

THE MAN WHO WAS DEAD

BY ARTHUR W. MARCHMONT

Author of "In the Cause of Freedom," "When I Was Czar," Etc.

CHAPTER VII—(Continued.)

"There is a hall here tonight; come to it, and you will see for yourself. A man of great influence is to be present, and he must not yet be estranged."

"I coughed suggestively. 'I understand. You hold him by the ties of attraction, eh? You are a very beautiful woman, Stephanie, and he won't have much chance. Poor devil! Who is he?'"

"Baron Von Epstein," she replied, with a smile. "I believe she liked my equivocal reference to her beauty."

"A big fish to catch in the conspiracy net," I said. "I knew of him well enough. Then our little compact is to be a secret, eh?"

"With one exception—Norma." "And why Norma?"

"She threw her head back and laughed. 'Because I wish it. Call it my personal vanity, if you will. I shall be very proud of you, Guy.'"

"Exactly. And the real reason?" "Yes, you may know it. It is policy. Norma believed in you once, in your capacity to do things—that was in Guy Pershore. She would not believe that he could ever be forced to marry me, and this will ever destroy any lingering doubt."

"If she believed in you, she might try to get your help to avoid this marriage with the prince; and I know you well enough to believe that that might be dangerous."

"I was careful not to let my face indicate my opinion of this, for she eyed me very keenly. I gave a shrug and a short laugh, and replied in the same half-dip-dip manner."

"If she doesn't wish to marry the man, why doesn't she just bid him good day?" "Why don't you bid me good day?"

"The words were not out of her mouth before she regretted them, and sought to cover the mistake. 'The reason is obvious; she understands the responsibility of her position and accepts them.'"

"And that's why you fear she would seek my help to get out of them?" "I returned. 'You made a little slip there, Stephanie. But never mind. By the way, though, hadn't you better cultivate the habit of calling me something else than Guy?'"

"I asked, to get away from the subject. 'I'm not very particular, but seeing that I'm married to the man, it's scarcely nice to take his name, is it?'"

"I rose as I spoke, suppressed a yawn, and laughed lightly. 'Do you still care for Norma?' She flashed the question at me suddenly."

"I answered very leisurely. 'I do trust that in addition to the other circumstances of our exceedingly unusual betrothal, you are not going to add the unbecomable complication of jealousy. If you feel that you can't trust me, it will save an infinity of trouble just to ring for your head assassin and let him give me the happy dispatch on this red rug here. It wouldn't equal the color; and I promise not to equal.'"

"Her face darkened, and she grew almost passionately earnest. 'Are you merely acting with me?'"

"Of course I am. Do be reasonable. Haven't you told me off for this sort of business? As I'm one of the principals in the comedy—or tragedy, whichever it is—surely I may give my own impression of the part. Much more my line of work to play it as a comedy part, I assure you."

"You had better beware," she cried, with a quick gesture of anger. "I smiled."

"That's how the heavy villainess talks. I'm not going to beware, or anything of the sort. As for Norma, if she means to murder him in order to stop her, you are too extravagant in your views. And now, have you any orders? Am I to spy on the kitchen staff? Do I call every day for orders?"

"Are you seeking to fool me with your jibes, or merely to anger me?" "A little of both, I think. If we don't quarrel, we shall only bore one another. By the way, what should you do, if you were running this, you know?"

"On the cheeks or the lips or the fingers?" "You're running this, you know. Her eyes sparkled dangerously. 'I will make you view this seriously and turn those views to earnest.'"

"I shall watch the process with deep interest, I assure you. And now, as a reward, Stephanie, I emphasized her name with exaggeration, laughing. 'I'll stay longer, but Gerard Provost has no dress clothes, and I must go and buy some.'"

"She let me get nearly to the door, and then called me. 'Guy!'"

"I really don't think 'Guy' is safe," I said, turning back slowly. "Guy or Murderer, or any little pet name of the sort?"

"Oh, don't!" she cried almost fiercely, stamping her foot. "You're a very unreasonable woman, Stephanie," I said as I went to the door again.

"Come back, Guy."

"No, I shan't come back to be 'don'ted' in that tone. Till tonight. And, with that, I walked out of the room."

"I was by no means dissatisfied with the result of the interview. I had got at some of her plans, while keeping my own to myself. As for the betrothal, I could just laugh at it. It would come to nothing, and the flippant, bantering manner I had adopted would blunt the point of any attempt at serious love-making on her part."

