A BID FOR FREEDOM.

By Guy Boothby.

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(Continued.)

It struck me as being rather strange to invoke a blessing from Allah upon such a work, but it is needless for me to say that I did not mention the fact to him.

Having bade him a respectful farewell, I left the presence and returned to my own apartment, where I found the Grand Vizier awaiting me. He was a stately old gentleman, with a long white beard, which he stroked continually. It was said that he was the only official in Madrapore who had any sort of reputation for honesty, and so far as my own interests were concerned, I can corroborate the statement.

"His Majesty the Sultan—whom may Allah long preserve!—has instructed me to pay to thee the sum of two hundred pounds in English gold. It is here."

So saying, he produced from the sleeve of his robe a leather bag, the contents of which he poured out upon a cushion.

"Be so good as to count them," he said, "for I would not have thee find any missing. The world is full of rogues and thieves, and it is well for such who work to one end to know that they may trust each other."

I paid him a pretty compliment and then knelt down to count the shining pieces. The work accomplished, I placed them back in the leather bag and slipped it carelessly into my coat pocket. My action horrified the methodical old gentleman, and he took occasion to warn me against the perils of the road and the chances I might stand of losing what he evidently considered was for me a considerable fortune.

"There is one other matter on which I am commanded to speak to thee, and that is concerning a still larger sum which will be paid to thee in London."

"His Majesty told me that you would give me the address where I was to apply for it. Have you got it with you?"

After some little fumbling under his robe he produced a small slip of parchment. He handed it to me, and on examining it I found an address written in English in a hand like that of a small Board School boy, but of which the old gentleman was inordinately vain. I placed it carefully in my waistcoat pocket. I next inquired if he was aware why I was receiving the money.

"Allah forbid!" he said quickly, looking round as if he were afraid some one might have overheard. "If my master does not tell me, I know nothing."

He then bade me "good-night" and hobbled off. I did not see him again.

That night I slept more soundly than I had done for weeks past. I woke at daybreak, when a meal was served to me, after which I went out into the great courtyard to find a horse awaiting me, my kit strapped to the packsaddle of another, and an escort of six of His Majesty's own body guard awaiting my coming.

A magnificent animal had been sent for my use, and I was about to mount it when His Majesty's own servant, the man who had conducted me backwards and forwards between my room and the audience-chamber, came to me and said in a low voice—"The Sultan my master—may be live for ever!—bids me say that he wishes you a safe journey and success in all you undertake." I tossed him some coins and then gave the order to start. Ten minutes later we were outside the city.

That night we camped at the fondak at which I had been arrested, and on the evening following arrived at the seaport I had so vainly tried to reach. Two days later I was at sea, on the way to England.

Who could foresee what the result of my mission would be?

CHAPTER V.

England's Fairest Daughter.

It was the middle of November when I reached England, after one of the roughest passages in all my experience. In the Bay the waves ran mountains high, and although my wanderings about the world have made me a good sailor, yet I was right glad when we sighted the Eddystone and an hour later dropped our anchor in Plymouth Sound. Even there the swell was decidedly unpleasant, and the motion of the apoplectic tender which came off to us was sufficient to cause more than one passenger considerable uneasiness, even after their voyage from Australia. The wind blew in strong gusts, with occasional heavy showers; Mount Edgecumbe and the Heights of Stadden were enveloped in mist, while even the historic Hoe could only be seen as through a glass darkly. It seemed a bit home-coming for a man like myself, who had such a secret to keep from company and such a villainous piece of work ahead of him. I don't pose up to be a moralist. I am afraid I shouldn't have much right to the role; but it is only fair to myself to say that my conscience had been driving steadily away at me throughout the homeward voyage. Do what I could, I could not still it. It was like a faint but yet nagging toothache; while it did not actually hurt, it was nevertheless sufficiently uncomfortable to render life unpleasant. The tender rounded Drake's Island and steamed into the docks, which on this stormy morning were even more depressing than the Sound outside. The slimy green piles, the sodden ships, and the disconsolate crowd of dock loafers who, with pinched faces and collars turned up, were waiting to carry our luggage ashore, intensified the dreariness of the scene. And then the customs shed, that great barrack of a place, at one moment empty and the next swarming like a hive. After that a wait of half an hour for the train, which time might be spent in a crowded waiting-room or on the wind and rain-swept wharf outside. That is a description of my arrival on my native shore. At last, however, the train got under way and in a very short space of time Plymouth lay behind us. By the time we reached Tavistock the rain had ceased and the sun had commenced to shine. As the journey is so well known it is not necessary for me to waste time in attempting to describe it. Let it suffice that we reached Bristol well up to time, Bath with the same admirable precision, and steamed into Paddington some five hours and odd minutes from the time of leaving Plymouth. The weather in London was all that could be desired. It was a bright November day, with a touch of frost in the air. There was also a brisk breeze blowing that gave men occasion to hold their hats upon their heads and the ladies to gather their skirts more tightly around them.

