

THE TRAGEDY OF
THE PYRAMIDS



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THE TRAGEDY OF
THE PYRAMIDS

THE wrapper gives a reproduction of the Cnidian Venus of Praxiteles, the most beautiful female head which has come down to us from ancient Greece, to which several allusions are made in the book.

The little picture of the Sphinx printed across it, reproduced from a photograph by the Author, shows the scene of "The Tragedy of the Pyramids."



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From a Painting by BENTON FLETCHER.

Cairo : the Citadel, the City, and the Pyramids.

The Tragedy of the Pyramids

A ROMANCE OF
ARMY LIFE IN EGYPT

BY
DOUGLAS SLADEN

AUTHOR OF

"My Son Richard," "A Japanese Marriage,"
"Egypt and the English," etc., etc.

With a Coloured Frontispiece by BENTON FLETCHER.

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Dedication.

DEDICATED BY PERMISSION
TO MY FRIEND OF MANY YEARS,
SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE,
IN ADMIRATION OF
THE SERVICES HE RENDERED OUR COUNTRY
BY HIS NOBLE VINDICATION OF IT,
ENTITLED
"THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA: ITS CAUSE AND CONDUCT."

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PREFACE

TO THE READER

THE fact that I have written a novel on the coming revolution in Egypt, simultaneously with Mr. Hall Caine, is not due to accident.

I had, before he began the serial publication of the "White Prophet," written about half a novel inspired by the humours of travel in Egypt.

But when I had read the first two instalments of the "White Prophet" I felt constrained to put aside what I had written, and write a counterblast to Mr. Hall Caine. I read no more of his book until I had finished mine. "The Tragedy of the Pyramids" is, therefore, a counterblast, not an answer, to his. It is my idea of the form a revolution in Egypt will assume, if the Egyptian Nationalist ever takes his courage in both hands. He will not do so unless the British Government and its Representative in Egypt are incredibly foolish, because, since the success of the Young Turk, there is no present chance of the agitation against the British in Egypt being Pan-Islamic. The dangerous element in the Egyptian Nationalist movement during the past few years has been Mohammedan fanaticism. While the old Sultan and the Reactionary Party were in power in Turkey, the Nationalists hoped to put all the forces of Islam in North Africa in motion against Great Britain. But when the chief religious and chief political authorities at Constantinople proclaimed that Great Britain was the friend of liberty and the friend of Islam, and that the British rule in Egypt had given Young Turkey its ideals, the chief motive force of the Egyptian Nationalist conspiracy was gone.

However, the great Senoussi Confederation in the Sahara, which only acknowledges the supremacy of the Sultan in a

shadowy way, continues firm in its intention of, whenever it is strong enough, expelling the Christians from North Africa by a Holy War; while the corruption-mongers, the city mobs and the schoolboys of Egypt will continue Nationalist; and the two latter can always engineer a demonstration.

To produce a *bonâ fide* revolution the *jellahin*, or peasants, estimated by Dr. Budge at about seven-eighths of the population, have to be thrown into the scale against the British. They cannot be made to understand what a Parliament means; they know that the British gave them water; freed them from the slavery of *courbash* and *corvée*—the lash and forced labour—and protected their women from the lusts, and their property from the avarice of the pashas. They know that the withdrawal of the British inspectors has taken away half the value of the cotton crop—their source of wealth.

The only way to rouse the *jellahin* against the British is a successful appeal to Mohammedan fanaticism.

Another great obstacle to an Egyptian Revolution lies in the Egyptian's want of organizing ability, the Egyptian's incapacity to take responsibility.

To meet this I have imagined an American millionaire, with the obliquitous ideas of Mr. Myron H. Phelps, coming forward to finance and organize a revolution in Egypt. Mr. Phelps, it will be remembered, is an American lawyer, whose plans for the future of India were set forth at length by the *Daily Express*, when he was in London a few months ago. The Stephen Considine of my book is an American Irishman, who has made untold wealth by the foundation of the American Hardware Trust, and uses his wealth and the machinery of his business in Egypt to produce the revolution.

It may be asked how I had the audacity to write a novel simultaneously with one of the greatest living novelists, upon the same subject, and from an almost diametrically opposite point of view.

I do this because I think that Mr. Hall Caine has been misinformed, and has committed a great injustice. He implies that the British are hostile to Islam. But the great mosque of Khartoum, which he makes a feature in his story, was put up at a cost of eight thousand pounds by the British authorities of the Soudan; Lord Cromer was responsible for the restoration of the mosques in Cairo; Lord Cromer shielded the great Mohammedan University of El

Azhar (which Lord Nuneham attacks in the story), which has no educational value, from the zeal of reformers; and Lord Cromer spared the Mohammedan Courts of Justice, which are the greatest obstacle to the development of civilization in Cairo?

The British are the friends of the Mohammedans; any Copt in Egypt, any native of India, would emphasize this.

The Egyptian Mohammedan is fond of advancing as an argument against the British Occupation of Egypt that the Koran forbids Mohammedans to live in countries which are ruled by non-believers in Islam. A glance at any reliable work of reference on the subject would show that half the Mohammedans in the world do live in countries which are ruled by non-believers—to wit, the empires of England, Russia and China, not to mention the French Republic.

I cannot believe that Mr. Hall Caine intended Lord Nuneham to be a portrait of Lord Cromer, the two characters are so unlike. Lord Cromer was a man of iron; Lord Nuneham is an incapable tyrant. But readers have identified the two characters, though I feel sure that Mr. Hall Caine used his privilege as a novelist, and created his Lord Nuneham without an identity in Egypt, as I created my Lord Clapham, who has already done duty in my Japanese novel "Playing the Game."

If Mr. Hall Caine intended Lord Nuneham to be a satire on Lord Cromer, he would, of course, have committed a crying injustice, and written absurdities. There is no close resemblance between the two, except that both were British Consuls-General in Egypt, and autocratic.

In any case I am not concerned with defending Lord Cromer, the creator of Egyptian prosperity, the Warren Hastings of Egypt, who made modern Egypt rise like a phoenix from its ashes. History will take care of him.

But the British Army and British Administration in Egypt stand on a different footing. They consist of units who are nameless unless they become the centres of crises. They have borne the burden and heat of the day, during the twenty-five years of the successful reconstruction of Egypt out of the fragments, into which the country had been torn by the creatures of the Khedive Ismail and Arabi Pasha. These men never seek what is called honour and glory; they just work until life or health is finished, or until they are called to another sphere in our Empire.

Mr. Hall Caine's attitude to the Army is foreshadowed on

page 5 of his book, where, speaking of the stubborn and perilous battle of Omdurman, he says, "Don't call it a battle, sir—call it an execution."

He will hardly allow one Englishman in Egypt, except the renegade Colonel Lord, any credit in his book. His General is an epileptic, broken down in health and nerves before he went to Egypt; some of his other officers present pictures of the British officer in Egypt, which all British soldiers, officers or privates, who read the "White Prophet," will resent.

The solitary exception is the "brutal" Macdonald, whom Mr. Hall Caine intends to hold up to obloquy, but represents as doing his duty fearless of consequences.

I am not one of those critics who make sweeping assertions and offer no proofs of them. I propose to give here, cut and dried, passages from Mr. Hall Caine's novel, which I consider unjust and insulting to the British Army.

To begin with, there is the appointment of the General. We are told that General Graves, when a major, had married the daughter of a Jewish merchant in Madras. She was a woman of strong character and great beauty, but little principle, who, when they returned home, became intimate, in their little military town, with the Lord-Lieutenant of the county. The end of that intimacy was "a violent scene, in which the husband, in his ungovernable rage, had flung the nobleman on the ground and trampled on him, torn the jewels out of his wife's breast and crushed them under his heel, and then, realizing the bankruptcy his life had come to, had gone home and had brain-fever. . . . When the brain-fever was gone, the General, being weak, both in body and mind, was ordered rest and change." He went to his native place in the Lake Country. "There he recovered bodily strength, but it was long before his mind returned to him, and, meantime, he had strange delusions."

Two years after the breakdown they were in London, and Lord Nuneham, whom readers have chosen to identify with Lord Cromer, met Helena Graves. He said to himself: "'This girl has the blood of the great women of the Bible, the Deborahs who were mothers in Israel; aye, and the Jael who avenged her.' At that time the post of Major-General to the British Army in Egypt was shortly to become vacant, and by Lord Nuneham's influence it was offered to Graves. Six months later father and daughter arrived in Cairo."

Mr. Hall Caine makes the mere journey to Egypt, a luxurious one, too much for the man he has appointed to command the Army there.

"It had been an exciting time, but Helena managed everything, and the General had borne up manfully until they took possession of the house assigned to them—a renovated old palace on the edge of the Citadel. Then, in a moment, he had collapsed and fallen from his chair to the floor. Helena had lifted him in her strong arms, laid him on the couch, and sent his aide-de-camp for the medical officer in charge.

"Consciousness came back quickly, and Helena laughed through the tears that had gathered in her great eyes, but the surgeon continued to look grave.

"Has the General ever had attacks like this before?" he asked.

"Never that I know of," said Helena.

"He must be kept quiet. I'll see him in the morning."

"Next day the medical officer had no doubts of his diagnosis—heart disease, quite unmistakably. The news had to be broken to the General, and he bore it bravely; but thinking of Helena, he made one request—that nothing should be said on the subject. If the fact were known at the War Office, he might be retired, and there could be no necessity for that until the Army were put on active service.

"But isn't the Army always on active service in Egypt, sir?" said the surgeon.

"Technically, perhaps—not really," said the General. "In any case, I'm not afraid, and I ask you to keep the matter quiet."

"As you please, sir."

"You and I and Helena must be the only ones to know anything about it."

"Very well, but you must promise to take care. Any undue excitement, any over-exertion, any outburst of anger, even——"

"It shall not occur; I give you my word for it," said the General.

"But it had occurred, not once, but frequently, during the twelve months following. It occurred after Gordon asked for Helena, and again last night, the moment the General reached his bedroom on his return from the Khedivial Club."

To my mind, though I do not suppose that Mr. Hall Caine was conscious of it, this whole episode is an insulting

reflection upon the British Administration in Egypt and the British Army.

(1.) This is not the way, influential as Lord Nuneham was, that the War Office appoints an officer to a ticklish position like that of the General Commanding the Army of Occupation in Egypt.

(2.) A man who had gone off his head would certainly not be allowed to resume his place on the active list.

(3.) Supposing that he had been appointed, any officer in the British Army occupying a difficult and dangerous command like that of Egypt would, instead of concealing his condition, draw the attention of the Government to it, and ask to be relieved of his command. Mr. Hall Caine makes his General ask a surgeon, who is also an officer in the Army, to be his accomplice in concealing it.

So much for the General. It is in the character of Colonel the Hon. Charles Gordon Lord, only child of Lord Nuneham (whom readers persist in considering a satire on Lord Cromer), that Mr. Hall Caine outrages British military sentiment worst. When he came back to Egypt, in the capacity of Colonel and Assistant-Adjutant-General—"Second in Command" to the General himself—he saw the "face of Hafiz, now a soldier like himself, beaming by his carriage window."

"It was not good form for a British officer to fraternize with the Egyptians, but Gordon shook hands with everybody, and walked down the platform with his arm round Hafiz's shoulders, while the others, who had come to meet him, cried, 'Salaam, brother,' and laughed like children."

This would be an inconceivable lapse of dignity and military etiquette. Even if Hafiz, who was the son of the foster-mother—in other words, the nurse who had suckled Gordon, and was now a servant of Lady Nuneham,—were an officer, the lapse would be none the less serious, because the Egyptian officers in their own regiments are not the equals of the British officers. They do not even mess together. I remember asking an Egyptian Bey, who had married a cousin of the Khedive, if the Egyptians resented this. "Why should they?" he replied. "You could not expect the English officers to eat with men, who belong to the same class as tram-conductors and barbers, who do not know how to sit at table."

A high Staff Officer walking about the railway station with his arm round the shoulders of a low-class Egyptian could

only be imagined by one ignorant of Army etiquette. And only such an one could imagine a British Staff Officer asking Hafiz (who is really a very fine fellow) :

“ ‘Tell me, Hafiz,’ said Gordon, ‘if a soldier is ordered to act in a way he believes to be wrong, what is he to do?’ ”

“ ‘His duty, I suppose,’ said Hafiz.

“ ‘His duty to what—his commander or his conscience?’ ”

“ ‘If a soldier is under orders, I suppose he has no conscience.’ ”

When Gordon, the General’s Assistant-Adjutant-General, is ordered by him to take a force and clear the Professors and students out of El Azhar, the great Moslem University, because it is a hot-bed of sedition, he refuses.

After a great deal of protesting by Gordon, who declares that there will be bloodshed, and England’s *prestige* (surely a most perverted use of this word) will suffer if she compels obedience to her orders, the General asks him point-blank: “ ‘Without further argument I ask you if you are willing to carry out the order I have given you?’ ”

“ ‘It would be a crime, sir.’ ”

“ ‘Crime or no crime, it would be no concern of yours. Do you refuse to obey my order?’ ”

“ ‘Recall your order, sir, and I shall have no reason to refuse to obey it.’ ”

“ ‘Do you refuse to obey my order?’ ”

“ ‘It would be against my conscience, General.’ ”

“ ‘Your conscience is not in question. Your only duty is to carry out the will of your superior.’ ”

“ ‘When I accepted my commission in the Army, did I lose my rights as a human being, sir?’ ”

“ ‘Don’t talk to me about losing your rights. In the face of duty, an officer loses father, mother, wife and child. According to the King’s regulations, you are a soldier first, remember.’ ”

“ ‘No, sir; according to the King’s regulations, I am first of all a man.’ ”*

“The General bridled his gathering anger and answered: ‘Of course, you can ask for a written order—if you wish to avoid the danger of blame.’ ”

“ ‘I wish to avoid the danger of doing wrong, sir,’ said Gordon; and then, glancing towards his father, he added :

* This is, of course, erroneous.

“ ‘ Let me feel that I'm fighting for the right. An English soldier cannot fight without that.’

“ ‘ Then I ask you, as an English soldier, if you refuse to obey my order ? ’ repeated the General.

“ But Gordon, still with his face towards his father, said :

“ ‘ Wherever the English flag flies men say, “ Here is justice.” That's something to be proud of. Don't let us lose it, sir.’

“ ‘ I ask you again,’ said the General, ‘ if you refuse to obey my order ? ’

“ ‘ I have done wrong things without knowing them,’ said Gordon, ‘ but when you ask me to——’

“ ‘ England asks you to obey your General—will you do it ? ’ said General Graves ; and then Gordon faced back to him, and in a voice that rang through the room he said :

“ ‘ No ; not for England will I do what I *know* to be wrong.’ ”

General Graves then sends for his daughter, who is Gordon's *fiancée*, to tell him that, if he is court-martialled and degraded, she will not marry him.

In my opinion, to allow the General to introduce such a mixture of military and domestic relations is to make a laughing-stock of the British Army. And Mr. Hall Caine does not stop here. When the General has given Gordon the written order, and explained that it relieves him of all responsibility, he makes Gordon suddenly say : “ No, I will not go on. Do you suppose that I have been thinking of myself ? Take back your order. There is no obedience due to a sinful command, and this command is sinful. It is wicked, it is mad, it is abominable ! You are asking me to commit murder—that's it—murder—and I will not commit it. There's your order—take it back, and damn it ! ” At the same time Gordon crushes the paper and flings it on the desk. This may be dramatic, but it is an insult to the discipline of the British Army to put such words into the mouth of an Assistant-Adjutant-General talking to the General in Command.

What follows is equally impossible, if not equally insulting. The General, instead of sending Gordon to his quarters and telling him to consider himself under arrest till he appears before the court-martial, demands his sword from him and breaks it, and tears the decorations off his tunic, ripping pieces of the cloth away with them, and throwing them on the ground. He does then tell Gordon to consider himself under

arrest, but cancels its effect by adding "or take my advice and be off altogether. Quit the Army you have dishonoured and the friends you have disgraced, and hide your infamous conduct in some foreign land." Gordon does not obey him and go straight to his quarters, but comes back to beard the General over his decidedly irregular behaviour. The General says, "Didn't I order you to your quarters? Do you wish me to put you under close arrest? Get off!" Gordon retorts, "Not yet. You and I have to settle accounts first. You have behaved like a tyrant." He asks, "What right have you to condemn me before I was tried, and punish me before I was sentenced? Before or after, what right had you to break my sword and tear off my medals? Degradation is obsolete in the British Army."

The General certainly had no right to behave in such a way. After the altercation has lasted a short time "the General, unable to command himself any longer, had snatched up the broken sword from the floor, and was making for Gordon as if to smite him . . . the General, losing himself utterly, flung himself on Gordon with the broken sword," etc.

If General Graves and Colonel Lord had been civilians this would have been bad enough, but to me it seems an outrage to make a General and his Second in Command behave in such a way in the course of their military duties.

Equally unjust to the British Army, as I take it, is Mr. Hall Caine's description of what happens when Colonel Macdonald, the Deputy-Assistant-Adjutant-General, goes with some cavalry to carry out the orders which Gordon has mutinously refused to carry out. El Azhar is an enormous mosque, and six thousand of its students are supposed to have rebelliously collected there when ordered to evacuate it. The Governor of the city is present, and authorizes Colonel Macdonald to force an entrance. Six or eight of the soldiers commence to batter in the gates with a beam, whereupon the students clamber up to the parapet of the mosque, and begin to hurl huge stones down on the soldiers. As they will not desist, the Colonel, very properly, to save his men's lives, orders them to fire on the stone-throwers, one of whom, a boy of fourteen, is killed.

"The soldiers were forcing their horses through the crowds, and beating with the flat of their swords, when two or three shots were fired within, and it became certain that some of the students were using firearms. At that the bull-

dog in the British Colonel got the better of the man, and he wanted to shout a command to his men to use the edge of their weapons and clear the place at any cost, but the shrill cry of the mother over her dead boy drowned his thick voice.

“ ‘He is dead ! They have killed him ! My only child ! His father died last week. God took him, and now I have nobody. Ali, come back to me ! Ali ! Ali !’

“ ‘Take that yelping b—— away !’ shouted the Colonel, ripping out an oath of impatience, and that was the moment when Gordon Lord came up.

“What he did then he could never afterwards remember ; but what others saw was that, with the spring of a tiger, he leapt up to Macdonald, laid hold of him by the collar of his khaki jacket, dragged him from the saddle, flung him headlong on to the ground, and stamped on him as if he had been a poisonous snake.

“In another moment there would have been no more Macdonald ; but just then, while the soldiers, recognizing their first Staff Officer, stood dismayed, not knowing what it was their duty to do, there came over the sibilant hiss of the crowd the loud clangour of the hoofs of galloping horses, and the native people laid hold of Gordon and carried him away.”

How could anyone acquainted with military matters, picture the General's Aide-de-camp, a little later, saying, as Mr. Hall Caine makes him, to the General's daughter, “Of course, Macdonald acted like a brute.” As a matter of fact, Macdonald is the only military character in the whole book whom Mr. Hall Caine makes act as the soldiers of all nations would expect him to ; to throw obloquy on him is merely hysterical. It is as unreasonable as Hafiz's remark to Gordon, “It's better, in any case, to let the War Office deal with you. They'll know everything before you reach London, and they'll see you've been in the right.” How, one wonders, could anybody expect the War Office to support Gordon Lord in throwing the General's orders in his face, or in pulling Colonel Macdonald, while in the execution of his duty, off his horse, and jumping on him like a costermonger.

I will not go into details over Gordon's trial by court-martial, his condemnation, his instant pardon by the King (without reference to the War Office), and his appointment directly afterwards to be the General in command of the Army of Occupation. The pardon and the appointment are of course quite impossible, but Mr. Hall Caine, as a writer of fiction, is

perhaps entitled to deal in this class of impossibility. It is, however, an insult to the Army to represent that "Gordon's brother-officers were with him to a man" in his defiance of the General. One and all would have been dead against him.

And the statement in Vol. II., page 325, "that all the Army was in love with Helena; every soldier was her slave," is an absolute impossibility when you have been told on page 315 that at the court-martial the hands of Helena and the Egyptian, Hafiz, "found each other in a fervent clasp, and sweetheart and foster-brother sat so until the end of the inquiry."

Such behaviour before a roomful of British officers would have made them all proscribe her.

Mr. Hall Caine, to pass for a little from the British Army to the British Administration, which has made Egypt so rich and prosperous, is as unjust to the civil authorities as he is to the military. He makes the Egyptians refuse to pay their taxes, at the suggestion of the White Prophet, because El Azhar has been interfered with. He makes it out to be a terrible thing that the law should have been put in force against them to compel them to pay their taxes, and that distraints should really have been carried out, instead of being held over their heads in the compassionate way, in which British officials generally treat Egyptians, when they are unable to pay their taxes. But this is not a case of inability, as when the Nile is too low to irrigate their fields; it is a case of mutinous refusal, in order to bring the Government to its knees, on the part of people who are perfectly able to pay. Could anything be more unjust than to pile opprobrium on an Administration for performing one of its first duties—the providing of means for carrying on the Government of the country and maintaining it in peace and security.

In another chapter Mr. Hall Caine says that "the Consul-General was organizing a general festival of rejoicing to celebrate the anniversary of the British Occupation of Egypt. . . . In the absence of other explanation the cold-blooded cruelty of the scheme seems to be almost devilish." What does this mean? All the prosperity of Egypt dates from the British Occupation; and as the Egyptians are contemplating a mutiny, it would strike most people as a piece of common policy to remind them of the benefits they owe to the Occupation. To talk of it as cold-blooded and devilish cruelty appears unjust—a perversion of language.

I have not, it will be observed, ventured in any way to criticize Mr. Hall Caine's handling of his masterly and imaginative *romance*. I have nothing but praise for that. The love-scenes are enthralling; the psychological treatment of elemental questions, such as the struggle between natural affections and a tyrannical sense of duty, is in Mr. Hall Caine's finest manner; and he has no superior among living writers in depicting an intense personality in the grip of Fate. The atmosphere of the book, whenever he gets away from Cairo and Khartoum, from the British Army and the British Administration, which he sees through Egyptian glasses, often held me spellbound.

Some of the passages which describe the great march of the pilgrims from Khartoum to Cairo rise almost to the level of the sublime. A more intense picture of Egypt has never been presented, and perhaps never will be.

I am lost in admiration of the chief character, the Sheikh Ishmael. I think it is as fine as anything the great novelist has ever written. Ishmael is, indeed, of the stuff of which prophets are made. He is an inspired creation, very lovable, very human, though so nearly superhuman; he is a character that only a profoundly imaginative and sincere and earnest writer, like Mr. Hall Caine, could have created.

It is just because his romance is so masterly and imaginative, and will have so many thousands of readers, that I think it necessary to point out how misinformed and unjust Mr. Hall Caine is with reference to the British Army and British Administration in Egypt. And some sort of explanation, I felt, was due to this great writer for my venturing to publish, simultaneously with his "White Prophet," a book which takes a diametrically opposite view of the merits and behaviour of the British Army and Administration in Egypt, and draws such a very different picture of the Egyptian Mutiny, which both he and I believe to be inevitable, if certain follies continue. As to the nature of these follies, we hold opposite opinions, for I hold that the salvation of Egypt lies in maintaining the British Administration, and maintaining it strongly, while Mr. Hall Caine seems to disapprove of the whole Cromer tradition.

I have taken the unusual course of writing this preface because I love soldiers, and wish to protest against the false impression Mr. Hall Caine has given of the British Army in Egypt. I have no doubt, that if he reads "The Tragedy of the Pyramids," much of it will be anathema to him, because,

in depicting the character of my hero, Captain Kennedy (a Scotsman of the type which has made the Scotch proverbial as soldiers), I have made him a soldier first. I have made him sacrifice all that he desires most in life to his duties as a soldier. It is on this that the love interest of the book turns.

My book aims at showing the Army of Occupation in Egypt as it really is, at first, in its leisure, leading Sport and Society in the gay Cairo season; and afterwards on duty, struggling sternly with riot, revolt and outrage, which culminate in the vast Battle of the Pyramids.

In conclusion, I wish to point out that this criticism is written entirely without personal animus against Mr. Hall Caine. I have immensely enjoyed reading "The White Prophet," and admit to the full the splendid and stirring qualities which distinguish it. Mr. Hall Caine is a personal friend, whose society has given me unfailing gratification, and whose friendship I have valued and continue to value highly. I regard him as one of our greatest writers of romances. My admiration for his writing I have shown many times in print. No one could have been more whole-hearted in his admiration of a book than I was in my criticism of "The Manxman," published in the *Queen*, and I wish to record here that I consider the character of the White Prophet himself as magnificent as anything in "The Manxman."

If Mr. Hall Caine were to turn his superb imagination, his superb indignation, his passion for justice, upon some legitimate subject like the atrocities of the Congo, I should have nothing but admiration for his work. Mr. Hall Caine is a man whom I consider to be incapable of intentional injustice. The injustices he has committed in this book must be due to misjudgment founded on insufficient evidence.

But as the father of a soldier, and as one who has spent six months on the spot studying the question, I felt bound to challenge the false light in which he presents the British Army of Occupation in Egypt to the public.

DOUGLAS SLADEN.



THE TRAGEDY OF THE PYRAMIDS

CHAPTER I

HOW LUCRECE CONSIDINE MADE HER DÉBUT AT CAIRO

"WITHIN a few months," her father had written to her, "the world will ring with my name. History will accept me as a Washington."

She was to come to Egypt to witness and aid in his triumph.

No woman could have been better suited to the rôle. Lucrece Considine was a lovely young American. As often happens, a healthy and beautiful Irish family had in the new land developed into a classic and regal type. She was a Columbia, tall enough, physically perfect; the calm eyes, the nobility and pensiveness of her expression proclaimed a just and gracious soul. She was very human and happy-hearted too, a woman made for marriage.

Her entry created a sensation at the first evening reception of the season at the British Agency at Cairo. Her father had an invitation waiting for her when she arrived from Alexandria, and Mrs. Julius Krafft, the wife of one of the three Radical M.P.'s who were exploiting Egypt, was chaperoning her for the occasion.

Lucrece, exquisitely gowned, advanced through the room looking like a Juno; but when she reached her hostess, and spoke and smiled, her face became as soft as the Cnidian Venus, the loveliest creation of Praxiteles.

The scene excited her. At last she was face to face with the British rule which her father denounced as fiercely as History writes of Nero. As materialised here, it consisted of an exquisite woman surrounded by a court of knightly men, and a gentle philosopher making himself cheap.

She told herself that her father must have extraordinary insight to read the true nature of the British. To her these strong, sunburnt, soldierly men, holding themselves like princes, looked fair play personified : she could not imagine them behaving like the Nero who larded her father's conversation. They did look like rulers, but she would rather trust to their mercy than to an American millionaire's.

They were a merry crowd too. Their voices were low and they laughed quietly. But they were jesting all the time. She was fascinated with them, especially with two who were talking to her hostess when she arrived, a strong, stiff man of about fifty, with a bold eagle face, whose hair showed hardly any silver among the gold ; and a serene young Highlander with a firm mouth only lightly moustached, who had travelled in the same ship with her from Marseilles to Alexandria. She had talked to him a few times. They were introduced to her as Sir Francis Vere and Captain Kennedy. Kennedy merely said How-do-you-do, leaving the field to the General. Sir Francis made himself delightful, without being personal, and introduced her to his wife, a little woman with clear eyes and clear cheeks, still very good-looking. Lucrece was astonished to find that she was the wife of the General commanding the Army of Occupation for, though her dress was good and becoming, it followed none of the fashions of the hour.

Were the tales she had heard of the dowdiness of English women true ?

She looked at her hostess. It was certainly not true of Mrs. Page, the niece who received for Lord Clapham, British Agent, Envoy-Plenipotentiary and Consul-General in Egypt. She was exquisitely dressed, and, when she got up to go and say something to her uncle, Lucrece envied the way she wore her clothes.

Lord Clapham was one of those men on whom greatness is thrust. He was sent as British Minister to Japan to change a strong British attitude to a weak one, gracefully. The people who sent him had no conception of the latent power of Japan, which had then fought neither of its victorious wars : but they were willing to kow-tow to a nation considered insignificant by Europe, rather than show ordinary diplomatic courage. The Japanese were gratified. The good feeling which Lord Clapham's meekness produced was a factor in bringing about the Anglo-

Japanese Alliance, and Japanese victories made the alliance of paramount importance.

Lord Clapham, before he left Japan, was raised to the rank of Ambassador. He was too modest to think himself a diplomatic genius, but more than ever persuaded of the soundness of his diplomatic methods. The Liberal Party did think him a diplomatic genius because he was the only man who had ever gained anything for England by turning the other cheek to the smiter—the pet policy of its peace-at-any-price section. Accordingly, when Sir Eldon Gorst was made a Peer, and Ambassador to one of the great Powers, and Sir Edward Grey resigned rather than lend his name to deceive people about naval suicide, his successor, the Right Hon. Winston George, asked Lord Clapham if he would excuse the fact that Egypt was inferior in importance to his last position, and go to Cairo to demolish what was left of Lord Cromer's life-work. If Lord Clapham had entertained doubts about assenting, they were dissipated because his idolised and delightful niece, Chiquita Page, was found to have lung trouble, for which Egypt is the panacea.

Therefore Lord Clapham found himself in the position of the official ostrich, expected to bury his head in the sand while the Nationalists were hatching their eggs in the broad sunshine.

He was still writing his "History of Philosophy," and cherished a belief that he should get the materials for an extra volume from the Ulemas of El Azhar. Except in the gradual blanching of the hair, he had not grown perceptibly older than when he was at Tokyo: he had certainly not grown any wiser, because the astounding luck, which attended his diplomatic efforts there, had led him to consider his foolishness inspired.

He was fortunately surrounded by wiser heads. Chiquita, his niece, had always been his angel keeping watch over him to prevent him knocking his head against stone walls: Sam Page, her husband, a very practical man, hedged him in with red tape; the Sirdar had one of the coolest heads which ever took part in the salvation of Egypt: the General commanding the Army of Occupation was one of Kitchener's Ironsides: and, lastly, the Khedive, having discovered that he was now the ruler, and the British Agent was the *fainéant*, was not in such a hurry to share his new powers with the Nationalists.

