten my tongue, for Creel looked at me like a thunder-cloud.

"A bite!" echoed Ma Creel, and they all stared at me—except old Digby. He just hung his head and went on with his meal. "But I didn't know there were wild animals out here," and she cast a frightened glance into the darkness about us. "And nothing but a tent . . ."

"There aren't any wild animals!" said Creel impatiently. "For goodness sake, don't start anything else, Mary!"

"Then what was it?" Ma Creel demanded. "It was deep, I tell you—savage—clear in! Billy . . ."

But I wouldn't have answered if I had been on the rack.

"Perhaps it was a camel," said Davis, quietly, at last. "Camels get vicious sometimes."

"No, it wasn't a camel," broke in Mollie, sharply. "It was too small for a camel."

"Then it must have been a goat," said Ma Creel scornfully.

"It was the Princess bit him," explained Creel, unable to endure the ordeal any longer. "Just as he and Digby were thrusting her into the tomb, she lost control, somehow—flew off—forgot it was only make-believe, and defended herself in the only way that remained to her. And then Mustafa lost control, too, and picked her up and jammed her through the hole as though she were a bundle of rags. It's lucky she wasn't hurt! And then the natives lost control, and went whooping over us and tore down the wall! By George, it was a strenuous afternoon—eh, Digby?"

We all started to laugh at old Digby—it seemed to ease our nerves—and then, when he looked up, I saw two ugly red streaks across his left cheek-bone.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Creel. "Did she get you, too?"

"She tried to claw my eyes out," answered Digby, intensely.

"Nonsense!" said Creel, impatiently.

"Of course, I may be mistaken," said Digby; "but I would much sooner handle a wild-cat!"

We all laughed again, but there was a sort of painful undercurrent in the laughter. A girl who bit men savagely in the arm and tried to claw their eyes out wasn't exactly pleasant to think about.

"I'm glad you didn't lose an eye," said Creel finally; "but it will make a great scene. I am sorry you didn't see it, Professor."

"So am I," agreed Davis. "Will you have some more to-morrow?"

"Yes—but nothing so exciting. I am going to rush this thing through as fast as I can, before something serious happens to my principals."

"Don't push them too hard," advised Davis. "They both seem to be very



SEND SMOKES

TO

OUR BRAVE SOLDIERS

It is conceded by all military men that a soldier deprived of his tobacco loses in efficiency. You are helping to win the war when you send "smokes" to the men in France.

(N. Y. Tel., Feb. 14/18.)

SWEET CAPORAL CIGARETTES

AND

OLD CHUM SMOKING TOBACCO

The homeland favorite brands are always the most appreciated.

(Continued on following page.)