"It was not impossible that I might even laugh her out of some of her plans. Love has no enemy so keen and deadly as ridicule, and it should be my fault if the farcical side of this thing was not always on the surface."

"In the meantime I had scored one important point. I should see Norma that night, and have a long talk with her. The letter I had found in Provost's wallet, and perhaps had an opportunity of speaking to her on other matters."

"I looked forward with the keenest anticipation to the meeting with her. I was prepared, of course, to find her very antagonistic to the idea of taking part in the conspiracy. I had calculated the probable effect of the betrothal upon Norma, and I was ready to gnash my teeth at the thing with which the barriers between us were being piled up."

"Nor was it likely that at the hall I should have much chance of talking privately with Norma. Stephanie's eyes would be on us all the time, and no doubt she would put the prince on her guard, also. Still, I was not in a mood to be easily checked, and as I entered the house for the ball, I was resolved to force matters with a strong hand, if I only should find Norma herself ready to listen."

"Intentionally I maintained the same air of either insolent swagger, I acted as though the deed with which I was credited had turned my head. I had dressed myself with scrupulous care, and when I swaggered up the broad staircase I waited at the door of the room where

Stephanie was receiving until there was a comparative lull in the hubbub, when I made the man bawl out my name at the top of his lung power."

"Many heads were turned in my direction as I went up to Stephanie. Baron Von Epstein, red-headed fiery little person, with bold, insolent eyes—was in close attendance upon her, and as I bent over her hand, which I held good deal longer than etiquette required, I murmured two or three phrases to the accompaniment of ardent looks, which I never would stir his jealousy."

"It was a good beginning. After a moment or two, during which I had the satisfaction of seeing that she was exceedingly uncomfortable, he pushed forward to claim her attention. I behaved with admirable rudeness. I gave him a very stony, imperious stare, and asked, in a tone loud enough for some of those about us to hear:

"Who is this person?" "Baron Von Epstein, let me present Monsieur Provost, one of the staunchest adherents of our cause," said Stephanie quickly, coloring with the effort. He stared at me, and I murmured: "Delighted," and immediately turned my back on him and went on talking to her."

But she cut me short. "You must excuse me now, monsieur. The baron was telling me something I would not miss for the world." And then she found myself at liberty to make the round of the rooms in search of Norma."

How many of those present knew me I could not even guess, of course, nor did it trouble me much; I had become absolutely indifferent to the risks of being recognized; and I sauntered about the room to the other with a lordly air as if the whole place belonged to me."

But to my dismay Norma was not present; and when presently I saw Prince Lepova, I resolved to ask him if she was coming. He was the center of a little group, and in conformity with my conception of my great personal importance, I pushed my way through the people, and said familiarly: "Good evening, prince."

"Ah, Monsieur Provost, good evening," he replied, somewhat distantly. He was apparently none too well pleased at my greeting."

"So her highness, the princess, does not honor us tonight?" "On the contrary, monsieur, she has been present, and will return," he replied rather curtly."

"I am glad," I said indulgently, as though graciously approving my approval upon the arrangement. "I shall be happy to meet her again."

"Indeed," he rapped back, thinking to snub me. "But I stared at him steadily, and replied in a tone of studied insolence: 'Yes, indeed, Monsieur prince. May I ask if you have any objection?'"

"My impertinence brought two little spots of color to his cheeks, and he bit his lip. He had mothered his anger. 'No, monsieur, none, of course.'"

"Then it is a pity you should so address me as to imply those about us that there was," I retorted, and without waiting for his answer, I turned on my heel."

And I found myself standing with two or three other men close by, and heard this. I saw them glance at one another with shrugs and smiles, and did not come up and made me good evening."

"I glanced down at him superciliously and waved him away. 'I have no commands for you, doctor. You can stay on as he rejoined the men, looking bitterly mortified and not a little discomfited by the early laughter with which they greeted him."

"It was, however, good policy for me to keep every one at a distance, and as to the means by which I could best accomplish that result, I was not slow to see that there was one as a swash-buckling braggart was nothing to me."

Presently Stephanie, flushed and angry, came up to me. "Are you mad, you seek to make enemies on all sides?" she exclaimed."

"I am not very particular. What is the matter?" "First you insulted Baron Von Epstein, and then the prince. That is very much the matter, indeed."

