

AT LOVE'S COMMAND.

By John A. Steuart.

The man on the black horse first tipped off the ostrich plume from the turban, then some ribbons, then he showed a piece of each of his arms, showing the easy and dainty precision with which he handled his weapon.

Two or three seconds passed, then, rising quickly in his stirrups, and with lightning-like strokes, he drew his antagonist from crown to breast-bone so that half fell from the saddle.

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The man on the black horse had evidently mastered the skill and strength of his antagonist, and he knew it.

The scene that followed is not to be described. Rushing like an overcharged dam, our men rushed headlong to all points in the compass, clashing, screaming, tramping, and stabbing each other in the fury of their fight.

In a momentary block of the sweeping torrent, which carried me with it as a piece of broken driftwood, I saw Yusef's champion slash his way across my front, and I saw him face full for the first time.

There had been seen that face, so familiar, so handsome, even in its terror. In a dream of the night, in a waking vision? Like a flash came the answer.

A total and irredeemable rout with the frenzied victors smothering under the shattered ranks of the vanquished is the thing not to be described by anyone sharing in the passion or the havoc of it.

no officer was within sight, nor indeed anyone I knew save Tabal, the son of my old benefactor, Said Achmed.

He was a short distance, but I was right and ahead of him, and he was urging his camel with all the might of voice and stick, shouting to him.

Starting again I cast an eye over my shoulder to see four of the enemy horsemen coming full tilt upon me with level lances.

For the next five minutes I flew in instant expectation of death. The long, spurs deep in my horse's sides, and my heart afraid to beat, I felt on the point of being bound and pursued, a race as of horses and packhorses.

It was now high noon, and the sun and an incandescent globe overhead, but assuredly there was never shadow nor brightness of moonlight.

All at once there came a sharp pang, and not sweet and pleasant, but charged with more poison than ever chemist dreads.

The storm passed on like a solid wall, and as by magic the atmosphere cleared, though I could still see the black line of the whirlwind far ahead.

I had no time to think, but I knew I was in a racing fever, and I was so sore and stiff that I was so compelled to sit down, though it was long time before I had any heart for surgery.

The hold was perilously slender, but what the lone riders caught they held with more than the strength of iron.

every nerve and muscle, indeed with every sense and faculty and cover of body and mind, and I bumped and buffeted clean out of me and the world seemed whirling away into a mist.

Small things are momentous in the eyes of a man who is dying, and I was in that condition with a few minutes to let go and let come.

Two or three more little spurs and my enemies could wait their will. The darkness and distance, now carrying double the weight of my burden, caused me to lose my footing.

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tended to or not? Why defer paying a debt that is exacted of all men? Would it not be best to let death drive me on once, and have done with it?

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