

(Continued from 1st page.)

CHAPTER II.

"Hullo, my son! Just ready for you," said Meryon.

"Honored lord, the prince commands your presence!" quavered the boy, agitatedly twisting together his slender fingers.

Seeing something was wrong, Meryon recognized the need of restoring Ebal's confidence by preserving a bold front.

"Commands it, does he? Isn't the old man oversteering himself a little? But of course you meant to say that he begs to supplicate the privilege of my company. Well, tell him to keep his capstan on and I'll be round in the course of a day or two."

"Do not speak so, beloved lord! Hatipa has found us out and told his highness. Oh, if they kill you I will kill myself!" cried the child, bursting into tears.

Meryon, gently touched, expressed it in his American way by a laugh.

"Don't you fret, Ebal, my jewel; neither of us is going to quit this sinful and hollow life for sixty or seventy years to come, at least. You don't half know me yet. I have but to clap my hands and say: 'Galah! and the president of the United States would march into the palace at the head of the army, navy and New York police department, and snatch up the whole court by the scuff of the neck and dump it hard down on Blackwell's Island—yes, they would! Hand me that stocking. And talk about palaces! Wait till you see the white house. Ebal, you don't know luxury, gorgeousness, extravagance, intrigue and corruption until you're been naturalized in the states as a Jeffersonian democrat or a Lincoln republican! This is a

simple, innocent sort of a place. If Hatipa were to get among hard politicians I know, mistake him for a newborn babe, sir?"

"We were there, mighty Ebal, whose black eyes expanded while he was information. 'How could he?'"

"Your grip for me, before long, all Hand me that necktie—no, the red one—I'm not this morning! I'm not about ready, don't I?"

"In an hour; stay here, me, and be a good boy; do

us did the young America go to battle. In one way the was an unequal one, and no new it better than he. But east (and perhaps in other) nothing is to be gained by rous or apologetic attitude; Meryon was conscious, more of possessing certain resources, if not immediately sublimed, might yet serve him in

lead. With wit, knowledge, and courage, even a single y make headway against a

side. He trotted with an insouciant air that part of the palace

as in which the prince's ents lay. As he passed the various courts, halls

riders he was the object of deal of curious scrutiny

ose who saw him, as if some d got abroad of his being in

ties. He noticed, for his at there sign of bustle and

ess about which could have reference to himself. d a military smack to them

s in the air, apparently, yon limited his interest for

out to the war in which n was a personal one. He

prince's ante-room was a outiers and attendants, among them. His un-

sage wore a grimace of ery as he caught Meryon's

s the latter drew near

ously ignored his greet-

turned his amorphous back

le. Meryon, with a pleas-

le, put forth his right hand

ught the eunuch by the lobe

of his huge ears, upon which

pivot he swung him forcibly

nd. The creature squealed with

rage and astonishment.

"Well, how is the old pudding

morning?" the American in-

s sweetly. "It mustn't for-

ss, or its manners, and tell his highness I

signified my pleasure to receive

you? Your lack of respect and

ceremony amazes me!"

"Prince," replied Meryon, with

imperturbable politeness, "I have

a communication for your private

ear—your private ear, prince," he

repeated, with a slight gesture of

the head towards Hatipa, who was

fairly dancing up and down in the

agony of his blood-thirsty im-

patience to recount his grievances.

"His highness hesitated a mo-

ment, bending the full force of his

glance upon the young artist, who

encountered it with one full as

steadfast and significant. "Retire!"

he then said to the eunuch, waving

his hand in dismissal.

"But, most illustrious son of

Heaven," began the inflamed

functionary, "you understand not."

"What?" roared the prince, in a

sudden fury; "am I told by the

filth that oozes beneath my feet

that I understand not? Retire

instantly, or that foul hide of thine

shall be stripped from thy carriage

caress and serve as a mat for dogs

to sleep on!"

This explosion fairly blew the

unwieldy eunuch out of the room,

turning green as he went with

mingled terror and unguilted malig-

nity. The American and the

oriental were left face to face.

"Now, sir," the latter set out

with the modified sternness of a

monarch who has just enjoyed the

satisfaction of scaring a subject

half to death; but Meryon inter-

posed with cool suavity.

"Since your highness desires

the Nubian deftly caught and re-

placed.

"I've been studying your little

principality," resumed the other,

"with a friendly disposition to do

something to improve it. I heard

you had a daughter, and it struck

me she might be the means of my

helping you. I'm unmarried, and

though I could get a wife worth a

dozen of her in New York or

Chicago to say nothing of Boston,

yet I believe in occasionally cross-

ing the higher strains with hum-

bler blood, and I have had

thoughts of honoring you and ex-

alting her by a union with myself."

A dozen things rushing at the

same instant to get uttered at his

highness' single word, naturally

got wedged, like people trying to

escape from a burning theatre, and

the prince became crimson, but

said nothing at all. Meryon went

on:

"But a serious objection has

arisen, for which you are primarily

to blame, and which you must

remove if I am to go on with the

sceme. Terah—though I'm confi-

dent she is a good little girl and

personally incapable of evil—is,

nevertheless, conventionally speak-

ing, damaged goods. And it's your

fault."

The novelty of his sensations

was hypnotizing the prince. His

eyes rolled outward, and his

breathing was stentorian. But he

no longer attempted to address

the meeting.

"Qui facit per alium, facit per

se," the American continued; "you

you say about the princess is cer-

tainly true, for Hatipa himself

told me so—and other things! So

I should like to have you for a son-

in-law, especially if it would benefit

my kingdom. But how would it

benefit it?"

"Well, looking at it strictly as a

financial measure, I should say it

would benefit you about a lac of

rupees worth a year, very likely

more—what with the summer

visitors, the boom in trade and new

openings for unmarried ladies."

After a pause he added: "But,

mind you, I haven't yet promised

I'll take her. My system got a bad

shock that day, and I may never

get over it."

The prince was silent for a long

time, doing more thinking than was

perhaps good either for him or

Meryon. At last he said:

"Allah is great. Man knows

little, and sometimes lies. Your

words, Meryon Pacha may be truth

or not. You wish to live; you

also wish, I think to marry my

daughter; but whether you desire

the good of my kingdom is as yet

hidden from me. But there is a

way, if you choose, to prove it."

"Yes," returned Meryon, in an

indifferent tone.

"Yes?" This morning I have

news that the prince, my nearest

neighbor, is going to make war on

me. I am unprepared and need

help. Beyond the country of my

enemy lies another kingdom, whose

king is my ally. If a messenger

from me could reach him in three

days from now I should be safe.

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