

swept along, keeling and dipping un-der the bellying sails, the bright green hideous emphasis to the prevailing water swishing from her gleaming gloom of the gorge. They were like sides and the snowdrift flying from her the ghastly mockeries of a world I fore foot in a way that would have made pleasure-seekers dance for Joy. Even I felt the gladness of the rushing, arrowy motion, though, on the whole, the speed was more ominous than inspiring, seeing what a doubtful dance might end the trip. The strain of dark uncertainty was somewhat relieved by the diversion of studying the crew, who were a living of us glad to breathe himself.

epitome of the fashions, past and curequal size ever displayed a like variety of costumes. Assuredly none could be on more distant terms with tailor and laundress. It was impossible to say. diversity, the dirt, or the tatters.

the ankle, Indian turbans, Syrian combazes, European jerkins, top boots, jerseys, hats, and frock coats, Persian gowns, breeches of all known cuts and countries in every degree of foulness, in every stage of decay and ragged-ness—all jumbled together as if some malicious artist had tried what effects of incongruity and grotesqueness, what outrages on taste and decency, he was capable of achieving.

The captain, as the chief personage on board, was naturally the most conspicuous example of the ridiculous. He was elaborately arrayed in a steeple beaver, strongly suggestive of the defunct missionary in spite of its jaunty ostrich plume and tarnished silver band; a coarse woollen shirt, smeared like a hog in autumn; a leathern girdle, from which depended a sword, a of a hundred enemies. It was the brace of pistols and a crooked dagger full of significant purple stains; Turk-ish trousers that had originally been crimson, but were now of more hues than the maker of Joseph's coat ever dreamed of; a pair of red boots that must once have shed their splendour grandees, and sashes enough of various colours to furnish a regiment of shelks. The decorations were thickest in the rear. Indeed when the gallant cap-tain turned his back it might seem he was clad in porous plasters patched with canvas steeped in pitch, so heavy were the incrustations of tar, grease, paint, and other adhesive substances. No sense of absurdity, however, disturbed his serene self-consequence. He paced the deck with as proud a step, as high and keen a look, as if he were an admiral of the fleet in faultless uni-form and the evidence of a hundred victories blazing on his breast, seldom condescending to any familiarity with those about him, never with me, hud-

dled in my corner. We tore along at an incredible rate and were soon beyond sight of land, though for a good while the smoke of the burning brig showed our starting point. Whither we were bound I could not guess, and durst not ask. I was free to conjecture, if I pleased, that our course was for some happy haven not far off, though appearances rather

noonday. had once known, but was never to know again. I am no judge of how long or how far we had struggled when upon turning a sharp angle we came upon an open space, or circular ledge, of the cour, I crawled into a shady spot bedimensions of a small room. Here we stopped, our sides heaving like the flanks of a spent hound, and the best asleep Whether by accident or the unrent, of pretty nearly all the nations of suspected design of those about me, the earth. Probably no company of I stood on the outer rim, the very edge of the wall that fell fifty fathoms sheer, the surging, unsounded depths beneath. Under that unaccountable species of fascination which lures a which gave the greater distinction-the | man to gaze on the horrible and awful, I bent forward and looked into There were Arab shirts reaching to the black pit at my feet. With a of water. Nor, what was equally dis-he ankle, Indian turbans, Syrian com- swimming head I drew back, to feel heartening, was sign of human abode myself seized roughly from behind. An icy sensation thrilled through me, I gave a great gasp, and my knees krccked violently together. The fearful moment I had been anticipating had come.

They bandaged my eyes, and bound my hand:: to my sides, and thus made helpless, left me standing. I shut my lips tight and my eyes also, although they were covered, and awaited the fatal thrust and giddy whirl into space. Not a word was spoken. I heard the rustle of garments and the rattle of arms, and

away below the sullen, muffled voice of the sea, but other sound there was none. The ill-boding silence was more phur pit let loose to destroy terrifying than the menacing tongues very extremity of torture to have my captors make their arrangements for disposing of me with such stealthy secrecy. In the crowding fears and agitations the idea flashed upon me that they

meant not only to slay but to torture on State assemblies and gatherings of me. I thought of all I had read about living men being flayed and cut into bits by savages, and my flesh crept and shrank as if at the touch of the knife. It was only by keeping teeth and lips clenched that I managed to hold from venting my agony in shrieks. To my great astonishment and unutterable relief, the procession began to move on again, I being given the muzzle of a musket to direct my steps.

to be in need of it.

among the cliffs.

the capital of the province: in an hou

more I was on the top, and Moses be

Pausing for a moment, my eyes shade

with my hand, I looked down upon

verdant plain, dotted here and then

with dark palm groves, and the pa

clustering trees, was the town I wante

to reach. With a fluttering breast

descending the steep braes above Kil

CHAPTER XIV.

