#### AT LOVE'S COMMAND.

By John A. Steuart.

By John A. Steuart.

I asked Tabal what be thought would be the result of the battle we had foight and lost.

The rewarding of the whole country black horse, be answered, promptly—"Ambod Shim bath fattened and grown larged on his neighbours, and Abou Trabal and Ahmed, some pulling at the bridles and others dance include the meals of the means that the enemy will converge on Amood Sinn's capital." I will converge on Amood Sinn's capital." I will converge on Amood Sinn's capital." I sath. "I would at home here there for the british of violory, "I had be suppression of incredulity and jumped the brothers."

Tabal glanced at me with the ole expression of incredulity and jumped brothers."

Tabal glanced at me with the ole expression of incredulity and jumped and get to the green valleys and one the brink of diszy precipies and on the brink of diszy precipies and one the brink of diszy precipies and core rubbly hills, when all at once we cannet upon a spot of such vendrous we sighted it. Tabal. who associated it might be inhabited, whispered to me to remain quiet. The process had in vent softly to spy. Clippling from his horse went steathfrify forward and precipies. All the second is the process and the cream and th

drew his dagger, which was his sole weapon.

"Put up thy dagger, Ahmed!" I said.

"I am surely thy friend."

"Thou art no friend," he returned, savagely.

"A man does not spit, on his friend. Thou hast cast the rinsings of thy foul mouth into my face, a disgrace, for which thy blood will atone. I will fight thee where thou standest, dagger to dagger, but I will not let thee call thyself my friend."

With that he wrapped his torn mantle about his left arm, as a sort of shield, and put himself in a posture of defence.

"Let it be quick," he hissed. "Stand not dallying as thou wert afraid of thy fair skin." the fair skin."

"What thou sayest is impossible," I answered, drawing myself up just enough to show I was not held back by fear. "It would be a sin in me to fight thee. Thou art in the midst of grievous misfortune."

"Thou art right," he said. "But I will bear my grief as becometh a man, and desireth not any sympathy at thy hand. I was eager to meet thee alone, and, lo! here thou art, and we will fight."

"If thou wilt sleep now," I when he had finished our dates

It was not intended as such, ned," I said. "I did but jest in ting water on thee,"
Nay; by my faith, it was no jest,"

"It was done in ignorance of the customs of thy country," I explained, He appeared to sway for a moment between two opinions.

"What sayest thou?" he asked, turning suddenly to Tabal. "Thou art of my own nation and not ignorant, like this infidel. Thinkest thou the Christian meant dishonour in cast-

"I add then east water in his face,"

"Fadst then east water in his face,"

"Lads. Here east water in his face,"

"Lads. Balle grave impartiality

"Lads. Balle grave in his face,"

"Lads. Balle grave thou hadst
meant him dishonour. But he acted
not in malice; but, as he sayeth, in
ignorance. Think what that meaneth! Peradventure if thou wert to
visit the Christian's country thy ignorance should betray thee into error."

This lucid reasoning seemed to weigh
with Ahmed. "It may be thou speakest the truth." he said, turning to me.
"I will so take it. Only remember
that, if thou put disgrace again upon
me, wittingly or unwittingly, I will
kill thee on the spot."

"I am warned and agree," I replied,
"and now what news hast thou of the
defeat?"

The worst that tongue can tell. The troops of Abou Kuram are scattered as chaff in the wind, and my father is dead, as thou knowest. But his death shall not be unavenged. A son liveth after him. Look you here. The man on the black horse is a mighty warrior, but I will slay him if he were the very devil himself, and he were the very devil himself, and I had to hunt him to the ends of the earth. I have sworn it, and that which I swear I will do."

having been hollowed out by the hand of man.

of the band in its recent enterprises.

When we arrived the cooking was held to be done, and the company, numbering at least 200, squatted to eat, Tabal, Ahmed, and myself being ordered to join. In appreciation, as he said, of my brave words, the chief did me the honour of keeping me close to himself, and we sat down beside the carcass of a gazelle, which had been roasted whole. As usual at such merrymakings, decency was thrown to the winds. Every man had a wolf's appetite, and took a wolf's ready method of appeasing it. The chief opened the proceedings by thrusting his hand down the gazelle's mouth and tearing out its half-raw tongue. Taking a huge bite himself, he requested me to fol-"Thou art right." he said. "But I will bear my grief as becometh a man, and desireth not any sympathy at thy hand. I was eager to meet thee alone, and, lo! here thou art, and we will fight."

"We will not fight," I returned. "Thou art famished with hunger and weak from fatigue and would be at a sore disadvantage. I will give thee a share of my food; it is not much, but it will strengthen thee, and when thou hast eaten thou shalt rest undisturbed. If after that thou be of a mind to fight, I may gratify thee. Meantime put up thy dagger."

He kept his blazing eyes on me for the space of perhaps half a minute, then sullenly thrusting the dagger into his girdle he threw himself on the ground without a word.