Lord Clapham seemed to have conceived the idea that his function in Egypt was to allow everyone to set him at defiance. His niece and hostess gave the example. She contrived to frustrate most of his efforts to democratise the British Agency. She could not prevent him inviting all sorts of Jews, Turks and Infidels, to use the polite phraseology of the Prayer-book, to the parties of the British Agency, but she could make them feel, when they entered her drawing-room or her garden, that it was a penance instead of a privilege to accept the invitations. Her smiles, and not the official invitations, decided who was in the Agency set. Therefore, Lord Clapham, instead of being beside her on the daïs, under a cluster of Union Jacks, and the Lion and the Unicorn of his country, was away in a corner being patronised by Dan Climo, M.P.

The Member for Houndsditch had no right to his name. He was a corpulent little Russian with coarse black hair and a sallow skin. He had a bulbous forehead and shaggy eyebrows, with no break in the middle, and puffed out his cheeks when he was talking. He wore a stained frock coat instead of evening dress.

He did not stop his harangue when Chiquita approached, though she obviously had something to say to Lord Clapham. He considered himself to be making a point: he looked self-satisfied. Lord Clapham, towering over him, a typical nobleman, more like an ancient philosopher than ever, was deprecating.

Chiquita knew Dan Climo's colossal vanity; that he thought all the world was talking about him; so she made an intentional mistake in his name.

"Excuse me, Mr. Rhino," she said in a sweet innocent voice.

"Climo, Missus."

She took no notice of his correction, but drew her uncle's head down by his coat-lappel to say something to him privately.

Climo rudely broke into the conversation of the other M.P.'s who were talking to Lucrece's father, Stephen Considine, a few yards away. They were men of a very different stamp. Julius Krafft was a person of force, a dark German-Jew with a clean-cut actor's face, who had naturalised as an Englishman to avoid military service; and did his native land more service as a Little Englander than he could have done as a corporal. He was eaten up

with a German's jealousy of British greatness, though England saved him from having to perform the irksome duties of a German citizen, and from the awkward consequences of being a Jew in Germany. Charles Prestage, the third M.P., had a more attractive personality. He was a retired manufacturer from the Midlands, who had sold his factories to a limited company because he was unable to work them at a profit. He had shown them an honest balance sheet, the same in fact that he had shown to his workmen, as his reason for leaving the business. He was still a believer in the blessings of Free Trade, and had come to Egypt not to agitate but to see for himself. He was a prepossessing man, popular on both sides of the House. Stephen Considine had therefore a double reason for trying to convert him; and was busy now.

Stephen Considine was a remarkable man. He was the creator of the American Hardware Trust, one of the great business-trusts of the United States, from which he enjoyed an untold income. Though hundreds and thousands of small investors, and their widows and orphans, had been ruined by its operations, he described himself in hotel registers as a philanthropist, and now thought of nothing but good works, if one may include doing evil that good may come. He had long been uncertain what brand of philanthropy he should buy; alleviating the lot of the humble investors ruined by the rise of his company did not appeal to him. But in the preceding year he had taken up as a "sacred trust" (trusts being his *métier*) the enfranchisement of Egypt. If he had called it a religious "trust," the description would have been fairly accurate: it was a plot to create in Egypt a monopoly for the Pan-Islamists on "Standard Oil" lines.

Stephen Considine did not perceive this. He was a conscientious man, a priest-ridden Roman Catholic, prepared to sacrifice all the Christians in Egypt on the altar of his hatred for Great Britain. But no one could know him without being persuaded of his honesty and high-mindedness; it was written large on a face of singular nobility. The high forehead, the high arched nose, the deep sunk eyes of maniacal blue, the fanatical mouth were all significant of an intense belief in the justice of his cause. Where politics did not come in, he was a pleasant man to meet, generous with his cruelly earned money, and, though he had little sense of humour in his dealings, witty.

Lucrece, while she was talking to the General, felt impelled to compare him with her father. She had an instinctive feeling that they were protagonists in an impending drama. Both, though she did not see it, were generals; the one indefatigable in laying the foundations for a campaign, the other holding a threatened position, unable to do anything to strengthen it, ill-supported by his country, but the man upon whom Kitchener himself had always leaned in the day of battle—a bayoneter born.

She had not yet been informed how her father proposed to become the Washington of the Twentieth Century. But a still small voice told her that he could only succeed by passing over the dead body of the man to whom she was talking, the man to whom she felt so attracted.

The General thought she was a little *distract*. Perhaps she had been talking too long to a man much older than herself.

"Here, Jock," he called to the Highlander. "Come and talk to Miss Considine. It is not fair for a hoary Major-General to monopolise her! Ah, you have met already!"

Lucrece was glad to see Kennedy again. She had thought him very distinguished-looking in his flannels on board ship. And now that he was in the full dress uniform of the King's Highlanders, her opinion was intensified. His face was as calm as an Egyptian statue's: he had steely eyes, and though he was not above the average in height, or big in build, she could see that he was a man of great strength and activity.

He took her off to give her ices, and renew their boardship acquaintance.

"Why did Sir Francis call you Jock? I thought I heard Lady Vere call you Ailsa?"

"They call me Jock in the regiment: my name is Ailsa John."

"It is so like men to call you Jock when you have a really beautiful other name."

"Well, you see, Ailsa is a bit high-flown, and it has the fault of being more generally used as a girl's name. They used to chaff my life out about it, when I first joined."

"What made them stop?" asked Lucrece—she was sometimes afflicted with the American disease of asking questions.

"Oh, people get over these things," he replied; but, if any of his brother-officers had been asked, they would

have answered, "Because Jock can show us all round in anything"—referring to sport.

"But it's an odd name," she persisted, she could not leave it alone—"How did you come by it?"

"I assure you there's nothing odd in a Kennedy being called Ailsa: Lord Ailsa is the head of the Kennedys."

"Are you related to him?"

"All Scotchmen are related, if you go far enough back; but there are thousands of Kennedys."

He did not mention that he was his godson.

Ailsa Kennedy did not often seek the society of ladies, though he was popular with them: he divided his time between his profession, in which he was keenly interested, and sports. But Lucrece was beautiful, it was a privilege to be in her presence; even Kennedy, when he brought her back to the dais, asked, "Will you and your father come and have tea with me in the Citadel the day after to-morrow at five, to see the sunset. I have had rather nice quarters given me there: my regiment's in Khartoum, you know: I'm down here on a special job."

"I don't know what Father's doing, but we can go and ask him, if you won't mind taking me to him. He's over there," she said, pointing him out, "he's talking to that Arabian."

He corrected her—"Arab."

She smiled her thanks and said, "Why are names so difficult to us Americans?"

Chiquita Page would have replied, "Because the ideas they represent are new to you——." Kennedy did not know, and said so.

As they approached, her father hastily excused himself to the Arab, and came to meet them: and when she had made the introduction, walked back to the dais with them. He said he would be delighted, and insisted on Kennedy's beginning the afternoon by coming to lunch with them in their flat in the Sharia Boulak—in a new house over the *Banner* Publishing offices, near the Telegraph office. He knew what an important position Kennedy held: there was very little he did not know about the Army of Occupation in Egypt. But he did not allude to it. He preferred to welcome him in a general way as a friend of his daughter's; he showed himself in his most winning light.

It was not many seconds before they were joined by Mrs. Krafft, who was being bored by Dan Climo. If ever she

allowed bores to talk to her, it was because she was milking their brains. She had drained all the aliment there was in the meagre, frothy, fever-spreading Climo long ago. She wished he was dead; his noisy advertising kept her husband in the background. Stephen Considine was the kind of revolutionary she preferred, because he was like a great editor, whose function it is to find ability in others and give it prominence; because he was a splendid specimen of the male human animal; and also, it must be admitted, because he was rich enough to live in the luxury of which rich Jews are connoisseurs. She envied the wives of Conservative M.P.'s. "Their friends have clean hands, at any rate," she said: she was famous for her unguarded remarks, and only meant that they washed oftener.

She had also a penchant for smart soldiers with whom she seldom rubbed elbows at home, except in the stalls of music halls. She meant to have Ailsa Kennedy introduced to her.

"Captain Kennedy, do you know Mrs. Krafft?"

He found himself talking to a lovely and engaging young married woman, flowering with eye and lip. Her dress was ultra fashionable; her shoulders were magnificent; the beauty of her complexion was so exceptional that one doubted it; her hair was extraordinarily fair, and adorned with a sweeping plume of the Azure Bird of Paradise. Men, who would have fought shy of the *tout-ensemble* if it had only been the shell of a Cleopatra, bowed to the consciousness that at the back of it there was real womanliness.

Kennedy did not fall a victim: though he could unbend a little to innocence and freshness.

Finding him unresponsive, she let her eyes wander round the room till they fell on a tall Arab wearing his robes.

"Introduce me to that beautiful Arab," she said.

"I don't know him."

"Can't you find somebody who does?" When Mrs. Krafft wanted a thing she never rested till she got it.

"Yes, Mrs. Krafft"—His tone was one of frigid politeness. "Will you excuse me, Miss Considine?"

Lucrece nodded.

"Cobbe," he called to a slim boy in a Guard's uniform who was passing. The Grenadier stopped, with an engaging smile on a face that was singularly handsome and well-

bred. He might have been Chiquita Page's brother, if it had not been for his English colouring.

"What is it, old man?"

Kennedy indicated Mrs. Krafft with his eyes, and told him what he wanted.

Cobbe took a hasty glance at Mrs. Krafft, and was struck with the wonderful beauty of the girl she was talking to. He showed his usual presence of mind; he noted who was near, and a look of satisfaction came into his face.

"There's Sam," he said. "He's a whale at introductions. It's his job." He went over to speak to a big bluff-looking Englishman with a high colour. "I say, Sam."

"Hullo!"

"That lady over there, with a peacock's tail over her left ear, wants to have that Arab in fancy dress presented to her."

"That isn't fancy dress, Tom. Those are his official robes. That's Hoseyn Hassan."

"I don't know the gentleman. Come along and put her through."

Kennedy went to meet them. He preferred to take Sam up, and introduce him himself. Cobbe was an *enfant terrible*. He was glad that he had taken the precaution, when he was greeted with, "Here's Sam: he'll do the trick. I say, Kennedy, introduce me to the other girl."

"Mrs. Krafft, may I present Mr. Page, and Mr. Cobbe. Mr. Page will manage that introduction for you. Miss Considine, may I present Mr. Page and Mr. Cobbe."

Mrs. Krafft greeted Sam Page as a friend, though she had never spoken to him before.

Lucrece abandoned Mrs. Krafft to him, and prepared to drop back into conversation with Kennedy. But the lively Cobbe had other views. Kennedy was apparently content to let him do the talking. Occasionally a little smile flickered across the Highlander's features at some sally of Cobbe's. He liked Cobbe, who could be quite amusing.

Sam said to Mrs. Krafft as they were crossing the room, "I'd better get Lord Clapham to introduce you. It's a fad of his introducing Egyptians to English ladies. He is always most grateful to ladies who will allow it. May I introduce you to Lord Clapham?"

"Take me to him—I know him well already."

Instead of taking her to his Chief, he took her to a seat a little way off. "The Arab must be brought up to you," he said.

She read the distaste in his voice. That did not trouble her. Though he found her antagonistic she eyed him approvingly, as he betook himself to Lord Clapham.

"Well, Sam?"

"Mrs. Krafft wishes Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan to be introduced to her."

"Which is Mrs. Krafft?"

"She said you knew her well:" there was an inflection of amusement in his voice.

"I know so many people well."

Sam pointed her out.

"What a pretty woman!" said the philosopher. "No, I'm sure I shouldn't forget her."

It was small wonder that Hoseyn Hassan had caught Mrs. Krafft's roving eye. He was a romantic figure, tall and graceful, with a haunting Byronic beauty. A painter would choose him as a model for an emir of Saladin, or a Moor urging defiance of the Christian in the Council Chamber of the Alhambra. His *mukleh*, the majestic turban of religious dignitaries, and his outer garments, which hung in beautiful folds, arrested every eye, for they were of the green of the Prophet, in which only his descendants may dress.

It was the colour best suited to bring out the clear olive of his haughty, delicately-nostrilled face. Only an Arab could have had that small silky moustache of faultless symmetry. It was raven black: it did not conceal at all the deep red mouth, the small white teeth, which seemed made for a beautiful woman. The whites of his eyes looked like china against his skin, the pupils were black and full of fire. He showed grace and dignity in every movement. His voice was music to those who knew no syllable of what he was saying.

But Hoseyn Hassan spoke English perfectly: he was even idiomatic: he had learned the language as a weapon against the British, and the way he used it oftenest was in subjugating their women. He had made a vow to strike at England by invading the homes of Englishmen. Mrs. Krafft was a lovely woman. But her words disarmed him.

"My husband and I are great sympathisers with your

cause, Sheikh," was Mrs. Krafft's opening shot. "He is a Member of the British Parliament."

"I hope you're not English."

She found it rather difficult to reply. Though her husband was an enemy of England, there was nothing which made him quarrelsome but the suggestion that he was not an Englishman. Was Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan such a furious hater of English people, as well as England, that he could not bear to speak to them?

"My husband is a Briton; otherwise he could not be a member of the British Parliament."

"I am sorry to hear that."

She imagined that he thought that their espousing the cause of the Egyptian Nationalists against England could not be sincere, if they were English; but he was thinking of his vow; he divined that this woman would be an easy conquest; and, if she was English, his vow held him. But he had no doubt of the sincerity of the Kraffts' ardour for "the Cause:" and to make her a victim of his vow would be an ill way of repaying it.

"Was your husband born in England?"

How was she to reply? Mr. Krafft never would have his naturalisation mentioned.

"No. But he is an Englishman."

"I hope you're not English too?"

Was she to let him slip out of her fingers, this man whose personality so strongly affected her, this man, by whose intimacy with them she meant to make her husband the British Parliamentary champion of Egyptian Nationality?

She did not see how her husband's position in England could be prejudiced by her revealing her own birth. Many Englishmen marry foreigners; and Hoseyn Hassan seemed to require it as a pledge of their sincerity.

"No," she said, desperately, "I am not English. My name was Sophia Loewe—my father was a Frankfort Jew, and I have never been naturalised."

"Allah is good," he said, with a sigh as of one who breathes freely after a tension, and then he told his plans for the regeneration of Egypt, beginning at the moment when not one Englishman was left in it. Any campaign or massacre that might be necessary to secure this condition was not a fit subject for ladies' ears, or prudently to be discussed in the presence of the many officers.

She was not ill-satisfied with her beginning, though she

would have liked more deference shown to her charms. She was not to know that it was out of deference to them that he placed such restraint upon himself.

Suddenly he noticed Lucrece. "Is she English?" he asked with a strange note in his voice.

"No. American. She is the daughter of the man you were talking to, when Lord Clapham came for you to introduce you to me."

"Of Stephen Considine, the best friend of our cause?"

"Yes."

"Allah is very good."

"Why?"

"Because she is the most beautiful woman I ever saw."

Meanwhile, seeing that Kennedy was left out of the conversation, Stephen Considine came over to join them. The beautiful Lucrece introduced Cobbe, and, looking at her father with eyes of adoration, asked, "Who was that delightful Arab who was talking to you when we interrupted you, Father?"

"Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan."

Cobbe whistled softly.

"I don't think I ever saw such a distinguished-looking man, except you, dear."

"But he is distinguished: he is the hope of Egypt, the Descendant of the Prophet, the principal Mohammedan Notable of Cairo, a most lovable personality."

Lucrece's voice dropped to a whisper, and the two officers moved a little away.

"Why don't you ask him to lunch the day after tomorrow to meet Captain Kennedy?" she demanded.

"Because Captain Kennedy would not forgive me, and because . . ." he hesitated. Hoseyn Hassan's amours with Englishwomen were notorious, and Mr. Considine was one of those who knew of the Arab's vow.

She did not press him. She (and her mother while she was alive) had been accustomed to treat him like an inspired being. His decisions had always passed unquestioned. Heaven had intended him for the founder of a new religion.

Finally he said, "For a reason of my own," and led her back to Kennedy and Cobbe, whom he asked to accompany Kennedy to lunch with them.

Stephen Considine was not popular with the officers of the Garrison. He was fond of enunciating the cheapest clap-trap with an air of profound wisdom or quarrelsome

earnestness. But at this moment they liked him better. There was a look of solicitude, of utter affection, on his face for the beautiful creature in smiling obedience before him.

Without any knowledge of her likeness to that goddess of Praxiteles, she had arranged her shining golden hair in the simple Greek fashion, banded by silver braids. But no one in that assemblage recognised the resemblance, except the marble philosopher who was their host.

When Lord Clapham had introduced Hoseyn Hassan to Mrs. Krafft he came back and chatted gaily to Sam; he enjoyed Sam's remarks about Climo, while he reproved them.

After a little while Sam said to him, "Won't you come back to your seat now, sir, and talk to the General? You've been here with these people all the evening."

"I don't see them every day—and the General comes to see me every day—now."

"Well, talk to Lady Vere: you don't see her every day, sir."

"No."

"The more's the pity," thought Chiquita's husband, who was the pillar of cricket in Egypt, and other things besides cricket.

Sam Page with his short nose and his square jaw was the type of Englishman whom Egyptians instinctively dread. The manners of these men are naturally brusque; being direct and truthful themselves, they show no patience with an Oriental, who tries every expedient to exhaust their patience before he comes to the point, or tells the truth, as the case may be. And, being masculine themselves, they have a contempt for the weaknesses of a yellow race, though they may feel amiable to the race itself.

But Samuel Page the Egyptians always found accessible and considerate. If an Englishman had told him a mean lie like Ibrahim Ferid—a wealthy Egyptian who had been at Oxford with him and of whom he had made quite a friend—told him one day, he would never have spoken to him again. But he knew that with Ibrahim Ferid, even after his English training, it was only an argument. Page had been through an excellent training for Egypt. The years he had spent as a teacher in a Japanese school had taught him the methods and standards of Orientals; and it had made him always keep himself well in hand,

when he was dealing with them. There was no more popular Englishman in Egypt. His *suaviter in modo* endeared him to the Egyptians and the Levantines, while the English admired his courage and nerve—and also his batting.

When he had managed to make Lord Clapham go and sit by Lady Vere, Sam turned to the General. Working together nearly every day to save the threatened interests of their country had made the two men close friends. The General knew well that the crash would have come already, if it had not been for the stubborn restraining influence of Page on Lord Clapham.

"I say, Vere," he whispered. "I've managed to get the Chief away from that crowd. Now you've got to do your part. I expect you know which of your chaps have met him, and which have not? Will you take the opportunity of presenting the chaps he doesn't know? I'll take on Lady Vere."

He went up and listened to the argument she was having with Lord Clapham about the necessity of cholera-belts. Lady Vere gave him a little nod and smile, and was preparing to renew her onslaught, when her husband came up to ask if he might present some of the officers who had not yet had the honour of meeting the British Agent.

Lord Clapham was a slave to duty, and went off at once. Lady Vere turned upon Sam with laughter in her blue eyes. "You don't wear a cholera-belt I am sure, Mr. Page."

"I'm ashamed to say that I don't," and, changing his voice, he added, "Never mind, it's his fad. I'd wear two, if he'd promise never to speak to Climo again."

Lady Vere smiled with quiet pleasure at Lord Clapham's relations with the young soldiers who were being introduced to him. He was dignified, but sympathetic to youth. There was not one of them who had not a high respect for him, in spite of his fads.

Lucrece observed it too. She had brought her father up to introduce him to Lady Vere, and, when Sam moved away from the General's wife, seized the opportunity. Something told Stephen Considine that this handsome sportswoman, who looked unromantic, was going to play a great part in his life.

While he talked to Lady Vere, Lucrece talked to Cobbe, who thought he had never seen anyone so beautiful, and rattled on audaciously, more audaciously than Lucrece

quite liked ; but he looked so boyish that she forgave him. Such impertinence, she thought, she had never seen. She was almost shocked when he addressed their hostess, who was sitting next to Lady Vere, as "Chiquita" and complained of the "dulness of the show." She waited to see him put in his place. But Mrs. Page smiled indulgently, even affectionately, as Lucrece thought, and said, "I don't find it dull."

"Of course not : you've got . . ." He was going to say "the whole British Army," but he pulled himself up and said, "You've got Sam."

"Oh, but I never have on these occasions. No such luck !"

"Well, you bear up."

Even this was not the climax, for presently he observed Lord Clapham standing alone in a brown study, and he went up, and put his hand through his arm, and said something. A change came over the British Agent, when he saw who it was. The whole man looked younger, more alert, more like an ordinary Englishman.

"Well, Tom," he said, "are you looking after yourself ?"

"Going strong, sir. So bucked at being with you again."

Lucrece looked scandalised. "Tell me, Lady Vere, who is this Mr. Cobbe, who behaves in such an extraordinary fashion ?"

"Oh, that's Lord Clapham's son, Tom Cobbe. He only arrived from England to-night to join my husband's staff. He's the dearest harum-scarum person, quite a wholesome influence to have in this house."

Lucrece looked gratified. Not because she learned that the gay boy, who had so obviously fallen a victim, was Lord Clapham's heir, the most eligible *parti* in Egypt, but because she found that he was the beloved son of the house, not more familiar, than he had a right to be, with Lord Clapham and Chiquita.

CHAPTER II

THE GREAT CONSPIRACY OF THE EGYPTIAN NATIONALISTS

THE secret of Mr. Considine's being the owner and designer of the Egyptian Independence Building had been successfully kept. The property was registered in the name of the Estate of the late Richard Pryse Harrison of Newhaven, Connecticut, U.S.A., and the Egyptian representatives of the Estate were a leading English firm of estate agents in Cairo. They issued leases, attended to the upkeep of the shops, and gave any orders that were necessary. Immense sums of money came from abroad for investment at the time of the land-boom: the investment of the Richard Pryse Harrison Estate only attracted attention, because the building had been completed and almost every apartment in it had been let. Giddy and Lumley were aware that Mr. Considine had absolute control of the Egyptian portion of the estate, because he was their employer; and although they had issued the leases to the Egyptian Independence Committee, and the *Banner* Publishing Company, and the Hardware Trust, and Stephen Considine Esq., as well as the smaller tenants who had shops on the ground floor, the rents of the four principal tenants were paid through Mr. Considine.

The building was constructed with great ingenuity. Besides the goods elevator, which ran from the cellars to the roof, there were two passenger elevators, one of which was given up to the occupants of the residential flat on the first floor, so as to enable them to use, in complete privacy, the garden on the roof, which the Independence Building, like many post-land-boom erections, possessed, and which belonged to them. It was constructed to serve also a private office of the Hardware Trust in the basement, a private office of the *Banner* Publishing

Company on the ground floor, and a private office of the Egyptian Independence Committee on the second floor.

But the leases of these tenants limited them to the use of the front elevator. And the amount of natives, that went up and down past the Considine's front door, seemed to visitors the blot in the construction of the building.

Mr. Considine would not let Lucrece use the elevators without him: for her use he had had the flat constructed with a private door and staircase, which had no communication with any other part of the building, to the street.

The inconsistency and carelessness were, moreover, only apparent. There was method in them. Mr. Considine knew the risks his daughter would run if it were not for that private staircase. Why then, visitors might wonder, did he, a millionaire, deliberately take a flat in a building which, as the headquarters of Egyptian Nationalists, was sure to be always swarming with Egyptian adventurers?

In point of fact his whole object in erecting and inhabiting that flat was to be in a resort which the Nationalists frequented. He was absorbed in the Nationalist movement, and intended to be in constant communication with them. He could not do this in an ordinary Cairo house without drawing the attention of the British authorities, "slack and don't care," as British authorities always are. But if he had a flat between the offices of the chief Nationalist newspaper and the Egyptian Independence Committee, he could run across Nationalists continually without drawing any attention.

The great expense to which he had gone in carrying out this part of his plans he had cleverly covered, at any rate to a considerable extent. For the operations of the Hardware Trust, the great American business firm of which he was the founder, and which did almost as enormous a business in Egypt as the Standard Oil Company, necessitated very large premises of a special character more expensive to rent than to build.

He therefore had all his interests under one roof, and no one but himself knew how they interworked.

At the reception at the British Consul-General's, he had invited Mr. Krafft and Mr. Prestage to meet the Nationalist leaders in the Independence Building on the following afternoon. They were to rendezvous at his flat. To avoid drawing attention to the conference he

took them up by his private elevator, which brought them into the room, where the Nationalists were to meet, from the back instead of by the usual entrance. As he entered he was greeted with "'Ullo, Considine, where did you spring from?" which caused him double annoyance. Dan Climo was the last man he wanted to be aware of his private entrance to the Nationalist offices, and he particularly wished him not to be present at this meeting, because Climo was as useless in council as he was useful in tub-thumping. He was noisy, arrogant, unpractical and indiscreet.

"I had something to say to these gentlemen."

"I 'ope there ain't goin' to be any gentlemen, 'ere," said Climo. He spoke like a cockney; all his life in England had been spent in the East End of London.

Mr. Considine itched to give the vain little man a taste of his bitter tongue, but he saw the necessity of exercising self-restraint, so he took refuge in an innuendo, which gratified the Nationalists who could speak English: "All Egyptians are gentlemen."

"Of course they are," cried Climo, going off at a wild tangent. "It's an outrage that such men should not 'ave the suffrage."

It was clear that he meant parliamentary institutions. Egyptians have the suffrage already for the Legislative Assembly, and cannot be induced to use it. At the last election there was no candidate for one of the divisions of Cairo. But the Egyptians did not know that he was using the wrong word.

The men whom Mr. Considine had invited Mr. Prestage and Mr. Krafft to meet, were the leaders of the Extreme Nationalists. Two showed head and shoulders above the rest of the party—Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan and Mulazim Bey.

They had seen Hoseyn Hassan already, the superb figure wearing the green of the Prophet, at the party at the British Agency, but Lord Clapham had not yet gone to the length of inviting Mulazim Bey to his parties; for Mulazim belonged to a class that could not be invited on such occasions, though to be sure he was a great deal more like a gentleman than Dan Climo.

Mulazim was a large man with a fleshy face, and goat-like eyes and expression. But in those sleepy eyes were latent fires not only of sensuality but of hatred and fanaticism.

Personally he had found the British generous, both as masters and judges, but he had a perfect genius for getting hold of wickedly perverted scraps of their history and recent annals, and using them as texts for oratory, which lashed his hearers into fury.

He could not speak any English, but Mr. Considine found him so fertile a mischief-maker that he allowed him to make unlimited use of the services of his Secretary-Interpreter, Mr. Chody—a Levantine, who had the impertinence to call himself an Irishman. He had begun by calling himself an Englishman, but as his stupid slanders about England proclaimed this to be a lie, and its being detected threw discredit on his other lies, he found it more convenient to call himself an Irishman. With a little encouragement he would pose as an exiled Irish Leader; his lying was only limited by the credulity of his hearers. There was nothing Irish about his appearance: he was a little man, a mongrel of the Near East, with a big nose and rather a light colour. He had no real hatred of the English; he would rather have been jackal to an Englishman than to the dangerous volcanoes he served. But jackalling against the English was his avenue to bread and butter and advertisement. He would sooner forego his food than that. He was a dressy little man, and never wore a tarboosh.

James Jeffery was a real Irishman, a pleasant-spoken man, whose connection with the Nationalists was not known to the public. He wrote charming poetry, about the wrongs of Ireland, certainly, but such true poetry that no one took them as a personal creed; he received much hospitality and kindness from the English in Cairo. They used their influence to get him a comfortable position in the Civil Service, which only took up his time in the morning, leaving him free, as they thought, to exercise his literary gifts. But he used his freedom to attend for the rest of the day at the *Banner* office, and write leaders and forge telegrams against them. He was one of the men who purveyed the cats' meat of history—the more putrid the better—to the Nationalists; the others were Mr. Considine's confessor, Father Jeremiah Dwyer, and a Greek named Dimitri, who found that inventions against the English went well with the illicit distilling of vile spirits, which he called brandy and whisky, and sold at a piastre and a half and two piastres a litre, four-

pence and fivepence a quart bottle; and at corresponding prices for *petits verres*, at his café, to native customers, chiefly Mohammedans. It was the principal Nationalist café.

Dimitri hated the English because of their efforts to put down the drink-evil among the poor natives. Neither he nor Father Dwyer was present.

Ahmed Mahdy and Mohammed Hilmy were types of the honest Nationalists who expect to see the English out of Egypt, and an Egypt, ruled by Egyptians, taking its place among the great Powers. Ahmed Mahdy, who could read English, was glib at inventing constitutions. Mohammed Hilmy owed his presence on the Committee of National Independence to the fact that he was one of the few rich men who took an active part among the Extreme section of the Nationalists, which had usurped the Committee. The Egyptian Liberals, and Constitutional Nationalists, were not allowed to be present at its deliberations.

These were the leading personages in the assemblage to which Mr. Prestage and Mr. Krafft were presented.

"My brothers," began Mr. Considine, though making an effort to avoid Christian phraseology at a meeting which was practically for the propagation of Mohammedanism. "I am here to present to you two British Members of Parliament who are in favour of giving Egypt her Parliament." Mr. Prestage was about to observe that he had really come with a perfectly open mind, but an eloquent glance from the speaker silenced him. It seemed to say, "Lie low, or you won't hear things properly."

"Don't forget that I'm 'ere, Considine," leered Dan Climo.

"I could not forget it; but I cannot claim the honour of having introduced you."

"You're too free with fine words, Considine: first it was gentlemen, now it is honour; they're both out of place 'ere."

"Surely not," replied Mr. Considine, glancing from Hoseyn Hassan to Mohammed Hilmy, and Mohammed Hilmy to Ahmed Mahdy.

"Leave *gentlemen* and *honour* to the English," said Climo, rudely.