FORTUNE.

along in grateful shade, among th

orchards and gardens and tinkling wa-

tercourses that skirted the town, a

very Eden after the desert I had pass-

gour.

scene as clearly as if the time were palmleaf mats in the midst of their I got to my feet, and some strange languid mien for the customers who birds that had their dwelling among never appeared to come, were the merchants. One and all they stared hard

about me in evident curiosity, then at me, and most of them came into flew away, screaming at my invasion the street to look after me, with mutof their retreat. No other living creature did I see or hear. Too weak and tered guessings and comments. I have drowsy to make any effort for sucno doubt there were muttered curses as well.

neath the ledge of a great rock, and To my surprise the orchards and gardens ran almost continuously into in spite of trouble and pain, soon fell the centre of the town, and who would I awoke near the dawn chilled to the was apparently free to enter. In vamarrow-for the dewy night air in riety and richness they surpassed anythese parts is sharp-and fallen tothing I had ever seen, and indeed gether like an emp'y sack. The pain seemed rather like the concentrated of my stomach was excruciating, beluxuriance of a whole country than ing for all the world like a living, conthe natural growth of a single spot. suming flame in my inside. To the There were clumps of feathery date tortures of hunger, too, was now addtrees. Indian palms, pomegranates, ed that of thirst, and in all the black orange, apple, apricot, peach, and fig riven wilderness there was not a drop trees. Another tree there was, too, more famous in Arabian song and story than any of these-the balm tree. or occupation anywhere to be seen. Like so much that is good and famous, The temptation was strong to lie down it is not beautiful-in fact, it is ugly and rest, but as that would be madand scraggy, and were the eye the ness if I wanted to save my life, I sole judge, contemptible, but those who staggered on once more, ignorant of know its virtues think little of its mean my direction and in the last ebb of appearance.

In striking contrast to the dark olive Weary hours passed-hours full of foliage were the blazing tropical flowndescribable anguish of mind and ers, many of them of inexpressible body-without bringing cheer or solace. glory and brilliancy. But what The sun came out, a huge white hot furnace enveloped in a pale haze of its touched me beyond anything else were own heat. The earth blistered and some clusters of magnificent roses, that cracked under my eyes; the rocks flung their fragrance on the air, unwere scorching it ; it seemed as if fire mindful of the general noisomenessand famine were blackening the land at times, indeed, making one forget it. together. A slight wind blew, but it The sight of that common English flower, so familiar and so lovely, stirwas the breath of the crater or sulred the emotions as not all the splen-Gasping to suffocation and dreading dours of the Orient could stir them. sunstroke, I hid in a deep cleft. Here It was like the greeting of an old friend I lay awhile in shade, but very soon in a strange land.

the sun smote in upon me till the walls In some of the gardens people were were like glowing iron. Crawling out, drawing water from deep wells with sought another refuge, which, in leathern buckets, others scooping it up turn, became an oven, forcing me to from slender stone-rimmed waterchange. And so for the best part of courses. At sight of such plenty I bethat day I went from place to place gan to get hungry and thirsty again, among the rocks, seeking shade, and all and so tempting was the fruit that the while getting fainter and more presently I found myself meditating a parched from want of food and water. robbery. But at every gate I decided Late in the afternoon I resumed my to wait till I reached the next, and in march in sheer desperation. But it this way, a thief at heart, an honest was woeful, heart-breaking work. I man from fear, I went along, feasting had got past the stage of acute pain my eyes, but grievously vexing the from hunger, but the thirst was a stomach, which protested ever more worse agony than ever. Fortunately and more vigorously. It is an ill exthe hot, noxious wird had fallen about perience to be famishing among noon, so that I breathed more freely, plenty.