Tabal came down with the horses and the dates, and Ahmed was invited to eat. He accepted the invitation with an ill grace and a lowering plower. But he was in my power, and I would not let his net. site himself, he requested me to fol-

dition to him, what is he that he should cross my purpose? Come hear, thou dog, and bite," he added, addressing me. "Bite, or by our holy religion I will crush it down thy throat with the shaft of my spear. Nay, I may even widen the passage with the boint."

"My lord," I replied, in my humblest and most respectful manner, "I have already eaten and have no appetite."

"No appetite for such as that, thou mongrel cur! Thy vile stomach knoweth not what is good. Had I eaten a two-year-old camel, yet would I find appetite for such sweet bread as that. I sav to thee, stick thy teeth in it."

I might have perished in my refural, for the look of the thing sickened me, but just then my eve caught Tabal's, which gave me a hasty but earnest admonition. So I bit at the outer edge, where the meat was best done.

"A dainty bite, by my sabre hilt," cried Suleiman. "Twas but a pretence. Open thy jaws and try again, as thou valuest thy welfare. That is better. So, so," he laughed. "Now thou shalt fare as if thou wert a brown of the vultures to eat, but to-day thou shalt fare as if thou wert a brother. Take that," and he held up a goblet of coffee. "If thou say not it is the rarest mocha, I will tell thee to thy pretty face thou art a scandalous liar."

I drank, and the coffee was good, so good that my lips smacked of their own accord.

"Ha, ha! my gazelle hath the right taste in his mouth yet," cried Suleiman. "That is from the store of our beloved friend and brother Amood Sinn. Thou mayest have head of him. He is an unfortunate son of Ishmael, but a right good judge of coffee. Yet is it not better than his sherbet, which delighteth the soul as the smile of the houris? Amood Sinn is a man of understanding. He goeth forth to battle and leaveth his good things to the needy. My blessings on him. May the holy prophet give him the bliss of paradise"—taking a draft of sherbet. "It grieveth my heart to think that Yumen Yusel and that devil on the black horse will be drinking his wine and dividing his wives zo soon. Take a cup of his sh

hold our peace and look death in the face.

By nightfall, after a ride that recklessly tore and jolted the soundest joints and bones, we emerged from the range on a level dip on one of the spurs overlooking the plain to the west. Here we halted for supper, which was stealthily prepared and silently eaten; for the need of concealment had come. As soon as the meal was over, Suleiman and Abd el Mahsin held a brief but animated consultation, the result of which was an immediate order to mount and march. By daybreak we were at the mouth of a steep and narrow defile that issued on a piece of green sloping down to the plain, and here we rested in the shadow of some tall precipices, I managing to snatch perhaps an hour of sleep.

The east was blazing in all the glory of crimson and gold, when someone prodded me vigorously in the ribs, and I leaped up to find the company tightening girths for the road. Tabal, who insisted on being at once brother and servant to me, had my mare ready by my side. I had just time to take the roin when Suleiman gave the order to mount, and, like one man, the band

stallwart of our band, who might be leaded up to find the company tightening girths for the road. Tabal, who insisted on being at once brother of the road servant to me, had my mare ready by my side. I had just time to take the robust in the rest of us, following the lead of Suleiman, and. like one man, the band sprang into the saddle.

At starting we divided, Abd el Mahsin, with Ahmed and the necessary guard, going southward with the captured horses and camels and other booty, and Suleiman and the rest of us striking out to the north-west.

Before parting I managed to get a word with Ahmed.

"We may never meet again, Ahmed," I said, "and I wish to assure the I am thy friend. Should you make thy way back to Abou Kuram, as I trust thou wilt, tell bim I shall not forget his kindness, and that I commend to him the son of the valiant Koor All."

"It shall be done as thou desirest," he answered.

"One thing more I would beseech of you," I added, "and it is this—that if thou fall in with the man on the black horse thou wilt not fight with him nor provoke him."

"It will slay him," returned Ahmed, flercely.

"Nay, Abmed, tempt him not lest he slay thee," I said. "As for avenging the death of thy father, thou canst not right the wrongs of battle. Koor Ali fell like a galiant soldier. Lay that to thy heart. Farewell."

"Farewell," answered Ahmed. "I will think of what thou hast said." And we parted, I turning to pressing interests of my own.

It was easy to see from the demeanour of Suleiman and his men that something big was in the wind and presently an inkling of is character were bound for Amood Sinn's palace.

"We not return the wind and presently an inkling of is character were bound for Amood Sinn's palace, were shedding a red glare on the prospect was glorious, but they held their peace, and our march was as the march of the army of the dead.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN AMOOD SINN'S PALACE.