"Can't you hold your tongue," growled Jeffery to him: "Nobody wants to hear you——"

"I know they don't: that's why I came. I'm honest, I am."

"The only actual murderer here," retorted the "uncompromising James," as he was called.

"Gentlemen, Mr. Krafft and Mr. Prestage would like to hear your message to the British Parliament."

Mr. Chody interpreted his remark with the requisite flourishes for the Oriental mind, for the benefit of those who did not understand English. Their stoical demeanour may not have been intended to convey that it was a matter of no importance: they had, probably, not the dimmest idea of the status of the British Parliament. Why should they? They could only judge by the M.P.'s—the Climos and others—who came and abased themselves in Egypt before the fetish of Egyptian Nationalism.

Hoseyn Hassan was quick to see that they were making an unfortunate beginning. His Oriental intuition told him that with Mr. Krafft this did not signify much; that he had come with his ideas prejudiced in favour of Nationalism, that he would disregard what was unsuitable for his purpose, and pick up any stray facts and phrases, which were useful to him in making Egypt a burning question to hoist him into fame.

But he saw that Mr. Prestage had come in the spirit of inquiry; to decide for himself whether the Egyptians were "as ripe for self-government as the Australians" (as Mr. Winston George had said to annoy Mr. Deakin), or there was ground for the unanimous verdict of the English whose life-work had been in Egypt, that the Egyptians were not yet fit for Responsible Government, because responsibility was an unknown virtue in the true Egyptian. So he rose to speak, using English, which showed hardly a trace of his being a foreigner, except in one place, and requesting Mr. Chody to take down his speech in shorthand and translate it into the vernacular afterwards, for perusal by Mulazim Bey and the others, who could not understand English. Mr. Chody's translation would make it appear all that it ought to appear to Mulazim and Co., for Hoseyn Hassan was rich and, being an Egyptian, knew the laws of *bakshish*. Mulazim was poor and could not bribe Mr. Chody to deceive Hoseyn Hassan in his turn.

The "uncompromising James" would have spoilt the pretty little scheme. His hatred of England was so

bitter that he could not even be politic. But Mr. Jeffery did not understand a word of Arabic, and Mr. Krafft, who was learning Arabic with a German's proficiency for languages, could make nothing of such a quicksand document yet: The only two people present who would know that Chody had deceived Mulazim would be Ahmed Mahdy and Mohammed Hilmy, and both of them would be glad for Hoseyn Hassan to speak moderately, and for the violent party to be hoodwinked. For they were moderate men, who attached themselves to the Extreme party solely because it was the only party strong enough, and real enough, to effect anything. It was their belief that Hoseyn Hassan, if left to his own inclinations, would be moderate; that he was violent because no one could lead the party unless he was violent; and because his claims as the Descendant of the Prophet went farthest with the religious fanatics of the movement, who were the most violent members of the party.

But Hoseyn Hassan's mind was not easy to fathom. He never blustered; more than most Egyptians, he was anxious to create a good impression on the person he was talking to; and he was full of guile. If you were angry with him for taking your enemy's part, he would ask, "Were you deceived too? then indeed I was clever." He used captivating tones, smiles, gestures to everyone but his wives. He was not happy at home. His amours with foreign ladies had made harem women distasteful to him. But the world knew nothing of the Hoseyn Hassan who fumed behind the lofty meshrebiyeh oriels, which looked down on the green court of the palace of Kait Bey, in which the Descendant of the Prophet lived. It only knew the Alcibiades of Modern Egypt, the young, the beautiful, the irresistible, whom rumour already accused of outraging the *hermæ* of so many foreigners.

Hoseyn Hassan began :

"Brothers,

"We are met to-day on an auspicious occasion. Never before have we had three members of the Mother of Parliaments present at the deliberations of the seed from which the tree of the Egyptian Constitution is to spring. I am doubly glad to see them here, because our motives and actions have been so traduced in England, and nowhere more than in the sacred precincts

of the British Parliament. Whereas we are really less to blame than the English. Consider our respective positions: Nearly a generation ago the English came to Egypt. No one invited them to come. No one to-day would say that the revolt headed by Arabi Pasha was unnecessary, any more than they would say that your English revolts against the Stuarts were unnecessary. But the Egyptians of that day were unskilled in constitutional methods, and the result was a conflagration, which threatened to do damage to the civilisation of Egypt. The English and the French were standing by! The English, as is their wont in the hour of peril and sudden death, retained their presence of mind, and flung themselves into the flames to rescue the innocent and helpless.

"They called upon the French to join in the work of rescue. But the French saw no reward for the salvager, and refused to take risks for nothing. The English hoped for no profit. Of their own accord they declared that they sought none, that they had no designs on the liberties of Egypt; that they were merely acting as police, who would withdraw when the danger was over.

"Their withdrawal was not speedy. They explained that it was impossible for them to withdraw incontinently, without bringing about a recrudescence of the disorders, which they had stepped in to arrest. But they announced yet more emphatically that, as soon as Egypt stood firmly enough upon her feet to do without her crutch, the crutch should be withdrawn.

"As a means towards this end they announced that they would import competent teachers from England to instruct the Egyptians in the arts of self-government, and that, as the Egyptians became trained, they should be employed to train other Egyptians, so that the service of foreign teachers might ultimately be dispensed with.

"We were thankful: we applauded: we waited to see them succeed. But as time went on the foreigners were not withdrawn: instead of that, the Egyptians were declared unteachable, and more foreigners were introduced. Repeated blows were dealt to our hopes in this direction.

"Subsequently our national feelings were cruelly outraged. The English began to assume the attitude that their promise to withdraw was given not to us, but to their ancient rivals in Egypt, the French.

"Now it may be true that at the time of Arabi's revolt, no promise at all of withdrawal would have been given if it had not been for the jealousy of the French. We can quite believe that. All parties were disposed to treat the Egyptians as a negligible quantity, when it was found that the rebels, who bragged that they would eat up all the lily-livered white troops who dared to stand against them, were children before the charge of the seasoned troops of Sir Wolseley.

"But the fact remains that the promise of the English, that their occupation of Egypt should not be permanent, was given not to the French, but to the World; that is, to the people whom it concerned, the rightful possessors of Egypt.

"So long as the English and the French maintained their ancient international jealousy, no one doubted this. But when the French suddenly became convinced that only the friendship of England could save them from the devouring jaws of Germany, they began to think of all the endearments which they could shower on her.

"As the policy of baffling England had nowhere been brought to such a science as in Egypt, Egypt was the first sop the French thought of throwing into the jaws of the British bulldog. The French very generously gave Egypt, which was not theirs to give, to England; and the English gave Morocco, which was still less theirs, to France.

"And they thought that the candle was blown out.

"In Morocco the result was war: in Egypt, which is a civilised country, the English were reminded that their promise was to Egypt, not to France.

"That was the position of the English, that they were ready to leave Egypt as soon as the Egyptians should be ready to take care of it.

"The position of the Egyptians is that they have long since fitted themselves to take over the administration of their country from the English.

"Take the matter of credit. The credit of the country is excellent. The disasters of the land-boom were caused by the credit of the country being too good. They could get money too easily. They did not ask themselves if it could be invested profitably. Take the matter of political capacity. Egypt is full of capable politicians. Not in England itself would you find a larger body of men

who are really fluent orators, and willing to devote themselves to the study of politics.

"Take the Civil Service. We turn out more clerks every year suitable for positions in the Civil Service than there are vacancies to fill.

"Take the Army. English officers are loud in their praise of the efficiency of the Egyptian soldier in learning his drill, and of his steadiness under their command in the battles against the Mahdists. There is not a single bureau, there is not a single department in which there is not a sufficiency of well-trained Egyptians to take up the administration of the country. We are not ungrateful to the English; they have been our preceptors; they have taught us the lessons of liberty and the lessons of discipline; they have fought for us and saved our lives from the Mahdists in the days when we were not strong enough to defend ourselves. They have put arms in our hands, and taught us how to use them; they have put education in our minds and taught us how to use it; and they have put patriotism in our hearts and taught us how to use it.

"We do not want to deprive anyone of the post in which he has made it his life-work to instruct us. We merely wish, when he has qualified for his pension, to replace him with one of the Egyptians, whom he has so efficiently trained to take his place.

"But all these are small matters beside the feeling that we have legitimately earned our right to representative institutions, for which our whole nation has been training itself every hour of the day for the last twenty years.

"I may say fifty per cent. without fear of contradiction, I expect I might say eighty or ninety per cent. of the English, who had a personal experience of Japan, viewed with the gravest misgivings the Treaty Revision which freed the Japanese from the leading-strings of Europe. Which of them all would be so presumptuous as to say that the experiment had failed. Since Japan has become her own mistress she has become the wonder of the world.

"Yet who would pretend that the Japan of ten years ago was equal in civilisation to the Egypt of to-day. You cannot compare Tokyo, even now, with Cairo. But there is much of Cairo which you can compare with London or Paris. For one Japanese who could pass for a European,

I could show you a hundred Egyptians. The educated Egyptian is a European ; the Japanese can never be anything but an Asiatic."

Both Mr. Prestage and Mr. Krafft had listened to him very attentively, and for both the allusion to Japan spoiled its effect. For both had been in Japan, and knew the extraordinary grit and backbone of the Japanese ; and his fearless assumption of responsibility, the quality above all others in which the Egyptian is wanting. It was not easy for them to picture Egyptians dashing into Port Arthur on that February night to open war with a power like Russia because war had become inevitable. They could not picture Egyptians keeping their heads, and displaying the statesman-like moderation, with which Japan secured the fruits of the war.

They noticed also that the speech was all oratory : that there was no attempt to prove by marshalled facts the present necessity for the Egyptians to assume autonomous institutions ; that there was no reference to such a cardinal question as the maintenance or withdrawal of the British Army of Occupation, under the proposed Egyptian Home Rule.

Of the two Mr. Prestage was the more favourably impressed, because Hoseyn Hassan had spoken with moderation and a broad general grasp of the situation, though he had skirted the questions which did not suit his convenience, and taken his stand upon general and popular principles. Such a leader, he considered, would be possible to deal with.

Mr. Krafft was disappointed : he could have made the speech himself ; indeed, he considered that he had made it better, in various forms, in the House of Commons. He had hoped for sensational items which he could have used in his speeches, as the magpie decorates its nest with stolen tinsel. He wanted threats of Revolution, not emanating from but judiciously deplored by Hoseyn Hassan ; he wanted *guts*, in fact, to show the House of Commons that this was not a matter for pigeon-holes but for platforms. He wanted to find something as convenient as Chinese Slavery in the Transvaal.

While he was rhetorically repining, he heard the harsh sneering voice of Dan Climo, who always rushed in where angels feared to tread.

"Talk ! Talk ! Talk

“Jaw! Jaw! Jaw!

“No blood spilt! no results! That’s not the way in which the great American Republic started. They flung the tea, with which they were insulted, into the ’arbour: they cut the throats of the ’irelings who were sent to coerce them. They retired to their backwoods and their mountains and when the oppressor followed them they defeated ’im; they demoralised ’im; they subjected ’im to the ’umiliation of surrendering ’is armies, as well as their rights.”

“That’s all very well, Mr. Climo,” said Stephen Considine, testily; “but Egypt has no mountains and no backwoods.”

“Make ’em,” said Climo, loftily, without thinking what he was saying, adding as he reflected, what was metaphorically good sense, though it sounded like nonsense, “make ’em out of the desert.”

Mr. Considine laughed contemptuously. He did not want the co-operation of Mr. Climo. “Make mountains out of sand, make backwoods grow in the waterless desert,” he said; “it is easier to make the British bulldog leave his grip.”

But Climo’s angry tones had not been without their effect, for they roused Mulazim Bey, who, with flashing eyes, commenced an extraordinary tirade, translated, a sentence or two at a time, by Mr. Chody, in whose translation it lost nothing of its fierceness.

“He was glad that English Members of Parliament had come to hear what Egyptians thought about England; England the Liar to the Universe, England the Murderer of nations, England the fever-breathed serpent of Oppression. Let them not think that the Egyptians were unaware that the deaths attributed to famine in India were really due to the English sending soldiers to destroy the food in order that the people inhabiting whole districts might die, and leave their country to be appropriated by the English; that the plague was caused by the English poisoning the wells to depopulate the districts where they had been unable to find the food and destroy it; that every year more than a hundred thousand Mohammedans were shot by the police at sight in order that the Moslem Religion might be exterminated in India; that the same fate awaited the Moslems of Egypt; that all the stories of cattle-driving and boycotting in Ireland

were invented as excuses for wholesale executions till all the Irish were exterminated. In Egypt let them not forget the incident of Denshawai, in which the inhabitants of a whole village were executed for trying to beat off with their walking-staves the English officers, who were destroying the pigeons, which were the only means they had for keeping their wives and children alive. Let them not forget the more recent instance in which seventy persons were murdered in cold blood, without a trial, by the Sirdar, in revenge for the death of the fool-hardy young Englishman, Scott-Moncrieff, whose blood was upon his own head: let them not forget the other instances in which English officers had gone into the villages to kill the men, and, because the men were absent at their work, had killed the defenceless women and children."

"'Ear, 'ear!" shouted Climo in frenzied delight.

"I've had enough of this," said Mr. Prestage in disgust to Mr. Considine. "Mr. Climo thinks that everybody is a murderer like he is. He fled from Russia to escape the consequences of having murdered the venerable philanthropist Count Borontzoff, who had protected the village people from his usuries. He claimed the protection of England as a political refugee; and as a reward for the asylum she granted him, traduces her in this infamous fashion."

"The man's a ruffian," said Stephen Considine, and springing to his feet, he cried, "Brothers, we shall alienate the sympathies of the world, if we allow a man like Climo into our councils. If he comes here, I come no more."

There was a dead silence among the Egyptians, while Climo cried sneeringly, "Well, don't come. Nobody 'll miss you, Mr. Concertina."

Hoseyn Hassan rose to the situation. He had reasons enough. There were these two serious Englishmen present to report whether the Egyptians were fit to assume the responsibilities of self-government; there was the question of losing Mr. Considine, who spent thousands of pounds every year upon their cause, and assisted them at least as much in other ways; and there was always the question of bidding for the lead between Mulazim Bey and himself. He was the acknowledged chief of the party; his birth and descent from the Prophet; his

position in the country, and his wealth had led to his unanimous election by the party. But his methods were not violent enough for the fanatics who swayed the party. And over these people Mulazim Bey had extraordinary influence. For Mulazim only required to be fed with wild slanders against the English by firebrands like Jeffery and Dimitri. He questioned nothing that they told him, but fanning it in his imagination into a burning grievance, he went down into cafés like Dimitri's, where the lowest and vilest Moslems sat fuddling themselves with the fiery and poisonous liquors prohibited by their religion, and sowed the seeds of fury against the English; and laid the foundation of his election to be the leader of the great Moslem Jihad, which was to sweep all the Christians into the sea.

Therefore Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan rose and, as chairman of the Committee of Egyptian Independence, summoned the two gigantic Nubians who guarded the doors of the Committee from intrusion. He ordered Climo to be expelled.

As the negroes advanced upon Climo, he turned a horrible colour. He recalled, in that terrible moment, what he had done at the altar of Independence in secret tribunals in Russia.

"Save me!" he cried, throwing himself at Mr. Prestage's feet, and flinging his arms round his knees. Instinctively he turned to the unrevolutionary Englishman who had no place or part in the proceedings. "Save me! They will murder me in cold blood, if you let them take me away!"

"You will not be injured unless you offer resistance," said Hoseyn Hassan, coldly and wearily. "I have given them orders to run you down the stairs, and put you in the street. But if you ever come back you will not only be denied admittance, but you will be proscribed."

He revelled in the word: it made him feel like a Marius or a Sulla. The fate of the proscribed had not been determined, but it would not be light, and each day fresh names were added to the list.

"Save me!" cried Climo, piteously, as they led him away.

Mr. Prestage could stand it no longer. Snatching up his hat and stick, he flew after them to risk his own limbs or life in rescuing him.

But there was no occasion. The giants marched him down gently enough. His only suffering was being thrust into the street hatless.

Up at the committee of Egyptian Independence Hoseyn Hassan and Mr. Considine gave the little laugh men give when they have won, and Mr. Krafft wondered to what use he should put the incident.

Mr. Prestage had his motor there. He motioned the hatless Climo into it, and drove him to a hat-shop next to the Continental Hotel. He received his thanks, his questions, his entreaties in stony silence. And, when the motor drew up at the hat-shop, he motioned him to get out, and told the chauffeur to tear out to the Pyramids as hard as he could go. He wished to get the taste out of his mouth.

CHAPTER III

A PEACEFUL INVASION OF THE CITADEL

KENNEDY and Cobbe had no difficulty in finding the Egyptian Independence Building in the Sharia Boulak, for the words *Egyptian Independence* were printed on each face of the building, just below the roof, in letters more than a yard long. Mr. Considine's flat occupied the first floor. It was fitted with sumptuous Italian-Moresco furniture which went well enough with the beautiful Arab servants. Miss Considine was in love with Arabic decorations.

"I should like to see the real thing," she said. "These are all imitations." To tell the truth they were not even imitations, they were crude adaptations, but handsome and effective.

The soldiers found that the Considines had asked two of the M.P.'s—Mr. Krafft and Mr. Prestage, and their wives, and Mr. Chody, who acted as Mr. Considine's secretary and interpreter, for them to meet.

Mrs. Prestage was a lovely woman dressed by Jay, with soft velvety eyes, and prettily proud of her husband. The Grenadier found himself very much in request. He did not, it was true, take in Lucrece, but he sat on her left and he had lively Mrs. Prestage for a partner. Kennedy sat between Mrs. Prestage and Mrs. Krafft, who was on Mr. Considine's right.

The lunch was elaborate, and champagne flowed, but conversation was of the most ordinary nature. It dealt principally with what the new-comers, meaning Lucrece and Tom Cobbe, ought to do and ought to see in Cairo: nobody would have thought of finding ways for Kennedy to kill time. Old hands were telling new hands about the Cairo season; the M.P.'s wives were spreading their nets for the desirable additions to their parties!

Mr. Krafft rather monopolised Lucrece, but Tom was to be with her all the afternoon, and he liked simple, pleasure-loving Mrs. Prestage. He was not taken with the M.P.'s; but he made allowances for Stephen Considine as Lucrece's father, who was also an American, and therefore could not help certain drawbacks.

This was Tom's way of thinking.

The Prestages left early. "We're motoring across the bridge as soon as it is closed," said Mrs. Prestage.

"That seems a bad time to choose," said Tom.

"Closed for boats," explained Mr. Prestage, who prided himself on being practical.

"Residents always say, 'When the bridge is open'," observed Mr. Chody.

"Meaning open for foreigners?" declared Mr. Considine, with an acidity which made Kennedy look up. Then, realising that the note jarred, he changed to chaff and said, "Mrs. Prestage and Mr. Chody arrange to drive across the bridge: Mrs. Prestage fixes it for as soon as the bridge closes. Mr. Chody for as soon as the bridge opens. They mean exactly the same thing—the context settles it."

"What's it all about?" asked Tom, who had never been in Cairo before. "Why is the bridge always opening and shutting itself?—and why is driving across a bridge the chief amusement in Cairo?"

Mrs. Krafft returned his fire.

"The bridge is the Nile Bridge, which has to be open for an hour or two a day to let the native craft pass through it; and lunch time is selected as the time when all good foreigners ought to be at rest. *Unfortunately*, the Egyptian authorities are under the delusion that all properly constituted foreigners lunch at one. *Unfortunately*, all the people I know are improper, in this respect. *Unfortunately*, also, the drive across the bridge is the only decent drive you can take in Cairo, where all the other roads lose themselves in the desert, directly they reach the town-gates. *Unfortunately*, also, Cairo's only place of amusement, the Khedivial Sporting Club, is across the bridge; and as you can't get across till half-past three, the golf links, tennis courts and croquet-lawns are all congested for the rest of the afternoon."

"I must really be serious with you," said Mr. Considine. "All these things concern a few frivolous foreigners:

Cairo is not run for them, but for three quarters of a million Egyptians."

"The bridge ought to be open at dawn," said the practical Prestage, "your three quarters of a million Egyptians would be better served; for the boats hang about from daylight till the afternoon waiting to get through the bridge."

"And how about the market people?" cried Mr. Considine, triumphantly.

"It would suit them to cross the bridge before daylight, if they were serving the early pauper," said Mrs. Krafft.

"The traffic would be open again in plenty of time for most of them," said Mr. Prestage; "the bridge is always blocked with them at nine o'clock, as every motorist knows."

"Motorist," echoed Mr. Considine, ironically.

There was a peculiar toot.

"That's our motor," said Mr. and Mrs. Prestage, jumping up and bidding a hurried good-bye.

"I never would have a motor," observed Mr. Considine, when they had gone. "The callousness and tyranny of chauffeurs makes me sick. Nero was nothing to them. Relying on their brute strength and weight they just 'toot,' and expect everything and everybody to get out of their way. They have tooted: that is enough. The next moment they charge you like a lot of bloodthirsty cavalry."

"They're very useful things. I don't know what we should do without them," sighed Mrs. Krafft.

"We should put money into the pockets of the poor Arab cabmen."

"The poor Arab cabmen seem to me as much like bloodthirsty cavalry as the motors are," said Mrs. Krafft; "they're always having chariot races over the bodies of the poor."

"What have you got to say to that, sir," said Kennedy to Mr. Considine, in pleasant, respectful tones.

"That's one of the problems I have not yet solved."

"We must be making a move too, Sophia," said Mr. Krafft. "I've got that native judge coming to me to show me the workings of the Capitulations."

"The Capitulations," cried Mr. Considine, vindictively. "The Capitulations! They'll have to go. It is mon-

strous that foreigners should come to a country, where they are not wanted, and shelter themselves behind Consular Courts of their own."

Then, repenting suddenly of his heat, he said: "Leave Mrs. Krafft with us. Lucrece and the two young officers and I are going to do the Bazars."

"May I have the pleasure, Mrs. Krafft," he said, when the two *arabeahs*, with their *tarbooshed* coachmen and their pairs of dashing little white horses, drew up in front of the steps of the Independence Building. He had asked Mrs. Krafft partly for his daughter's sake, partly with a view to offering such a useful person bakshish; but he foresaw a very pleasant afternoon in the company of such a lovely and animated woman, though he was not a lady's man. Two of his servants came down to help them into their cabs, and off they dashed up the broad Sharia Boulak, round the Ezbekiyeh Gardens, through the busy Ataba-el-Khadra and down the still busier Mousky to the Bazar. Cobbe, as the junior of the two subalterns, insisted on sitting on the little low back-seat with his long legs dangling over the wheel.

As is usual in the afternoon, the native women, with their faces veiled, and their heavy clinking ankle's much in evidence, were waddling along the Mousky impeding the traffic. But Lucrece did not care: she was talking young thoughts to Tom, and there was not much young talk flying about in her father's serious household.

It was Lucrece's first visit to the native city; and her romantic imagination was fired as the stream of gaily-robed Orientals grew thicker and thicker, till the *arabeahs* turned sharp round a corner, and they found themselves under the shadow of a venerable mosque, and passing tall glazed stands of barbaric jewels. Soon they alighted and, threading a passage of humble shops, found themselves in what is called the Turkish Bazar.

It should be called the Foreigners' Bazar, for few Turks sell in it, or even enter it. Its gay stalls are arranged to catch the passer's eye instead of depending on clients. Lucrece wandered from stall to stall, buying lace, gaudy embroideries, enamelled knick-knacks of ancient Egyptian designs, matrix turquoises, chased brass boxes, old silver, Persian lacquers, all fascinating and quaint and Oriental in effect, all retailed with lying descriptions by Levantines in *tarbooshes* and black European clothes. She bar-

gained of course, though none of her purchases were bargains; and grew tired with excitement, though she was given many cups of caravan tea and Turkish coffee, and invited to help herself *ad libitum* to the choicest rose-scented, almond-stuffed Turkish delight.

Meanwhile her father had taken Mrs. Krafft into Cohen's, and bought her an exquisite old Turban box of tortoise-shell inlaid with mother-of-pearl in the Turkish fashion, over which she had gone into ecstasies, because she thought it could be converted into such a nice little cellarette for liqueurs. Clever Mrs. Krafft always had her curios converted into articles of domestic use for her friends to envy. Mr. Considine did not inquire the price, till he went to the desk to write a cheque for it, which came to a good many pounds. It was not without an object that he had asked the pretty creature to accompany them to the Bazar.

When they retraced their steps to their cabs Lucrece imagined that she had seen the whole Bazar instead of one vulgar little street in it. But the interest of even that seemed inexhaustible. She meant to go back and back. She was pleased with her skill in bargaining. Tom thought it rather *infra dig.* at first, but succumbed to its seductions. Kennedy looked on, and occasionally showed a little real knowledge.

As they drove to the Bab-es-Zuweyla, the chief gate of the City of the Caliphs, and on to the Citadel, they passed many noble mosques and fountains and Koran schools—the finest buildings of Mediæval Cairo. Lucrece felt as if she was being hurried through fairyland. She was conscious of passing through the most beautiful sights, the most fantastic experiences of her life-time; but it was all like a half-waking dream. Kennedy did not speak: he never talked about what he did not understand; and Tom met with no response.

It was thus that they passed the mosques of El Ghoury and El Moayad, El Merdani and the Blue Mosque, and drove smugly through the Bab-el-Gedid, the principal gate of the Citadel, to the officers' mess. Kennedy's servant met him.

"Such a warm evening for you, sir, that I've set out your tea in the garden of the Royal Artillery, overlooking the view."

In itself, the garden of the Royal Artillery was *triste*

It was laid out for the great Mehemet Ali, but its ever-greens had grown lanky and its fountain had dried up. Flowers it had none : but it overlooked a scene not easily to be matched in the world. For the garden was in an angle of the ramparts : and the ramparts looked across the city to the Pyramids, though nobody noticed them.

Lucrece's mind was flushed with the beauty and romance of the scene, and it gave a pensive grace to her pure profile and limpid cheeks. When one of Mrs. Krafft's sallies caught her attention the smile which dawned on her face might have given Praxiteles a new inspiration.

Without Mrs. Krafft, the party might have suffered by Lucrece's dreaming. But it made an excellent foil for Mrs. Krafft's gay, alluring laugh. Mrs. Krafft was far more attractive by day. Her bright colour proved to be genuine, and the figure which was conspicuous in evening dress, was kept very much within bounds in a marvellously fitting tailor-made suit. A fascinating neatness was her keynote by day. She was in her merriest and wittiest humour.

"After tea you'll have to show us over," said Mr. Considine. "It seems an enormous place. Have you a very large force up here?"

Kennedy shook his head.

"Only a regiment of Infantry, and some Garrison Artillery, and a few Sappers."

"What do you have artillery up here for?—to bombard the town in case of insurrection?" he asked, lightly.

Kennedy was aware that not one of the modern guns was mounted, but, without knowing what a dangerous person he was speaking to, he thought it impolitic to confess how ill-prepared the British Army was; so he evaded the point.

"Our six-inch howitzers are very formidable for this kind of thing. With their lyddite and shrapnel they could destroy any building and any force in the town in a few minutes—the splinters of their lyddite shells fly two hundred yards in every direction."

"Give us fair warning when we are near these terrible death-dealing monsters," said Mr. Considine in mock fright; he wished to locate them for a future occasion.

"Oh, I won't take you anywhere near them."

The "*petits fours*" of Egypt are delicious, and Lucrece was not too dreamy to eat well, but it was Mrs. Krafft who

made the tea go. She was determined that people should enjoy themselves ; and her appetite for tea-dainties was unlimited.

When they had swept the board, Mr. Considine said, " Now, Captain Kennedy, keep your promise and show us over the glories of the Citadel. We want to see everything."

" All right. I'll show you Joseph's Well and the place of the Mameluke's Leap, and the mosque of Mehemet Ali."

Tom added, " There's nothing really to see except the sunset, though I suppose you've got to see these things."

" But I've read in father's guide-books that the Citadel is a place of the highest interest," said Lucrece, who had the American's craving for " sights."

" I think they must have meant that it was the highest place of interest in the city," said Mrs. Krafft, with a wink to Tom.

" If they've any regard to truth they must," said the Grenadier decisively. " Let's start in—What shall it be first—the Mosque ? It's nearer than anything else."

It was Lucrece's first mosque and she felt her soul expand within her when she stood in the fair white court with its long arcades of flashing alabaster.

" Where are your mosque tickets ?" said the Sheikh to Kennedy in English.

Kennedy stared at him : he had never heard of them. He had never been in an Egyptian mosque. The Sheikh showed him the little brown tickets which the lady and gentleman who had gone in ahead of them had given him. " It would be a great trouble for you to go back to your hotel and buy them : give me five piastres each and I'll let you through."

He guessed that Kennedy would not know that he was required to sell them, and that they cost only two piastres each.

Kennedy gave him the five shillings and thought him very polite. Tom and Lucrece were just going to step into the mosque, when the Sheikh said, " You must wait until the mosque servant has put on your overshoes."

An Arab came forward with an armful of enormous and filthy yellow slippers.

Lucrece's feet were as pretty and as exquisitely slippered as Mrs. Krafft's, but she seemed to grudge every

inch that she drew up her dress for the Arab to tie on her overshoes. Mrs. Krafft was not so blind to opportunity.

"I'm sure they're full of insects," she cried, with an exhibition of delectable frills and delectable ankles.

Inside, the gaudy decorations did not hurt Lucrece's sensibilities. For her they were all fantastic, mysterious, full of the spirit of the Orient.

Kennedy knew nothing, but instinct told him that the decorations were rather cheap.

"Do you like it, Miss Considine?" he asked. "I don't think it's really much better than the Brighton Pavilion, and I don't like it so well as the Mena House."

"Hush," said Lucrece. "You must not be such a Goth. I think this Arabic art is lovely."

"I suppose it is," he conceded; he did not wish her to think he had no taste. "It must be the fault of my bringing up."

