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Sign of the Big Hat.

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## THE MESSENGER FROM KHARTOUM

BY ST. GEORGE RATHBORNE

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

### SYNOPSIS OF THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

The story opens at Cairo, where Mr. Grimes, who passes as an American silver king; Sandy Barlow, a newspaper correspondent; Mr. Tanner, a millionaire traveller, and his daughter Molly, all meet. Mr. Grimes informs Grimes that his dahabiah on its way down the Nile picked up Mynheer Joe a messenger from Gordon. As both Grimes and Sandy know Joe they go down to the boat to find him. Joe gives them the first news of the fall of Khartoum within a year in Philadelphia to claim it, otherwise it is to go to the other branch of the family, who are represented by Molly Tanner. She is searching for Carrington, but is unaware that he and Mynheer Joe are the same Molly further complicates matters by asking Joe to find for her the man who thrashed her father. He promises.

This wonderful speech receives its reward, of course, in the shape of a sweet smile; but it is still too early to tell what the designs of the explorer may be. "You are very kind, Mynheer Joe. When this fellow is before me, I am in doubt what to do—whether to give him a piece of my mind or use a whip. I have heard of before of overbearing women doing. In some way I must show him that he cannot beat my dear governor with impunity." Joe almost smiles as he thinks of the ferocious and warlike Tanner having heard of such a defender as this. But the situation is so extremely delicate and desperate that he has no heart to be amused at its ridiculous side. "Will you leave the decision with me?" he asks, giving a bold idea. "With pleasure," he replies. "And aside by the result?" "Yes, indeed. It will take a load off my mind to have you decide my course." "Then, if I were you, I would not think of doing anything with a whip. In the first place, it will get your name in the papers—news-gatherers are always ready to seize upon a sensation and make the most of it. Thus you would find people turning to look at you in the street, not because you had done anything noble, but because you had whipped a man who for some reason was powerless to resist." "Say no more; I really did not dream of it." "Besides," he goes on, quietly, "I have an idea the poor devil will suffer worse at words of reproach from your lips than he would under the tortures of El Mahdi."

"It shall be as you say, Mynheer Joe, only I must give him to understand that the next similar offense—" "Yes—the next similar offense—" "Will not only be followed by displeasure but something more lasting." "You need never fear that this unlucky wretch will ever offend again in the same way. I can guarantee that, Miss Molly. It was all a mistake, anyhow, which I can explain. You see, he had a positive idea—" Unfortunately for his peace of mind, Mynheer Joe gets no further than this. They are interrupted. The baron and a companion come up and introduce some subject that all Cairo is talking about.

Molly looks annoyed, while Mynheer Joe is secretly fuming. He silently nurses his wrath, feeling that some time the chance may come when he can take it out upon the baron. Depend upon it, he will no longer stand between the other and any vengeance he may invite; indeed, it would do him good to watch a man of about Tanner's build use the baron neatly up. His ideas have changed, you see.

Then Sandy makes his appearance, and Joe presently finds himself tete-a-tete with his voluble newspaper friend. There are times when one desires a confidant; even a man likes to pour his woes into a sympathetic ear. Mynheer Joe's life has been such, that, as a general thing, he has been deprived of this privilege; but he has the feeling deep down in his heart all the same.

In Sandy he sees the friend who may help him out of the hole. A suggestion will do it, for his brain, usually so clear, seems strangely muddled just at present. Besides, the war correspondent knows Molly and her father very well, having met them in various places. Perhaps he can discover a loophole of escape, whereby Joe may crawl out of his awkward scrape with honor.

Having made up his mind to trust Sandy, he first of all draws a pledge from him that he will not reveal a word of the story or hint at it in any of his correspondence; all of which Sandy, duly impressed with the gravity of the situation, solemnly promises.

Then Joe relates the difficulty into which his impetuosity and love of fair play have led him, nor does he forget to lay due emphasis on the fact that when taking the little man's part he fancied and truly believed he was defending the dear old governor himself. Sandy holds in as long as he can, and at last, doubling up, shakes all over with laughter. It is silent, too, all but the gurgling sounds as of water bubbling down a rocky ravine.

Mynheer Joe appreciates the situation. He has made a consummate donkey of himself, and although naturally tempted to make use of his boot, firmly refrains. Two mistakes do not make a right. Sandy has reason to be merry. And, besides, Joe realizes that he has need of advice from this sagacious writer—this little man who has, figuratively, waded knee-deep in gore at battle's searching for news.

The great obligation under which he has, this night, placed Sandy, by giving him the story of Khartoum's downfall and Gordon's death, must serve as a lever to lift him from the slough of despair. Back of it, of course, is Sandy's personal regard for his fellow-citizen. That goes a great way. He patiently waits till the other has had his laugh out.

"I must beg your pardon, Joe. Awful tick, that of yours. Too impulsive by half, my dear boy. If you had known the baron as I do—" "I would have danced to see him knocked out!" cries Mynheer Joe, vindictively. "Ho! You've come to it already, eh? Thought it would be that way. Expect pistols for two between you and the baron yet. Sly fellow, that man. They do say he's downed half a dozen major affairs of honor, with sword or pistol."