CHAPTER XXIII. We pushed on with the speechless haste of men who cannot afford to waste energy on words, neither heat of sun nor lack of water being allowed to detain us. In and out among drifting dunes, across shifting ridges, over fissures that would have swallowed us all without being aware of it, through black rocks and scraggy shrubbery, dipping into valleys, climbing hillocks skirting villages—on, on we went, with never an abatement of the pace and no hint of our burning impatience save what might be gathered from fiashing eyes and keen set faces. To me it was the old agony over again.

The pangs of thirst were upon me, and my hurt was paining me dreadfully. From his uneasy wriggling and his peculiar stoo. I understood that Tabal, too, was suffering. But as we had no desire to be stripped and left in the desert to console each other in native nakedness, no murmur of complaint escaped our lips.

Two days and nights this continued, with scarce a pause or remission. Our IN AMOOD SINN'S PALACE.

native nakedness, no murmur of complaint escaped our lips.
Two days and nights this continued,
with scarce a pause or remission. Our
food was eaten in the saddle, and, as
for prayers, heaven and the prophet
would forgive a little present neglect
in view of the urgency of our business
and the amplitude of the after atonement. We did not think of eating, we had no time for devotions, and such momentary halts as were permitted were wholly out of consideration for the labouring horses.

By noon on the third day we entered upon a high plateau of tableland,

momentary halts as were permitted were wholly out of consideration for the labouring horses. The were deaded in the place of tableland, clothed with stoculent grass, and giving promise of sorts sort of civilization. The esgerness of the men increase, and while foreign promise of sorts sort of civilization. The esgerness of the men increase, and while the place of spoil. We came upon many herds of goats eyes, and while prevent of the men increase upon many herds of goats while the commotion and revolution of war. Toward evening one of them reported order, as well as parties of troops that he took to be portions of the victorious army of Yumen Yusel. Suleiman list of the standard evening one of them are took to be portions of the victorious army of Yumen Yusel. Suleiman list of the standard evening one of them reported order, as well as parties of troops that he took to be portions of the victorious army of Yumen Yusel. Suleiman list of the standard evening one of them reported order, as well as parties of troops that he took to be portions of the victorious army of Yumen Yusel. Suleiman list of the standard evening one of them reported orders are the standard evening of the properties of 

Though there was no path save such as could be picked among broken rational down breathless steeps, the progress was swift, for Bedouin horses leap and dodge and climb with the agility of goats. In trying moments when we three strangers were demonstrative from fear of our necks we were admonished to silence with the butt end of a spear, and so learned to hold our peace and look death in the face.

By nightfall, after a ride that recklessly tore and joited the soundest joints and bones, we emerged from the range on a level dip on one of the spurs overlooking the plain to the west. Here we halted for supper, which was stealthly prepared and silently eaten; for the need of concealment had come. As soon as the meal was over, Suleiman and Abd el Mahsin held a brief but animated consultation, the result of which was an immediate order to mount and march. By daybreak we were at the mount of steep.

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and kicking open a stove that smoulder-ed in a corner, lighted it. Another and another followed suit, till twenty brands were shedding a red glare on the ghastly scene. In a swift glance we reckoned the multitude of demons against us; then, clustering once more about Suldigar, was recorded a rotation. about Suleiman, we reaped a path in-ward till we came to a battered stairward till we came to a battered staircase. Somewhere at the top of it were
the secret apartments in which Amood
Sinn's most precious possessions were
kept, and we made haste to ascend,
stabbing and tearing down all that
blocked or barred the way. It would
have saved much life and considerable
trouble had the several bands agreed
to combine and distribute the booty
share and share alike. But no man
thought of that, and probably would
not have entertained the idea had it
occurred to him.

For why? Because the good old rule Sufficeth them; the simple plan, That they should take who have the And they should keep who can.

So every-ruffish did that which promised the best and speediest return to himself.

We gained the top with the loss of only one man, who went down clutching his slayer and bellowing frightfully. Remarking that, everything considered, we had done very well, Suleiman paused a moment, trying to decide which way to turn. Labyrinths of passages ran like an intricate network in all directions. Anyone of them might be right, but the probability was that most of them probability was that most of them were wrong, and it was important to make the proper choice. As we were debating in our own minds which cor-ridor to take, and with the aid of our weapons endeavouring to maintain our fcoting, Suleiman caught a man who

seemed to be a panel in the wall. The smext instant there was a crash of splintering wood and rending iron, and through the broken door came a gush of varm perfume. "The houris, my dove," said Suleiman. "The houris, The men at his back, shouting, wildly strained for paradise, all except the guide, who groaned dismally as if he were on the brink of the pit.

Surging forward, we entered a narrow passage heavy with incense and darkened by massy curtains. Then, bursting another door, we came to a tapestried chamber. Suleiman growled at flidding it empty and was turning to have satisfaction out of Baruk when a chorus of screams came ringing out of the remote darkness beyond. Baruk was let alone. There was fun ahead that prohibited dallying.

To be Continued.

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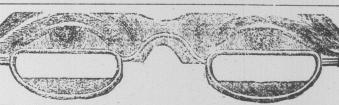
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