"I smiled. 'Of course I'm jealous of the baron. What else? As for the prince, he tried to snub me. He would not let me honor with your hand, take a snub from a third-rate prince, my dear Stephanie!'"

"No more than returning the complimentary paid to Guy Pershore. I am naturally glad over my betrothal, and you must get all the enjoyment I can out of it."

And at that she flung away from me with an exclamation of disgust, and was standing close to one of the conservatories when Norma came out of it, in the arm of a man. My pulses leaped at the sight of her, but I had myself well in hand, and when she saw me I bowed. I feared that she would do as she did to my surprise she returned the bow, and after one or two nervous glances about her, she said something to the man, took her hand from his arm, and came toward me."

"It became very difficult for me to retain my composure. 'I wish to speak to you, Monsieur Provost,' she said. She trembled and stumbled over the name."

"You honor me, princess," I replied loud enough for those about us to hear. "Will you walk with me down the room?" "I mean privately."

"Believe me it will be safer not to leave this crowded room."

Her glance of suspicion told me that she half-thought I wanted to avoid any private conversation. But I took no notice, and as we turned down the room I began to talk of the heat and the crush and so on. She replied in monosyllables, and was so obviously uneasy that I gave her a word of caution."

"Many eyes are on us. I beg you play your part as though this were merely a casual conversation. I also have much to say to you."

"Did you bring nothing for me from Belgarda, monsieur?" she asked, after a few moments."

I saw Stephanie and the prince watching us from a distance. I laughed as if at some jest of hers, and waved my hand about the room, as I replied: "I have a paper for you. If you will drop your handkerchief I will give it you."

A moment after she dropped the handkerchief, and with the paper folded in my hand I stooped to pick it up."

"Permit me," said a voice. It was Lepova. He had come up with Stephanie on his arm, and reached out to recover the handkerchief."

"You will scarcely rob me of the choice to render the princess this trifling service," I said quickly, as I picked it up. Then, holding his eyes on mine that he might not see what I was about, I crushed

the paper into the handkerchief and returned it, with a bow, to Norma. As I stood up, I met Stephanie's eyes. Norma was very confused, and obviously much afraid of them both. She changed color, bowed to me, and with a murmured 'Thank you, monsieur,' went off on the prince's arm, just as Von Epstein came up to Stephanie, much to my relief."

Had either of them seen anything? CHAPTER IX.

The Dregs of the Cup of Degradation.

As Prince Lepova led Norma away on his arm, I glanced after him with a very unamiable frown. So far as she was concerned, Guy Pershore might in reality have been as dead as common report stated."

She could never be anything to me, nor I to her. I knew that. I had carefully schooled myself to accept that as a hard, unalterable fact."

But love is love, and hot blood, hot blood will not be denied. And to see her marched off in this fashion with his air of masterful ownership galled me no less than it would have done had I been once more myself instead of the pitiful pigeon-carrier and go-between of these conspiracy-mongers."

The man must have fallen from my face for awhile, for suddenly, with a sneering chuckle, a low, deep voice said in my ear:

"A handsome couple, Monsieur Gerard Provost, eh?"

I turned, to find a tall, angular man at my elbow, wearing a black, narrow-brimmed, graveney eyes screwed up, and his long thin face wrinkled into a cunning grin."

"I returned his stare, and had the greatest difficulty in repressing a start of surprise as I recognized him as a Captain Neschers, of the Servian Government, whom I knew to have jumped there and then from the balcony and broken my neck on the flag below."

These personal feelings outweighed for the time even the significance of the discovery I had made that behind this plot against Norma was the Servian Government. This Captain Neschers was, with out doubt, acting for the government, and Norma was in vastly greater peril from it than I had thought."

But for the moment I was so mad with rage that I could think of nothing else. I was sick to death of the part of Gerard which he had played, and I was so profoundly miserable and dejected."

The lights of the great city which spread out in front of me served to make my mood even more bitter. In the world they typified I had lost every thing. Position, hopes, desires, and love—all gone. I was a man whose name would have been tainted by the foulest of crimes but for an elaborately acted lie and fraud."

"Time to talk about that when the need arises."

"Come out on the balcony, here. I have something to say to you. I shall be at an alcove at the far end, which was almost concealed by palms and shrubs. A very cozy corner indeed. It did not seem possible that there was any lower depth of degradation or bitterness left for me to sound."