They only stayed a few minutes. As they were leaving Kennedy pulled out a shilling to give the man who had brought the overshoes. Tom pushed him away. "Humbug, old man, it's my turn now." Mr. Considine was so disappointed that they would not let him pay that he proceeded to tip the Sheikh five shillings, not quite gratuitously, perhaps, for when the two soldiers turned away in accordance with the English convention of not seeing the other fellow's tip, he said, "I suppose if there's anything not usually shown which I want to get into, you're the man to ask."

The Sheikh responded with Oriental glibness.

"What sort of things?" asked Kennedy who had not been intended to overhear the remark. Mr. Considine did not like the way in which he spoke. But his presence of mind was equal to the occasion; he replied: "The Royal Mosque there, for instance." He pointed to the still picturesque ruin on their right.

"Why not go in there now?" asked Kennedy.

"Oh, thank you so much. I'm sure my daughter would like to see it."

But the Sheikh, who feared that he might not get a fresh tip if they went into it now, said that the man who kept the key had gone to the General's house on a message. This was two or three miles away.

"What shall we do next then?—the place where the massacre of the Mamelukes took place, or Joseph's Well?"

The Mameluke's Leap is the place we see the sunset from——"

"Oh, let's see the place where the Mamelukes were massacred," cried Lucrece, enthusiastically. "I am so interested in them."

"It's only because they're such elegant people in the oleographs hanging on the Ezbekiyeh railings. If you could believe them, every one of the Mamelukes was as perfect as Sheikh Huseyn Hassan," said Mrs. Krafft.

"Is that the splendid-looking Arab I wanted you to introduce to me the other night, Father?" asked Lucrece.

"Yes."

"The servants say that he's a prophet," continued Lucrece, not noticing the curtness of his answer.

"The English call him the False Prophet," said Mr. Considine, thinking that the conversation was growing dangerous.

A walk of a few yards took them to the Middle Gate of the Citadel. This bars the top, as the Bab-el-Azab bars the bottom, of the winding lane which was the scene of the last massacre of history.

"What is a massacre, properly, Father?" asked Lucrece.

"Massacres," he replied, "are of daily occurrence in the newspapers; but this loose use of the word only implies the slaughter of a number of persons who are unable to strike back. History reserves the expression for a more particular use: and we have to ask what are the common elements in the Massacre of the Holy Innocents, the Massacre of the Sicilian Vespers, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the Massacre of the Mamelukes. In each case the extermination of a whole class was aimed at; in each case the class was for some reason an object of dread to its murderers; in each case the murder was treacherous; and in each case it was carefully premeditated.

"Among the Innocents Herod hoped to make sure of the death of the prophesied King of the Jews: the Vespers were to remove by assassination the French soldiers whom the Sicilians could not face in battle; in personnel the Huguenot Party were much stronger than their rivals before that great night of St. Bartholomew; and but for the extermination of the Mamelukes Ibrahim Pasha would have been the last of the Khedives. As a

nation is freed from the despotism of one man by assassination, so it may be freed from the despotism of a party or a conqueror by massacre. The strong, who have forgotten that the worm can turn, denounce massacres with withering indignation: the weak, trembling in the grasp of tyranny, see in a future massacre their last hope of salvation, and see in a successful massacre the day of Judgment."

It was Mr. Considine's habit, if he was taking a walk with a friend, to stand still if he had anything important to say. The halt lasted quite ten minutes while he was delivering this philippic; and Mrs. Krafft found it a strain on her gravity; for his daughter was gazing at him in rapture with ecstatic eyes and half-parted lips, and Kennedy was as serious as a judge, while Tom was stooping over the mongrel which had followed them, looking for ticks.

But when Mr. Considine halted for breath, Kennedy unexpectedly took up the running.

"That blackguard, Mehemet Ali," he began, "invited the Mameluke Beys, the whole four hundred and fifty of them, to pay him a state visit in the Citadel. When he had taken leave of them with the highest marks of his favour, he paid them the compliment of having the lane we are now in, down which they had to pass, lined on both sides with the flower of his army.

"As soon as all the Mamelukes were in the lane, the gates were shut with a bang at the top and bottom, which was the signal for the troops to fall on the unsuspecting Beys. Shut in between the walls of the Citadel on one side, and the wall of rock on the other, not one could escape. So complete was the cowardliness of the whole business that other soldiers lined the top of the rocks, and shot down from above every Mameluke who tried to defend himself. That's the way these people have."

"But one did escape," said Lucrece; "he leapt over the walls. You said you'd show us the place."

"Oh, that's where we're going to see the sunset, but the massacre didn't begin till they were down in the lane. I believe that the survivor only dashed through the bottom gate when they were closing it, and jumped over the low wall round the top of the steps into the road—that's just what a man would have done who was making a bolt for his life."

"I should like to examine the place carefully," said Mr. Considine, when they reached the Bab-el-Azab. He looked round the vaulted gateway and the courts and chambers leading off it, like a terrier sniffing for rats, as Tom whispered to Mrs. Krafft, but recaptured Kennedy, who was beginning to be rather exercised by his inquisitiveness, by pronouncing in a tone of final judgment that he saw no possible solution of the legend but his.

"Our best way to the Well will be to go outside and take cabs back to the big gate, the way we went before," said Tom. "The ladies will find it an awful fag climbing up that lane again: it's almost as steep as the side of a house."

"I think it would be best," replied Mr. Considine, and he added to himself, but audibly: "I've got the points of that in my mind."

"What, sir?" asked Kennedy.

"I think I've made this Mameluke site tally with the accounts I've read. I'm a great sightseer, Captain Kennedy."

"Awful," thought Tom and began to wish that he had not come till he found himself in a cab again with Lucrece, and then he thought it was worth it all.

"Oh, I am enjoying myself," she cried. "It's all wonderful to me—I could picture every bit of it; those Mamelukes dressed like Crusaders, having the mediæval gates clanged in their faces, and being set on by swarms of fierce Moors in that lane where they had rocks and walls, lined with sharpshooters, to climb before they could get out. Even at this distance the idea of a massacre, of brave men being caught like rats in a trap and killed like vermin, makes me go hot and cold; it makes me rage with fury one moment, and faint with sickness the next."

"There's nothing so vile in the world as a man who can deliberately plan a cold-blooded massacre," said Kennedy.

"Swine," said Tom.

By this time they had reached Joseph's Well: the guardian was there: the afternoon was his harvest time.

"You mustn't think, Mrs. Krafft, that the Joseph who built this well is the Joseph who brought the Israelites to Egypt."

"My ancestors——"

"Is that so?" Then he gave a little laugh. "Ho-ho, I see." And continued: "As I was saying, Mrs.

Krafft"—(he pronounced her name Kraf—t)—"this well was not called after Joseph the son of Jacob, but after the great Saladin of the Crusades, who was also called Youssef or Joseph."

Mrs. Krafft had read it all in the guide-books, but received it with a tolerant smile. She was accustomed to the iteration of things which everybody knew, also of things which were patently absurd, into which department of fiction she had little doubt that Mr. Considine would presently drift.

She was his only listener. Tom was trying to light a cigarette in the wind, and Kennedy had hurried Lucrece on to get the door opened, and was making her peer down the great square shaft a hundred and fifty feet deep with windows cut in the rock all round it.

"But where's the water," asked Lucrece. She had her practical side.

"Round the corner : you only see half the shaft. The bottom which you see is a sort of landing where the oxen used to walk round to work the *sakkiyeh*."

"How did they get down?"

"There's what we call a ramp, a sort of staircase without steps, winding all the way down to where you see."

"Can you see the water from down there?"

"Oh, yes, you drop stones into it."

"Let's go down."

Mr. Considine and Mrs. Krafft followed them—very slowly—Mr. Considine kept stopping to explain: the guardian stayed with them: he thought Mr. Considine required most looking after; men of his age and weight came down very heavily if they slipped. Mr. Considine allowed the Arab to give him an arm. He had no objection to appearing infirm. He wondered that the English had given the position of guardian to an Arab. Mulazim Bey had informed him that they kept every position of emolument for themselves.

As they went down he inquired, "Has the water given out? I don't see any?"

"Sir, not at all," replied the Arab. "There is quite enough for the whole garrison, but they prefer pipe-water."

"Is the water good?"

"The best in Cairo."

Mr. Considine wondered many things: Was the man telling the truth, or merely bragging about his charge? In the case of eventualities, would it be possible to destroy the well? Would he be the person to do it? Would he be amenable to a bribe?

When they reached the bottom they found Kennedy trying to open a door, and Tom and Lucrece discussing the ball that was going to take place at the General's on the next night, for which it seemed she had received no invitation.

"Like a tower in Topsy-turvy Land, isn't it, Captain Kennedy?" said Mrs. Krafft, challenging him with her provoking eyes. "It goes down instead of up and has its rooms and staircases outside instead of in."

"Well it is, you know."

"And now, where's the water," asked Mr. Considine.

The guardian made him peep down a crack into another shaft as deep as the one they were in, with its right edge at the left edge of their shaft.

At this point Mrs. Krafft suddenly divulged that she was a well-read woman, a fact she may have concealed as unlikely to advance her in Tom's estimation.

"Egyptologists consider that the well was made long before Saladin's time; that this rock was a Pharaonic fortress, and that the bend in the shaft half way down was some wise device of the Pharaohs, perhaps to prevent fouling matter being thrown down it by traitors."

"Does this path go on?" asked Mr. Considine, wishing to look into this.

"Yes, sir."

"How far?"

"Down to where you see the water."

"Does the height of the water never change?"

"Sir, never. That is the water of the great river which flows under the Nile, and the height is the level of the sea."

"Does that strike you as possible, Mrs. Kraf—t?"

"I am afraid it's beyond me. But one reads a great deal about that river under the Nile."

"I should like to go down and examine the whole thing carefully"—he pointed to the door which Kennedy had been trying. "Open this, will you, guardian."

"Sir, not possible," he replied, spreading out his fingers to emphasise the negative. "Regiment-Colonel has key."

"What should you like to do now?" asked Kennedy of Lucrece, when they reached the top. His invitation to the Citadel was for her: the others were incidents.

She looked to her father.

"Well, I should like to make the circuit of the Citadel so as to see how far one can trace the work of Saladin. He's the Saladin of the Crusades, the Saladin of the 'Talisman,' Lucrece."

Lucrece knew the "Talisman" by heart. Reading it had been her preparation for Egypt: her romantic temperament fed on it.

"You can take us round, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes, I think so."

Stephen Considine's gratification was so obvious that Kennedy thought Americans must be mad. Such extraordinary things pleased them.

They started with the palace of the Khedives, supposed to be the residence of the officer commanding the Royal Garrison Artillery, who preferred a flat near the Club.

The palace was a barrack, with finely proportioned rooms already falling to pieces, and preposterous decorations.

"There's nothing in it but views," said Kennedy. "They're splendid." Mr. Considine peeped out of various windows to examine the lofty bastion on which the palace stood. "There might be some bits of Saladin's wall incorporated," he said. "What a height it is from the ground. This is the view we shall have from the terrace, I suppose, so we needn't delay over it now."

"Yes," said Kennedy. "The only view you don't get better outside is the view from the Artillery Major's office."

"Can we see that?"

"If he's in. I daresay he won't mind."

"I suppose he keeps it locked up when he's away?"

"I don't know. Anyhow I am afraid that we could not go in unless he took us," said Kennedy doggedly.

The Major was there; and naturally had no objection to showing his views to charming ladies introduced by an officer on the Staff, and Lord Clapham's son. Mrs. Krafft made herself agreeable, while Lucrece went into raptures over the lovely and fantastic Tombs of the Mamelukes, spread below the windows, and beyond them the desert stretching for miles—all *couleur de rose*.

Mr. Considine looked so long at the view that Kennedy suggested they ought to be going on. "They're all modern," he said deprecatingly, observing that Mr. Considine was intently eyeing a group of houses which encroached upon the Citadel wall.

Antiquity was not the point of view from which Mr. Considine was regarding them. He was looking out for a weak spot in the defences, and this was the first he had seen. If it was left unguarded, a storming party could get in here.

It was growing so near the time for sunset that they had to scamper round the rest of the Citadel, though it is at the back that the walls of Saladin and En-Nasir can best be traced.

Kennedy pointed out various barracks: they were of more interest to him.

"Can one go over them?" asked Mr. Considine.

"Only if one of the officers in that particular barrack offers to take you."

"And we haven't seen those terrible guns yet."

"Modern guns aren't shown. You never see them pointing out of portholes in the old style."

Then a majestic spectacle arrested their gaze. From the east gate of the Citadel a crumbling mediæval causeway, that looked a mile long, mounted to the noble mosque, stately even in ruin, on the skyline of the Mokattam Hills. The fast-sinking sun suffused the whole mountain-side with a crimson glow: arch and cupola and minaret were picked out in gold, at which the great shadows of the valley were snatching with menacing hands.

"That is the place from which Mchemet Ali's guns made the Citadel untenable," said Kennedy, acting the cicrone.

"They haven't any batteries there now?" inquired Mr. Considine in a voice that asked to be corrected.

Kennedy very much feared that they had not, but England's reputation for sanity was at stake, so he said—(a conversation which he remembered very well afterwards):

"That's the howitzer's position from which the six-inch guns we were talking about could lay Cairo in ashes in half an hour. But their location is kept very secret."

"Fancy thinking about guns when you have a view like this to look at!" cried Mrs. Krafft.

"Did you ever see anything so lovely!" cried Lucrece.

"I'll show you something lovelier in a minute," said Kennedy. "It's time to go and look at our celebrated sunset view now. We won't look at it from the Mameluke's Leap—there are such squads of tourists there."

"Going through a kind of service with Baedekers for prayer-books," interposed Mrs. Krafft.

"Yes," said Kennedy, "we'll go back to our garden. The wall there has a little gallery so that the Khedive, walking in the cool, might look out on the life which went on in the Meidan Rumeleh in those days."

The rays of royalty have departed, but the Meidan Rumeleh still bids against the Piazzetta of Venice, with its tiara of mosque domes and minarets stretching from Sultan Hassan's, the St. Peter's of mosques, and the Royal Mausoleum of Al Rifa'iy'a, to the crest of the Citadel, like the hoop of a coronet—noble masonry graciously arabesqued.

As they stood facing the sunset, the flat-roofed city looked like an illustration to the Bible, and the minarets rising above it seemed as plentiful as poppies in ripe corn, and as black as the palms on the Nile banks horizoning the west. Beyond the harvest of houses was the Nile, a steel blue ribbon, and the desert, a brown haze; and beyond that the whole sky was filled with the golden halls of sunset, in one of which, based on the horizon, stood the vast purple forms of the two chief Pyramids which enthroned the memories of the Pharaohs.

"The Pyramids!" cried Lucrece. "The Pyramids, within sight of Cairo! Why, I thought they were buried in the heart of Egypt! The Pyramids! Why should they affect me so powerfully—I don't believe I shall ever get them out of my sight as long as I live! Something tells me that I shall see them for ever looming over my mind as they are looming now on the horizon!"

CHAPTER IV

HOW LUCRECE BECAME THE TOAST OF THE ARMY

It was not much after nine-thirty, the next morning, when Tom presented himself at the General's house and asked for Lady Vere. She met him with a smile.

"I know what you broke your rest for. Have you had any breakfast?" she said.

"I've been down the card at breakfast, thanks. I couldn't sleep, you see."

"Is it so bad as that?"

"I was wondering what I should say to you," he answered, evading the question. "It seems such cheek."

"I shouldn't have thought it mattered, as you knew that I should know what you were going to say."

"What was I going to say?"

"That you want invitations for Mr. and Miss Considine, and, possibly, but I am not sure of that, for Mr. and Mrs. Krafft for our ball to-night. The Kraffts have theirs—Mr. Krafft is an M.P. of the Empire, which he is seeking to destroy; but here are the invitations for the Considines, with the General's and my cards, for you to take to them, if you will be so kind. I'm glad to ask her. I think we should do something to bring her in contact with the right sort of people. She's very pretty. And her father's mixed up with so completely the wrong set. Really, Americans have no judgment."

"Thanks awfully, Lady Vere. I knew that I might ask you. Would you tell the General that I have gone on a message for you, in case I'm a bit late in reaching Headquarters?"

"Yes. I'll make it all right with him: Good-bye. I'm very cross. I shall have to miss my game, and spend the morning giving orders to Greek confectioners."

Lady Vere was a devotee of golf:

When Tom presented himself at the flat in the Egyptian Independence Building Lucrece was alone. She had promised that she and her father would go if the invitation was forthcoming, and she looked very pleased. He found her printing and washing photographs, so she had a big enveloping linen apron over a lace blouse and white cloth skirt, which were not very suitable for paddling with photography.

The nun-like severity of the white linen apron brought out the classic perfectness of her features.

"Did you ever go to a fancy-dress ball as a nun?" he asked.

"No, it would be stifling," laughed the practical Lucrece.

"Did you take these photos yourself?"

"Of course. I'm not Eastman's."

"By Jove! what lovely photos they are! I never saw an amateur take better!"

"They're not so good as that," she replied simply. "But they ought to be fairly good, because I've worked hard at photography. And I use the best lenses and plates."

"Why didn't you bring your camera yesterday, Miss Considine?"

"Because I never take it when I'm invited out, unless my camera receives a special invitation. A person with a camera can be such a nuisance when her host has not arranged for photographic pauses."

"The camera shall have a special invitation when I take you out."

"I'm not sure that I shall ever trust myself with you."

"I'm sorry I can't offer to help now," he said, to retaliate; "the General's waiting for me."

"How naughty of me to keep England waiting! But no one is allowed to help me except by fetching and holding. The secret of perfect photography is to carry out every detail yourself."

"I don't think I should make a perfect photographer," opined Tom, as he said good-bye.

"I don't think you would," she said; but she bestowed a look of motherly affection, though he was a year older than she was, on the slim figure in the Guard's uniform, which paced slowly down the steps:

In a minute or two he came bounding up again. The

Arab at the door divined that he had forgotten something, and opened it before he had time to ring.

"By Jove!" he cried, bursting in upon her. "I forgot altogether about settling where we are to meet."

"That's very important."

He thought she might be chaffing him; but she had remembered that he was the only person she really knew in Egypt except Kennedy and Mrs. Krafft.

"You'd better dine with us. Father likes dinner at seven-thirty. Will that suit you?"

"Shan't I be in the way?"

"Of course not. But don't let me keep you; I guess you have something very important on, as you are in uniform."

"Guess again," he said. "The B. O. has to be in uniform, except in the afternoon, in Egypt."

"Please, what is the B. O.?"

"A 'brilliant officer.'"

"I know better—he's only British. But what will England be doing without you all this time?"

"Cigarettes, and swearing at its correspondence."

"What do men do who don't smoke?"

"Hustlers. A boss who smokes gets through twenty-five per cent. less work. It doesn't follow that he likes you to do less; but it all takes time."

"How about the General, Mr. Cobbe?"

"Only so-and-so. He smokes a great big pipe."

"If I were you, I should choose a General who rolled his own cigarettes."

"Can't get 'em. The demand's too great."

"Oh, what nonsense we're talking! It makes me ashamed of myself."

* * * * *

"What! another uniform?" she said, when he arrived to dinner in his scarlet Mess jacket. In that genial climate he could come in an open cab without any overcoat on a November evening. She had seen the scarlet right up at the top of their street from her window.

After the stormy meeting at the Independence Committee, Mr. Considine was rather interested to see something more of the English, of whom he had seen singularly little since he had been in Cairo.

They arrived in time for the scramble for partners before the dancing began. Lucrece's pensive loveliness attracted instant attention.

"There's that girl again," people said, and they generally added something about her meaning to be the future Lady Clapham.

She had shown no signs of pensiveness, or of a desire to be the Honourable Mrs. Cobbe during dinner, but Tom had been falling in love with her, hard.

And Stephen Considine had laid himself out to keep his guest entertained. He had been in his wittiest and sunniest mood, and his daughter had been greeting his sallies with light laughter and adoring eyes, or interchanging glances and smiles with their guest as the points of Mr. Considine's stories developed themselves in subtle surprises.

"Tom, she's lovely," whispered Lady Vere to Cobbe, when they had shaken hands. "Have you helped yourself to dances? The flies will be buzzing round in one second."

"Oh, no!" he said, hastily attacking Lucrece with a programme.

"How many may I have, Miss Considine?"

"You must take what you want, Mr. Cobbe. I owe the invitation to you."

"I should take all if I did. Would three be too many?"

"No, you can take three," she said simply.

She thought she had never seen a more brilliant affair. The whole of the great house was swarming with soldiers. Stalwart sergeants of the various regiments took the place of footmen at the entrance, and inside there were officers everywhere—Engineers, Artillery, Guards, Cavalry, Infantry and Egyptian Army—the English officers in the Egyptian Army. The Egyptian officers present were only older men, who had been through the perils of the Soudan campaign with Sir Francis.

Most of the younger officers were stalking partners, but a few were standing about in little knots, talking and laughing, and watching the arrivals. Kennedy, who did not dance, was one of them. He had come for a sight of Lucrece. The Veres knew him and his habits well enough to have excused his absence.

He had no hope of saying more than "How do you do," and "Good-bye" to her. But it was meat and drink to

him to see her in her ball-room beauty and flush—the toast of the Army. He loved her with the passion of a silent man, whose feelings have not been blunted by trifling. Yet he saw no hope of ever marrying her; he had no intention of proposing to her. Some day, when his uncle died, he would inherit a fair estate, but nothing for a millionaire's daughter. And he saw no prospect of rising in the Army. He considered himself stupid. He had not distinguished himself in class at school. He had to go to a crammer to get into the Army, and did not pass high. He liked his work, and he understood it, but no better, in his own estimation, than a good sergeant. Courage he knew that he possessed, and presence of mind in danger. Like General Gordon, he had never seen fear; and he had stood the test of the worst battles in the South African war. But were there not hundreds of cool, brave men in the regiment?

Clearly he was one of the ruck. Yet his love would be no disgrace to any woman, and it could be no trouble to Lucrece, for she would never know it.

Lucrece saw him, and stopped to speak to him with such evident pleasure that he would feel the thrill of it all the evening.

The Kraffts were there, and came over to join Lucrece. They knew very few people in the Army set. Lucrece had not time to take in more before the flies began to buzz.

"Are you dancing yourself?" Lucrece had asked Lady Vere.

"No, I have too many duties to perform. I shan't miss it. One can dance every week-day night of the season in Cairo, if any human being could stand it."

The prize partner of Cairo, Captain Aylmer of the Rifles, was the first presented. He was thought the handsomest man in the garrison. He was very tall, very fair, and his features were, if anything, a shade too perfect and refined for a man. They were no index to his character. He was one of the best men at games in the Royal Irish Rifles, a regiment renowned for them. Nor had the ladies succeeded in turning his head. Many had tried.

He decorously asked for a dance, and retired.

The next person Lady Vere brought up was a *parti*, a Grenadier named Captain Ronald Wemyss, a person of family and great wealth, and a big fine man in appearance.

He enjoyed being pelted with marriageable daughters, but had no intention of entering into a union, which was only dissoluble in the law-courts. He was a *bon vivant*, with an intolerable opinion of himself and his wit; he was rather clever.

After them, she brought up in rapid succession the rest of the *fine fleur* of Cairo ball-rooms: Mr. Polkinghorne, a pretty boy of twenty; Mr. Lavender, a tall, dark man, a beautiful dancer, with very distinguished manners; and Mr. de Grammont, a noted golf player—all Grenadiers; Major Carleton of the Scots Greys, who was a personage; Captain Bigge of the Horse Artillery, the champion polo-player of Egypt; Mr. Esslemont and Mr. Renshaw, likewise distinguished at polo, and both Scotchmen in the Welsh Fusiliers; and Colonel Went of the Egyptian Army.

The moment a man was introduced to her, before he had even time to ask for a dance, she said, after the habit of unfledged Americans: "Captain Aylmer, do you know Mrs. Krafft?" "Captain Wemyss, are you acquainted with Mrs. Krafft?"

The humour of the situation was heightened by the fact that most of these self-reserving young men had expressly stipulated with Lady Vere that they should not be introduced to Mrs. Krafft, whom, lovely as she was, they would have condemned for her style, even if they had not prejudged her as her husband's wife.

Lucrece had no respect for Society's likes. Mrs. Krafft was her friend, and all these prize young men were nothing to her; if they wanted her, they must accept Mrs. Krafft with her.

Most of them did; and those who refused were, few of them, much loss. Lady Vere had not introduced them as types of the Army, but as Society young men of Cairo: to Society a beautiful millionaire's daughter is always a desirable addition.

They all asked her for dances; they thought that they were treating her handsomely, as her dancing was an unknown factor.

They need have had no fear. She danced with American brilliance. She was not only light and graceful, her dancing was inspired. But after a round or two, if they had not asked Mrs. Krafft for a dance, and she saw her without a partner, she said: "Take me to Mrs. Krafft, please. I cannot let her sit so much alone."

Tom asked her for the first dance and the two last. "I don't suppose there'll be room to move in the others," he said.

Before they had gone once round the room, he discovered that she was the best dancer he had ever held in his arms. Ere it was over, he cursed his folly for having deprived himself of any more dances till the very end of the evening.

When they had seen her dance there was a fresh onslaught on Lucrece's programme, especially as there were two waltzes on it, which she had marked with a cross as not to be taken. She had nothing to give but extras about which she wrote down methodical notes of her promises. The two dances, the fourth and the eleventh, she had reserved for talking to her host and hostess, and nothing would shift her from the idea. It would have been easier to keep off partners by saying that she needed a rest; the "Thank you, I don't wish to dance this," was so uncompromising.

The third dance had been a two-step. The famous old "Mosquito Parade" had never lost its popularity in Cairo, being the verviest of all two-steps to dance to.

Lucrece was dancing it with Beau Aylmer. Beau was not only an allusion to his personal appearance; it was an abbreviation of his christian name, which happened to be Beaufort. He danced a two-step well, and his six-feet-two of height was the finishing touch required to show off the phenomenal grace with which she danced it.

Lady Vere was watching the handsome graceful couple, and commenting on his daughter's dancing to Mr. Considine, when the encore went out like the wind in a bag-pipe, and they came to her breathless.

"I'm just going away with Captain Aylmer to have an ice, and then may I come and sit by you for the next dance, Lady Vere?"

"Are you tired already?"

"No, but I want to talk to you."

"Oh, you mustn't waste your dances on an old woman: Make haste and give it away."

"Mayn't I have it, Miss Considine?" asked Beau Aylmer, as they fought their way upstairs to the ice.

"No; I'm going to sit it out with Lady Vere."

"May I sit it out with you too?"

"If you sit on the other side of her."

Stephen Considine was devoting his fortune, his talents and his time to the overthrow of the British power in Egypt, and the abolition of the Army of Occupation. Nationally speaking, Great Britain was a red rag to him, but it gave him more than a thrill of pleasure to see the pick of a ball-room full of British officers crowding to the shrine of Lucrece. Her spirit and grace in the gay two-step were admirably set off by the dignified verve of tall young Aylmer; the classic beauty of her features was matched by the aristocratic refinement of his; her fairness was even outshone by his. Stephen Considine confessed to himself that this, apart from the hated uniform, was the kind of father he had pictured for his grandchildren. He had confessed the same thing to himself when Tom Cobbe had been standing in his drawing-room after dinner, holding Lucrece's fan for her, while she was putting on her gloves.

Stephen himself was a superb-looking man, but more like a sculptor's god taken from a plebeian model with beauty and rude strength mixed—a Vulcan rather than an Apollo—one of the later portrait-sculptures rather than an idealisation of the Golden Age. In a word, he was Roman, not Greek.

He wished the husband for his daughter to be idealised. And to him there was more idealisation to be found in these gallant young Englishmen than in any other types of the twentieth century. The old inspirations might be wanting in them. They certainly did not talk about poetry in its old forms, or think about art in the abstract; but their lives, which seemed so idle to the world, were full of poetry in another way. They carried their worship of physical perfection farther than the ancient Greek himself, for, though they did not study manly activity in the nude, their whole lives were given to its cultivation. Each of these boys developed his endurance, and trained his eye and hand in running the physical race that was set before him, with apostolic patience and vigilance. Nature had endowed his right hand with special skill for striking the ball in some sport. No matter what his inclinations were, his energies were devoted as she inspired. The golfer might long for the more combatant balls of cricket; the batsman, making his centuries in the hot

sun, might think of the delights of boating or swimming. But it was rare for the Saint Antonys of sport to yield to the seduction of ease or inclination. They kept their eyes fixed on perfection.

And it was only the crown of wild olive that these young Englishmen sought. They did not even stretch out their hands for the laurel wreaths offered by fame in print. The sordid side of athleticism, which quagmired sport in commerce and dishonesty, was unknown here. Stephen Considine, a sport-loving American, who never missed a historical contest in his native land, was struck by this. To be the best polo-player, the best golfer in the Garrison, or any other state unto which it pleased God to call them, was enough. Their prize was the respect of their fellows.

That was one phase of their idealisation. The other was *form*, which included honour, and chivalry, and courage and correctness of behaviour and appearance. To pronounce a man good form was another way of writing that he was a gentleman, or, as our fathers would have said in the old time before us, a perfect knight; a *cortegiano* of the Golden Book; a practiser of Bushido. There were axioms of honour and courage that none could transgress and remain in Society. Beyond these many got no further than form in appearance, and a certain correctness of behaviour. But the higher the man's ideal was, the greater the respect that he eventually gained from his fellows, as a notable instance was to prove, though at the outset he might be derided as a prig. And here Stephen noted that one of the elements of English *form* was its derision of the prig.

And he was very soon to learn that the weakness of English politics lies in the fact, that though the Great Men who administer England's Departments of State may earn the respect of millions for their own sincerity of form, it is only in times of a great national crisis that the voters, to whom they are answerable, listen to the voice of form, which is at other times drowned by the braying of priggishness.

His host had very little to say to him. A downright man like Sir Francis Vere could hardly help feeling a repugnance for the person who, belonging to a friendly nation, a nation of the same blood as the English, entered into an unholy alliance with men of a different colour

and an alien creed, against the Anglo-Saxons among whom he lived.