After all, to my thinking, there is no place like London. Paris may be gayer, New York more alive and up to date, but the Old City for me has a charm that neither of the others possesses. I had telegraphed from Plymouth to the Cecil for a room, and I drove there immediately on my arrival. As we bowled along through the well-remembered streets it seemed difficult to believe that, less than a fortnight before, I had been a miserable prisoner, lying in hourly expectation of death in the Kasbah at Madrapore. I reached the hotel in due course and was conducted to my apartments. I had lunched in the train, so I stood in no need of a further meal. By this time it was nearly four o'clock, and beginning to grow dark. Not knowing what to do with myself, I determined to go for a stroll. There were several articles I desired to purchase, and it struck me that this would fill in the time very pleasantly until it should be necessary to return to the hotel for dinner. I accordingly donned my hat and coat and set off. To my eyes, unaccustomed as they had been of late to such hights, the Strand seemed more crowded than ever. I passed through Trafalgar Square and by way of the Haymarket to Picadilly. The world is very small, and few people, particularly those who have not travelled, realize how small it is. I was within fifty yards of the gates of Burlington House when whom should I see coming towards me was a man with whom, less than two years before, I had been on the most intimate terms and in somewhat peculiar circumstances. Like myself, he had been knocking about the world, since he was a youngster. When I first met him he was in China, engaged in the sometimes profitable but always dangerous attempt to squeeze the Governor of a Province. He was anxious to obtain a concession, and came extremely near losing his life in his attempt to get it. By good luck I was able to extricate him from his dangerous position, and from that moment we became friends.

"I thought I couldn't be mistaken," he cried, hastening towards me with outstretched arms. "It's Roger Gavesson."

"Well, who'd have thought of meeting you, Laceby?" I answered, returning his grip. "How long have you been in town?"

"Just about a month," he replied. "Came home from Bolivia. Which way are you walking?"

I told him my errand and he agreed to accompany me.

"After that," he continued, "you must come and dine with me at my club. We'll go on to a theatre later. I'm not going to lose sight of you, you may be sure of that."

"Hadn't we better put it off till another night?" I suggested. "I'm a wanderer, a prodigal son, you might say, just returned from among the swine who won't wear clothes."

"Not a bit of it! I can rig you out. We are much of a build, and it won't be the first time we've worn each other's duds. Do you remember that fat old French priest who lent me a pair of bags that were nearly a foot too big for me round the waist, and didn't reach much below my knees? By Jove! those were jolly old days!"

"Nice to look back upon, but scarcely so pleasant at the time. If that jolly old Governor had had his way, you wouldn't be walking down Piccadilly."

"It was you who got me out of the scrape, old fellow. And I am eternally gratefully to you for it."

"Rubbish!" I answered. "You'd have done the same for me. Well, here we are."

I entered the tailor's shop at which I had always been accustomed to deal. The proprietor, a bald-headed little man, who looked more like a dignified judge than a sartorial artist, prided himself on never forgetting a customer's face. It was three years since I had crossed his threshold, and I wondered whether he would reinembr me. He came forward, bowing and washing his hands in the way that I so well remembered.

"Ah, Mr. Gavesson," he said. "We have not had the pleasure of seeing you for a considerable time. What can I have the pleasure of doing for you?"

