

AN EGYPTIAN ROMANCE.

A Story of Love and Wild Adventure, founded upon Startling Revelations in the Career of Arabi Pasha,

by the Author of "NINA, THE N'HELIST," "THE RED SPIDER," "THE RUSSIAN SPY," ETC., &C.

CHAPTER XIX.

ARABI PASHA TELLS AS SECRETS WHAT HE WISHES TO BE MADE PUBLIC.

But no sooner had he accepted the war minister's offer than it struck Mr. Trezarr that by the act he, the leading European banker in Cairo, had more or less allied himself with an arch-rebel and in a manner even identified himself with the rebellion.

If it were to take the form of a successful revolution, of course this would be immaterial, for to the successful all things are forgiven, but what if the movement never rose above the dignity of a rebellion and, on its being stamped out, its leaders were shot or sent to the galleys, how would he then escape the shame of he and his family having been the arch-rebel's guests? Why, the entire European community of Cairo would cut him, that, at least, was evident.

So, instead of at once departing with the expression of security and gratitude on his face that had for a brief while dwelt there whilst receiving and accepting the war minister's invitation, he still sat on the edge of his chair, puffing and blowing with both the inward and outward heat (for the thermometer marked more than a hundred degrees), whilst he mopped his bald head with his yellow handkerchief in a state of the most pitiable perplexity.

Arabi Pasha read his thoughts as clearly as though they had been expressed in words, and despising the old time-server in his heart, said blandly:

"Oh, I see you are anxious to know how the good movement proceeds. I my good movement unreservedly, for unless you deemed it to be such I am convinced that you would not have affianced your lovely child to the chief promoter—myself."

Mr. Trezarr fancied that a silent how would be the best answer to this speech.

"Well, you shall know, my dear sir, for I have no secrets from one who is so soon to be my father-in-law. Of course I speak in confidence." (Here Arabi Pasha smiled involuntarily, for in heart he wished that all that he was about to say might be circulated far and wide, and knew that his auditor was just the person to confide it in similar confidence to a hundred or so of his acquaintances, who in like manner would inform theirs in turn, until at last all Cairo was in the secret.) "You are doubtless already aware that the Khedive is no longer the ruler of Egypt save in name."

"I have heard the rumor that your excellency has imprisoned him in his own palace."

"That is a hard way of putting it, Mr. Trezarr. My devoted soldiery are guarding him in his palace against possible harm from those who are enraged against him for the predilection that he has shown for foreigners over his own people, and equally for his safety they prevent those foreigners from compromising him further by approaching him."

Then he proceeded rapidly but explicitly to detail all that had taken place between himself and the consuls of all the leading European nations, in which he told them that Tewfik was his prisoner, adding that he had received the Sultan's approval for all that he had done and that he had received fresh instructions from his sovereign by that morning's mail.

"In evidence of their genuineness," said Arabi, "here is the diamond Order of the Medjidie, the highest honor which the Sultan can bestow upon a subject. It is welcome to me chiefly because it prevents his Majesty from again altering his mind. With the guarantee that I at present hold for his active alliance, he dares not do so; and the united Turkish and Egyptian armies, with France neutral, Germany and Austria secretly supplying us and Russia and Italy almost daring England to draw the sword, what can she do, except, perhaps, make a frigate with her ironclads as she did at Dulagira, like a great dog barking in its kennel but unable to break the

chain that holds it back from biting? If Tewfik yields to all our demands he can but remain a puppet king, and I shall be for years the real ruler of Egypt; whilst if he is obstinate, and has to fly the realm and seek safety in Europe, I shall sit on the ivory footstool and guard the silver throne for Prince Halim, even should he not appear for years.

Mr. Trezarr was by now thoroughly convinced that, to use his own inelegant simile, though Arabi Pasha had shot up like a rocket, he would not come down like the stick, that in fact events had made him the foremost man in Egypt, and that he would make a most unexceptional and brilliant match for his only child.

Again therefore he accepted the war minister's invitation that his entire family should accept the shelter of his palace from the possible violence of the mob.

But when a few minutes later he had taken his departure Arabi Pasha muttered to himself: "Ah, even he is ready to snap at me. Little does he think that I no longer dare marry his daughter."

Mr. Trezarr re-entered his carriage and drove back to his bank, meeting with no further misadventure on the way than having his hat knocked off by a stone, another missile cutting his coachman's face open a little later.