Yet there was still room for a pang of the merest stab of comfort I had true; yet something I had succeeded in getting about. By marching in close formation and always keeping down in the slopes between hills, we managed to get to the well as being a tedious affair. From the crowd it without being noticed by a party of thirteen Moors, of whom only three were properly mounted."

The unlucky thirteen had no earthly chance. The Goumiers swept down upon them, and, without making a sound, they were all dead. As I was marching with the artillery at the time I missed this little engagement and my first knowledge of it was when the prisoners trailed by on foot—six tall, gaunt, brown men, bare-legged, and three of them bare-headed. They were dressed in a dirty woolen shirt that dragged to their knees. They moved in quick, frightened steps, keeping close to one another, obeying their captors implicitly. Allah had deserted them and their souls were as water. The Goumiers, fellow Mahomedans and devoted to their religion, were on light-reined ponies, riding erect in high dished saddles, their colored kalfans thrown back from their waists, and their eyes were good barter. My cigarettes I had found were good barter. My cigarettes were distributed and we were just beginning our breakfast when a man standing up came out from among the Goumiers coming our way again with the Moors. They were walking in the same order, the prisoners first in a close group, moving quickly on foot, not venturing to look back, the Goumiers, probably twenty, riding steadily on hard bits. "Pour les tuer," repeated the others, looking at me to see if I smiled."

I shook my head in pity, for the doomed men were ignorant, pitiable creatures. A hundred yards beyond us was a clump of dwarfed trees, smoke rising from barren hills, and for this spot the Moors were headed. Mechanically I went on eating, undecided whether to follow, for I did not want to see the thing at close range. I thought the Moors would be lined up in the usual fashion, their sentence delivered, and a moment given for prayer. But suddenly, while they were turned, just as they set foot upon the dry grass, quickly a dozen shots rang out almost in a volley—then came a straggling fire of single shots. The single shots were from a pistol, as an officer passed among the dying men and put a bullet into the brain of each."

The Goumiers set fire to the grass about the bodies and soon the smoke and smell brought over an light Atlantic breeze, caused us to move away."

On another occasion, crossing a trodden grain field, we came upon three Arabs, dead or dying, a dead horse and the scattered remains of a tent. A lean old brown man with a thin white beard and a shaven head lay naked with eyes and mouth wide open to the sun, arms and legs flung open, a gash in his stomach and a bullet wound with a powder stain between the eyes."

Choosing a high point from which to watch an engagement, we saluted the camp of a line of Algerians and lay down among the men. Below us, in plain view, was a quarry of a mile away, was the camp of the Moors, about 400 tents, ragged and black with dirt, some of them old, circular army tents, but mostly patched coverings of sackcloth, as it were, to be seen all over Morocco. As we looked, this camp, discovered by the balance, that the French army had come

"Hello! Cogitating a poem, Grundlehoff?" was the reply.

"No. Something more practical. Been curing a man of madness—Gerard Provost. Teaching him how to get back that memory of his."

"That sort of madness!" laughed Baumeister. "Suppose because the dragoness has taken him up he thinks he can do as he likes, eh?"

"I've told him that if he doesn't remember where that money is and bring it to us tomorrow night, there'll be trouble."

"I think we can find a way between us to lead him back into the paths of sanity and virtue," asserted the other. "Depend on the value he puts on his skin," said Grundlehoff, as they moved away together chuckling, leaving me with the knowledge as they regarded me as both a liar and a thief. If I attended the meeting I should probably be killed; while if I stayed away the probability became a virtue in certain respects."

A comfortable outlook. It was a good thing that I had made up my mind to leave the matter to the men's threats that disturbed me so much as the cheap contempt in which they held me. Nothing was too mean and despicable to slaughter the European residents, and the fellow's grip on my arm still; he had boasted of the thrashing he had given me, and had expected me to be grateful. I was a sort of doorman for others to wipe their feet upon."

"I don't know whether men who are the 'real thing' in blackguarding feel as I feel like the hot shame which I felt that night. But if they do, then, poor devils, they must carry their own weight. They stretch themselves to the limit of their own strength."

I could and would, do something to avenge the men so lightly given me, and this thought eased the sense of degradation. But if I had been in truth the miserable wretch they believed, I would have jumped there and then from the balcony and broken my neck on the flag below."