I informed him in reply that I had that day returned from abroad.

"If you will excuse my saying so, I gathered as much immediately you entered my shop."

"The deuce you did. And how did you manage that?"

"If you will pardon my saying so, by the cut of the clothes you are wearing. It is at least two years behind the present fashion. Terrible!"

He groaned in horror. It was evident that the subject was an extremely painful one to him.

"Well, you will have to fit me out again," I said. "And I want you to be as quick about it as possible."

"You may depend upon us, my dear sir. All that I can do to expedite matters shall be done. Think of your customers before yourself, Grigson, is my motto, and always has been. Let them come first."

"And charge them for it afterwards," I said, with a smile. "Well, every man to his trade."

He smiled a deprecating smile and washed his hands more carefully than ever.

"Still the same genial, merry hearted gentleman, Mr. Gavesson, I see," he remarked.

I could not help wondering what he would have said had he known the truth—that truth which I was trying so hard to keep behind me, but which would thrust its ugly head out every now and then. Having made an appointment with him for the following morning at eleven o'clock, we left the shop, hailed a hansom, and ordered the man to drive us to Laceby's lodgings, which were in a street leading out of Jermyn Street. Having obtained the clothes he had offered to lend me I returned to my hotel to dress, after which I proceeded to the club at which we were to dine. It was a pleasant little diner for more reasons than one. I liked Laceby and I fancy he liked me. We had many bonds in common and our conversation embraced the wide world.

"I was lucky enough to secure a couple of stalls at the St. James's for tonight," said my host, as we sipped our coffee. "What do you say to going on there?"

"I should like it immensely," I replied. "The last theatre I was in was in Rio, and I remember, within a hundred yards of the doors, seeing a woman knife a man and then stab herself. She was a fine-looking creature."

"Women who do that sort of thing usually are. Now, let's come along. We needn't take a cab. It's within easy walking distance."

We accordingly strolled quietly down to the theatre and took our places in the seats my friend had had the good fortune to secure. They were in the third row and commanded a good view of the house. The latter was rapidly filling, and it wanted only a few minutes to the rising of the curtain. Suddenly I noticed a little stir in the audience and all eyes were directed at the box on the prompt side.

"What is it?" I whispered to Laceby, "Royalty?"

"The royal box is on the other side," he whispered; and as he spoke there came forward to the front of the box in question the most beautiful woman I had ever seen in my life. She was superb! She was accompanied by an elderly gentleman who it was easy to see was her father. Again I turned to Laceby.

"I seem to know her face," I whispered. "Who is she?"

"The most beautiful woman in England," was his reply. "Lady Olivia Belhampton."

Try to picture for yourself my feelings. For a moment I felt as if the world were spinning round my head a million times a second. The theatre swam before my eyes; then, with an effort, I pulled myself together, and glanced at my neighbors to discover whether they had noticed anything. Fortunately, the lady on my right was perusing her programme, while Laceby was watching some people who were entering on the left side of the house. Feeling half afraid to look, I glanced up at the box again. What an exquisite face it was! A diamond necklace encircled her slender throat, but she did not need it to enhance her beauty. And to think that this was the woman whom I had pledged my word of honor, and sworn by all I held sacred, to deliver into the hands of the Sultan of Madrapore!

What the play was about I have not the remotest notion. It may have been a tragedy or a comedy—I cannot tell you. I had no eyes and no thought but for the lady in the box.

During the interval Laceby and I went out for a cigarette.

"Splendid play, isn't it?" he remarked, when we were in the lobby.

"Magnificent," I answered, but without enthusiasm. "By the way, tell me about Lady Olivia Belhampton. I used to know her when she was a child, and her brother and I were at the 'Varsity together. I haven't seen her for years."

"I don't know what there is to tell you," he returned, "save that she is popularly supposed to be the most beautiful woman in England, and that when the old Duke dies she'll be immensely rich. She is also a great horsewoman, hunts as many days in the week as hounds are out. I suppose they are up in town on account of the frost."

"Where do they hunt from?"

"From Burndean Hall, their place in Leicestershire."

"Not married, I suppose?"