Having alighted he sent the vehicle away to the Hotel Coulombe, in the Bab el Bah, with instructions to call for him as usual at four o'clock, for to a man of Mr. Trezarr's temperament the safety of his bank came before that of even wife and child.

The doors and shutters were of course tightly closed and all business suspended, but Mr. Trezarr kept his clerks hard at their books, and pretended to be equally closely engaged in his own. His ears, however, were on the alert to catch what his underlings thought of the situation, but they were a set of litigious and adventurous young fellows, whose chief regret seemed to be that the emissaries of Toulba Pasha had visited the bank during their principal's absence to search the place and their persons for weapons, taking away with them all that they had been able to find.

"All the better," thought Mr. Trezarr, "for one incautious act might have been our ruin."

Hour after hour passed in the gaslit bank with naught but the scratching of pens and the subdued buzz of occasional conversation within and a strange, discordant medley of sounds without; now soft, now loud, something resembling the monotonous murmur of a Summer's sea, but ever and anon rising to the shrieking wall of the Winter's tempest.

At last there was a knocking at the street door and the result of an espial through the keyhole showing that the applicant for admission was an emissary from the war office he was at once let in and the door again securely fastened in his rear.

He saluted in silence and handed Mr. Trezarr a note, which he tore open and eagerly perused.

It was from the war minister and its purport was as follows:

"I much fear that the populace are slipping out of my grasp. I have as yet only three thousand troops wherewith to hold three hundred thousand excitable and easily maddened people in check. My advice to you is that you brick up the front windows and door of the bank and send me the keys, when I will hold myself accountable for the safety of its contents (you told me, I think that you had the necessary materials at hand in case of emergency). I also counsel you as soon as ever this is done to get home as quietly and unostentatiously as you can, and there comfort the ladies with assurances of safety and with them quietly abide the hour when I shall send an adequate escort to conduct you to my palace, as well as Egyptian dragoon wherewith to place even the risks of insult on account of your creed and race out of the range of possibility."

ty. Expect the escort soon after darkness has set in nor fear the danger in the meantime, but if the mob should unfortunately get the upper hand of me the warehouses and shops of the Europeans in the city will appeal to their cupidity and invite their attack before the private residences in the suburbs. I have still, however, a strong hope of being able to check outrage, and by to-morrow I shall have five thousand extra troops in the city and then strict order will be enforced and the European population will no longer have anything to fear."

This letter caused Mr. Trezarr considerable uneasiness. He, however, dismissed the Canvases who had brought it with a handsome present, and then at once prepared to follow the advice that it had contained.

An abundance of bricks and ready-mixed mortar had been kept on the premises for days, owing to the possibility of a crisis like the present arriving, and now the spruce clerks pulled off their coats, tucked up their sleeves and went to work with a will, the consequence being that in something under three hours the door and all the front ground floor windows of the bank were thickly bricked up on the inside, whilst yet another hour saw the back door and all the windows save one treated in like manner, the solitary exception having to be bricked up from the outside as a matter of course, since 'twas through it that the occupants of the bank had been constrained to make their exit therefrom.

There existed a hundred chances to one, however, that the populace would never think of approaching the building from the rear, for it was only to be reached in that direction through a perfect labyrinth of ruins, and it was through this labyrinth that Mr. Trezarr and his clerks now retreated for the greater security in different directions, the banker eventually turning up at the Hotel Coulombe about the same time as one of his employees reached the war office in order to hand the bank keys and a short note of thanks to Arabi Pasha.

A few minutes later Mr. Trezarr once more re-entered his carriage and uttered the welcome word, "Home."

The blood horses spurned the dusty soil with their hoofs, and away flew the well-appointed equipage through an avenue of mimosa trees as big as English oaks in full flower.

CHAPTER XX.

NELLIE FINDS HERSELF IN A QUANDARY.

Everything was so quiet in that part of Cairo through which Mr. Trezarr passed that he began to hope that the worst was over.

The sole cause of the quietude, however, was that the aroused population had swarmed to other quarters of their huge city, leaving this portion all but deserted.

It was fortunate for the banker that it was so, and also that all the way home he encountered none of the rioters.

Arrived at Mount Carmel, Mr. Trezarr alighted from the carriage, and then entered his sumptuous residence with an almost untroubled countenance.

