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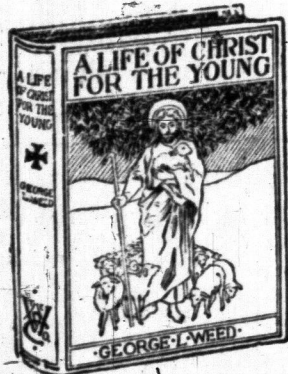
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There should be no time lost in closing with a proposition of this nature. The papers start at once and the books are mailed immediately, post paid, to the subscriber.

THE PLANET, CHATHAM, ONT.

THE MESSENGER FROM KHARTOUM

BY ST. GEORGE RATHBORNE.

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

"It's all as simple as raising or a log. The whole thing lies in knowing how to do it," he remarks, whereat Sandy adds:

"A second Columbus making the egg stand on end? Suppose you illustrate matters, my dear fellow, and show us how the thing is done."

"Perhaps you saw me make a signal, and the rascals obey. You wonder what that could mean. Truth to tell, Sandy, I am a member of the very organization which our unscrupulous enemy, the baron, has subsidized in order to complete our downfall."

At this intelligence, the newspaper man loses his head and looks silly. His ideas even become confused, and he wonders whether Joe is not giving him a little chaff. Up to the present he has believed himself too old a bird to be caught in this way; but such strange things have occurred of late that he stands ready to take almost anything as gospel truth.

"Oh, you're a full-fledged Thug, eh?" he manages to murmur.

"Not only that, but an officer in the organization. It was as such I gave the sign that threw those fellows into a fever."

"How do you come to belong to such a lovely crowd?" asks Sandy.

"Ah, my dear fellow, that is a story you shall hear some day! Really, it is worth telling, since it is founded upon strange incidents such as only a Hag yard could use with credit. For the present, let it suffice to say that this ancient order has more about it than the general world knows. It is not organized for murder, as you and other people believe, but for the Thugs of India, like the Nihilists of Russia, do not hesitate to remove anyone who runs against their will."

"A series of strange adventures threw me into the midst of them some years ago, and to preserve my life I was obliged to join the order, attaining a high place of honor before the opportunity came to quit India's shores."

"I can now see very plainly why that same thing occurred to me, for you and I must have fallen victims to the fury of the mob only for my power."

"By the way, Joe, have you any more of these little bombs hidden away? If so, put them to good use man! There's no telling when we may need them in this country. Bless my soul! I have a strange feeling all the while as though invisible danger was hanging over our heads. What can it mean?"

"When the baron ceases to annoy us, you will get over that, Sandy. The truth of the matter is you have fallen into the habit of feeling his presence near you. These men of evil seem to exude a something that impresses itself upon those they hate, even as might the rattlesnake when charming a victim. Once the serpent is trampled under foot, and all that uncleaness vanishes. You've changed your mind, then, and intend to make way with the baron?" says Sandy, quickly.

"Well, it becomes more evident every hour that it is a desperate case of Greek against Greek. Unless I demolish the baron he will down me."

"Eureka! That's my policy to a dot. The question is how it shall be done. 'That will come out all right, old man.'"

"I give myself no uneasiness with regard to it. Poor old Popoff! He'll carry out the name to a letter presently. But since he's shown himself to be such a consummate rascal, I no longer feel pity for him. Let him go. The king has commanded it; the decree must be entered," and Sandy makes a royal sweep with his arm that would cause many a monarch to turn green with envy, could he see it.

Mynheer Joe looks beyond, and sees things that a wise Providence screens from the eyes of impulsive fellows of Sandy's stripe. He knows that the life of the baron is exceedingly precious to the Russian authorities, and that they will make a searching investigation into matters in case he is downed; it may even be considered a casus belli, and the two great countries embroiled in a terrible conflict.

Thus Mynheer Joe, feeling the responsible nature of his position, resolves to do nothing rash. He desires to consult with some one who has a long head, and knows of no person more competent than Mr. Grimes. Sandy is all right when it comes to action, but he does not make the best adviser in the world, as Joe has learned before now.

It is high time they turn their steps in the direction of the hotel, as the hour is getting late.

Through the crowds they pass without any fear of violence, since they hold the good will of the great secret society of India.

"Ah! There's the baron!" says Sandy. And Joe catches a glimpse of the Russian's face among the dark ones just beyond.

He reads surprise and baffled rage upon it, as though Popoff had already begun to understand that again his plans have been defeated by circumstances over which he has no control.

Mynheer Joe cannot help showing something of his feelings in his expression. The look is not a contemptuous one, for he has considerable respect in the direction of the shrewd baron. At that same time, he despises a man who will descend to the methods practiced by this agent of the czar.

If Joe chooses, he can meet him on a level, and, employing the same methods, influence the secret order of Thugs against the Russian, for he has power behind the throne. This does not hap-

pen to be his way. If the baron was not enter into another duel with him, he must employ some other honorable means for accomplishing his end.

They finally bring up at the hotel. The hour is not so late for those who make day out of night, but with travelers weary from a long sea journey and sight-seeing all day, it is an entirely different matter.

All have retired, and Joe is compelled to let the matter lie over to the morrow or else wake Mr. Grimes. This latter he would be tempted to do, as he believes the case requires prompt attention, only that he remembers the pseudo silver ring complained of a headache as well as a lame ankle.