"Oh, dear no; seems to take no interest in men. It is commonly reported that half the Peerage have proposed to her, but so far she has refused them all. She has evidently got a will of her own. By the way, there is rather a joke connected with her. Rumor has it, that when the Sultan of Madrapore was over here some little time back he was very anxious to add her to the list of his wives. I believe he offered exceptional terms, but the old Duke didn't see it in the same light. Fancy that infernal rascal aspiring to such a girl as that. It was said that that was why he cut short his visit to England and went over to play at politics with the French."

Having no desire to discuss the subject any further, and having finished my cigarette, I suggested that we should return to our seats, which we accordingly did. On looking up at the box I noticed that a tall military-looking man had entered it and had taken the Duke's place. He was engaged in an animated conversation with his companion, but I gathered from the expression upon her face that her interest was only assumed.

"Who is that?" I asked of Laceby.

"Lord Carborough," he answered. "He's in the Guards. Handsome fellow, isn't he? Rode the winner of the Grand Military, and stands a good chance of winning the National with the same horse."

Then the curtain went up on the second act and further conversation became impossible. This time I was able to pay more attention to the play, but I found my eyes continually reverting to the box. Lord Carborough had taken his departure on the rising of the curtain and the Duke occupied his place. By the time the last act was finished I had made up my mind as to one thing, and that was that I would go a-hunting, and that I would take up my quarters somewhere in the vicinity of Burndean. The more I thought over the notion, the better I liked it. I had money enough to purchase some good horses, and if I was to serve the Sultan faithfully I was determined that he should afford me some amusement in return.

"You are very quiet, old chappie," said Laceby as we drove away to have supper together. "What's the meaning of it? Tired of England already?"

"No," I replied. "I was wondering how soon the frost would break, because I think I should like to go in for a little hunting. It is a long time since I heard the music of the hounds, and, as I've managed to get hold of a little money, I don't see why I shouldn't enjoy myself."

"Good man!" he answered. "I wouldn't mind doing a little myself. What do you say if we chum together? I can't run to a very big stud, but whatever I back shall be good 'uns."

"I wouldn't wish for any one better. We'll lay ourselves out to have a good time."

"Right you are. I'm your man. It's not the best time to pick up gees, perhaps, but there's a fellow I knew lives two miles from Leatherhead who may be able to do something for us. What do you say to running down tomorrow afternoon?"

Having no other engagement, I promptly accepted, and it was agreed that Laceby should send him a telegram in the morning to inquire whether he had anything he thought might suit us. We supped together, and then I went home to bed, having spent a very fair day. Whether it was that I was overtired or not I cannot say, but I could not sleep. I could not get my thoughts away from the memory of that beautiful girl whom I had seen at the theatre that evening. Her face haunted me hour in, hour out. It was easy to see, as Laceby had said, that she was the possessor of a determined will, and from the way in which she had behaved to Lord Carborough I felt able to corroborate Laceby's assertion that she was not likely to be influenced easily by men.

Next morning I was early astir, though it had never been my luck to have such a bad night. It was a true winter's morning and quite dark. But I did not mind that. I made my way down to the Embankment, and then set out for a brisk walk towards Charing Cross, and thence by Northumberland Avenue and a circuitous route to Mayfair. Everyone knows the Duke of Bamborough's magnificent house. For my own part, I had good reasons for wishing to have a look at it. By the time I reached it the maids were just getting astir, and a servant was busily engaged washing down the steps up to the front door. Upstairs the blinds were still down, and, as I watched, I could not help wondering which might be the room occuried by Lady Olivia. But it was no use speculating. In order that it might not be thought that I was watching the house I walked to the end of the street, and then returned on the other side of the road. Before resuming my homward walk I turned to take one last look at the house. To my astonishment I saw the footman, who had been talking to the maid on the steps, move a little on one side and then bow. A moment later I saw a tall graceful figure, that I easily recognized, emerge from the doorway and come down stairs.