As Mr. Considine was his guest, he addressed a few stiff remarks to him, and then relapsed into the granite silence of a coachman who knows his place.

But his face suddenly lightened with a charming smile, as a little old Egyptian, wearing a well-worn frock-coat instead of dress-clothes, came in to present himself to Lady Vere.

"Ah, Hakim," he cried, stopping him as he went by, "you must never pass me. We have too many memories in common!"

Dr. Azib had been the surgeon of the Native Battery commanded by Sir Francis in the River War. When Sir Francis saw the queer little man, he had visions of the very different Dr. Azib, so devoted, so collected under fire. There was no public function at the General's house to which he did not receive an invitation. Mr. Considine was hoping that the General would introduce him, but Sir Francis had no intention of subjecting Dr. Azib to evil communications.

If Sir Francis was frigid, Lady Vere was not. She saw no object in allowing his visit to their house to drive him still further from the English. Woman-like, she argued that a man of his noble physiognomy could not be beyond reclamation. All women are born propagandists and matchmakers. But they are not all born alike; some insist and others influence.

Lady Vere was of the kind who influence. She did not address a single remark to Mr. Considine that bore upon his opinions. She asked him if his daughter inherited her dancing from him; and if he knew how important it was to boil every drop of milk that was used in the house, in Cairo.

"Is that so?"

Presently he asked: "Don't you dance, ma'am?"

"Very fond of it."

"Then why don't some of these young men come up and ask you? If I was a younger man, I'd show them the way."

"They know it's my rule not to dance at my own parties."

"And why did you make that rule?"

"So that I might be here to talk to—you, for instance."

"That was a mighty good rule," he said, with a twinkle in his intense blue eyes.

"How long has your daughter been out here, Mr. Considine?"

"Less than a week."

"I hope you're going to be careful of her. I don't mean of her health; that goes without saying, and it is not a very treacherous climate; but you can't be unaware of the fact that she is a very beautiful girl—I don't think I ever saw a more beautiful girl. And the men here are such brutes in the way they talk about a girl if she gives them the least encouragement. I don't mean our men. Public opinion in the Army won't stand it, though we have some sinners like that," she said, indicating with her eyes Captain Wemyss, "who defy public opinion and ought not to be in the Army at all, in times of peace."

"Lucrece is an American girl, ma'am. She knows how to take care of herself," he said, not aggressively, but with the smugness of the platitudinarian.

"Have you any woman to go about with her?" asked Lady Vere, stepping boldly across the platitude.

"Thank you, ma'am, yes."

His ma'aming got on her nerves.

"Mrs. Kraf—t has promised to take her round, some."

"I don't like Mrs. Krafft much better than I like Mr. Krafft; but, at any rate, she has her eyes wide open, and I daresay she's very much attracted to your girl, as we all are."

"You are attracted to her? You, yourself, ma'am?"

"I think she is a darling. I was going to have offered to take her round myself."

"Don't think me the worse for ingratitude, Lady Vere; but it would not work. I don't know as how you know much about me, but if you do, it won't be to my credit."

"I do know all about that."

"And yet you make this offer?"

"War is not declared yet, Mr. Considine. Have you never read how the English and French knights in Gascony used to entertain each other during the truces of the Hundred Years' War?"

"No, ma'am. I have never heard of Gascony; and a hundred years' war don't seem to me possible."

"Well, look after your daughter. Some day you'll—
Hush! here she comes."

"May I have the pleasure of this dance, Lady Vere?" asked Lucrece, still glowing with the exertions of the encoored "Mosquito Parade."

"What do you mean, dear?" The "dear" escaped her spontaneously. The girl's cameo-like features had the flush of a shell; her blue eyes, usually as calm as the sky, were sparkling.

"I have kept this dance to talk to you."

Beau Aylmer brought a chair for her and took up his position, as he was bade, on the other side of Lady Vere.

"Aren't you dancing this, Captain Aylmer?" asked his hostess.

"No, Lady Vere."

"Well, take Miss Considine for another round, when she has rested a minute."

"I shall be delighted," he answered simply. This was what he had been hoping for.

"Indeed, no. I am going to talk to you, if you'll let me."

When the music struck up, the flies began to buzz.

She shook her head as would-be partners came up, but such a light discharge did not keep them off; all tried to protest, till Beau Aylmer got up and stood in front of her.

Captain Bigge, who was the next aspirant, asked: "Is this your dance, Aylmer?"

And Aylmer answered boldly: "Yes."

"Oh, that's the noblest thing I ever heard," laughed Lady Vere. "People'll think that she did not find your dancing good enough—you, with such a reputation to lose!"

In a couple of minutes she recognised the girl's innocence and loveliness. Then she rose from her chair. "Now, Miss Considine, I'm going to take refuge in my kitchen, or some place where you can't follow me, unless you restore Captain Aylmer's credit by giving him the rest of the dance."

Lucrece got up with a lovely smile for them both.

"She goes well with uniforms, Mr. Considine."

"I was thinking that myself, ma'am." But his thoughts were not so uncomplex as his speech suggested. He indeed did think of how near to the ideal husband Beau Aylmer came. But hatred of England came before his daughter's happiness, as it came before religion, in his

feelings. He was thinking what part her beauty could be made to play in his great game. These English were, by all accounts, a clean people. Lucrece's beauty might be used, without any danger to her, against them. The charm of her presence, such trifles as dancing would be sufficient.

"What did you do that for, Lady Vere?" asked a reproachful voice at her elbow.

She turned to see who the speaker was.

"Oh, Mr. Cobbe, I didn't see you, or I should not have forgotten that she was here *by special request*."

Tom struck Mr. Considine as one of the instruments he was thinking of—the most valuable of all, as he was the British Consul-General's son. He smiled, and said: "It's too bad. But Mr. Cobbe can afford to be generous, because he knows us well enough to drop in when he likes."

He took care that Tom should overhear him. The boy went away quite relieved.

"Lord Clapham's son is a very nice boy," said Lady Vere. "He suffers a little from the same complaint as the rest of them, a feeling of pity for the portion of mankind who are not officers in the British Army. But he admits that men have a right to live who are not officers in the Guards, which is something."

"He'll know better soon," said Mr. Considine, and Lady Vere agreed; but they were thinking of different things.

The evening wore on. The strife over Lucrece's extras would have grown almost Homeric, if she had not insisted on making a joke of it. Her popularity was at fever-point. It even reflected itself on Mrs. Krafft, of whom the officers as a body disapproved. As Lucrece insisted on making Mrs. Krafft the base of her operations, it was wiser to include her.

Lady Vere watched with great amusement the little comedy which was being played again and again, where Mrs. Krafft had taken up her position a few yards to her right. Lucrece dragged up her partners, jibbing, and left them with Mrs. Krafft. They found themselves talking to the prettiest woman but one in the room, and much the best dressed, very gentle and womanly, and, if anything excited her mirth, bubbling over with wit. They asked her to dance, to please Lucrece, and before

they had finished the first round, found that she was one of the best partners in the room.

Captain Wemyss, for whom Lucrece felt a kind of dislike, was the first to make the discovery. He was old in the ways of the world. He was an excellent dancer, but idle about it, because he went out to dances every night, and after the hard polo of the afternoon, and an indulgent dinner (he never sacrificed his meals to sport), he preferred to sit about and flirt, or talk, to amuse himself, something very like gossip.

He had also realised that Mrs. Krafft would be what he called "rather fun."

Being a diplomatist, he asked her for a dance directly they were introduced. She was engaged for the first; would she give him the second? He did not ask her right off to sit it out; he started in as if he meant to dance it all through, fully intending in his heart to drop out when they had been once or twice round the room, and suggest that it would be cooler in the garden. But he found that she waltzed adorably. So he engaged the third dance, which in Egypt is always a two-step, for sitting out, and waltzed number two to the end.

She would not go out into the garden. She said she was afraid of catching cold; in reality, she was holding garden *séances* in reserve. She saw that she had scored with her dancing. And she meant to pursue with her nimble tongue the advantage gained by her nimble feet.

"What sort of a place is Egypt, Captain Wemyss?"

"Egypt is the banks of the Nile, and the banks of the Suez Canal. They have two cities each, and the rest is desert."

"I'm not writing a geography. I mean, what is there to do in Cairo?"

"Repent."

"What for?"

"For having come here, and for the follies you perpetrate while you're here."

"But I haven't perpetrated any follies; and I don't repent having come here one bit. It's all so new and strange."

"Oh, is that your tack? I'm afraid I disagree with you. It's so very much the old thing, except that you are sure of the weather."

"In what way?"

"We spend the morning in all the absurd drills and things we spend it in at home; you spend it in bed."

"I don't. I have breakfast at nine as I do at home. And then I go out shopping."

"I don't see much novelty about that."

"Instead of Bond Street and the Army and Navy Stores, there's that very amusing front between the 'Continental' and 'Cook's'; and the Bazars."

"Just the very places that I should avoid. You can't keep the beastly natives out of your sight."

"I don't think the natives are 'beastly.'"

"The kind of natives you see there are. Touts with postcards; touts with beads and other Egyptian rubbish; touts with violets, and dragoman touts—that's what you have outside the 'Continental'; and touts who take you into shops to be swindled in the Bazar."

"I think they're exceedingly picturesque; but we'll pass that, and get on to the afternoon."

"In the afternoon you lunch until it is time to cross the bridge, and then you go to Ghezirch and take your choice. I play polo; you play something else if you're energetic enough, and we all have tea—there if we have any sense, unless we have something on. Afterwards, unless I'm better engaged, I go to the club, and have a few whiskies and a lot of cigarettes, and discuss the latest till it is time to dress for dinner. I'm sure I don't know how you get through that time,—unless you have something on."

"You needn't pity me. I always have more than I can get through." She did not think it necessary to enlighten him as to the nature of her occupations. Mr. Julius Krafft, M.P., was at home from five to seven to any Egyptians who chose to come and drink his coffee and his tea—many of them preferred his whisky. They paid for his hospitality in grievances. His wife entertained the European sympathisers. The Kraffts had a flat opposite the "Savoy," and frequently took their meals at the hotel, where the Prestages were staying.

Mrs. Krafft was not often nonplussed. To account for the hours between tea and dinner, and conceal the real nature of her occupations, she countered with "What price *Bridge*?"

"Oh, I forgot *Bridge*. I never play it, unless I hate the people I'm with, and want an excuse not to talk to

them. One can't draw an unaccompanied breath at Bridge."

"Well, what about the evening?"

"In the evening you dine; and if the dinner's good enough, you don't do anything afterwards. But it very seldom is, in Cairo; and there's nothing to do afterwards except to go to the opera, or go to a dance, or go to the devil. The last is the best fun, and the first is the worst. It is a funny thing that when you're trying to get a woman to go to the devil with you, you generally have to go with her to the opera first. When a woman's working up a *grande passion* for a man, it sweeps all the chords in her being to have him go to the opera with her. It 'bores him stiff,' but he goes through with it for the sake of what he expects to get at the end. A farce or a musical comedy would be different, especially if there was a bit of a break in it; and a piece like *The Second in Command* might make him pull himself together. But we never have plays in Cairo. If I must go to the opera, I choose *La Bohème*."

"It's a lovely opera; but why do you pick it out?"

"Because they keep the theatre dark; and she can't see if you go to sleep."

She gave a gesture of impatience, but smiled again.

"And how do dances come into your philosophy?"

"Dances are well enough; you needn't dance if you don't want to. You can have your whiskies and smoke in the lounge the same as you would in the club; and if it is a well-built place like the 'Savoy' you can see the dancing from it. That's just as well, because if anything nice comes to Cairo, it's pretty sure to turn up at the dances. If anyone you want is there, you dance a bit, and have supper together, and you see her home, and spend half the night saying good-bye."

"And what do you do if there isn't anyone you want?"

"Go back to barracks, and get to bed as quick as you can, and, for once in a way, have more than five hours' sleep."

"Do you know that I give very good dinners?"

"I shan't believe you till I have tried them," he said in a tone which made the speech a challenge instead of rudeness.

It would have been better if they had gone out into the garden, for then Mr. Considine would not have heard

this unedifying conversation, which furnished him with the occasion for some of his fiercest diatribes against the British Occupation. It was not possible to disbelieve the stories told by Egyptians, and people of other small nations, and the Levantines, who are a people of no nation at all, when he had heard Captain Wemyss self-convicted out of his own mouth. Here was a man who boasted of his want of morals, want of manners, and want of feelings. Here was a monster, whom, as a father, he could only view with feelings of dread for the sanctity of his hearth.

When he received a letter from Mrs. Krafft, the next morning, asking if he and Lucrece would dine with them on the Sunday night to meet Captain Wemyss and Mr. Cobbe, he wrote her an answer which she was not likely to forget. His daughter, he said, should never, with his consent, sit down at the same table as such a blackguard as Captain Ronald Wemyss. He had overheard his conversation with Mrs. Krafft at the General's dance, and had admired the skill, with which she made him convict himself. He knew that she could not avoid having Captain Wemyss to dinner, because he had heard him ask himself . . . etc., etc.

Mrs. Krafft sighed when she got her reply. It was such a well-conceived little party. Tom would not have rested till he had lured Lucrece out of earshot; Mr. Considine would have entangled her husband in a political conversation for the good of the Egyptians; and Captain Wemyss and she would have snatched the fruits.

But one phrase in Captain Wemyss's conversation had impressed Mr. Considine not a little, when he talked about "for once having more than five hours in bed." What a grit there was in the men who, under a sun like Egypt's, could lead a life of early rising, military exercises, and exhausting sports like polo; and indulge in smoke and drink, and worse forms of dissipation, on five hours a night in bed.

He began to wonder if war was such a bad thing after all, while there were Wemysses in the world to divorce peace from virtue.

But, while the General's ball lasted, he was able to forget the delinquencies of Captain Wemyss, who fortunately did not come into his sight any more.

Now and again he felt the aversion return when he saw the mannerisms of a man like Lavender, showing that

he could not for one moment forget that he had a good height, a good figure, a good tailor, a good income, good family, good looks, and a very particular style of waltzing. It was his mannerism to look utterly bored; and to dance with the indolent movements of a clock.

But a minute afterwards Mr. Considine thought better of the world, because he saw the big Dragoon Major, or rich little Polkinghorne, spinning round as if their lives depended on it.

After all, it was not so much individuals who signified in the scene; it was the general effect of sunburned, soldierly faces; of proud, well-set-up figures, some strong and stiff, some boyish and lissom, in the perfectly fitting uniforms of scarlet or Artillery blue, or Rifle green, moving in unison to the inspiring strains of waltz or two-step.

There were few of these sunburned faces but were paying gay homage to young and fascinating women, the pick of the idlers attracted to the Winter City. Encircled by the uniformed arms, the brilliant dresses of the women fitted well in the scene; each seemed to have borne in mind the colours that would go with the prevailing scarlet of the uniforms, and the banners of England on the walls.

The revolutionary Mr. Considine was not insensible to feelings of fatherly pride, when he noticed that there was not a girl in the room with such a buzz of uniforms round her as his daughter.

As Lucrece floated round on their arms to the strains of "Luna" or "La Faute des Roses" he questioned Lady Vere about their characteristics. He was fortunate in his company. She seemed to have studied every officer in the Army of Occupation more thoroughly than most commanders do; though flirting had been left out of the composition of the well-preserved woman, who must have been such a very pretty girl, and who was so intensely popular.

It was in sport that she had got to know them so well. When a man strains every nerve in sport, he shows almost as much of his true nature as he does in the real crises of life; and she was at Ghezireh nearly every afternoon, playing and watching.

When she saw Mr. Considine's lip curl again as he watched "Frenchy" de Grammont doing the two-step with Lucrece, with a theatrical finish, Lady Vere said:

"No. He is not the ridiculous little fop he looks. He plays his golf with just the same precision; and he's one of our best steeplechasers. Besides, he was born a Frenchman, though he finds the life he likes in the army of his English mother."

Mr. Considine was rather disappointed that he had not seen Tom dancing again with his daughter; he had taken a liking to the boy, and he had his plans. He liked seeing her approached and appropriated by dashing soldiers, with admiration, decorously attired in deference, expressed on their faces—such men as polo-famous Captain Bigge. He liked seeing her dancing with the two Fusiliers, Esslemont and Renshaw—they were splendid soldierly men as well as good dancers. He liked seeing her with such men as Colonel Went, who commanded the Egyptian Regiment at the Abdin Barracks, and, though not so smart as the others, had the distinction of brains and responsibility stamped on his face.

But in his heart he wanted to see her with Tom; and not only because he was Lord Clapham's son, which was important to his schemes. But the evening passed, and there had been no more Tom. He wondered especially that Tom had not come up to try and negotiate the eleventh dance, the second that Lucrece meant to sit out with Lady Vere. But he was rather glad that he did not, for Kennedy, who had been talking to Mrs. Krafft, came across, not without hesitation, and took a seat beside her. Only just in time; directly afterwards one of the prize-partners, who remembered that she had been keeping it open, came up to ask her for it.

She shook her head. "I'm going to sit it out with Captain Kennedy." He had not asked her; instinct told her that he wanted it and did not like to ask her to give up a dance. He did not know that she meant to sit it out beside Lady Vere.

Lucrece kept Lady Vere in the conversation all the time, but this did not hurt Kennedy, for it would not have been like him to say anything personal if they had been alone. Indeed, it did him good, for Lucrece had an immense respect for Lady Vere. And Lady Vere's opinion of Kennedy's merits might have turned his head if he had been a different sort of man.

Lucrece could not fail to be impressed by this. But he won more in her good graces, because, as the evening wore

on, she noticed him going up and talking to Mrs. Krafft, whenever she was alone.

Already Kennedy felt that Mrs. Krafft was a friend. Though she was not at all his sort of woman, he genuinely liked her. She had the tact to be quiet and gentle with him, except when her irresistible sense of the ridiculous got the better of her—and then she was witty. But generally she treated him as if she had been his prospective mother-in-law. She saw that he had fallen in love at first sight with Lucrece, whom she was chaperoning; and she felt herself on his side. She did all she could to advance his success, and encouraged him to make a convenience of her.

Nor was this mere generosity on her part, for it kept him continually in her society; and *she* came much nearer to being in love with him than Lucrece did. She knew that he would only give her friendship. But that would ensure a delightful intimacy, and, to win that, she showed herself womanly, unselfish, and unremitting in her kindness.

As the first note of the penultimate dance struck up Tom appeared and Lucrece gave him her happiest smile.

"It has been such a long evening," whispered the boy, and she smiled again.

"Don't let's lose any of it," she said.

"There is more room now, isn't there?" he urged to console himself for what he had missed.

"Much."

Tom had made a wise choice. For the Lucrece, who was awaiting him, was intoxicated with the excitement of the evening, a little relaxed with tiredness, a little eager with waiting, very grateful for an evening of great pleasure which he had been instrumental in conferring on her.

He received a warm welcome. Lucrece showed more animation than she had displayed during the entire evening. She had been storing up questions to ask him—it was her first real experience of soldiers. She had her impressions to tell him; she felt that he would be more sympathetic than her father.

It was his, too, when the cornet had blown its last blast in the final galop, to fetch her opera cloak, and the lace she had worn round her hair to keep it from the wind in the open vehicle; and take her to her carriage.

Kennedy, to whom Lucrece stopped to speak for a few minutes as she said "Good-bye," smiled approval on

them both, though he could not help a passing pang. For there was nothing in the world which he desired so much as to call this woman his wife. Yet he did not grudge Tom, for he knew that if the boy had not been there, he would have stood by while some other of her partners pushed himself forward.

It gave Tom a pleasant proprietary feeling, till, mounting the steps again, he met the General, who put a hand on his shoulder and walked him into the deserted ball-room. The guests, who were not storming the cloak-room, were demolishing sandwiches and liquid accompaniments.

"Cobbe, my boy," said the General, "beware of Mr. Considine. He's not straight : we have evidence to show that he is engaged in an extensive conspiracy with the Egyptian Nationalists ; that he is suborning the natives against the British Occupation. You'll have trouble with him. And the girl is very pretty."

The General had his misgivings about Mrs. Krafft too ; but it was not his way to speak against a woman.

CHAPTER V

HOW LUCRECE VISITED THE PALACE OF THE DESCENDANT OF THE PROPHET

BEFORE ten the next morning Mrs. Krafft sent a note asking Lucrece to lunch with her, and do some sight-seeing.

Lucrece felt some misgivings about accepting. She thought Tom would be pretty sure to drop in, as he had not tried to make any arrangements to take her out—a sound enough deduction. She begged Mrs. Krafft to excuse her: Mrs. Krafft urged; and, since she was a recent acquaintance and was kind enough to act as her chaperon, Lucrece felt that she must go.

When their *arabeah* was announced Mrs. Krafft gave the dragoman an address in a *haret* off the Gamaliyeh. Lucrece enjoyed going down the Mousky and Khordagiyeih again. Even the Mousky had fired her passion for the romance of the Orient; and the bit of the Khordagiyeih she had passed, when they went to the Bazar, had been Bagdad to her. But her heart almost stopped beating when they reached the Bazar of the Coppermiths, and their carriage drew up for the dragoman to reel off the names of the three royal mosques, which have been welded by time into the most perfect mediæval pile of the Mohammedan world, whose lofty battlemented walls and fairy domes and minarets are covered with a filigree of stone as delicate as the chasing of a silversmith.

Then they turned up the hill, until they came to an ancient palace with an open hall, whose five noble arches filled its whole front to the very roof; and drove under a dark, old, low-browed doorway.

"Where are we going, Mrs. Krafft?" asked Lucrece.

"To see the palace of one of the Caliphs."

"Is this its entrance?"

Mrs. Krafft did not know ; but the dragoman overheard, and said : " No ; on a little."

They turned to the left into the most romantic street Lucrece had yet seen—the famous Gamaliyeh, the High Street of the native.

She felt inclined to clap her hands and cry *encore*, as she would at the opera for a triumph of Melba. Her imagination, her sense of delight, her nerves, were affected just as powerfully by the old mosque falling into inimitable ruin ; by the beetling and fantastic doorways ; the exquisite arcaded fountains ; the vistas of dome and minaret ; the retreating lanes of tall houses with tier upon tier of overhanging oriel, each with every inch of glass concealed under the network of carved wood, which is called *meshrebiyeh*, mellowed in colour and outline by twice a hundred summers and winters.

One such lane had its entrance still guarded by the massive doors which once secured the end of every street in the hours of darkness and revolt. The doors were opened for their *arabeah* to pass down.

It drew up outside an old Arab mansion, which might have been a fortress, for the only windows that it had opening on the street were on the top floor, and its door was like the postern of a castle.

They were evidently expected, for before the dragoman had delivered his message, a dignified major-domo came out and bowed them in.

They found themselves in a noble courtyard almost filled with the shade of three glorious *lebbek* trees.

Its builder seemed to have made a vain attempt to exhaust the beauties of Saracenic domestic architecture. Through the ancient arches of the ground floor vaulted storehouses and stables could be seen. Above, on three sides, the wide expanses of masonry were made exquisitely light by panels of arabesques in delicate low relief, and had their surfaces broken by ranges of great oriel windows, supported by richly carved wooden brackets. All down one side they were closely screened with *meshrebiyeh* of exquisite workmanship. There was one screen forty feet long and twenty feet high in the chief story. The fourth side of the courtyard might have belonged to the palace of Harun-al-Rashid, it was so picturesque, so fantastic. Below, separated by columns from the court, was the Open Hall of the Men, with water flowing down

its centre in a white marble channel lined with gilt mosaics to make the water sparkle: the fountain through which it entered was built in steps, down which the thin, pellucid stream leapt and ran. The walls were covered with old Persian tiles with intricate and mystical patterns of turquoise-blue; and along the two side walls, a few feet from the ground, went a broad cushioned bench. A couple of narghilehs, with bowls of crystal, and gaily decorated tubes twisted round their chased brass heads, stood on the ground, ready for the chance guest, when an ember of charcoal had been placed in the tobacco-charged head. At the back was a low, richly-decorated doorway, with an inlaid door; and, drawn to the ends of the colonnade, for the weather was not yet warm, were richly embroidered curtains, triumphs of the Arab tent-maker's art. The colonnade, which had a coffered ceiling of dark, richly-carved wood, occupied all one side of the court.

Above the Open Hall of the Men was the Open Hall of the Harem. Its open side was spanned by three glorious Moorish arches, which rose to the very roof out of a gallery of beautifully carved wood-work, flanked at either end with a little domed pavilion of indescribable elegance, in which the women of the harem could screen themselves from view, if they wished to look on the come and go of the courtyard. Little more could be seen from below except that the walls and the roof glowed with ancient painting.

It was entered from the court like a mosque, by a flight of broad marble steps leading up to a balustraded landing, at the back of which was an apse fifty feet high, panelled and arabesqued. The dragoman conducted them to this point, and motioned them to ascend the steps, but, as they approached, the ancient door, of bronze damascened in silver, opened, and a radiant vision descended the steps. It was Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan, with his noble turban and exquisitely hanging robes of the sacred green showing to the full the haunting beauty of his face and his Arab grace and dignity.

"Welcome to my poor home," he said to the two ladies, the music of his voice holding Lucrece almost spell-bound. "It must seem bare and comfortless to you, for it is just as my forefathers left it to me; just as the Caliph Kait, four centuries ago, bestowed it on my ancestor, a very holy man, of whom I try in vain to be worthy.

Enter, I pray you. Forgive me for going before you to point the way."

It was necessary, for the stair was dark, winding and low-ceilinged, and several small doors led off it. One, through which he passed, admitted them to the Open Hall of the Harem.

It was like nothing which either Lucrece or Mrs. Krafft had ever seen. It was a glow of colour. The beams of the ceiling, in the condition that the painter's hand left them four hundred years ago, were as covered with arabesques of soft, rich colours as the ancient carpet on which they were standing; and the walls were adorned with curious paintings of Mecca and Medina, full of enormous standards out of all proportion to the castellated walls, and innocent of perspective. "My proper home," said the Sheikh, "for I am the chief descendant of the Prophet."

"Oh, why don't you go there?" cried Lucrece, enthusiastically.

"Alas! my work is here," he said. "We must not consult our desires." He spoke with such fervour that he convinced Lucrece. But Mrs. Krafft, who knew more about Arabia than Lucrece did, was wondering how he would like to exchange the fleshpots of Egypt for the barren sanctity of Mecca. However, her self-command was as strong as her sense of the ridiculous, so she smiled sweetly.

The hall, though so richly decorated, contained no chairs; those who wished to stretch their legs in the European fashion had to sit on the edges of the broad lounge which ran round the room. The only seats were huge cushions covered with green silk, rich, and faded into the beauty of Nature.

"You English would change these covers," he said; "I have not the heart."

"I am not English!" cried Lucrece.

"Nor I," said Mrs. Krafft, with a meaning smile.

"But aren't you?" asked Lucrece in her direct way.

"No, I was born at Frankfort—my father's name was Loewe."

This time she did not say that she was a Jewess—she knew of the furious prejudice Americans have against Jews.

Lucrece went into one of the little pavilions to test how much the women could see out of them.

She gave a grunt of disgust. "It would be worse than being in prison, if you could not look out on your own courtyard, except through a lattice."

"It is not so bad as that," protested the musical voice. "Our women can look where they like, and go where they like, if they have their veils on, and are properly guarded from insult."

"I see. These little sentry boxes are in case they suddenly want to look at something in the courtyard, when they are unveiled."

"Absolutely. They are for their convenience, not for their restraint. They can see, without craning their heads, the performances of the musicians and dancers, which used to take place very frequently before the Open Hall of the Men, in hot weather. But come and see the state-apartments of my palace, where Kait Bey himself dispensed justice, and entertained his courtiers, before he bestowed it upon my ancestor. I have a private way down, but we had better go back into the courtyard and through the hall below—that is the State way, and prettier."

Lucrece was even more enchanted with the lower hall than the upper. Here everything was open and free. The very water running down the centre, swift and sparkling, symbolised freedom; the fountain babbled; the vista of the great courtyard through the colonnade was not only magnificent and Oriental, it was wide and spacious; the broad benches, with their green cushions and their backing of grand old Persian tiles, gave the finishing touch, and made it look like a millionaire's smoking-lounge.

"What a lovely place! Do you smoke here?"

He smiled. "No, it is too public. It was the place where the Caliph's guards and servants, and the servants of those who came to visit him, reclined so as to be within call."

"What is it used for now?"

"For servants, when I am receiving in the Hall of Fêtes."

"Was that the Hall of Fêtes we were in just now?"

"No. That is the Open Hall of the Harem. Will you come now?"

He went to a door at the end, of no great size, and

held it open, and they passed into a curious square room, not twenty feet across, but thirty or forty feet high, surmounted by a mameluke dome, and with its matrix vaulting beautifully decorated with the fretted plaster-work in which Arabian artificers excelled. It looked like the entrance hall of a mosque, and the effect was heightened by a tall seat of old dark wood, carved and inlaid with ivory, about two yards high and two yards broad and long, which resembled the *dikkas* from which the Koran is read.

"This is the throne-room; and that is the throne from which Kait Bey dispensed justice."

"How awfully interesting!"

"Yes, it is interesting, but it is rather a plain little room. I use it as an ante-room, for my receptions. Now come into the Hall of Fêtes."

Lucrece gave a little gasp when, stepping through another low door, they found themselves in a hall, fifty feet high, and fifty feet wide, and twice as long, lighted by another mameluke dome.

It was the most beautiful chamber she had ever been in. Before she saw it, she could have conceived nothing like it, for she had not yet been into one of the mosques of the building Caliph. The floor below the dome was sunk a foot and paved with richly-coloured marbles in arabesque patterns. Its centre was occupied by an ancient fountain, which threw a slender jet of water half a dozen feet into the air.

Four great Moorish arches built of red and white stones supported the cupola, and divided the fountain court—it was like a roofed court—from the four arms of the hall. The arms, right and left, were graceful alcoves for use if the guests were few. But the two long arms were noble apartments, designed for the court of a great prince, and exquisitely beautiful.

