

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 NIHILIST," "THE RED SPOT," "THE RUSSIAN SPY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXV.

FRANK, DISGUISED AS AN EGYPTIAN, DEPARTS ON A PERILOUS MISSION.

It did not take long to bring the beautiful girl bride back to consciousness, and when she recovered from her swoon she found herself lying on a couch in the pretty sitting-room and her husband bending fondly over her.

She first of all listened nervously and timidly for sounds of riot and tumult from without, but the fickle crowd had already dispersed in quest of other excitement, and sensations, instead of besieging the hotel in order to get at her.

"Is Pat safe also?" was her next inquiry, and when her husband had answered the question in the affirmative she next remarked:

"You see, Frank, my presentiments were far from idle ones, for we are not yet out of Egypt and terrible perils still surround us on all sides."

"Nonsense, dear. There have been riots and uprisings of the mob even in dull, prosa London, and in Paris, well-dressed people have often been in worse danger in the streets than they are in those of Alexandria to-day. Here comes the landlord to ask how you do. I will inquire of him what he thinks of our chances of getting away immediately."

It was almost the first question that he put to the burly host after he had told him how much better his wife was; but Monsieur Boucœur shook his head and made answer that he feared getting out of Alexandria for the present was quite out of the question, because even three days ago the different European consuls had joined in strongly recommending all their fellow countrymen who could leave the place to do so without a moment's unnecessary loss of time, and the majority had acted upon that advice so promptly that there had been a regular stampede, delicate ladies and children being only too glad to be taken as deck passengers even in such dirty craft as steam colliers rather than be left behind.

This was very discouraging, but Nellie spoke up bravely and said:

"But we also are quite ready to go as deck passengers on board colliers."

"Aye, madam," rejoined the host, with a shrug of his shoulders, "but the colliers are not ready for you. They steam away as fast as they load, and thousands of frightened people are actually living in the warehouses and stores along the quay rides in order to be able to step aboard the first vessel that wharfs alongside them. These fellow countrywomen of yours, in their love and anxiety for their children, would be ready to fly upon you and tear you to pieces were you, as a new arrival, to try to take precedence of themselves and little ones after they had waited so patiently in order to have the first chance."

"Well, Monsieur Boucœur," said Frank, cheerfully, "then I think that we will remain with you."

"Monsieur has. I am sure, decided wisely, nor let the little madam be afraid, for the threatening aspect of the population has already been reported in Cairo, and a telegram has been received in reply from the war minister to the effect that as order has been perfectly restored there he will at once start for Alexandria and do the same here. So the chances are that before noon, even, we shall be quite quiet again."

Monsieur Boucœur, delivered all this as a sort of soothing balm, but its effect on the shattered nerves of Nelly Donnelly was that of a strong irritant.

She flushed crimson and then turned deathly pale as she gasped out:

"Arabi Pasha coming to Alexandria? Then we must leave it at any and all risks, Frank, and that at once."

Before Monsieur Boucœur or Frank Donnelly either could make any answer to this speech there came a gentle tap to the half open door, and then the tones of a voice from without:

"Pardon, but may the dove bring the olive branch into the ark?" and without waiting for answer, into the room came a burly, swarthy, black-bearded man, habited entirely in black, who very much more resembled the raven than the dove.

Frank Donnelly looked up and at once recognized him as one of those who had fussed about Nellie in the hall, but rather, or at least so he had thought at the time, for the sake of gazing at her exposed loveliness than to render her any real service.

He was therefore more disposed to resent his intrusion than to thank him for his visit.

The next few words that he uttered entirely changed his feelings toward him, however, for without waiting to be questioned he went on with:

"Is it not the truth that you want to leave Egypt at once? Very well, I can help you. I have passages secured for myself, wife and servant on board the French steamer *Le Comète*, which sails this afternoon for Marseilles, but at the last moment my wife is taken ill prematurely, and as the doctor says it would in all probability kill her to remove her, here we must stop; wherefore, if you would like to purchase our passage tickets, you can."

"I am infinitely obliged to you," said Frank. "Name the price and I will write you out a check for the amount. Yet how the deuce can I do that without a check-book?"

"At what bank have you an account?"

"The Anglo-Egyptian."

"Then I have a check book of that bank, and if you like you can fill one up payable to Messrs. Cohen, or order, for fifty pounds (\$250), that being the amount that I paid a week ago for two saloon and one steerage passage to Marseilles."