but it was still the struggle of a dy-On turning one of the many street ing man. And indeed if relief did corners, full of the thought which not come quickly I should soon cease most engages a hungry man, I entered a square in which was assembled a By degrees the country grew less great crowd. A glance made it plain barren and forbidding. Grass began that they were holiday-makers. In to appear, at first in scanty brown the midst was a man wearing over patches, but gradually getting greener the usual shirt a gay, parti-coloured and more plentiful. This heartened mantel and a scarlet vest, with wide me a bit, and ere long to my infinite sleeves like a bishop's gown. His joy I came upon a man herding a flock head was fantastically enfolded in a of goats in a little valley that nestled flaming handkerchief, in the volumin-ous twists of which there were stuck He was mightily astonished at seeing three bobbing peacock feathers. He me, and his demeanour at first was was seated on a camel as gorgeously none too friendly. But my wretched caparisoned as himself, and was

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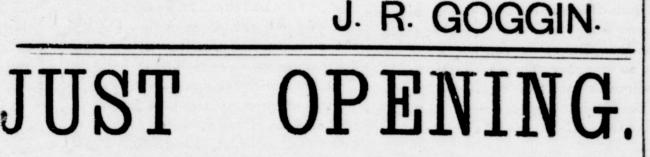
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suggested we were scouring the sea for

By and by we hauled our wind and began to fetch in a backward direction. began to fetch in a backward direction. But we had not gone a league when we bounded off on another tack, and for the next hour or two we tacked and changed so freyuently, running close-hauled as if for our lives and dropping off as if in sheer perversity, that I completely lost my reckoning. It was wonderful how that strange-we built thin behaved how sensitive the

ly-built ship behaved, how sensitive she was to the gentlest pressure of the helm, how clean, quick and graceful were all her movements, and how she rushed on her course when she got her and threaten to pitch me head forerushed on her course when she got her head. In spite of rather rough sea-manship, only once did she make a mistake. Through a too hasty luff she happened to come dead into the wind's eye, and for the space of a second she hung in irons with loose sails. She seemed to shake herself with vexation, like a highly spirited horse thrown on whispered consultation. Then I knew its haunches without reason, turned that part of the company went one way

It was now well on in the afternoon. The sun, though scorchingly hot, was near our level, and the water was deepening in purple and crimson. I was beginning to think we were to have a night at sea, when the captain gave the order to put the helm hard down. We swung round and sped on a landward course, sailing free and very swift. very swift.

wery swift. "We shall make land a good hour ere sundown," said the captain to his chief officer, giving me the first au-thentic information of the day. By this time my faculty of curiosity had lost its edge, but at the mention of land I sat up to keep a lookout, and in less than an hour we sighted the shore. The general character reserved shore. The general character resem-bled that of the part we had left earlier in the day, though I soon saw we were not returning to the death scene of the luckless Bird of Paradise. Instead of a shallow beach the water ran close to high rocks, penetrated by rugged gorges, into which the sea flowed. No port, town, or human hab-itation was to be seen. But that, all things considered, was not surprising. We shot into a narrow opening under the darkening brows of lofty cliffs, and the darkening brows of lofty cliffs, and immediately the sails fell together with a flap. Almost before they ceased flut-tering they were in and furled. Then a boat was lowered, half a dozen steel sinewed men got into it, and rowed, pul-ling the ship by a cable. Light and of small draught, she followed easily, and in half an hour or so, after manifold windings, we came to a rude jetty windings, we came to a rude jetty, hewn, as it appeared, out of the solid rock. Here we disembarked, the ves-sel being made fast to a rough stone pillar.

As we leaped from the bulwarks to the ledges of rock that formed the pler, my heart beat quickly with conjecture and apprehension, for it was plain that a crisis was at hand. To guess what it might be was enough to make the stoutest tremble. The black precipices, the yawning caverns, and hoarse roar of warring waters were of evil suggestion, but of far darker import than a



I was given the muzzle of a musket to direct my steps.

heart of man.

the pillaging of the pirates. quickly half round, caught the wind again, and then, with her yellow wings spread to their utmost, went skimming along like a sea bird. It was now well on in the afternoon. he asked, suddenly,

bluntly. "Listen well to my words, parted.

for they concern thy very life, While we were yet far down the gulf, some said, 'Cut him in two and cast him to the fishes.' Others-and well for thee they prevailed-answered, 'No. rather let him live, if so be he go not to come back. If he return, then shall his blood be upon his own head.' Now we are merciful. We will lead thee to a place of safety some distance hence and there leave thee. Only if for the space of one hour thou triest to free thine eyes from their covering, then as surely as thou dost it thou shalt die ere thou hast time to look

twice." Without waiting for a word from me he gave the order, and we went on igain. The ground was broken and ineven, but after the pit sides we had limbed it was like the Queen's high-VRY.