Reaching the corner, she made her way down Upper Grosvenor street. For a moment I stood irresolute. Early as the hour was, should I take advantage of the chance presented to me and make myself known to her? It was a dangerous step, but it was just possible that it might succeed. On the other hand, if I were to offend her, she might forbid me to ever speak to her again, and in that case my mission, to all intents and purposes, be at an end. A man's success very often depends on taking advantage of an opportunity. Here was my opportunity, and I resolved to profit by it. Not wishing her to think that I had followed her, I waited till she reached the bottom of the street that led to Park Lane. She turned to the left hand, whereupon I went down South Audley Street as fast as I could go, turned up Park Street, and then, trusting to my luck, made my way up Park Lane. When I turned the corner she was only a few paces from me. I think I have as much confidence as most men, but I am willing to admit, and I ask you to believe it, that never in the whole of my experience have I been as much afraid as I was at that moment.

I walked up to her and raised my hat. "I hope you will forgive my rudeness and that I am not making a mistake," I said. "Are you not Lady Olivia Belhampton?"

She was not in the least put out, but looked steadily at me out of her grey eyes. "That is certainly my name," she answered. "Is there anything that I can do for you?"

"Is it possible that you do not remember me, Lady Olivia?" I said. "I am sure I must have changed a good deal since you last saw me. Your brother Grenville and I were great friends. I have a very vivid recollection of a boating party on the lake at Bramleigh Castle, and your doing your best to upset me out of an American canoe."

She looked at me in amazement, and then light dawned on her

"Surely you are not Mr. Gavesson," she cried. "Roger Gavesson?"

"That is my name," I answered. "You will forgive me now for speaking to you in the street?"

She did not answer this question, except like the Irishman by asking another.

"But, Mr. Gavesson, where have you been all these yars? We have neither heard nor seen anything of you."

"Walking up and down the world," I answered, "from Dan to Beersheba. I only arrived in England yesterday."

"And are you going to stay long?"

On this point I did not enlighten her, for her voice told me that she took no sort of interest in it.

"It all depends," I answered. "I may be here a month, I may be here a year. At present I am anxious to get a little hunting, but this frost seems likely to last."

"It certainly would appear so," she rejoined.

Seeing that she did not wish to be detained any longer, I bade her good-morning and went on my way in the opposite direction.

"She's not the same jolly little girl that I used to know in the old days," I said to myself as I walked along. "I can see her now, with her long hair flying in the wind, running across the lawn with Grenville after her, as full of mischief as a young monkey, and prouder of her brother than anything or any one else in the world. It seems that Society has knocked the girl out of her and has left a Woman of Fashion in her place."

Thus moralizing I made my way back to the Strand, and thence to my hotel.

The keen morning air had given me a rare appetite, and when I sat down to my sumptuous breakfast I could hardly repress a smile as I thought of the rice and dates to which I had even gone so far as to learn to look forward in the Kasbah. As I looked round the spacious room, where many were taking their morning meal, I found it difficult to believe that I was the same man who had been the companion for so many days of that wretched Greek and of that still more wretched Jew. Yet here I was, with my pockets full of money, enjoying a breakfast fit for a king! and, on the other hand — but there, I am not going to dwell on that.

An hour or so after breakfast, when I had read the papers and had my pipe, Laceby put in an appearance, looking like a Russian Grand Duke in his fur coat. It appeared that he had sent the wire to the man near Leatherhead, and had received a reply that he had in his stable four animals that he thought might suit us. The ground of course, was too hard to try them, but we decided, in order to fill in the afternoon, to take a run down and inspect them. The morning was occupied in visits to tailors, hatters, hosiers, and other tradesmen. We lunched together at my hotel, and afterwards drove to Waterloo, where we caught the train to Leatherhead. We were met at that station by Mr. Manfield, the owner of the establishment we were about to visit. He drove us out to his stud farm, which was some two or three miles from the station. On arrival there we overhauled the stables and carefully examined the four animals concerning which he had telegraphed to Laceby that morning. It needed very little knowledge of horseflesh to see that they were something out of the common, and that made me suppose that the price was on a corresponding scale. At the dealer's suggestion we agreed to come out as soon as the frost broke to try them, when, should they prove satisfactory, we would be prepared to purchase them.