The walls, to the height of a man, were lined with presses of dark wood, with many open, arched recesses for the display of choice pottery. Above that, the walls were inlaid with the same gay marbles as the floor; and broken, just under the ceiling, by a band of windows running all round the hall, which were designed, not to give light, but to throw rich hues on the floor through the pieces of deep-coloured glass, arranged in exquisite patterns of that fretted mediæval plaster-work.

These windows served, too, to bring out the richness of the ceiling, whose long beams were arabesqued in colours of indescribable richness, mellowed by four centuries of undisturbed repose. The six score windows with pointed heads, almost touching each other and extending round the hall, had the effect of arches carrying the roof; while the rich glass in the pierced plaster, which filled them, glowed like jewels when the sun shone through.

The details of the architecture were lost on Lucrece. She was only conscious of its romantic richness, of its glow of colour, of the loftiness and subdued splendour of the apartment. But she noted the minor details, the splashing fountain, the marbles of the court, the broad divans, with their piles of luxurious cushions, and especially a curious seat occupying the centre of a sort of apse at one end of the hall.

She asked what it was.

"That is my seat, when I am performing my ceremonial duties."

When she asked what they were he told her of the titles it was his duty or privilege to bestow. She had quite forgotten what the titles were before she reached home. They sounded like "The Well of Truth," and "The Fountain of Honour," she told her father, when he asked her to try and recall them. Perhaps he had visions of earning such a title for himself, for the services he was rendering to Islam.

To tell the truth, they sounded too high-flown for an American to take seriously. But she was deeply impressed by the illustriousness of Hoseyn Hassan's position.

It seemed almost incredible that the splendidly handsome and chivalrous-looking young Arab, who was showing them round his palace, and would doubtless soon be offering them afternoon tea in the most approved English style, and French bonbons, was the descendant and representative of Mahomet himself. She always called the Prophet Mahomet. It seemed a profanation to call him Mohammed, like a cook or a cabman.

What she specially liked about him was that, beyond wearing the turban of a religious dignitary and the sacred green, he did nothing to recall his position as head of the Mohammedans of Africa. He was just an Arab gentleman of fine breeding, sufficiently acquainted with foreign—

that is, with English—habits to make him a graceful host, who could put them at their ease.

“And now, if you are not afraid of being kidnapped,” he said smilingly, “I will take you into the harem of my palace, which used to be a beautiful place in my father’s time, but now is in a sadly neglected condition, because the harem has no attractions for me.”

Both women looked at him inquiringly, but his sincerity was obvious.

Lucrece began to be very much interested in him.

The harem did indeed look neglected, and it might have been so exquisitely beautiful and reposeful.

The house was built in the form of a bisected square : the bisecting line was the harem. One side of it looked out on the courtyard, which they had entered, through the great *meshrebīyeh* oriels which they had admired. The other looked out on a garden which only an Oriental mind could have devised, with roses pouring in profusion over the domes and cornices of the fantastic Egyptian pergolas, which had sunken marble basins, connected by marble channels with clear water coursing along them, in their shady walks, and pleasaunces of many kinds. Between the pergolas, orange-trees here, there plantains or palm-trees, grew with forest thickness. The walks were lit with electric light, with shades made in the forms and colours of various flowers. The water came now from the Cairo water-works, but the *sakkiyeh*, which had supplied it of old, from a well sunk to the level of the provident Nile, still stood in the corner of the garden, just as the last buffalo or ass had left it, a guarantee against the exactions of officialdom, which might be very necessary, if Hoseyn Hassan worked his rash will against the English.

Lurking violets and narcissi, blossoming at the same time as the roses, filled the air with sweetness, and cages of singing birds were hung from the pergolas. The other sides of the garden had three stories of graceful Moorish arcades built round them. The effect was indescribably beautiful.

Inside the harem bore evidence of neglect. In the Hall of the Fêtes of the Harem, some of the coloured glass had fallen from the delicate pierced stucco of the windows ; here and there the tessellated marbles of the floor were loose or even kicked away. Some of the blue

Persian tiles had fallen from the walls and had not been replaced ; little pieces of hard wood had fallen from the glorious *meshrebiyeh*-work ; the carpets and cushion-covers were old and worn. Mrs. Krafft noticed that they were not of the sacred green, which was omnipresent in the public apartments below, and, with her quick Jewish wit, divined that the Sheikh's father and his ancestors, who were responsible for the decoration of the harem, had not been agitators making political capital out of their descent from the Prophet. It was, indeed, evident that the harem had no attractions for Hoseyn Hassan ; but to European eyes it was not the worse for that. For if he had been the uxorious husband of a harem, the ladies would not have rested content until so rich a husband had called in the local Maple and Co., Walker and Meimararchi, to re-furnish their apartments with unblushing plush.

Whereas now, the great, bare rooms had hangings of old native fabrics, pleasantly faded, and the *kursi*, on which pipes and water-jars would have been standing, had their dented brass more finely chased than many a museum piece.

There were no women about but an elderly servant ; and what struck Mrs. Krafft more was that there were no water-jars standing in the window recesses, where the ladies of the harem keep them. Hoseyn Hassan was growing decidedly interesting.

When she had walked through the whole suite she said, " I should not like to be in your harem. Its inmates are denied even the poor satisfaction of looking through their gratings on the street."

" You have not seen all yet," he replied, as if he was rather pleased with the accusation. Then he opened a door and led the way up four little staircases, each as steep and narrow as a ship's companion.

There was a door at the top, which opened into a passage, with another door immediately opposite to it, admitting them to the very large room, which contained the harem windows that they had seen from the street.

Its carpets and cushions were much more worn than those of the other rooms, and it bore signs of having been occupied and cleared up. Hoseyn Hassan observed that the ladies noticed this, and said, " The old woman whom you saw below is much in this room. She likes to look out of the windows. But I told her to clear it out to-

day in case you would wish to have tea here. When you have seen the view you shall choose which room you will have tea in."

He then went across to one of the windows. They were all fitted with comfortably padded divans, and had great cushions piled about; and the *meshrebiyeh* of all of them, about two feet from the ground, had a row of little wickets which could be opened to give an uninterrupted view.

"We have them this height," he said, "because our women at the time when these were made did not use chairs—they sat on the ground; can you manage it for a few minutes so as to see the view?"

Mrs. Krafft had been in Egypt some time, and had noticed how the native women sat on the drays they use for omnibuses. She made a pretty parody of their ungainly posture. Lucrece made no attempt at it; but reclined sideways in an attitude full of grace, which set Hoseyn Hassan's passionate Oriental blood tingling.

A cry of delight and astonishment broke from the lips of both, for right before their eyes, looking as if it were only a hundred yards away, instead of many hundred, rose the citadel of Saladin, with its lofty rock, and its ancient walls, and the soaring dome and minarets of Mehemet Ali's mosque bathed in the warm glow of sunset. The space between was filled with the rich outlines of the mosques and palaces and fountains of the Gamaliyeh, and the Bazars: he pointed out the mosques of the three sultans in the Bazar of the Coppersmiths; the vast roofs and fantastic minarets of El Azhar, the University of Islam; and the towering Bab-es-Zuweylah.

"Here I can sit and look on the fairest sight in the world," he said: "the monuments reared by the Caliphs when Saracenic Art was in its zenith. You see that they have not been destroyed; they are only lost to view like so much that is vital in Egypt."

Lucrece was thrilled by the fervour with which he spoke. She did not know—Charity may even believe that he did not know—that the rescue of these glorious monuments from the owls and the bats and, above all, from the French art-dealers, was the work of the English against whom he was plotting and striving with might and main.

The Arabs attached no value to them till the English

preached it, and made the Wakfs, to whom the care of Moslem monuments belongs, attend to their preservation.

His eye kindled when he perceived how thrilled they were; going into the passage again, he led them up another short staircase to the flat roof, where he stood, a superb figure in his sacred green, outlined against the sky, with his index finger outstretched. It was a favourite attitude of his when he was taking up a text. This time his text was Cairo, the Arab capital. As they stood on the highest point of the Gamaliyeh, all the Cairo of the Caliphs was spread round them, all Arab, all ancient, all admirably beautiful, fantastic and romantic.

Lucrece's placid, if sentimental, soul had never been so moved before. She was not yet able to take in the fine points of the picture like Mrs. Krafft, who knew her East well, and had for years been moving in that artistic and literary set in London, which prides itself on a general acquaintance with the monuments of all accessible countries.

But Lucrece felt that she was in fairy land, and that Hoseyn Hassan was the magician, who would make rocks and caves fly open; and give her the ring, which would make her mistress of all she desired.

Low down on the horizon the Pyramids were visible, but not one of the three noticed them. Their vision was bounded by the domes and minarets of the Arab city.

When Hoseyn Hassan had pointed out the chief glories of El-Kahira, he stood in silence, an Apollo in pensive grace, while they gazed their fill. It was long before they could tear themselves away.

When at length they turned to descend, he said, "Where shall we have tea? In the room we have just left, or in the Hall of the Mecca pictures, or in the Reception Hall of the Caliph?"

"You decide, Lucrece?" said Mrs. Krafft, good-naturedly.

"Is the Hall of the Caliph the place in which they had the fountain and the seat, where the Sheikh sits at ceremonies?"

"Yes," he smiled.

"Let's have it there."

"Very well."

"And will you sit in your proper seat?"

"The seat I occupy at ceremonies? Very well."

"And one thing more, Sheikh."

"It is granted."

"I like tea much better, but I think that on this occasion I had rather it was coffee, served in the proper Arab way."

Mrs. Krafft had more than one reason for not wishing Lucrece to be too sentimental, not the least being that she had brought Lucrece to chaperon herself, though she had had the tact to keep this in the background.

Hoseyn Hassan had, it was true, urged her to bring Lucrece, "whose acquaintance he had neglected to make at Lord Clapham's reception." He let Mrs. Krafft have no inkling of the hints he had given to Stephen Considine to introduce him to his daughter, which had fallen flat. Much less did he let her know that he had a two-fold object in asking that Lucrece should be of the party, when Mrs. Krafft told him how much she wished to go over his famous palace; which all art-loving visitors to Cairo knew by reputation and so few ever saw. From time immemorial it has been the custom of the great men of Mohammedan countries to grace their harems with beautiful, blue-eyed and fair-haired Christians. The slave-trade in Circassian women, who are noted for their beauty and their fairness, has become a proverb, and the constant introduction of vigorous Christian blood into the race has done not a little for the vigour of Oriental dynasties.

For the daughter of an American millionaire to become a slave was clearly an impossibility. But it was conceivable that Mr. Considine, who was so enamoured of the Egyptians that he was devoting his life and his fortune to winning their independence for them, might let his daughter become the wife of one who, in point of family, stood before the whole of Egypt, being the chief descendant of the Prophet. That he had other wives already Mr. Considine would probably guess, but, if he meant to give his consent to the marriage, he might wish this knowledge kept from his daughter. They might even have to be divorced. It was for this reason that Hoseyn Hassan's wives and children were banished to the far end of the two upper stories, while Mrs. Krafft and Lucrece were being shown over the palace; and their litter had been attributed to Fatima, the woman the two ladies had seen, who had been in attendance in case her lord should ask for anything.

He had asked Mrs. Krafft to bring Lucrece, because he wished the girl to be impressed with the glories and romance which he could offer. The Arabs are a subtle race. At a glance had he discerned the only motives which could induce a girl like Lucrece to marry a man of an alien and antipathetic race. His other reason was yet more subtle. The liaisons he had formed with English women, in fulfilment of his vow, had given him much intuition in the pursuit of his nefarious goal. The victims had mostly been prejudiced in his favour by Semitic blood. He therefore understood Semites like Mrs. Krafft better than any type of Englishwoman. His instinct told him that to conquer her resistance would be a comparatively easy matter. On the other hand, Mr. Krafft, as a Little Englander Member of the British Parliament, who had come to Egypt with the express idea of assisting the Egyptian Nationalists to drive the English out of Egypt, even if it was to advertise himself, might reasonably feel injured, if the leader of the Nationalists, whom he was assisting, dishonoured Mrs. Krafft.

To his animal-side Mrs. Krafft appealed strongly. She was fair and blue-eyed, though she had not the exquisite purity of Lucrece's complexion; she was a lovely woman, and the suppression of her tendency towards the voluptuous, which was necessary for her to retain admiration in London, was a direct challenge to the passions of an Arab. The intense nature of the Jewess fascinates the Arab. He looks for animal passion.

Had it not been for his duty to a fellow-worker for Egyptian Independence, Hoseyn Hassan would have praised Allah for throwing Mrs. Krafft into his path. But, as she was not English, there seemed to be no excuse. All the same, he was not sure of himself till his eyes lit on Lucrece. With her he fell in love at first sight—a great overmastering passion. Whenever she was by, he knew that he could resist the temptation of transgressing with the other. It was as a talisman against the temptation, as well as for the supreme object of laying the foundations for making Lucrece love him, that he had urged Mrs. Krafft to bring her on that afternoon.

Mrs. Krafft was not long in discovering that he had fallen in love with Lucrece. The worst of it was that the simple and pure Lucrece was so romantic, that there was considerable danger of her falling in love with the

character he was playing—that of the Arab chieftain, the last descendant of the Prophet, living the classical life of his ancestors amid the decaying glories of a mediæval palace of the Caliphs.

It was the climax when Lucrece asked him to use the seat he occupied at his ceremonial receptions, for her to sit adoring him, while she sipped the *café à l'Arabe*, which she found more sentimental than tea.

Mrs. Krafft felt that something must be done to break the current of sentiment. She had already arranged herself on the floor in the graceful reclining attitude, for which Lucrece had given her the hint in the minute, while she was looking out of the wicket in the harem window. With a couple of the great green cushions under her elbow it was not difficult. With the greater abandon that she allowed herself, she looked infinitely alluring.

When she had completed arranging herself she cried, "Lucrece, I'm ashamed of you; you're using that bench as a chair. Come and sit on the floor with me, and drink your coffee leaning on your elbow, as if you were the light of the harem."

Lucrece blushed, and became constrained, as Mrs. Krafft intended that she should, though she protested that she meant nothing.

The plot failed. Lucrece's confusion only seemed to increase the ardour which Hoseyn Hassan felt for her in his soul. And though Lucrece felt angry with her friend for the jest, it introduced the subject into her mind; only to be negatived, it is true; but even that counted for something.

For it set her picturing what an American wife might do with such a man. He seemed a being of brilliant gifts. He was romantic, she was sure of that, and chivalrous to women. As the chief descendant of the Prophet, she supposed that he could effect more for the emancipation of Moslem women than any man living. If he were not already in favour of it, he would, of course, be converted by his wife. She would not marry him until he had promised to aid in the good work.

She would equally, of course, be allowed all the liberty of an American woman. Her religion would not be interfered with, though all visions of converting him, the head of a religion, had naturally to be dismissed.

And what a romantic match it would be for her! Great

surprise had been felt in Europe when it was announced that an American heiress was to marry a minor member of one of the reigning Royal families ; it would be even more extraordinary if an American were to marry the heir and descendant of Mohammed, and become the ancestress of the future heirs.

A more romantic figure for a husband she could not conceive. And his home, the palace, hardly changed, of a famous fifteenth-century Caliph, was the palace of a fairy prince.

She forgot the little contretemps with Mrs. Krafft, and rushed into her father's study as soon as she got back, brimming over with pleasure and excitement.

Stephen Considine felt furious with Mrs. Krafft for taking Lucrece to Hoseyn Hassan's palace, though, as he had not spoken to her on the subject, and Hoseyn Hassan was his chief colleague, he could not say much. But he expressed his surprise to Lucrece that she should have gone there, after he had refused so pointedly to introduce the Nationalist leader to her.

"But, father, I had no idea where we were going, or whom we were going to see, until I found myself in his palace talking to him. Mrs. Krafft just asked if I would go sightseeing with her."

Mr. Considine accepted the explanation, but he wished that the incident had not occurred. For he was confronted by a dilemma. Theoretically, there was no reason why he should ask a particular Egyptian to meet his daughter, because he thought that the Egyptians as a nation were sufficiently civilised to have a parliament of their own. But in practice, it seemed inconsistent to urge with such vehemence that the Egyptians were the equals of the English in every way, and to tell the most illustrious of them all, the Descendant of the Prophet himself, that he must not be introduced to his daughter.

Yet he had a double reason for forbidding it. He had in his veins the American-Irishman's loathing for coloured blood, though his still greater hatred for England made him willing to devote his time and his fortune to championing the Egyptians against the English. And even if he had had no objection on the score of colour to Hoseyn Hassan's being a friend of his daughter, there was the vow which the Egyptian had made, and so often fulfilled, of ruining the domestic happiness of Englishmen ; and he

knew the proverb that a tiger which has tasted human blood is sure to become a man-eater.

Now, however, that Hoseyn Hassan had become acquainted with Lucrece, it was such an extreme measure, and so bad for the Cause, to declare that the acquaintance must be broken off, that he could only keep a strict watch over her safety, and look out for some other means to achieve his purpose.

CHAPTER VI

INTRODUCING THE CONSIDINES TO THE NOBLE GAME OF CRICKET

WITH deep resentment in his heart the arch-plotter planned to use his enemies against the colleague who had crossed him. There was no easier way to disillusionize his daughter on the subject of Hoseyn Hassan, than to let her hear the comments of these English, who considered him a mountebank, and always spoke of the Egyptians, nationally, as an inferior race. It was impossible to be both in British Society and Egyptian Society; and it was a concrete assistance to his plans to mix with the British; it allowed him to watch the barometer of the British sense of security, and it lulled British suspicions of his movements.

He therefore encouraged his daughter to pursue the intimacy with Lady Vere. That the General allowed no relaxation in his attitude did not trouble him. He never allowed trifles to stand in his way. So he accepted cordially Lady Vere's invitation to let her drive them out to the Khedivial Sporting Club, better known as the K. S. C., on the day after Lucrece and Mrs. Krafft visited Hoseyn Hassan's palace.

He had never seen a cricket match, and the annual match between the Guards and the Rifles was looked forward to with special interest, because, to use the words of *The Egyptian Gazette*, "the Grenadiers, who have been rather overmatched for the last two years, will be reinforced by one of the best bats in the regiment—the Honourable T. Cobbe, son of the British Consul-General—who has lately arrived in Egypt to join the staff of Sir Francis Vere."

Lady Vere and the Considines reached the pavilion just as the Guards were about to commence their innings.

The two batsmen walked out of the pavilion together—Tom, slim and spruce, and a big sergeant, with a beefy face and without an “h” to his name, both wearing the Guards’ colours, and conversing in the language of cricket. The sergeant was saying that he had better take the first ball, because he knew Captain Aylmer’s delivery.

“That man’s not a gentleman,” said Mr. Considine.

“Of course not; he’s a sergeant.”

“And yet he’s playing with the son of Lord Clapham, the virtual ruler of Egypt, on terms of perfect equality.”

“Certainly.”

“I call that fine. That’s the true spirit of democracy.”

“Wouldn’t it be so in America?”

“No-o-o. They wouldn’t be playing in the same team at *Ball*.” He meant Baseball.

The umpire called “Play!” The big sergeant was a stonewaller; he merely interposed his bat to Aylmer’s first four deliveries and steered the last ball of the over round to short leg for a single. He repeated the same sort of tactics for three or four overs, and Tom, when he did at last get the ball, played very cautiously at first. He was strange to Egyptian light and Egyptian pitches. But when he got set, he gave the Rifles a rare leather-hunting.

Mr. Considine could not make out how it was that a man with a light figure like Tom hit so tremendously hard, while the stalwart sergeant put no force into his strokes. In fact, neither he nor Lucrece understood cricket in the least. But they could understand that Tom was cutting a dashing figure, and that the “well-hits,” which were shouted from every part of the field, were pæans in his honour.

They were rather relieved when Kennedy and the two Fusiliers came up, and talked to them about more general subjects. These three being Scotchmen were not wild about cricket, and, not belonging to either regiment, were under no compulsion to be more interested than they felt, while Lady Vere followed every ball. The interest this quiet-looking woman took in all kinds of sports, which were played by the officers and men, made her quite as popular with the Army as the famous soldier she had married. When they had talked for about an hour, and tea was brought to Lady Vere’s party, Tom was still batting, though his partner had changed half a dozen times.

When tea was over, Tom was still batting. Lucrece wished that he would get out, so that she might tell him how well she thought he was playing.

Kennedy suggested that they should go and see the golfers driving off from the first tee. They spent quite a long time there without Lucrece being allowed the slightest suspicion that he was golf champion of Egypt. The Fusiliers showed her where polo generally went on; they visited the croquet lawns and tennis-courts and the race-course; and then they heard a great roar and looked at their watches. It was near the time fixed for going away; they went back to Lady Vere, and found her congratulating Tom, who was just out. The roar of cheering came from the non-coms. and privates of the Guards, some hundreds strong, who had been allowed into the club, as it was a regimental match. Tom, flushed and tousled, with his shirt half-open at the neck, with his legs strapped in batting pads, and the odd rubber-guarded batting-gloves on his hands, looked very strange to Lucrece. But she recognised that he was being a hero; and when he came up to her, the beautiful girl babbled sweet and foolish compliments, which gave him as much pleasure as Lady Vere's enthusiastic and appropriate congratulations.

One thing Lucrece did understand, that Lord Clapham's son must be a fine man physically; for counting the privates and non-coms. of the two regiments, in addition to the members of the club, there must have been fifteen hundred or two thousand Englishmen present, all wildly enthusiastic about manly sports; and Tom was the hero—a strange son for such a father.

Nor did the two resemble each other in politics any more than in physique. Tom, like nearly every man in his profession, was an ardent Imperialist, and, being very young and just out from home, was most outspoken about Egyptians. Stephen Considine was rejoiced, for two reasons, when Lucrece overheard his indignation at the admission of Egyptians to the Khedivial Sporting Club. For it showed her the arrogance of the English, if even Lord Clapham's son could talk like this; and it showed still more how strong the prejudice was against admitting Egyptians into the society of white ladies.

These afternoons at Ghezireh worked in very pleasantly with the nightly dances at the hotels. It was pleasant

to find out over the tea-tables at the club, what people were going to the dance in the evening, and arrange programmes beforehand. Where money was no object, delightful little dinners could be got up impromptu at the hotel where the dance was to take place. It was also pleasant at the dances to arrange tea-parties for Ghezireh, when the officers would be coming in from their polo or golf; or for the intervals at race-meetings.

No girl was more popular than Lucrece. There was not a more beautiful woman in Cairo. She never pretended. She was easily pleased. And she had a frank way of meeting men half-way, though she would not let them go further.

Moreover, though she was no flirt, she was frank in her admiration. She did not conceal her pleasure in looking at Captain Bigge, as, with keen, soldierly face burned to a brick red, and lithe, erect figure, which had nerves and sinews like steel, he trotted his lively chestnuts on to the polo field, where he had no equal in Africa. She had not spoken to him since the first night; he was too keen about his polo to go to dances except the General's or Lord Clapham's, where it was a kind of duty.

These were golden days for Lucrece. She had the pick of the partners scrambling for her dances; and all the liberty which American girls are allowed by indulgent parents. She was free to accept and issue what invitations she pleased, except to the Egyptians, whose perfections were extolled in her father's paper.

She said to Tom, for instance, now: "Are you going to the dance to-night; or would you come and dine quietly with us?"

She said nothing to her father, though he was standing within call.

"Oh, I'd far sooner dine with you and go to bed early."

"I suppose you're very tired, aren't you?"

"Oh no! But we're playing again to-morrow; and it will please Fellowes if he hears that I did not go to the dance."

Fellowes was the captain of the Grenadier team.

When his pony-cart came round to take him to the Turf Club, he saw Mr. Considine close by, and as he was going to dine with them, he thought it would be more civil to say good-bye.

"Good-bye, sir. Half-past seven, I suppose?"

"Oh, are you dining with us? Well, I'm right glad," said the American, with the deep smile of pleasure which occasionally comes over reserved and rugged faces.

Suddenly he remembered his company, and fearful lest the little bird of the proverb should whisper his real reason, he said: "It gratifies my vanity to secure the hero of the day for my humble hospitalities."

Captain Wemyss overheard him and said, so loud that Mrs. Krafft was afraid that Mr. Considine would hear: "Good old Considine!"

Mr. Considine had an excellent chef and an excellent butler; he knew their value in politics; he was himself a teetotaller.

Mr. Considine's butler was a highly respectable Englishman. The General himself was not more opposed to the pretensions of the Egyptian Nationalists. The butler, Probyn, was aware that his master held heretical notions on the subject; he may have known that he owned the heretical newspaper—*The Banner*—but he was totally unaware of his master's incessant intercourse with the Nationalists, because no Egyptian but the servants was ever allowed to set foot in the flat.

Any one who wanted to see Mr. Considine, or whom Mr. Considine wanted to see, had to call at the office of the Committee of Egyptian Independence, and state his business to Mr. Chody. A code word on the telephone told Mr. Considine that he had a Nationalist caller; and when another code word told Mr. Chody that it was Mr. Considine who held the other end of the line, Mr. Chody telephoned down the caller's name and business. If Mr. Considine wished to see him, he went up to his room in the office of the Committee of Egyptian Independence; if he did not, Mr. Chody said Mr. Considine was out, and took notes of the applicant's business, and got rid of him. Mr. Considine did always see applicants who had the slightest claim to see him, and they were very numerous. It was for this reason that he had his flat where he could step into the Independence offices without any one outside knowing. The private elevator could only be entered by a latch-key, and he had the only key. Mr. Chody himself, Mr. Considine's secretary-interpreter, had never entered that elevator. And even Mr. Considine's Arab house-servants were unaware of their master's private visits to the Independence offices.

But the people whom Mr. Considine did entertain were not persons of whom his butler could approve. They were generally European sympathisers, of whom Mr. Krafft would have been a favourable specimen.

Probyn was very glad to have a Grenadier officer for a change. "That's the sort of company he ought to be having for Miss Lucrece, bless her heart!" he said to the head footman. Both the footmen were English. Mr. Considine said that the English were the best servants, and he did not mind the expense. They were certainly the best for his purpose. He could not employ Egyptians at the table for fear of their listening to the conversation at meals, and selling his secrets.

Tom enjoyed the dinner very much. It was not the food, though it was a better dinner than he would have eaten at the British Consul-General's or at any of the hotels, and served by thoroughly competent English men-servants; and the pleasures of the table were not thrown away on him. But the most beautiful woman in Cairo, exquisitely turned out, sat at the head of the table, while Mr. Considine, a man of uncommon parts, and in the mood to please, sat opposite to her, and kept the pair of them interested all through the meal.

After dinner, when he had smoked a cigar, Mr. Considine excused himself. He still smoked cigars, and his cigars were wonderful. Cigars are also a force in politics. Tom was not, but he liked a good cigar.

Lucrece was accustomed to being left to entertain people who dined with them *en famille*.

Her father generally worked after dinner. It was convenient for him to be in his study, beside the telephone from the Committee rooms, because many of the Nationalists who came to see him were only free at night.

Lucrece led the way to the drawing-room.

In a moment of inspiration Tom asked to see the photographs she had been printing when he called.

When she had shown these, she showed him her albums. He had not reflected that the best way to get to know a person is to get to know their hobby; he stumbled upon the result. He was not interested in the photographs of countries, which he did not know, where they simply represented views of street life. But half of them represented her life; or they depicted other charming American girls, as the other girls' kodaks had depicted her, in

their various occupations and enjoyments in the choice places of the world, more particularly the American world. They ranged from bathing at Newport in summer to sunning in the palm-gardens of Florida or California hotels in winter. In one kodak these fortunate damsels were coaching in the Yellowstone; in another they were tarpon-fishing. Some of the prettiest and most interesting pictures were taken in gardens.

In explaining the photographs Lucrece was describing her own life with a *naïveté* which delighted Tom.

Tom was simple too, or she could not have rattled on about her photographs. It would not have been possible, for instance, with Captain Wemyss.

When she had shown him all her photographs, Lucrece offered to play the pianola to him; she had all the latest English music—meaning musical comedies and waltzes, and a popular ballad or two.

Did she think that officers were like children and had to be regularly amused?

Tom did not care what she did; he only wanted to talk; the pianola idea was a success. Hearing music always inspires young vandals like him with conversation; and as Lucrece sat, silhouetted in the candle-light at the instrument, she looked more and more like the Venus of Praxiteles.

She did not play long; what they had to say to each other was no better for being shouted.

Mrs. Krafft would have flirted. But Lucrece was not a flirt. If she was growing sentimental, her speeches were not. While Tom was falling in love she was only dropping into friendship. Yet she was arriving at the conclusion that there are not many better cinematographs, for a woman to look at, than the *cinema*—that was the form in which she used the word—of a handsome, well-bred, manly Englishman, now in the sunshine in his flannels, hitting a ball to the admiration of a crowd of critical judges; and now in his mess kit, perfectly turned out, showing deference and dignity to one woman.

Tom's preference was all for youth and innocence in women, and here were youth and innocence in a most lovely form, combined with frankness and ease.

He would have asked her to marry him there and then, if he had not been afraid of risking things by being premature.

She saw that he was screwing up his courage to say something. But a woman, as beautiful as she was, cannot even reach the age of twenty-two without going through ordeals.

"I have something rather important to ask you," he began, "and you may think it awful cheek."

Her eyes said: "Well, get it over." And her ears doubted their sanity when he asked:

"Have you ever seen the Sphinx?"

"No; I haven't."

She wanted him to explain where the awful cheek came in; it was not even cheek to the Sphinx, as far as she could judge.

"Well, will you let me take you to see it in a motor? I know your father doesn't like motors, but it's the only decent way of seeing the Sphinx."

"Have you got a motor?"

"Bigge lends me his; he's playing polo every afternoon. My cart does him just as well to take him back to the barracks to dress."

She liked him for being shy about it; without even consulting her father she promised to go.

She was glad that his manner showed that it would be a pleasure to him if her father did come. But she knew Stephen Considine too well to believe that there was any chance of it.

"Will you show me the Pyramids and take me for a little walk in the desert as well?"