Mynheer Joe snaps his fingers. "To the dance with the baron! If he ever comes in my way, I'll ring his heavily neck as I would that of a chicken," he mutters. "Good! Glad to hear you say so! Despire the fellow myself. And yet, Joe, he's a power in the land, protected by a hired gang that is paid by Russian gold. When the time comes, if it ever does, for you to lay that plotter out, remember that the moment your hand touches him it will be a signal for several desperados to leap into the game, armed, and ready to make life, if necessary, in order to save the emissary who is worth so much to Russia."

Mynheer Joe gives a low whistle. "The devil! Do you happen to know these men, Sandy?" he asks in a low tone. "Two of them I am sure of. There is another who baffles me. Without any apparent motive, cast your eyes across the room. Do you see that tall, elegant-looking man in full evening dress? He is known here as Colonel Taylor, an ex-Confederate officer. In reality, he is a Russian spy, and one of the things he is paid for is to be always at the elbow of the baron, so that a signal will fetch him up. I've seen the baron in many places since coming to Cairo, but never has Colonel Taylor been more than fifty feet away."

"And the other shadow?" pursues Joe, whose mind is working upon a subject. "He's a dark-skinned fellow—a native of India, I believe. You know the baron leaves Cairo for Bombay or Calcutta soon, and this man will be of great use to him there."

"See here," says Joe, quietly. "I remember such a fellow. He caught my eye on the square at the time I noticed the disturbance. He made me think of my faithful Kassow, which fact causes me to remember him. At the time he was just back of Tanner; indeed, not five feet separated them."

"Just so," remarks Sandy, significantly. "An idea strikes me." "Well, let's hear it." "It is possible that had Tanner been forced into conclusions with the baron, he would have been set upon by these things."

"I am positive of it." "Such a thing would explain the confident assurance of the baron." "Yes." "A brilliant thought comes to me, Sandy." "I can guess it, old fellow." "In knocking Demosthenes Tanner out, I was really doing him the greatest favor."

"No doubt of it." "Slaying his life." "They would have nearly or quite finished him." "If she could only be induced to see the thing in that light." "Depend upon it, Joe, dear fellow, she shall. I myself will undertake to open her eyes."

In all times and among all people beauty and love are associated. We all believe that Eve was beautiful.

Bather found favor because of her comeliness. Love and jealousy caused by Helen of Troy made historic trouble for two nations. Nobody ever conceived an ugly Juliet. Heroines of romance are always beautiful.

Ideas of beauty differ but the one sort of loveliness that all agree upon is the beauty of health. No matter what her features, no sickly woman can be attractive. Sallow skin, sunken cheeks, pimply face, hollow eyes, lifeless lips—these are repellent. And they can nearly always be traced to the one cause—womanly weakness or disease. Almost all the ills of womankind are cured if you put the feminine organism into healthy, vigorous condition. All sickness of women seems to involve these delicate organs and so no matter what the symptoms may be it is best to look there for the real trouble.

All such disorders are completely and permanently cured by Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. It is designed for just this one thing and is the only preparation of the sort produced by a regularly graduated physician—a skilled specialist in the diseases of women.

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beforehand—we'll give you the benefit of the doubt, anyway."

"Take a look across as I live, that little fiend is himself telling Molly the truth. Notice the look upon her face—she can't wholly believe him. Confound the villain, he's got the start of me! Now, what am I to do, my good friend?"

Joe has been considerably shaken up by what he has just seen, and he turns to his companion for consolation. Fortunately, Sandy is equal to the emergency, and quickly responds: "Leave Miss Molly to me, Joe. I'll mule all that rascal has built up and establish him in her heart more firmly than ever," he says, at which the travel-stained man's hand in a way that marks his gratitude.

"Again I say, bless you, my boy. What a fix I would be in, only for your genius in arranging things." "Don't mention it. Time may be near at hand when poor Sandy shall have need of your strong right hand—who knows?"

"And willingly shall it be placed at his disposal. But, see here, I ought to have a hand in my own redemption—I don't like the idea of standing around doing nothing while you accomplish the work."

"That's just like a man of your size, Joe. Well, I see no reason why you shouldn't hold up your end of the leg!" "Good!"

"While I win over the daughter, you can be patching up the peace with the awful dad." "Good heavens, face that tartar again! I'd sooner take a whipping!" "Hush! He's her dear old governor—a savage, I'll admit, somewhat, but the better you know him the more you'll find in Demos to admire. Diamond in the rough, you see."

To be Continued.

The great guiding landmarks of a wise life are few and simple—to do our duty; to avoid useless sorrow; to acquiesce patiently in the inevitable. This little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love.

Be cautious with whom you associate, and never give your company or your residence to those of whose principles you are not sure. A friendship which makes the least noise is very often most useful; for which reason I should prefer a prudent friend to a zealous one.

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