That evening I wrote to the principal house agent in the neighborhood of Burndean and gave him a commission to find us a small residence in the neighborhood, telling him what stabling we should require, and, perhaps, what was more important still, letting him know that the question of rent was practically unimportant. Our lucky star was evidently in the ascendant, for four days later the frost broke, and the house agent wrote to say that he had found us just what we required. We paid a second visit to Mr. Manfield's stables, tried the horses, and found them excellent. They stood the journey well, and, as Jim Laceby observed, "all they wanted was riding, and riding they should get."

As will be proved, riding they certainly did get, and better animals I never wish to throw a leg over.

I often look back now upon that first night's dinner in our new abode, with Jim Laceby at the other end of the table, young and handsome, and clothed in the knowledge of the big world which is an education that comes to few, yours truly as his vis-a-vis, and the cook, wine, and service irreproachable. I put the Kasbah behind me; it was only a nightmare, a ghoulish memory that I must school myself to forget. But as I raised my glass of port to my lips I seemed to see that room in the palace, the Sultan lolling upon his cushions, and those dark distrustful eyes fixed upon me. Almost mechanically I put my glass down, and a deadly chill swept over me. Even though I sat here in luxury, I was playing pitch and toss with life and death.

"What's the matter, old fellow?" inquired my companion. "You are looking very glum."

"I was thinking," I replied. "I was dragging up old memories. Heaven alone knows why. Men like you and I, who have knocked about all over the world, must of neeessity know moments when the past comes back, when some little thing, trivial in itself, suggests something else, and brings in its train a host of memories that sometimes are pleasurable, but more often give pain."

"Well, I must say you are a cheerful sort of party," said Laceby. "What's the matter with you? You are not drunk, I know, because you take scarcely anything, but you are as glum as a sick owl."

"Never mind, old boy," I said, rising from my chair. "I shall be better in the morning. Let's get to bed. We have plenty to do to-morrow."

We bade each other "good-night" and went to our rooms, but not to bed. Reaching my own apartment, I threw open the window and looked out. Across the valley I could see the lights of Burndean Hall.

CHAPTER VI.

A Fine Hunting Day.

Of all the meals of which one partakes in the course of the year there is not a more enjoyable one, in my humble opinion, than that of breakfast on a fine hunting morning. Let me go into the matter in detail and I will try to convince you. In the first place, when you descend from your sleeping apartment, your first thought should be to open the front door and take a careful observation of the morning. Overhead the sky will probably be blue, with fleecy clouds chasing each other across its vast expanse; the dew will lie heavy on the grass; the blackbirds will doubtless be making merry in the shrubbery, while from the stables come the sounds of active preparations for your amusement. Having satisfied yourself that the prospects are just as they should be, you glance complacently down at your snowy leathers and neat boots, and rate your terrier because in an excess of affection he desires to jump upon you and thus mar their brilliance; after which you retire into the house for breakfast, and, if you have the misfortune to be a bachelor, pour out your own tea or coffee, and eat your meal in solitary grandeur. Probably, while you are disposing of your second devilled kidney, you will look out through the window to see your horses starting for the meet, looking as if they knew, as you may be quite sure they do know, what the day's work is going to be, and were as anxious as you to hear the welcome sound of "Gone away."

After breakfast, if you're the man you should be—and between ourselves I'm quite sure you are—a pipe must be smoked and a newspaper skimmed through; the latter, however, not to be taken too seriously, by which I mean, of course, avoiding Parliamentary debates and, shall we say? the state of the money market. Such things are not for hunting men.

Later your butler, or if you do not care to be bothered with such a factotum, your pretty Mary Jane, will enter your sanctum to inform you that your hack is at the door. With what satisfaction do you swing yourself into the saddle, while the wife of your bosom, provided this time that your porch, wishes you good sport, and—as is more than probable—regrets that she is not accompanying you. As you jog along the quiet road and the cool wind blows upon you, you will find yourself, if I am any judge of human nature, reflecting that life is worth the living after all, whatever jaundiced, ill-conditioned folk many say to the contrary.

Our first morning out was just such another as I have endeavored to describe. The sky was blue, the wind in the right quarter, and it needed only a glance to see that the going would be perfect. The meet was some five miles distant and was a favorite one. Never in the memory of the oldest member of the hunt had the covert in question been drawn blank.