We may have marched for an hour when we stopped. I was made to sit upon a stone. Then they untied my hands, admonishing me to remember MANY TRYING VICISSITUDES O the penalty for disobedience in respect to the bandage on my eyes, and hav-I was soon swinging light-heartedl

ing given me my pipes, which in a surprising spirit of generosity had been taken care of, they left me. I sat there awhile with perfect loyalty, acutely mindful of the injunctions and admonitions I had received. I kept my hand tight on the green bag. In the stress of terror just gone through I had forgotten it, but now that it was returned its touch had for a moment something of the solace of

an old friend's presence. Partly to amuse myself, partly to compute the flight of time, I began to count the seconds, but it proved a count the seconds, but it proved a weary process and was given up, only,

condition must have touched him, for shouting and gesticulating with many vhen I came tottering and rolling down wild grimaces, the people responding he slope to where he stood, he stepped to his sallies of wit and distortions of countenance with resounding bursts of forward to meet me with words of merriment

pity enquiry. I saluted briefly, "A professional story-teller," I said to myself, and it proved I was right. The fellow seemed master of his busand appealed to him in Heaven's name to let me have a drink or I should die. In an instant the Christian soul was iness, for all were eager and excited, vigorously milking his best goat. save only the gaunt, sorrowful camel, watched till the pail was half full of which was sunk in a gloom no mirth the frothing, creamy milk; then, unable could brighten. Perhaps, like Harle-quin, it was too familiar with jests to to forbear, I snatched it from him and drank till I choked. After slaking be much cheered by them. I had not myself, I had some dates from his own watched the performance more than a wallet, and felt wondrously revived. minute when the clown noticed me. and for his charity he had as grate-He stared for a second in amazement, ful thanks as ever came from the but quickly recovering the professional insolence he pointed a leering finger at When we came to talk, I told him me, calling upon the assemblage to look only such parts of my story as 1 at the rare curiosity that had opporthought he could understand. He tunely appeared for their entertainwas greatly amazed, breaking out into ment. Like one man they wheeled frequent ejaculations at the relation about and fastened their eyes upon me. of Abram ben Aden's treachery and At this I turned quickly on my heel to walk off, considering it the safest "And what is to become of thee policy to get out of the way with as much speed and as little fuss as pos-sible. But the story-teller hurling a "Only God knows that," I answered, but if thou wilt add to thy goodness stinging gibe at me about my courage by directing me to the nearest town I (a quality I would let no man make a may perhaps find a way of returning jest of with impunity), I turned again to my own country." This he gladly did, but before he and faced the throng, my heart already beginning to bristle in my breast. would consent to my departure I had There was a moment's silence, then the to take some more milk and dates. buffoon on the camel began a running Nothing loath, I feasted a second time, commentary on my looks, my dress and the goatherd joining me in token of spirit, enlivening his remarks with goodwill. Then, with ceremonious emwitticism that made very free with bracings and many vows of amity, we my feelings and sent the listeners (all save one) into convulsions of laughter. Rekindled hope is the best of all cor-

He capped his insults and insolences by dials. I had drunk of it, and now inviting his audience to step forward pushed on, a new man, reanimated in and examine me for themselves. body and spirit. In two hours I wa The next minute the had formed a climbing a range of hills beyond which ring about me, taking care, however, lay the town that happened also to b to keep some distance off, as if I might be an animal of uncertain temper. But a perky youth, in rich cloak holding the promised land could not and many coloured sashes, eager to have gazed forward more wistfully set an example in temerity and make sport for his fellows, ran up and probed me in the ribs with his riring-stick. It was wonderful how the old fiery spirit of retaliation came back on me. Quicker than thought I whipped out triarchal flocks and herds of Arabia Near the further side, half hid by th my pistol and covered the fellow's head. He ducked, dodged and disappeared like magic. Disappointed at went on again, bounding down the his celerity in getting out of sight, I took aim at the clown. He, too, had slopes almost as joyously as if I wer an antipathy to such target practice, and like a flash was off his camel and hiding among the crowd. A thrilling pause followed as the people, fallen silent, stared in wonder at me, then at one another, then at the camel standing as saturnine and stupid looking as ever, quite unconscious of its master's sudden desertion,

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