"You needn't walk; you can have a donkey—or a camel, if you can stick on."

"But I like walking."

"If you're going to do anything but just walk down to the Sphinx, it's all rough stones or deep sand."

"I don't mind. When shall we go?"

"Let me see. I'm playing cricket again to-morrow. How about the next day?"

"Yes; I'm not engaged."

"Then I'll be round here about three—the time the bridge is supposed to be opened. I can run you out there in twenty minutes to half an hour, according as the road is blocked. We can walk about and take photos till you're tired, and then we'll put in a tea at the 'Mena House.'"

"I'm glad you've remembered to give my camera an invitation."

“ Wouldn't it have come without ? ”

“ I expect I should have asked for one.”

Tom drove home with mingled feelings of elation and suspense.

Lucrece was the most charming and beautiful woman he had ever met. Of that he was sure. And she gave him her friendship so unreservedly that he thought she must feel a prepossession in his favour. And now he could not rest till he knew if so much beauty and goodness were to be his to go through life with. Yet he dared not ask the question for fear of bringing his whole dream to an end.

And, in truth, there were large issues of life and death to be solved before that question of Lucrece Considine's marriage was answered.

CHAPTER VII

OF THE SHOCK WHICH LUCRECE CONSIDINE RECEIVED AT THE PYRAMIDS

LUCRECE remained as calm as the reposeful beauty of her face. As she was equally nice to all people, and every boy she was equally nice to promptly fell in love with her, she was unaware that anything had happened.

When she went to Ghezireh in the afternoon, she did not look at Tom playing cricket. She induced Mrs. Krafft, who understood cricket no better than she did, to follow Kennedy round in the regimental golf singles. The beautiful Lucrece played golf after a fashion; and Mrs. Krafft had quite lost her heart to the invincible Highlander.

At the Semiramis dance in the evening, as she had not spoken to him in the afternoon, she had extra smiles for Tom, and she had kept two dances for him, together, in the middle of the programme, though she had given away all the rest to Red-coats and Rifles, who had asked her at Ghezireh.

There was not one vacancy for the other spruce young men, who swarmed round the beauty the moment she made her appearance in the Semiramis lounge. She was the reigning monarch of the military, and hardly one of them, except Tom, was favoured to the extent of a second dance. She looked out for Kennedy, but saw no trace of him all the evening. She had some little friendly recognition for everyone she knew.

Tom felt as if he was treading on air when she beckoned him, and said: "I've kept the sixth and seventh for you. Are you disengaged for them?"

"Of course. I wasn't going to ask anyone for a dance till I knew which I could have with you."

No one was jealous of him, for he was on rather a more

intimate footing than the others. The dinner-party the Considines were giving on the next night to a party of sixteen officers at the "Ghezireh Palace Hotel" before the dance, was the first occasion on which they had entertained any of them except Tom and Kennedy. Mr. Considine's acquaintances in Cairo, up to this, had been connected with politics or business.

Punctually at three the next day Tom came round in Captain Bigge's little racing Darracq, which was like a sea-fish in a pond, in a country where the longest road a motor can run on is only eight miles long, and addicted to camels and sheep.

Lucrece was ready for him, looking a most sumptuous young person in her motor furs, borrowed from Mrs. Krafft; but came downstairs with more youth than dignity.

She laughed gaily when she found that he had brought no chauffeur. "Are you sure that you are to be trusted to drive?" she asked with mock seriousness.

"No. Shall I take it back?"

"I'll risk it."

She began to wonder if she had not spoken by the book when the car flew down the Sharia Boulak, like a rifle shot, and whirled round into the Sharia-el-Madebegh. But two minutes' threading among the traffic, into which they were plunged in the Sharia Kasr-el-Nil, showed her that there was no need for anxiety, that she was in the hands of a skilful driver as well as a bold one.

The Nile bridge was only just open for vehicles, so they had to take their place in the westward-moving queue of *arabeahs*, dog-carts, motors, gaudy natives on polo ponies, mounted policemen and carriages of Khedivial ladies with gorgeous *saises*, all trying to push past each other; while the eastward queue consisted of camels laden with stacks of green forage, and trolley-omnibuses laden with hunched-up native women in unrelieved black.

Lucrece would not have minded an hour on the bridge. With her smaller camera she took the best photos of native life which she had secured since she came to Egypt—a couple of dozen of them. She changed her films twice on the bridge.

The rondpont on the other side of the bridge and the end of the avenue to the Pyramids were almost as congested. There was the traffic of the Khedivial Sporting

Club to be shaken off; and the traffic of the cabs which had come to deposit foreigners in the Pyramids' tram. When at length the fierce little Darracq shook itself clear, it darted like an arrow up the long, straight, shaded road, which led to the Pyramids—a causeway across a world of waters, for the inundation was still at its height, and one could almost have canoed from the Nile to Mena.

In less than a quarter of an hour they turned up so sharply through the gates of the "Mena House," that Lucrece's heart was in her mouth.

But Tom knew what he was about; the car came to a safe halt in the garage, where a servant ran forward to take charge of it. He helped Lucrece to take off Mrs. Krafft's big motor-coat, and left it with the car.

"Oh, my cameras!" she called out, as they were leaving the yard.

"Will you want both of them?" he asked.

"Will there be any difficulty about getting a man to carry both?"

"None whatever. It is impossible to escape having an Arab with you when you go to the Pyramids, so it's a mercy having something for the brute to do."

She looked at him uneasily; such sentiments were not in vogue in her father's household.

He reparteed by glancing round the crowd outside the Mena Gates, where some dozens of foreigners, who only wanted to be left alone to the enjoyment of the Pyramids, were being pestered to death by the Arab touts, who swarmed round them like flies.

She laughed; in the face of this she could not maintain her position.

"We shall have to take one," he said. "I wish I had an anchor for him to carry. Let's choose the actor who has the best make-up, so that we may have the benefit of it in your pictures."

A tall Arab, almost as beautiful and sumptuous as the Descendant of the Prophet, came up to them. "Milord," he said, "I am the dragoman employed by the British Agent and Consul-General, when he visits the Pyramids."

"Then I suppose you will take us for nothing."

"If milord wishes it."

"You won't like humping the camera."

"I don't mind what I carry, milord."

"You mustn't say that word again," said Tom, "or I shall hire another man. I am not 'my lord,' and I wish to be called 'sir.'"

"Sir—yes."

The comical English reconciled Tom to his fate; and Ibrahim, in spite of his grand appearance, proved a practical and obliging guide, as most of them are at the Pyramids. They are annoying, when they insist on performing services, which are not desired, and set a fancy value upon them.

Ibrahim at once led the way to the Sphinx. He walked backwards at a pace that might have been considered impossible, so as to look at Lucrece all the time. Arabs are profound admirers of a beautiful woman.

Tom was himself too absorbed in Lucrece to notice it, or he would have been furious.

In a few minutes they were standing at the foot of the Great Pyramid.

Lucrece stood in delighted awe gazing up at the mountain of stone, which is one of the oldest, as it is one of the most god-like, of the works of man.

The dragoman grew eloquent as she stepped back to look at the top with shaded eyes. "It was once," he said, "as smooth as a scarab, and painted with the figures of gods and men in the same bright colours as the inside of a tomb."

To Tom and Lucrece, who had never seen the inside of an Egyptian tomb, the simile was not suggestive of gaiety.

He saw that his description hung fire, that he was not talking to imaginative people, so he said: "But we will go on; you will think more of the Sphinx."

They took some little time getting to it, for all sorts of ridiculous tourists, surrounded by Arabs pressing their services or sham antiquities upon them, kept passing. Some were on foot, some were riding asses pursued by donkey-boys, some were preserving their balance on camels. There was something incongruous about all of them, and, with the Pyramids or solid-looking mastabas for a background, they gave Lucrece one tit-bit after another for her smaller camera, which she could not resist. It was the first good day she had enjoyed with her camera in Egypt.

❧ All of a sudden a turn of the road brought them in full view of the desert monster, which, for more than two

thousand years, has been a synonym for mystery; and which, for twice as long, has had the sands of the desert rising and falling about its feet like the risings and shrinkings of the Nile.

They ran down the slope of the road, which remained, and stood on the brink of the bowl in the desert, which is occupied by the world's chief graven image.

The Sphinx has an attitude of calm strength, and an expression of singular majesty and serenity. But there is a certain malignity in its stony stare, its cruel eyes, its broken nose, and its thin, straight, immobile lips. Certainly it looks more like a personification of Evil than a personification of Good. It would do for an Atropos—she of the Three Fates of Classical Mythology, who could not be turned.

The sand of the bowl was as golden as the afternoon sunshine; the great image was beginning to take on the romance, with which the sinking sun has gilded it every day for countless centuries.

Tom, who had reached the edge a little in front of Lucrece, turned round to watch her face as the ecstasy of admiration broke over it. But instead of ecstasy he read a look of horror in her eyes. She turned deadly white. She staggered; she almost fell.

"Oh, what a hateful thing it is!" she cried. "It's positively human in its spite. I feel as if it was alive, and mocking me, and threatening me with its vengeance."

Tom looked at her in amazement. He wondered if he or she had taken leave of their senses. He had heard of women turning hysterical, but he had never met one in real life before. He sent Ibrahim packing back to the "Mena House" for cold water and brandy. He was not certain which was the right remedy.

"That hollow mirth is fiendish," cried Lucrece.

Tom thought she had a touch of the sun and tried to comfort her.

"Cheer up, little woman. He'll be back in five minutes. These Arab chaps always do a thing at a run."

"It isn't water I want, or brandy. I've nothing the matter with me physically. I've only had a shock."

"Did you see something ghastly?"

"No, nothing. It's just that I feel as if some great disaster had happened to me, and that wicked thing was mocking me. Take me away, Mr. Cobbe."

"Will you come and have some tea at the hotel now?"

"Yes. Let's go to the hotel. Perhaps seeing all those English people will be the best thing to banish these foolish forebodings."

Half-way to the "Mena House" they met Ibrahim.

"Lady better now?" he asked solicitously. "Best have brandy."

"No; I don't think I require it, thank you, Ibrahim. I shall be all right when I have had a cup of tea."

"How much did you pay for it, Ibrahim?" asked Tom.

"Sir, I paid two shillings."

"Here you are. Take the beastly stuff back to the barman. I daresay he'll give you the money back; then you'll score two bob."

"Sir, no. I shall keep it. It is good."

"But the Koran forbids you to drink it."

"Sir, you would not call this wine."

"No, it's spirits; that's much worse."

"Sir, the Koran does not speak of spirits."

Lucrece laughed in spite of herself. It did Tom good to hear her laugh; he joined in heartily.

When they got to the hotel, Lucrece at first refused to go in. She dreaded that she would meet somebody she knew. She was not in the mood for it, she said; she was too overwrought.

But Tom persuaded her.

She looked white and tottery. More than one person came up to ask if she had had a sunstroke. The sun is always very fierce round the Pyramids and the Sphinx.

"Oh, no, thanks," said Lucrece. "It is nothing to do with the sun."

And Tom told people, who drew him aside to whisper "What is the matter?" that she had had a shock, that she fancied that she had seen something, but she would not say what it was.

After tea, Lucrece declared herself practically well again, and said she would like to go out and take some photographs.

When they got outside she said to Tom, in what he thought was a queer way: "Is there any place where we can go and take photos without seeing that abominable Sphinx?"

He asked Ibrahim, who replied that there were plenty, considering that there was nowhere from which you could see the Sphinx till you got right down to it, except the top of the Pyramid.

"Well, we can't go up the Pyramid, then. Should you like to go inside it?" asked Tom.

"No; I should be afraid to go inside it," she said, turning white again.

"Madam or Mees, you like to see inside some mastabas," suggested Ibrahim.

"What are mastabas?"

He pointed to some enormous tombs that looked like pyramids with their tops cut off.

"Those are tombs?" she said.

"Madam or mees, yes."

"No—no tombs."

"What else is there to see, Ibrahim?" demanded Tom.

"New excavations, sir—Temples of the Pyramids, many things."

"I think I'll photograph the Pyramids," said Lucrece, as if it was a new and original idea.

The odd thing was that the shock, whatever it was, made her feel a kind of repulsion for Tom; her answers were almost perfunctory as they started out. But little by little the sap came back to her heart. The first pulse came when she was trying a study of the entrance of the vast Pyramid of Cheops. To make the aperture visible, to give its height from the ground, she asked Tom to climb into it, and stand upright. While she focussed her camera, thoughts came crowding into her brain—the lively young figure emerging from the house of death implied so much. He who stood in the entrance, where the dead Pharaoh had been carried-in to lie in his glory five thousand years ago, was the son of Egypt's ruler, the Consul of the race, alien in blood, religion and colour, who had been Egypt's latest conquerors. There were in the Army of Occupation, of which the boy was at this moment the type, men who had taken part in the conquest, the grim General amongst them. Tom had pretended to disappear down the shaft, and as he emerged again, a gay youthful figure, he was a type of the young West triumphing over the aging East. But of Tom himself she did not think.

Ibrahim said that the best place for photographing in

the afternoon was a point at the back of the Pyramids, and was told to lead the way.

It was as they passed the second Pyramid, which still had its coating of polished granite half-way up, that Ibrahim whispered mysteriously :

“ Temple of Chufu ! If you like, I show you. Not allowed. Keep very quiet ! Watchman not want to see you ! I give him money afterwards ! Come this way.”

The broken wall they had to climb had stones a yard high. Kennedy sent the dragoman up to take Lucrece's hands while he held out his hands for her to put a foot in, and be hoisted up.

In this way they entered the building at the back.

This, the world's oldest temple save one, was strangely unlike Lucrece's idea of a temple. The Egyptian temples, which she had been looking at in her books on Egypt, were perfect buildings, with rows of mighty columns, and often painted with fresh bright colours. This was being excavated ; half of it was still buried beneath the waves of sand, with which the desert had overwhelmed it. And the other half consisted of the low walls of little chambers, whose interiors were hardly wider than the masonry which enclosed them. The only intelligible feature in most of them was the entrance. The only traces of their occupants, which survived in them, were bits of linen. Lucrece hunted all over them, although it was tough scrambling over broken masonry, in the hopes of finding some relic she could take away of the men of five thousand years ago. She grew excited in the search, and began to call out merrily to Tom in her clear American voice ; the guardian must have heard her, but he took no notice. How was he to know that there was anyone inside raking over the excavations, which he was paid to protect ? He had not seen anyone pass in.

It was easy getting out of the Temple. There was still sand up to the top of the wall in most places, and, once on the top, Lucrece only had to take Tom's hands and jump down three or four feet at a go.

By this time she had recovered herself and scrambled along for the rest of the walk merrily. There was plenty to diversify it, such as the group of dignified Arabs, bowing and making passes with their hands, to induce them to enter the little Pyramid of Mycerinus.

And when she had taken her photographs, and they were turning their steps back to the hotel, with eyes for the whole view, the matchlessness of the spectacle almost took their breath away. For on their left were the supreme monuments of the great Pyramid field; and in front of them was the palm-bordered lake of the inundation; and, in the background, the Citadel of Cairo with the sunset playing on it, like the limelight thrown on the chief actor in a theatre.

Even Tom knew that the stones of which the mosque on the edge of the world, the crown of the Citadel of Cairo, was built, were torn from one of the Pyramids—the Pyramids which gaze at the mosque as the mosque gazes back at the Pyramids, though the desert and the Nile are between them. There is no more magic sight in the world than the Pyramids at sunset.

Lucrece felt it strongly. Unconsciously she moved near to Tom, and drew his attention to this and that, with a hand upon his arm which was intoxication to him. At that hour she was very gentle and intimate. The swift rush home in the motor, too, exhilarated her. And when he left the motor in charge of the hall porter, and went up into the flat for her to give him a whisky-and-soda, she was so almost affectionate that his glass remained unheeded. She felt that she had something to make up to him for her coldness after the shock.

CHAPTER VIII

OF WHAT BEFEL LUCRECE AT EL AZHAR, THE OXFORD OF THE MOHAMMEDANS

THE sight of Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan, the descendant of the Prophet, seated with his back to the horses, facing two foreign ladies on that fair winter morning, might have fired the inflammable minds of the crowded population of the Arab city of Cairo, if his vow had not been bruited about in the Bazar. Foreign women, except the English, often admired their dragomans so much that they made them sit opposite them on the little seat, which can be dropped down from under the coachman's box of an *arabeah*. The people, who were so ill-posted in Bazar gossip, as not to know of Hoseyn Hassan's reputation in this matter, were too slow-witted to perceive that he, the Descendant of the Prophet, was sitting like a dragoman. It was, to be sure, his own carriage, and the most important Englishmen in the land, like the famous General himself, would think it a natural thing to sit with their backs to the horses, if there were ladies in the carriage. But to the Arabs it would have appeared in a different light. With them it was *place aux hommes* ; it was the man who took the place of honour always, above all the Descendant of the Prophet, who, in illustriousness, stood above the Khedive himself.

But the gossips knew what Hoseyn Hassan's attentions to English women had always meant ; to them all white women were English.

Therefore, as Lucrece and Mrs. Krafft drove through the Bazars with Hoseyn Hassan, the Arabs made disgusting, though often witty, remarks about the fate which was in store for them. Of course, neither Mrs. Krafft nor Lucrece had the slightest inkling of this : indeed, Lucrece observed admiringly to the Sheikh, " What a witty, merry people the Egyptians must be ! "

He agreed with her politely, but he was annoyed now. It had been nothing to hear these ribald jests about himself, while his intentions were ribald. But it was horrible to have them said about the woman he loved; he had contracted many Western ideas in the course of his amours. But it was no good trying to frown the jesting down, for though scandal runs like wild-fire, it can only be quenched slowly, yard by yard. And he perceived that the ladies did not understand; indeed, that they enjoyed seeing the people making merry, though they were unconsciously the victims.

They were driving to El Azhar, the great University of Islam—a quarter in which the population is more than usually fanatical, because the chief subject of the teaching is the interpretation of the Koran, and the University is not only free to all, but feeds its students out of endowments. Therefore fanatics from all parts of the Mohammedan world beg their way to El Azhar, just as Mohammedan princes from all parts think it an honour to study in those sacred precincts.

The jesting, the mocking had been most marked at the entrance of the wide and crowded Sharia-el-Ashrafiyeh, into which they turned from the Mousky, just before their carriage commenced jolting up the narrow and ill-paved Bazar of the Soudanese, where, except the leopard skins, the wares are too uncouth to hold the attention of the foreigner.

Before they reached the top, Lucrece perceived, behind a group of ancient and picturesque houses, which jutted half across the street, the most fantastic and Oriental minarets she had ever seen.

She gave a little indiscriminating cry of pleasure—"Oh, what lovely minarets!"

"That is El Azhar," he said, and the next second his carriage swept round into the open space in front of the Barbers' Gate. He pointed to the native barbers at their vocation under the long wall opposite. The whole piazza was filled with very poor people, engaged in the oddest trades, which ministered in some way to the wants of the motley thousands of students.

Seen from this side, El Azhar was a plain building of no great age, but on the opposite side of the road at the end of the piazza Mrs. Krafft's quick eye caught sight of a vast and noble building of great height, with its walls

covered with the decorations, in which the Saracen architect delighted. Here were the lofty apses and portals, the sunken panels with bas-reliefs of delicate arabesques, the overhanging oriels, the fretted plaster-work, the balconies and arches. She pointed it out to Lucrece.

"Oh, what a beautiful building," cried the girl: her exclamations were generally trite, if often true.

"I suppose that is part of the University, Sheikh?"

"No. That is the *okelle* of Kait Bey, who gave my ancestor his palace."

"Does *okelle* mean a palace?"

"No. I am afraid that it is what you call—um—um—a tenement now, though it was once an inn for the richest merchants of the Orient."

"Ah, a tenement house."

Lucrece knew the tenement houses on the east side of New York. She had been taken to the East side to see one after a big fire.

"What a shame!"

"I might buy it," he said, thoughtfully, "and present it to El Azhar: they are badly in need of more buildings."

He was not merely thinking of her remonstrances, and trying to impress her with his wealth and generosity. He was conscious that his agitation against the English had been responsible for a great influx of fanatical Mohammedans, who hung round El Azhar, in many instances for the lodging and bodily food, as well as for its educational pabulum.

But he was also willing to shine in the eyes of Lucrece.

"Now please dismount," he said, "and we will go and see this façade, and something else, before we enter the mosque."

"Can we go inside this . . . what do you call it?"

"*Okelle*. We can go in the courtyard. But there is nothing to see. If the inside was worthy of the exterior, it would be a finer palace than mine."

They were walking past this trophy of mediæval grandeur, feasting their eyes upon its fantastic lines, when suddenly their attention was arrested, as Hoseyn Hassan meant that it should be, by the hum of a thousand voices.

They looked to see where it came from; the Sheikh led the way to a small door in the centre of the mosque's long flank. There they saw the most wonderful sight Lucrece had ever seen.

The door opened right into the mosque; the contrast between the blazing sunshine of the street and its dark, cool depths was almost blinding.

They were looking into the *Liwan*, the praying-hall of the great mosque. It might have borne for its motto the *Orando laborando* of the famous English school; for here the four hundred professors of El Azhar, each by his column, were imparting oral instruction to eager circles of students, as Roger Bacon must have taught at Oxford, and Abelard at Paris, in the beginnings of the great universities of the West.

The pupils of Abelard and Bacon, with ink-horns in their belts, may have had rough desks to write at; these had none, but were kneeling, sitting cross-legged, or lying on the floor. El Azhar could not entertain one half of its ten thousand students, if the floor were not enough for their needs. Very few had books, though a few had detached leaves. Many were writing on slabs of wood or tin instead of paper. Each professor had his *dikka*—a high square seat, on which he might sit cross-legged if weary, or so-minded. But all were standing in the midst of their eager pupils. It was a bit of the Middle Ages pure and undiluted.

Lucrece was glad afterwards that they did not enter here, though she was disappointed at his refusal for the moment. The great entrance to El Azhar was truly impressive. The gate was lofty; the officials and procedure were dignified; and the first sight of the great courtyard was as marvellous, if not as majestic, as the vista of the *liwan* through the postern.

But they lingered on some minutes at the postern. It was not surprising that the romantic Lucrece found it difficult to tear herself away. For when she stood in that doorway, she was gazing down into a vast hall with the arches of four hundred antique columns veiling the roof, and glowing white against the darkness. It was full of swaying, praying forms, besides the circles of students crowding round the professors, and gesturing their attention. This dark *liwan* of El Azhar was full of waves of voices ebbing and flowing, earth's many voices, the voices of all Mohammedan lands from Morocco to Yunnan. Among the students kneeling, sitting and lying down outside the *liwan*, were even some little girls being taught with the boys.

El Azhar, the University of Islam, has a gigantic courtyard, which presents a unique sight. It is paved like an Italian *cortile*, and surrounded with colonnades which have no dignity but from their size, over which tower six incongruous minarets, with no merit but in their quaintness. Were it deserted, it would be like the courtyard of the dejected palace of the Bey of Tunis. But, instead, it looks like the largest room in the world, with its roof off. For the thousands of students crowd every foot of it. It needs no furniture; the Arab is accustomed to make a chair, a table or a bed of the ground; and many students bring with them into El Azhar rugs, on which they pray and do their preparation; sleep and eat the meals provided by charity; kneel or sit or lie.

Lucrece could have counted dozens of boys lying on their elbows on coloured blankets, with their boots and a pitcher of water and a crust of bread or a yard of sugar-cane beside them; studying the rows of spidery characters which they had written down at their lectures on their tin or wooden "slates." They even performed their toilet in that court.

So crowded was the court that they did not at first realise that it was paved—there was hardly a square yard of pavement to be seen anywhere.

So occupied were the students with their own concerns that the presence of Hoseyn Hassan was only noticed by the groups he actually passed, and these made no exclamation. They only rose to draw near him to kiss the hem of his garment, the green mantle which floated through their midst with the grace of youth and the beauty of holiness.

In the *liwan* too, wherever he passed, they kissed the outer garment of this princely young man, as they kiss the robes of a saint, and many *ulemas*, respectful but dignified, advanced to speak to him as he passed. As they bowed, the Sheikh raised them with an exquisite gesture of courtesy, and they touched his shoulder with their lips. Sometimes he introduced them to the ladies, which he would never have done if they had been Englishwomen, whom he was luring to their fate.

Several of them pointed to various parts of the *liwan*.

"What was he pointing to?" asked Lucrece about one of them.

"The parts of the building which have stood for a thousand years," he answered simply.

"A thousand years!" gasped Lucrece: the emotion shone in her eyes.

"I will take you to them," said the Sheikh, and led the way first to the little low dome over the *mimbar* and the *mihrab*, the pulpit and the Mecca niche. It had lost its beauty: the frettings of its carved plaster-work were almost filled up; it had gone very grey; it was merely venerable. But its venerableness glorified it, and Lucrece demanded with enthusiasm who built it.

"Gohar."

She did not think of asking, nor he of telling her, who Gohar was.

Then he showed them the other remains of Gohar's handiwork, and these were mostly more beautiful, because they were inscriptions cut above the arches; an ancient Arabic inscription is always beautiful, though it be merely the builder's dedication.

Veneration sunk into the soul of Lucrece, a greater veneration than possessed Hoseyn Hassan himself, for his was reflected from hers: the sanctity of a modern Moham-medan saint would really have meant more to him than the antiquity of El Azhar, and its buildings, or its fame as the University of Islam. But with Arab adaptability he was assuming the *rôle* which the sensibilities of Lucrece demanded.

Her woman's eye was bewildered and bewitched with the vast concourse of Oriental students, through whom they were threading their way. But its picturesqueness was diminished by the prevalence of black garments. Few of the students had any colour about them except the red and white of their turbans, and the red of the slippers beside them. The purple robes of the *ulemas* made a welcome break; and there were three students surrounded by a dozen attendants, who were magnificent in a scarlet and gold fabric like brocade. They had negro faces.

"Are those the Three Magi?" asked Mrs. Krafft, who had kept studiously in the background. Her wise Jewish mind had perceived that Hoseyn Hassan desired Lucrece; that to let him win Lucrece was the readiest way for an older woman to win him. She credited him with the same designs that he had cherished for other white women.

He did not know the Magi under that name, but when she explained whom she meant, exclaimed at once, "Ah, the three sultans from the East who came to see the

Prophet Jesus. No. These are from the West. But they are princes, from the back of the Sahara. Those are their tribesmen, who never leave them. In their country a prince needs a bodyguard. Here they rank as students. One does not need bodyguards here."

While he was speaking Lucrece saw a boy of singular beauty, about sixteen years old, who was discontentedly drumming the floor with his toes, the only boy in all that vast building, who seemed to be displaying his natural instincts; for none were playing and hardly any were idling.

"Oh, there's a real boy! Who is he, and why is he so beautiful?"

"I must ask," said the Sheikh, consulting the dignified official who had been following them round a few paces behind.

After a short consultation he said to Lucrece. "He, too, is a prince—a Russian."

"A Russian!" repeated Lucrece in astonishment.

The Sheikh held another consultation, and corrected himself. "A Mohammedan prince from the Russian provinces beyond Persia. His mother was a Circassian slave: they are noted for their beauty."

Hoseyn Hassan would like to have confessed to Lucrece, in the flowery compliments of the Orient, that it was as the loveliest type of Circassian that he thought of her. But his experience of English women stood him in good stead. He refrained.

"He is the only bad boy here," he said. "He is too much a Russian."

While the ladies were interested in the hauteur of the graceless young *khan*, an *ulema* came up to Hoseyn Hassan. He was, he said, over the students from Morocco, and one of them, an old man, who came from beyond distant Mogador, desired to speak with the Descendant of the Prophet, and die in peace.

Hoseyn Hassan assented at once, and his manner was perfect, when a tall, emaciated man, very poor and about sixty years old, with a long white beard and burning eyes, was brought up. His salutations were profound; he came from an unpenetrated land where the forms of the ancient world are unchanged; and to him beholding the Descendant of the Prophet was like beholding the Son of God. He had not been to Wazan, where the Holy Shereef

of Morocco lives. He had walked across the Sahara, using the wells and resthouses of the Senoussi. When he said this, quick-eyed Mrs. Krafft saw Hoseyn Hassan give a start. For a moment the Sheikh thought he was talking to a secret agent, who had been awaiting an opportunity of speaking with him unsuspected. Much caution was needed.

It was on the great Senoussi confederacy, of seven million untamed Arabs, that the wilder spirits of the Committee of Independence, like Mulazim Bey, relied for the massacre or expulsion of the foreigners in Egypt. A Senoussi invasion was the backbone of their scheme for the revolution. Even Mulazim, the credulous, the fire-brand, knew that the Egyptians, unaided, were too inert to rise in action on a great plan.

Hoseyn Hassan questioned the man as closely as he could. But the services of the *ulema* were constantly in requisition as an interpreter, for his Arabic was almost unintelligible to Hoseyn Hassan, and the *ulema's* suspicions must not be aroused too particularly, though he would know that whenever the Egyptian Nationalists talked of the *jehad* against foreigners, the name Senoussi was glibly used.

The Sheikh could get nothing out of the old man now. He maintained with perfect simplicity that he had only come to El Azhar because he wished to understand the Koran before he died. Nowhere else, he said, was the interpretation of the Koran sound.

Then, with more beautiful salutations, he departed, and Hoseyn Hassan turned to Lucrece, whose soul was in her eyes, to tell her about the old Moor. Though he only half believed his story he repeated it literally: for instinct told him of the effect it would have. Lucrece almost wept for the poverty and simplicity and earnestness of the man. Hoseyn Hassan was beginning to be a prophet to her too, a feeling that was to survive all shocks but one.

It took long to make their way down a *liwan* the length of El Azhar's, when every student, as they passed, pressed his lips to the mantle of the sacred green. Youths with white, yellow, and black skins, from Equatorial Africa and Central Asia, from the shores of the Mediterranean and the shores of the seas of Asia, were all at one in this. For here was the Descendant of the Prophet; and in El Azhar it is the Prophet and the Koran which loom large, not that

learning of the moderns which would make its students the equals of the hated English.