But instead of, as usual, proceeding to his chamber and his valet in order to make himself more presentable are joining the ladies, he walked straight to the drawing-room, where he discovered his comely wife and lovely daughter already dressed for dinner; for all he was somewhat late, and society generally dined at five P. M. at Cairo, so as to have the entire cool of the evening at disposal for the promenade, the tide or the drive.

But there were to be no more pleasant rides, drives or promenades in its locality for a long while, and this was an intelligence that Mr. Trezarr had to break to his family.

"You look worried and tired, Paul," was Mrs. Trezarr's first observation.

At the remark Nellie glanced anxiously toward her father, but said nothing.

"Well, my dear, I own to be a little fatigued, but I am about to take a holiday."

"A holiday, with matters as they are?" queried the lady of the house.

"Yes, my love, for the bank is not only locked up, it is bricked up as well, and the keys are handed over to our excellent friend, the war minister, who has promised to be responsible for the safety of everything," replied Mr. Trezarr unhesitatingly.

"Isn't that very like intrusting a hungry fox with the charge of a poultry yard, papa?" inquired Nellie maliciously.

It was Mr. Trezarr's turn this time to wear an anxious glance, but to say nothing.

"I don't see the similitude at all, Nellie," said Mr. Trezarr severely. "His excellency Arabi Pasha is at this moment supreme ruler of Egypt, and, mark my word, he will remain so. The joint control is at an end, and while France will do nothing to oppose him, Turkey will actively help him, and I cannot believe that a British liberal government will really make war on a nation for simply supporting the freedom of its own parliament against a despot who has certainly tried hard to overthrow it. No, England will assuredly come to terms with the only man who cares for Egypt, who is cared for by Egypt or whom the Egyptian people will allow to rule over them. I am now fully convinced that this is a genuine national uprising, if ever there was one, and so directly Egypt's champion and benefactor invited us to be his guests for a few days, I accepted the invitation."

"Invited us to be his guests, papa? Why does he want us to be his guests?"

The question came from Nellie, who had suddenly turned as pale as death.

"Because, my dear," rejoined the father, "a disorganized time like the present is the rogue's harvest, and Egyptian rogues are bloodthirsty as well as dishonest. There are hundreds of religious enthusiasts also in the city who would consider it a meritorious act to shed Christian blood and to stir up others to do so as well, and as the war minister has not yet sufficient troops to keep this turbulent element in abeyance, he has offered us the shelter of his room, under which we shall be as safe as though we were at home in old England."

"But mamma and I should be shut up in his harem and guarded by monstrous negroes as though we were prisoners, for in no other part of a Moslem habitation are our sex allowed to set foot. You would never be permitted to see us, papa, from the moment that we entered his palace."

"My dear, I think I could bear the ordeal, and besides it would only be for a few days."

"I'm sure I could bear it very well, and should delight in the change," echoed Mrs. Trezarr. "Remember the pasha has already one wife, and I've no doubt that she would receive us and do the honors very creditably, or at all events according to her lights."

"Knowing that I was intended to supersede her in her husband's affections, that I was to be his second and, of course, favorite wife. And then, once a prisoner in his harem, how could I save myself from becoming his wife if you and he determine to force me to the step? Papa, I will not accept the Pasha's invitation. You and mamma may go if you like, but I will stay here. Nothing shall force me into his harem!" exclaimed Nellie excitedly.

"But when does he expect us?" she quickly added, for it suddenly struck the lovely girl that if the removal was not to be until the morrow there would be no need of her so fearfully exciting herself, since in half a dozen hours more she would have eloped with her lover, and long ere dawn be out of reach of all further persecution.

But her father's answer knocked this hope entirely on the head, for it was:

"His excellency will send a special escort for us during the evening, and disguises to wear in addition, in order that we may be quite safe from the fury or the fanaticism of the populace as we pass along. And now, Nellie, I have only to add that you must do as your parents wish you, believing that they have your best interests at heart. I am convinced that you will be as secure in the pasha's harem as in your own bedchamber at home, for he is a highly honorable man, and, besides, matters of such importance at present engross his attention that I doubt if he will bestow on you a single thought. Ah! dinner at last."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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Knowledge must be made vital in the heart before it can blossom into conduct, and the continual panning of right feeling into right action alone can form a worthy character.