"I wouldn't change places with an emperor," said Laceby, after we had given our hacks a smart half-mile over a piece of common land beside the road.

"Nor I with a sultan," I replied. And I can assure you with the utmost truth that I meant it!

We reached our destination with a quarter of an hour to spare. The master and the hounds had just arrived, and the former, most courteous of men, was busily engaged making himself agreeable to his many and varied acquaintances. Being a true sportsman as well as gentleman, his nod and cheery "good-morning" were the same to my Lord Tom Noddy as to Mr. Snooks, the sporting butcher from the neighboring town. Handing over our hacks to the grooms, we mounted our hunters and then had leisure to look about us. The field was a big one, though I fear a large porportion of them were intentional Macadamites. All this time I was keeping my eyes open in the hope of seeing Lady Olivia. At first I thought she had not arrived, but at last I espied her on the farther side of the hounds, talking to a lady and gentleman, the latter being Lord Carborough.

Leaving Laceby to his own devices, I walked my horse round in that direction. If she had looked lovely at the theatre, she was even more so now. Her habit fitted her to perfection; her hair was neatly coiled beneath her hat; and the toe of a particularly smart boot peeped out from beneath her skirt. She was splendidly mounted on an almost thoroughbred bay with black points, who looked fit enough to win the Grand National. Taking advantage of the conversation I had with her that morning in Park Lane, I rode up to her and wished her "good-morning." She was evidently surprised to see me.

"I had no idea," she said, "Mr. Gavesson, that you intended hunting in this country."

"My friend and I have taken The Retreat on the Burley Road," I said.

"Really?" she answered, as if she had not taken any interest in the matter. "Poor Colonel Beverley used to live there. He was a great friend of my father's."

From the way in which she said this, it might have been inferred that she very much regretted the change of ownership. For want of something better to say, I inquired after her father.

"He is very well indeed, thank you," she replied. "You will find him over there, talking to the master,"

I could see that she was determined to keep me at a distance, and the knowledge of this was sufficient to put me on my mettle. I asked her opinion as to the prospects of the run.

"Excellent, I should think," was her reply, and I noticed that a new light came into her eyes. For the first time she thawed a little.

"We always find here," she continued, "and if he only goes away towards Grimstowe, we should have a capital run. You have a very nice horse, Mr. Gavesson."

"I think I may safely return the compliment," I answered. "If appearances go for anything, yours should be fast enough to win a big race."

I could see that the compliment pleased her, for she smiled appreciatively as she stroked his glossy neck with her crop.

"Yes, I am very proud of him," she said. "He was a birthday present from my father, and I am quite sure I never had a nicer. By the way, here is papa."

I wheeled my horse to find the Duke coming towards us. He was a good sportsman in the real sense of the word, and might have stood for a portrait of that proverbial individual, "the fine old English gentleman."

"Well, my dear," he said, addressing his daughter and throwing a glance at me, "time is up and we shall be making a move in a few minutes."

"I am glad to hear it," she remarked. Then she added, "Papa, may I introduce Mr. Gavesson to you, as I see you do not remember him? He was poor Grenville's friend at college."

"Forgive me, sir," said the old gentleman, "for not recognizing you. It must be many years since we last met."

"I have been abroad, and only returned to England a week ago," I said by way of explanation.

"And you immediately pay us the compliment of hunting with us. Well, well, let us hope that we shall show you good sport in return."

"I have promised Mr. Gavesson a good run this morning," said Lady Olivia, with a smile. "I hope Reynard will not disappoint us."

"I don't think we need fear that," remarked the old gentleman. "By the way, Mr. Gavesson, you must come up and dine with us one evening. The Duchess will be very glad to see you, I am sure."

(To be continued.)

FARMER GIVES THE REASON WHY

HE PINS HIS FAITH TO DODD'S KIDNEY PILLS.

They Made Him Strong and Well After Years of Intense Suffering from Lumbago and Other Kidney Troubles.