There being pen and ink on the table, Frank Donnelly rapidly filled in and signed a check and handed it to Mr. Cohen, who, as he took it, said to him:

"Now, I would advise you to go at once to the Marseilles Steam Navigation Company's offices in the Old Harbor, close to the mole, and get the names changed in the books and on the passenger list, because they all know me, and were you to simply go on board and take your places at the last moment, the steam packet people might suspect some fraud and raise some awkward difficulties about taking you, which it would be just as well to avoid—don't you see?"

"Certainly I do, and will be off at once. I shan't be long gone, Nell, so don't be nervous."

"Oh, I am sure you will be torn in pieces by the mob, and that I shall never see you again. At all events, won't Mr. Cohen and Pat Monaghan go with you?"

"I would not think of allowing Mr. Cohen to leave his sick wife, and as for Pat, though a fine fellow to help one out of a scrape, I should feel far less sure of getting into one whilst by myself. I assure you, my darling, that everything is quiet outside now."

"I'll tell you what would make you doubly safe, monsieur," said the landlord of Hotel d'Orient. "A slight wash of tincture of iodine over your face and hands, and a red tarbouch on your head. That dark blue flannel jacket and trousers are wonderfully like an Egyptian officer's undress uniform, and the tarbouch would render it undetectable, whilst the iodine would stain your skin to the exact tint. I've some remaining that I had to paint a swilling with and I'll lay it on with a camel's hair brush and make a first-rate job of it."

The landlord's offer having been accepted, Frank Donnelly's face, throat and hands were quickly rendered as dark as a real Egyptian's, and as the natural color of his eyes and hair very well corresponded, nothing but a red tarbouch was wanted to complete his disguise, and this Monsieur Boucœur was also able to supply him with.

"Now, Nellie, don't you think that I am quite safe?" exclaimed her husband.

"Yes," replied his wife, "I think you look much more Egyptian than English. I'll try not to be frightened whilst you are away. Nevertheless, do not be gone long."

"You may depend on that, my love. Well, farewell for the time, gentlemen, and thank you very much."

He sold this because he wished to pay his adieu to his bride in private, and both the Frenchman and the Jew took the hint and departed.

"Nellie," said Frank, then, "you must ring for Marie, and see if you cannot somehow purchase clothing sufficient for the voyage and have it already packed against my return, for I shall smuggle you aboard this French steamer as soon as ever she lies alongside the quay. Procure a yashmack, also, if you can, so as to look as much like a native woman as possible. I dare say one or other of the hotel servants has one as a curiosity, and would part with it for an adequate consideration, but if one isn't to be got procure as thick a veil as possible and be ready for a fitting the instant that you see me return, which I have no doubt will be under an hour, so now goodbye, darling, for a very little while. It will be our last parting."

Their last parting! Poor fool! Little did he guess that another was close at hand which would prove the most terrible experience that either of them had ever known.

But we must not anticipate, and misfortunes always come soon enough.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PREPARATIONS FOR FLIGHT—THREE DANGEROUS RECOGNITIONS.

After her husband had departed the time passed very slowly to Nellie, that is to say, when once she had made, assisted by Marie the French chambermaid, all necessary preparations for flight, and had bought half her wardrobe and box as well, for now that the girl saw the urgency of the case she offered to go out and do whatever shopping was necessary, Nellie would not allow her to run the risk of leaving the hotel.

So, after the little box containing just sufficient necessities for the voyage were packed, padded and labled, the hour-old bride had nothing left to do but to gaze out of the window of the prettily furnished sitting room and watch what was going on in the streets, for though she had entreated Marie to stay with her for company, the lively little French maid could not neglect her work any longer, and was compelled to go.

But the prospect from the window was not an uncheering one to Nellie; indeed, it was exactly the reverse, for the mob had dwindled away by degrees until the long, broad and not altogether unstately thoroughfare was almost deserted, and encouraged by this the shopkeepers had, for the most part, taken down their shutters again, and were conducting business as usual, the cafes, whose name is legion in all parts of Alexandria, following their example and the banks in like manner.

All this made her hope her husband was not in peril, more especially as he had disguised himself so very like an Egyptian, but even while she was hugging this comfort to her heart the hoarse boom of a cannon from the direction of Fort Tebarah brought back all her fears with redoubled force, and she clasped her hands together in terror.