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Choosing a high point from which to watch an engagement, we saluted the camp of a line of Algerians and lay down among the men. Below us, in plain view, was a quarry of a mile away, was the camp of the Moors, about 400 tents, ragged and black with dirt, some of them old, circular army tents, but mostly patched coverings of sackcloth, as it were, to be seen all over Morocco. As we looked, this camp, discovered by the balance, that the French army had come

SHOOTING DOWN PRISONERS IN THE WAR WITH MOROCCO

Correspondent Witnesses a Summary Slaughter of Disarmed Arabs by French Troops--French Officers Admit That Prisoners Taken in Arms Are Not "Kept"--An Officer With Pistol Finishes the Work Left Undone by Volley Firing.

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Tangier, May 22.—Any of the officers in the French army now fighting in Morocco would admit that they "keep" no prisoners taken in arms. The Arabs opposing them, they point out, are murderers who had looted Casablanca, attempted to slaughter the European residents, and, failing, had turned upon each other to fight not only for plunder but for wives. What would have happened to the European residents, the Frenchmen asked, had the consulates not sustained the siege? What happens to French soldiers who are captured? The French officers argue also that drastic methods bring submission quicker."

On a recent excursion with the French I happened to witness the shooting of six prisoners. We set out from camp as usual at early morning and

out, and we had managed to come over the knoll at the moment that the first flames were applied to it; just beyond the camp the squalid village of Taddert, beneath a cluster of holy tombs, a place of pilgrimage, was already afire. The Moors evidently had been taken by surprise. They left most of their poor possessions in the camp, getting away with only their horses and their guns. A soldier of the Foreign Legion came back driving three undesized donkeys, with several short, pot-like Moorish drums. We spoke to him and he told us that they had taken seven prisoners and had shot them."

When the Shawia tribesmen made their first attacks upon the French at Casablanca they were thoroughly confident of their own prowess and of the protection of Allah. They had often, before the coming of the French, called the attention of Europeans to the fact that salutes

of foreign men-of-war entering port were not nearly so loud as the replies from their own antiquated battery—always charged with a double load of powder for the sake of making noise. But they have come to realize now that Christian ships and Christian armies have bigger guns than those with which they esteem; and the news that Allah, whatever may be his reason, is not on the side of the noisy guns has spread all over Morocco."

The Arabs now seldom try close quarters with the French, except when surrounded or when the French force is very small and they are numerous; and as I have indicated before, their defense is most ineffective."

One morning on a march toward Medinet, I sat for an hour with the Algerians under the war balloon, watching quietly an absurd attack of the tribesmen. From the crest of a hill behind which they

goes in North Africa—the entire Moorish country. Such an army as this last could make the roads safe for Arabs and Berbers as well as for Europeans, punishing severely, as the French have learned to do, any tribe that dares continue its marauding practices and any brigand who essays to capture Europeans; and as for the rest, the safety of life and property within the towns and among members of the same tribe, the instinct of self-preservation in the Moors themselves is sufficient. There is no danger for the French in Morocco."

Nevertheless their task is not an easy one. Conservatism at home and fear of foreign protest keeps them from generalizing the strategy as they must in order to subdue it. So far they have made their power felt only locally, and though they have slaughtered thousands of Moors, their action today is to all practical purposes the same as it was after the first



LADIES OF THE IMPERIAL HAREM ENTERING THE GATES OF HABAT. Following After the Sultan from Fez, They Crossed the River Bu Regreg in Barges that Could Carry But Five or Six at a Time with Their Harems. It Took a Week for the French to Take Fez. From a Photo Taken for This Article by Frederic Moore.

moved up the coast for a distance of eight miles, with the object of examining a well which in former dry seasons supplied Casablanca with water and was now no doubt supplying the Arabs with water. By marching in close formation and always keeping down in the slopes between hills, we managed to get to the well as being a tedious affair. From the crowd it without being noticed by a party of thirteen Moors, of whom only three were properly mounted."

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engagements about Casablanca. For four months General Druce held Casablanca, with tribes defeated but unconquered all about it. With the new year General d'Amade took command and the district of operations was extended inland for a distance of fifty miles. But beyond that there are again many untamed tribes, ranging over a vast territory."

The struggle in which the French are engaged in Morocco is a serious, trying, sometimes unclean business, which will drag on its bloody course for an indefinite time. For fear of interference from Germany or some other power or powers, France can establish herself only gradually; and at the same time fearing that another power will take her place, thereby creating a permanent