NORTH PELHAM, Ont., April 22.—(Special.)—Mr. Joseph L. Thomas, a substantial farmer of Pelham Township, well known and highly respected throughout this neighborhood, has joined the ranks of the great army of Canadians who pin their faith to Dodd's Kidney Pills. Mr. Thomas gives his reasons for doing so as follows:

"For several years I was sorely afflicted with Kidney Trouble, having many of its worst symptoms in an aggravated degree. I had Lumbago and was in such a condition that I was unfit for anything for weeks at a time.

"Insomnia resulted, and I was an intense sufferer. I had almost a perpetual headache and grew thin in flesh.

"I had been treated by a doctor without good results, so upon the recommendation of a cousin, who had been saved from a life of misery by Dodd's Kidney Pills, I began taking them.

"The first box gave me decided benefit, and after taking five boxes the old trouble was a thing of the past and I was again in every way strong and well."

Ask those who have used them if they ever heard of a case of Kidney Disease Dodd's Kidney Pills would not cure.

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BOY BANDITS HANGED YESTERDAY.

Full Penalty Paid for Eight Murders.

CHICAGO, April 22. — Peter Neidermeier, Gustav Marx and Harvey VanDine, the notorious car barn bandits, and confessed murderers of eight men, were hanged here today. Neidermeier was the first to die and his manner of death was unusual. He was so weak as the result of his recent attempt at suicide, that the jail guards were forced to carry him to the scaffold. He was then placed in the chair and the drop sprung at 10.35. His body moved convulsively as it hung. Although it was first believed by physicians that he was strangling, it was found later that his neck was broken.

Twenty minutes after the drop fell he was pronounced dead and the body was cut down.

Previous to the execution Neidermeier maintained the same sullen demeanor which has characterized him since he became a prisoner. While the death warrant was being read he snatched the document from the sheriff and stuck it in his pocket, making a sarcastic reference to his execution. He was carried to one of the floors on a jail truck, then carried down a flight of stairs to the scaffold.

Marx accompanied by two priests, was led to the scaffold repeating a litany after the clergy. He made no statement. He appeared weak, but met death bravely, the trap being sprung at 11.17. He was pronounced dead at 11.34, his neck having been broken.

VanDine's execution followed about half an hour later.

The hanging of the youthful car barn bandits followed eight murders all attendant upon robberies or efforts to escape arrest. During an attempt to escape on a stolen train after an extraordinary battle in the swamps of northern Indiana, just east of Chicago, in November last, the capture of the gang was completed by the arrest of Neidermeier, VanDine and Emile Roeski, their associate, Marx, having already been arrested.

VanDine, Neidermeier and Marx were sentenced for the murder of Frank Stewart, a clerk in the Chicago City Railway car barns during a robbery there on the morning of Aug. 30, 1903. James B. Johnson, motorman, was also killed, and two persons were wounded.

The bandits escaped with $2,240. Roeski was not concerned in this crime. Marx's drunken boastfulness directed suspicion to him and he was wounded and captured, but not until he had shot and killed Detective Quinn in a battle in a Chicago saloon.

Several days later Marx, angered at the failure of his companions to carry out a pre-arranged plan to dynamite the police station in which he was confined and secure his release, confessed to the murders at the street railway barn and implicated Neidermeier and VanDine. Marx told of other desperate crimes they had committed and involved Roeski.

Soon afterward the three men were found hiding in a "dugout" near Clarke, Ind. Seven Chicago policemen laid siege to their cave and a pitched battle with rifles and revolvers ensued, in which two detectives were wounded, one fatally.

The bandits escaped from their cave and the detectives withdrew to care for their wounded and secure reinforcements. The bandits captured a freight train, shooting and killing brakeman John Sauvie and started to run to Liverpool. A posse of farmers stopped the train. The bandits again gave battle to the farmers and Neidermeier and VanDine were wounded and surrendered. Roeski got away, but was soon arrested without resistance.

In the trials no defence was made for Neidermeier. In the case of VanDine evidence was introduced to show that he had been since birth afflicted with a form of epilepsy which had made him irresponsible. Marx, Neidermeier and VanDine were found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. Roeski was afterward sentenced to life imprisonment. All of them were under 21 years of age.

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