So he determines to let matters rest until the morning. If all goes well, they can then discuss the affair with clear brains and decide upon the best course to pursue.

The day dawns upon the city of Bombay, and, as is usual, all soon becomes bustle and confusion. As the hour grows nearer noon, this enthusiasm will gradually die out and leave a sort of lethargy in its place, common to all warm climates.

Mynheer Joe is early on foot, and awaits the coming of his friend. When Mr. Grimes finally shows up he is greeted with a wink and a beckoning finger that draws him over to a retired spot, anxious to learn what new deviltry is in the wind.

Rapidly Joe sketches the adventure of the preceding night. The lapse of time has not changed his mind with regard to things, and he sees matters in just as serious a light as when the events occurred, two hours before.

Mr. Grimes hears the story gravely. He makes a good listener, for he says nothing until the end is reached; he waits while he keeps up a thinking. Of all people, he is the last to make a mountain out of a mole hill; but there can be no disguising the fact that the situation is desperate when a man like the baron can set such diabolical machinery in motion against them.

He agrees with Mynheer Joe that the time has come to strike back. Perhaps his methods may differ from those of the traveler; for Mr. Grimes is a believer in the homoeopathic adage, similar similibus curantur—like is cured by like. When in Rome, he does as the Romans do, and adapts himself to circumstances. This has been one reason for his remarkable success. To a certain extent, Mynheer Joe has followed the same plan, but he cannot go so far as his friend in these matters, drawing the line at a certain point.

Thus, in order to meet at a common level, these two must both give way. It is advice Joe seeks, nothing more.

Mr. Grimes ponders over the matter. He does not often act from impulse, and chews the cud of reflection at the beginning of a crisis, not when it has passed by, his policy being that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure.

Finally he turns around and lays his finger upon the arm of the traveler. The light in his eye proclaims that he has conceived an idea, and Joe feels that his friend is coming which it will pay him well to lay hold of something that may cause the baron to believe he has struck an avalanche.

"Mynheer Joe, we must be up and doing. This miserable Russian shall not say he has beaten three Yankees in a game. I know your principles and respect them, but the baron is an obstacle to our progress. He must be removed."

CHAPTER XXI.

"In the first place," remarks Mr. Grimes, in that steady voice of his that never deviates, no matter what the excitement around him, "we must have the secret co-operation of the authorities in anything we undertake."

"There will be no trouble about that. I have already put a flea in their ear. They know who the baron is and what the nature of his mission to India may be. Naturally then they hate him—naturally it is to their interest to dispose of this spy who comes to foment trouble. The question is how far will they go?"

"You can see some of them again, Joe?"

"Readily, sir."

Then we must fight fire with fire. Since the baron has inaugurated this system of tactics, we'll give him all he wants. His Russian ways don't go with people from the States. I wish we had him out there. A nose and the limb of a tree would transport him to eternity, unless we thought it best to use a coat of tar and ornament it with feathers."

"That would be a prime ending of the game, sir, but unfortunately we are in a country where such enlightened arts are not known. Besides, the government would be held responsible for such a public taking off. It will be better for us to have him transported."

"Certainly," remarks Joe, although he does not grasp the idea that is slowly taking form in the other's brain.

"In order to accomplish that, you and I must exercise our minds and arrange a plan by means of which the baron will step into a trap. We know his cunning, and whatever is done will have to be sugar-coated."

"That is quite right, Mr. Grimes."

"My plan, broadly speaking and without the details that must be arranged later, is something like this: We will arrange matters so that the baron steps into the little parlor of the spider. He sees a luscious morsel there and is tempted to devour it. Just then his feet are entangled in the web and he finds himself powerless. After that he leaves

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the country on board a sailing vessel, to be landed perhaps on a desert island or conveyed to South America. The chances are ten to one he will never care to indulge in any more of these games in case he lives to reach Russia again."

"Your idea is a good one. Of course, it must be understood that under no circumstances will the hand of the British authorities be seen in anything we undertake."

"That can be arranged easily enough. Things are often done sub rosa, and nothing left to tell the tale."

"Ah! A thought strikes me: let us have it out while I find it fresh on my mind. You spoke of an attractive bait. Mr. Grimes bites his lips."

"That was it, Joe."

"You had something definite on your mind when you spoke in that way?"

"I did for a fact," watching his companion out of the corner of his eye.

"Someone I know, sir?"

"Well, I am free to confess it."

"Plainly, then, Mr. Grimes, you had reference to Miss Thacker."

"To be equally frank with you, I did, my boy. You frown. I understand your feelings to a dot. You have my sympathy, my dear fellow, if that will do you any good."

Mynheer Joe frowns savagely now.

"Give up the idea, sir."

"Why so?"

"Because I put my foot down upon it."

To be Continued.

RUSHTON'S CORNERS.

Ingram Bros. have already finished building a wood-house for our school. Mrs. C. Craig is suffering from a severe attack of inflammation.

During the warm weather last week some of our farmers tapped their maple trees and report having a good run of sap.

Miss M. McKeenrecher has returned, after spending the past week the guest of Miss Josie Trumper, 8th Con.

Miss Lillie Cooper has returned, after spending a few days at Huffman's Corners.

On a prayer meeting was held at Mr. Beattie's, Howard road, on Tuesday last.

On Tuesday last a number from here attended the party given by Mr. Mrs. Arnold, Harwich, and report having an excellent time.

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