"Boom, boom, boom!" went the cannon, and she was not experienced enough in the sound of artillery to know that such a dull, leonine roar could never proceed from a shotted gun.

That it was Egyptian ordnance she did not know, however, because the reports came from a landward direction.

From this she jumped to the conclusion that the massacre of the Christians had commenced, and she pictured them as being blown from the mouths of cannon just as Sepoys were blown during the Indian mutiny.

Then, presently, the roar of artillery ceased, but only to be succeeded by rattling peals of musketry and a continuous and prolonged cheering that seemed each passing minute to be nearer and nearer, and while Nellie wondered what it could all mean the street without began to fill again, each narrow thoroughfare that opened into it disgorging a living stream of wretched humanity, who presently filled each side of the long *Rue de la Colonne Pompee* as far as the eye could reach.

We have already on more than one occasion described an Egyptian crowd, so there is no need of a repainting of the picture.

The only difference was that this one seemed to be more excited than they usually are, and to be eagerly awaiting the arrival of something, while naked savants, looking like revived mummies, or plucked baboons, kept running about and around and two and fro, their long, unkempt beards all of a shake with the incessant wagging of their jaws as they continued to preach to or exhort the multitude, possibly as to how they should conduct themselves on the occasion.

"But what occasion was it?" Nellie mentally asked herself, for she could see no slaughtering of Christians going on, which, as may be imagined, was an intense relief to her.

Ah, that was a glare of a brass band, too. Well, that was cheering at any rate, and as Nellie could not associate a merry air from the opera bouffe with either violence, rapine, incendiarism or murder, all her fears began to melt away, whilst such few as yet remained her curiosity got the better of, and in order to see more clearly what was approaching she stood boldly and without any attempt at concealment before the window, as she beheld many other European women doing on the opposite side of the street, all of them apparently as curious as she was.

Their curiosity was soon destined to be satisfied, for now the head of an approaching procession appeared in view, in the shape of a troop of Egyptian cavalry, clad in a kind of French zouave uniform, with scarlet and white turbans with long lances.

These really dashing looking troopers were followed by a portion of the celebrated dromedary corps, strange looking cavalry indeed, dressed in Oriental garb, grasping long pennonless spears, and sitting between the two humps of their ungainly, long-legged steeds, that were grinning like devils and uttering uncouth cries as they came along, for dromedaries and camels are alike bepraised as they both are by poets and novelists who know next to nothing about them, are the most quarrelsome, stubborn, cantankerous and vindictive brutes in existence, who have been known to kill a child for tickling it with a straw, and many another venal act.

The mounted band passed directly under her window, now blaring forth the well-known "Turkish patrol," and it was followed by a sumptuous open carriage drawn by six gray horses, in which sat or rather reined, the Khedive, bowing to right and left as he passed along, but receiving no reply from his discontented and rebellious subjects, unless sullen looks and scowls could be accepted as such, so that it was no wonder Nellie thought that he looked so sad and dejected.

So full were her thoughts of him (though admiration for the fickle, extravagant and weak-minded prince she had none) that she took no notice of, and, indeed, hardly saw the entire regiment of white uniformed, red tarbouched Egyptian infantry that closely followed the Khedive's carriage, and her attention was only again attracted to the street by shrill and vociferous cheering.

Nellie was now in a kind of maze, or mental lethargy, in which her brain slept though her eye were open.

Had it not been so she would assuredly have guessed who was approaching and retired from the window to have escaped the chance of having been seen by him.

But her thoughts, still running on the Khedive who was nothing to her, she forgot all about the war minister, who was everything or at all events destined to be every thing to her, and his existence was first recalled to her mind by the sight of his face looking directly upward, with his fierce, eager eyes fixed upon her with a glance of mingled surprise, recognition and triumph, or so, at least, the poor girl read it.

This and the tempest of sound stunned her, as it were.

She caught hold of the curtain and grasped them firmly to save herself from falling, and thus she stood, riveted to the spot, and as unable to move therefrom as though her delicate ancles had been gripped between the teeth of steel traps.

She knew that she was recognized. She felt that her chances of escape from Egypt were forever at an end. She was conscious of a feeling which was rapidly creeping over her that she no longer cared whether she lived or died; and yet whilst troubled thus in mind, she was aware of a latent admiration, deep down in her heart, for him who was the chosen of the people, and as she thought the predestined liberator of Egypt, even while she condemned the worldly guile that