Envy, not emulation, is the seed of El Azhar.

Even the head of the mosque, the Sheikh-ul-Azhar himself, when it was reported to him that Hoseyn Hassan was honouring the *liwan* with his presence, hastened down to offer him a proper reception. Hoseyn Hassan had become separated from the ladies, who wandered on, without noticing, at first, that only the attendant was with them, watching the curious sight. After a little, they became conscious that the attitude of the students towards them had changed, and that they were regarded with marked hostility and rudeness. Their attendant was growing uneasy.

Mrs. Krafft's observant eyes discovered the reason. An obese and truculent-looking old man was passing from group to group exciting them. Soon, not content with this, he advanced towards the ladies and, with shaking head and blazing eyes, began pouring out a flood of words. His tones were very offensive: he was evidently abusing them for being there, and ordering them away. And finally he held up his finger and proceeded to curse them.

The professors did nothing to interfere. Some at any rate must have sympathised. For Mulazim Bey, the leader of the Extreme Nationalists—it was he—was too well known for many of them to take him for a madman, whose behaviour is always treated with tolerance by Mohammedans.

The ladies were terrified. Every moment they expected the students to set on them. Students are proverbially inflammable; and by this time Mulazim Bey was raining curses. They felt sure that Hoseyn Hassan had been separated from them by a plot. How on earth were they to let him know. Their attendant could speak no English; he seemed to be the only sympathetic person in the thickening crowd.

Hoseyn Hassan was in ignorance that anything was happening, and it was not easy for him to terminate his reception quickly.

When at length he came upon the scene, Lucrece and Mrs. Krafft were ringed around by hundreds of scowling faces, with Mulazim Bey, livid with rage, in front of them. The Sheikh-ul-Azhar had wished to accompany him to the door; but Hoseyn Hassan had, with much protestation,

dissuaded him. If the Sheikh were with him, he could not give the ladies the concentrated attention, which they received from Englishmen who escorted them.

But several officials accompanied him, and they went forward to clear a way for him, and the students fell back right and left, till only Mulazim stood in his path. Mulazim was so beside himself with passion that he was blind to the change. Hoseyn Hassan said nothing, at first, but stood eyeing him with a calm and pitying gaze, until Mulazim should see that the skies had fallen. Then Mulazim turned and glared at him like a wild beast at bay, but the Sheikh maintained his composure, and the Arab words he spoke, in grave measured tones, signified :—"Peace, O Mulazim. These are ladies who belong to one of the religions of the Book whom the Prophet himself excepted, even if they were not exercising the right of all. For what else does the portal of El Azhar stand open but to invite the world to gaze upon the beauty of learning? Thy curses dishonour thyself."

Mulazim Bey, who had been proselytising for days among the students of El Azhar with success beyond all hopes, remained defiant.

It was easy to defy women, whom he took to be English, though they were the child and wife of England's enemies. It was quite another thing to defy the Descendant of the Prophet within the reactionary precincts of El Azhar, as Mulazim Bey soon learned.

He never knew how he found himself outside the gates of the mosque. He only remembered the sensation of the pressure of a thousand hands, which carried him forward like a wave. For the second time he had been foiled in a crisis by Hoseyn Hassan. He said, "Allah is great. My time will come."

But inwardly he raged like a madman.

Not better pleased was Hoseyn Hassan. From this visit to El Azhar he had expected much. To him El Azhar was one of the most glorious of human institutions; he had hoped that the moral of it would sink deep into the mind of Lucrece.

And his heart had been uplifted within him when he had been received like a prince, alike by its dignitaries and its students, before the woman he loved, as white women are loved.

But the cup had been dashed from his lips. The visit

of the Sheikh-ul-Azhar, which had seemed to set the crown upon his hopes, had left the woman he was delighting to honour, to the malice of his enemy and the mercy of an angry crowd. She must hate him for exposing her to such perils and indignities. He must take heroic measures to retrieve his position.

He knew Mulazim Bey's power of mischief-making by playing on the prejudices of the ignorant. But Mulazim had shown an intelligence, with which he had not credited him, in tracking him, in the company of the woman he loved, to El Azhar, and waiting, until his vigilance relaxed for a moment, to inflict this damaging and humiliating blow upon him.

He had intuition for weaknesses, but not the intuition of courage, or he would have known that with Lucrece this was his Marengo—a defeat converted into a victory; that nothing in their brief acquaintance had impressed her so much as this salvaging. Yet after that Mogador Moor had spoken of the Senoussi it was too much to expect that he should argue the truth about Mulazim Bey, who, to the moment of his expulsion, was perfectly ignorant of the identity of either woman, and unaware of their acquaintance with Hoseyn Hassan.

Seeing first the Moor and then Mulazim, Hoseyn Hassan was convinced that their appearing in El Azhar was not unconnected, and that a fresh conspiracy was on foot, of which he did not possess the threads.

CHAPTER IX

THE TRAGEDY AT THE HELOUAN RACES

IN the afternoon Mr. Considine had arranged that he and Lucrece should go with Lady Vere's party to the races at Helouan. Tom and others of her soldier friends were to be of the party. But Lucrece would rather have stayed at home. She wanted to think about that other Cairo, which is as Oriental and romantic as the "Arabian Nights."

Having been admitted to the freedom of the city of the Caliphs, she wanted something more than she could find in the Ismailia quarter and Ghezireh. Also, she found the Descendant of the Prophet a more romantic figure than the son of the British Agent, though she thought Tom a dear boy, and would have liked him as well as any one else for a brother.

Stephen Considine had intended that Hoseyn Hassan should not know his daughter. But since the acquaintance had been made, he felt increasingly that to put a stop to it, or even to throw obstacles in its way, would impede the cordial co-operation of Hoseyn Hassan and himself in his life-work. So when his daughter, breaking through their usual habit, because she thought he might like to refuse, asked his permission to go with Hoseyn Hassan and Mrs. Krafft to El Azhar, he did not interpose his veto.

But having made a concession to his politics against his instincts, the great schemer was anxious once more to play the Army—more especially Tom—against the personal element of Hoseyn Hassan.

This was the first time that he or Lucrece had seen Tom, except in uniform or in flannels. He looked conspicuously well dressed, a little too well dressed, perhaps, for Egypt, where it was a sort of fad with the officers,

except foppy Guardsmen like Mr. Lavender and Mr. de Grammont, to wear well-worn clothes, immaculately brushed and pressed by their servants. But Stephen Considine did not know this, and drew contrasts in Tom's favour.

When the Considines arrived at the station, Tom was talking to his cousin, Chiquita Page, the hostess of the British Agency, and her husband, for whom he had the greatest admiration and affection. Cricket was the bond between them. Sam Page was the best cricketer in Egypt, many degrees above a military slogger like Tom Cobbe.

Chiquita adored them both. She was never more arch or more charming than when she had the two of them together, and played up to first one and then the other.

As this little person was an enormous favourite with the officers, and the other nice Englishmen in Cairo, and was fond of amusing herself with them, it was certainly a good thing for her reputation in slander-breathing Egypt, that she should be so obviously in love with her big husband.

He made a point of taking her to all the races and other British gatherings, at which Lord Clapham would have been present, if he had been a man of the same kidney as Sir Francis Vere. Sam thought it good for Egypt, and good for the English, that the Agency should show its interest—an interest which he himself was very far from feeling—in races. If he had no cricket match on he would sooner have spent his afternoon in a round of golf, or in the Arab city, which, in point of fact, he knew much better than Hoseyn Hassan did, for he studied its antiquities, and, having already mastered a difficult language like Japanese, his progress in Arabic had been unusually quick.

Sir Francis and Lady Vere, on the other hand, loved racing. They knew almost as much about the form of the principal animals belonging to the officers, and the rivals which extinguished their chances, as they knew about polo and cricket form. They did not bet, chiefly because they wished to discourage betting among the subalterns.

Chiquita, too, loved racing, and the part she enjoyed most of all was backing her fancy in the totalisator, though she had such a fancy for backing the favourite,

that she generally won less money than she risked, if she did not lose.

Mrs. Krafft, too, was a backer, a thoroughly business-like backer, accustomed to having a "book" at home. So what with them and her soldier friends, Lucrece would have been in good company if she had cared for racing.

Her partners were delighted to see her. Those who did not bet much, and there were a good many, had more time on their hands here than at Ghezireh, where sport is an imperious mistress. Others, like Tom, came up with tips, and polite offers to put something on for her, as they did for their hostess at the British Agency, the adorable Chiquita.

A thing that Mr. Considine noticed first this afternoon, and it pleased him, was the *camaraderie* which existed between the General and his wife, and Lord Clapham's party, and the British officers. They were like a big family much more occupied with each other, in rather a simple way, than they were with the distinguished and wealthy visitors, who were anxious to entertain them. The visitors at Cairo form a Society of their own, which revolves round hotel dances.

Mr. Krafft and Mr. Prestage, who were both at Helouan with their wives, were rather personages in this set, as rich M.P.'s. Not that there were many in the set who would have approved of their politics, if they had known them. But these people did not think of M.P.'s as politicians; they thought of them as tadpoles, which were the next best thing to the real frogs of the House of Lords.

Helouan made Lucrece shudder. Just as her eye was getting attuned to the real Cairo, the Arab city nestled under the Citadel, she was brought out to Helouan, which looks like a new seaside place put up by mistake in the desert. Hotels, pensions, villas, and a row of struggling shops—this is what residential Helouan consists of. Its baths and mineral waters are of value; and for the delectation of its visitors there are sand golf-links, a sand race-course, and the view of the Pyramids, not to forget the advantages of the desert as a natural Rotten Row. Everything is appallingly new; to Lucrece's languid eyes, the houses suggested dusty pastry. She was her father's daughter, and, in her heart, she resented the presence of this casinoful of foreigners in the Egyptian desert, from the moment that they emerged from the railway station,

and found themselves surrounded by the Egyptian touts, who hang round such places.

Residents like Lady Vere and Mrs. Page, she observed, were not troubled by them in the least; they took less notice of the touts than of the flies, which did rather worry the person who was too much of an open-air woman to wear veils.

A short drive brought them to the race-course, where Mr. Considine overpaid the cabman. The course was a bit of the desert marked off and cleared of its stones. The grand-stand was like the temporary stands for the Oxford and Cambridge boat race, except that it had chairs instead of forms, space being of no consequence. It and the other sheds used for the purposes of the Helouan Racing Club were covered with native thatch, which gave the most graceful effect of anything in Helouan.

Mr. Considine looked pleased. He had ascertained that the Arabs crowded on the opposite side of the course in the blazing sun were having their show for nothing. Lucrece's pleasure even in this was spoiled by her concern for their being exposed to the sun. But her father, as a large employer of labour, knew better. And so the races began, and displayed the usual long waits and small fields of local races. The events were nearly all won by rich Levantines, who could afford to give more for their horses than the officers. And the rich Levantines were in force in the grand-stand and the paddock, overdressed parodies of the latest English style, who were ignored by the English. Mr. Considine was not sure which annoyed him most, the attitude of the English to the Levantines, or the way the Levantines deserved it. On the surface he surrendered to the enjoyment of the good company in which he found himself, especially the society of Lady Vere, whose thoroughness and freedom from nonsense, and healthy handsomeness attracted him. The beauty of his daughter and his late wife had made him a connoisseur of women.

The elegance of Mrs. Krafft and Mrs. Prestage in their brilliant racing costumes, good-looking women as they were, did not appeal to him. It chiefly made him wish that Lucrece had not come dressed for a fête like them.

Nor did Lucrece look her best. Perhaps it was that her impressive beauty was not suited to desert picnics.

Mr. Considine noticed with approval that Tom was

devoted. Finding that Lucrece was not interested in visiting that desert paddock, to which Mrs. Krafft made pilgrimages between every race with a fascinating display of slender slippers, and foamy frills, which really needed holding up to keep them out of the sand, he gave up inspecting and backing horses, and made up his mind to stay in the stand with her.

Mrs. Krafft made great headway that afternoon. If the scene jarred on Lucrece, and made her look less comely, it had the opposite effect on Sophia Krafft. She loved every kind of race-meeting; in England she attended race-meetings much more regularly than she attended church, where she had to be seen as a professed Christian; nor did she go to them for social effect; she went because she loved horses and loved racing, and was a bold and skilful backer. The officers were not long in discovering that this pretty creature, a dainty toy from head to foot, who laid herself out to win the heart of every man she was talking to, was the most interesting woman you could meet on a race-course, because she threw herself with equal zest into business and flirting; it was like being in the paddock and the grand-stand at the same time. Even Captain Bigge, the polo champion, who had hitherto avoided her like a plague patient, succumbed to-day, and was her special cavalier for the afternoon.

Mr. Julius Krafft, M.P., had been glad when motors came in. Though he did not imperil the necks of his family by driving, he could learn the necessary vocabulary for boasting about his cars, and the points which signified expensiveness in the cars of his friends, whereas he had never been able to see where his prize carriage-horses were better than livery-stable horses, when their harness was off. He had not been born to horses, and he had been too busy to pick up an intimacy with them in after-life.

On public occasions he did not go near his wife unless she required him, though he was at her beck, and, if she chose to have him with her, was tactful and attentive. She flirted with him on these occasions as graciously as if he had been a new acquaintance, and sometimes paraded him as her owner.

At the present moment he was trying to overcome Mrs. Page's prejudice against German Jews, and failing for want of his wife's paddock-knowledge, which would have formed a good working introduction.

Lucrece tried to be interested and nice to Tom, but everything seemed futile.

The grand-stand in the immensity of the desert looked less important than the goods-shed in the railway station. The visitors were a mere handful, and half of them were odious Levantine fops, or their puffy women, who wore white kid gloves long enough for the fore-legs of a camel. She felt angry with herself for not accepting them, as she accepted the English.

She had a reason for not looking at the Egyptians gathered in the sun on the opposite side of the course. They made her doubtful of her father's mission. It did not seem to her that anything could be done with such rascals as electors to Parliament. They seemed much more fitted for casual labourers.

To cure her of boredom, she wanted something besides Tom's rattle. Even Kennedy's silence would have been better. But he was too serious a person to go to the Helouan races. And nothing, nothing happened for half an hour, or an hour, and then everybody grew very excited, and three or four horses came out, one of which generally showed its heels to the rest after they had gone a few hundred yards, and was never headed afterwards. She was so pre-occupied that Tom, casting his eyes round for food for conversation, lit on the long line of the Pyramids from Ghizeh to Medum. He pointed them out with pride; the effect was not what he anticipated. Lucrece shivered and exclaimed: "Those hateful Pyramids!"

"Why, what have the poor Pyramids done?" he asked. He could not help laughing; they seemed such innocent things to vent your temper on.

"I don't know—but they make me shudder. Not these humble ones opposite," she said, dismissing with a wave of her hand the lofty false Pyramid of Medum, and the grand old step-pyramid of Sakhara, the ancient of days, and its satellite named after King Unas. I mean the real Pyramids, that look like a pair of letter-weights."

"Cheops and Chephren," interposed Sam Page pleasantly. He was the diplomatist of the British Agency, and loved Tom like a brother. He saw how fond he was of Lucrece, and considered that the Honourable Tom Cobbe would make no way by talking to Lucretia Con-

sidine in her present mood. Whereas, for him, it was like finding the solution to an anagram in a ladies' newspaper to find a cure for her *malaise*.

Lucrece found herself talking to a sunburnt man with a frank, clean-shaven John Bull face, whose square jaws were relieved by a short upper lip, with a good-humoured smile, which seemed to his friends to say : "I take nothing seriously, not even danger ; but I watch everything as closely as I watch the ball, when I am making my centuries."

He did not allow his cricket to absorb him. He was a keen diplomatist, who took a view of British interests, which was entirely opposed to that of his chief, whose indiscretions he contrived to shackle with red tape. The Egyptians recognised in him a formidable barrier to their plots, but liked him because he looked the kind of Englishman who is stand-offish, whereas he was always accessible and sympathetic, though he was as difficult to deceive as a judge. He heard what they had to say, and explained the constitutional difficulties of Lord Clapham's initiating any change, now that the Khedive's authority was extended.

"Do you like races ?" she asked.

"Like them ? I think they're as fatuous as punch—not the paper, but the poisonous mixture with which they celebrate anniversaries in this country."

"Then why do you come to them ?"

"Because there's nothing like them for keeping a British community together. Lord Clapham does not hate them any worse than I do. He doesn't hate anything much. But he can't be got to see the object of keeping the British community together. So I bring Chiquita to fill the breach."

"I hate these society functions," she cried.

"Those are not the kind of sentiments you expect from—may I say it ?—such a pretty girl."

Her smile expressed that she was accustomed to it. A lull in the conversation implied that he expected an answer.

"It all seems so futile," she began. This was sweeping ; he became attentive.

"Here we are looking on at make-believe races—a few horses not of the best, and a few people not of the best, in a corner of the desert. We are dressed in our best—

the women—and we have on our professional look of being amused. We are aping England.”

“But would you be any better employed if you were not here, Miss Considine?”

“How can you ask that in a place like Cairo, Mr. Page? Here we are in an Arabic city so mediæval that one might be in Granada in the days before it fell. I am intoxicated with romance every moment that I spend in the native city.”

“What sort of things are they which move you so?” he asked interestedly.

“Well, all this morning I have been in a splendid mosque.”

“Which mosque? I know most of them.”

“El Azab.”

“I think you mean El Azhar; El Azab is the gate which shut in the Mamelukes, while they were being murdered.”

Lucrece blushed. She felt convicted of an affectation. What would a serious man, like Mr. Page, think of her not being able to remember the name which was so important to her.

Sam Page noticed her confusion, it being his profession to read people’s thoughts, and he said: “It’s easy for strangers to make mistakes in Arab names. El Azhar is awfully interesting, though it isn’t very lovely. Did you have any difficulty in getting in?”

“No. We had an Arab gentleman with us who had influence.”

“What was his name?”

“Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan.”

“Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan! I should rather think he had influence in El Azhar. He could raise the whole place about our ears by lifting his little finger.”

He knew enough to have added: “And your father will ask him to—some day.” But it was his rôle to pretend that he was as blind as Lord Clapham to the great conspiracy, which was growing like a gourd in Cairo. And when he checked its advances at the British Agency—a matter of daily occurrence—he did not divulge his objections; he made references to the Khedive.

Stephen Considine’s daughter was not a person to whom he chose to unmask himself diplomatically, but he was sincerely attracted to Lucrece, so he pleasantly transferred the conversation to the delights of the mediæval city.

"El Azhar has an interest of its own," he said, "which is unique. But for beauty of architecture, and the beauty of holiness, I could show you twenty better mosques."

"Could you really?" she cried; her face grew rosy with excitement, and the smile of Cypris broke over it.

"Of course I could. I'll tell you what some of them represent to me if you like. El Amr's means solitude and history. Ibn Tulun's means vastness, antiquity, romance; it is our Granada or Kairouan. El Merdani is the noble fourteenth-century mosque, unspoiled without and within, and with its courtyard gleaming through its open portals. El Moayad is almost such another—a little grander, a little less unspoiled. It is the mosque that is inseparable from the old gate, which is the epitome of the 'Arabian Nights.'"

"The 'Arabian Nights,' " she exclaimed. "That dear old book, and the tales of the Alhambra, were the fairy tales of my childhood."

"Of course you know that fourteenth-century Cairo was the city which gives the 'Arabian Nights' its local colour in its present form, though it may have originated five hundred years earlier."

"The city of the 'Arabian Nights'! How delightful! It is no wonder that I thought of it, all the time, when I was in Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan's palace."

"Yes, that palace gives you as good an idea as any of the palaces of the 'Arabian Nights,' though it was not built when the book was written. The only palace in Cairo as old as the book is the Beit-el-Kadi, on the little hill above the Bazar of the Coppersmiths; that was part of El Kahira itself."

"Oh, please, what was El Kahira? I am very ignorant."

"El Kahira was the wonderful fortified palace, built outside the city of the Caliphs by Gohar, their victorious General, a thousand years ago, which grew into the city of Cairo."

"Wasn't there any Cairo before that time?"

"Not strictly speaking. But there were the ancient Roman citadel called Babylon; and Fustat, the city built by the Arabs who conquered Egypt; and at least two other earlier capitals. Fustat is the city whose ruins lie under the mounds which stretch all the way from Old Cairo to the Tombs of the Mamelukes."

"Why is there nothing left of it? Was it destroyed by an earthquake like Messina?"

"No, by a fire, like Moscow. The Arabs burnt it themselves to prevent it falling into the hands of the Crusaders and becoming their shelter. That's where I got my beautiful Arab pottery."

"How did you get it?"

"By digging for it. You may dig for treasures as much as you like there."

"Oh, do take me there some day!"

"I should be delighted. I'd like to make you know Cairo as I do."

"And will you show me the Palace of the Caliphs—El ———?"

"El Kahira?"

"Which was standing when the 'Arabian Nights' was written?"

"You wouldn't be interested in those parts of the building. But the part, which was called the House of the Kadi, where the Grand Kadi of Egypt used to hold his court, is ancient and magnificent with its five great arches as high as its roof."

"Can we go into it?"

"Yes, I could get you into it; it's being repaired. But there's nothing to see there, compared to that wonderful group of buildings at the bottom of the hill in the Coppersmiths' Bazar."

"Tell me about those," she said excitedly. She had Arab Cairo on the brain.

"There you have your 'Arabian Nights' pure and undiluted. Haven't you noticed that wonderful old group of buildings whose domes and minarets have their stonework carved so delicately that they look as if they were covered with lace?"

"No; I don't think I remember the Coppersmiths' Bazar."

"Well, there's nothing more wonderful in all mediæval Cairo than the Hospital of Sultan Kalaoun and the Mosques of the Three Sultans."

"What are the Three Sultans?"

"Sultan-en-Nasir, Sultan Kalaoun, and Sultan Barkouk."

"Oh, yes. Mrs. Krafft's dragoman did point them out as we were driving to the Sheikh's. But he did not take us into them."

"Well, they are inconceivably beautiful; and there are fountains and palaces and ruined mosques all round them."

"How ripping!"

"And the life which is going on all round them is mediæval. If you go into En Nasir's tomb you see the coppersmith sitting on the ground, holding his pan with his toes, while he beats it into shape; and at the foot of the hill there is a veiled woman sitting on the ground surrounded by fine old brass-work, which she sells second-hand when she is in the humour."

"Oh, take me there to-morrow!"

"I will if the chief does not want me. If you want to see Arab Cairo properly, you must begin at once. There's lots more to see besides the things I have told you about."

"And you will take me to see them, Mr. Page?"

"Yes, and we'll make that lazy Tom come too," he said, remembering his cousin's feelings.

"How I wish that he was as interested in these things as you are!" exclaimed Lucrece in her straightforward way. "He's a dear boy, if he would only remember that a woman needs something more substantial than ragging to feed her brains."

Sam promised, and pictured to himself many and many a pleasant afternoon; which never came off.

Lucrece had been so interested in Sam Page's conversation that she had forgotten to look round, as she generally did, to see how Mrs. Krafft was enjoying herself.

In the saddling paddock Mrs. Krafft was having the day of her life. Captain Bigge was learning the truth of the old proverb about playing with fire, and his example was contagious; he was the particular star of the horsey men in the Cairo Garrison. The white teeth which lay under the thin blonde moustache on that high-nosed, high-cheekboned, brick-red face, showed with increasing frequency, and his attitude grew more and more attentive. The pretty, smart, high-spirited Sophia showed such judgment, such pluck in her backings; her wit kept the paddock in a titter. She was having a wordy warfare with Captain Wemyss, in which she was getting much the best of it.

Presently Tom Cobbe passed, looking as if he was going to a funeral. He was really going to the totalisator to back a horse, because Lucrece had nothing to say to him,

and Chiquita Page, to whom he had wandered up aimlessly, needed less serious society.

Mrs. Krafft, in the midst of her good time, noticed him and felt for him. She guessed the source of his trouble. There was tenderness in her eyes and her smile as she called out : " Tom, come here." She had not called him Tom before ; the wonder was that she hadn't ; she was free with Christian names. She called out a second time : " Tom, come here ! " And he came.

" You're not in the right frame of mind to bet. You'll plunge, and you'll plunge on the wrong thing. I'll make your bet for you. Tell me how much you want to put on. I'll do the rest. You can take me up to the machine, if you promise not to look. You come too, Captain Bigge, in case I want your advice."

" What were you going to back, Cobbe ? " asked the Horse Artilleryman.

" The Prophet."

" Why the deuce ! "

" Because it seems to be the winning number."

" Bet you a fiver it isn't. The horse is good enough, but the dirty little Jew it belongs to hasn't anything on it."

Tom was watching his protectress's face, and noticed a little gulp in the pretty throat. It meant nothing to him. Sam Page would have known that a rising feeling of indignation at the disrespect to her race was swallowed up in the satisfaction that Captain Bigge had not taken her for a Jewess.

She turned the subject.

" You shan't take his bet, Tom. Hand over your five hundred piastres to me, and stay here, while I put it on."

She left the two officers together for a minute while she made the bet with the mechanical bookmaker. When she returned, it was Bigge who asked her : " Well, what did you back ? "

" B. O.," she said.

Tom felt it was an omen, and cheered up a little, and was quite himself again, when, a quarter of an hour later, B. O. sailed in before his field and landed him a nice little stake.

" Where did you get that tip ? " asked Captain Bigge admiringly, as the numbers were hoisted. " I didn't think he had a chance."

"He was the best outsider, and I had a reason of my own for wanting to back him."

"What was it?"

"I'm not going to tell you."

He did not guess, though he puzzled his honest head over it, and the conundrum was not a severe one. Nor had Tom any idea that the coincidence of name was intentional.

Oh, Mrs. Krafft, you were very wise! Having cured Tom, you gave your attention to Captain Bigge. Who could have guessed that of all the officers in the garrison, except the impracticable Kennedy, Tom was the one who appealed to you the most? You could very easily have fallen in love with him, though you were married, and it was no fault of yours that he was not engaged. That did not prevent you intending to make him like you as much as you liked him. On a crossed lover, you decided, the frontal attack would fail; you must try a traverse. You lavished your witcheries on Captain Bigge, to whom also you owed a debt, for the success of the afternoon. You only gave Tom just enough line to keep him on the hook. Captain Wemyss you proceeded to choke off, to show the others that you were capricious, and therefore worth playing for.

With Sam devoting himself to Lucrece, and Tom dismissed as doleful, and the horsey men following Mrs. Krafft, Chiquita Page found herself left with Sir Francis and Lady Vere, and Stephen Considine. Though she liked the Veres, she never had much to say to them. She decided to try and sift Mr. Considine.

It was natural that she should feel attracted to such a statuesque figure, such a sturdy personality. Also, he was a mystery, which meant a good deal to the inquisitive Chiquita.

"You spend a great deal of time in Egypt, don't you, Mr. Considine?" she began.

"The best part of the year."

"What do you find to do with yourself—in the hot weather?" she added, after a meaning pause.

"The same as at any other time, ma'am—business."

"Business?" she echoed.

"Yes, ma'am. I am the Chairman of the American Hardware Trust."

Parried here, she tried a new tack.

"Ah, I remember your interests in Egypt are very large. You have agents all over the country, haven't you?"

"In every town in Egypt; and we have many travellers also—travellers do you call them, or drummers, ma'am?"

"I think it must be travellers; we only use drummers for military purposes, such as reminding the Egyptians of the presence of the British regiments," she replied, eyeing him closely.

He stood her scrutiny without appearing to notice it.

"And don't they do anything else except sell hardware to the impecunious Egyptian?" she asked, with sweet innocence.

"They all do something else. Our idea is only to employ people who are of importance in other ways. They are able to push our wares more effectively."

"What does hardware consist of, Mr. Considine?" she asked suddenly. "Guns?"

"Tools, agricultural machinery, corrugated iron, piping, wire, and so on. We do sell guns, but their sale is an insignificant part of the business. I think I am right in saying that we did not sell a single fire-arm of any sort in Egypt last year, except to British officers and officials; the visitors generally bring their sporting weapons with them."

"Don't Egyptians buy fire-arms?"

"Not from us. Perhaps I am wrong in saying no Egyptians. A Pasha, or a wealthy landowner here and there, may have bought a gun or a rifle, for sport."

"But plenty of natives shoot."

"I know they do. And it would be a mighty good thing for us if they bought their guns from us; but our books show that we sell them practically none."

Chiquita's deep feeling of relief was reflected in her face. She did not know the difference between a gun and a rifle, and it had been freely bruited about that Mr. Considine's firm had been rifle-running to the natives on an enormous scale. Sir Francis Vere was convinced of the truth of the report, and had more than once advised their prosecution.

She told Sir Francis her news triumphantly as soon as she could get him alone.

"Then the 'Gypsies must get them from some one else," he said shortly. "I don't think Considine looks

the sort of man to tell a direct lie, though I am convinced that he means us no good."

For the time, she went on talking to Mr. Considine, and reassured on this point, opened a fresh battery.

"Why do you hate the English, Mr. Considine?"

It was his turn to be honestly relieved now.

"But I don't hate them. On the contrary, I never met a set of men to whom I felt more attracted than these young officers like your cousin, and Captain Kennedy, and Captain Aylmer. I think the British officer—the best sort, not your Captain Wemysses—is the salt of the earth, except perhaps in brains."

"But you want to drive them out of the country?"

"I, ma'am?"

"I mean, you want to have them driven out of the country."

"You have never heard me say so. But allowing that I did wish it, it would not show that I hated the English, but merely that I disagreed with their national policy."

"Oh, I don't always agree with the Imperialists myself; began by being a Pro-Boer."

He reparteed with: "Perhaps you will end by being a Pro-Egyptian."

"I should like to; but they are such a hopeless people. How can you have a nation, in which there isn't a man who speaks the truth?"

"I don't see what right you have to say that, Mrs. Page."

"I wish I didn't. But, mark my words, Mr. Considine. If report is true, you are the best friend of Egyptian independence. You make friends of the Egyptians in a way that no other white man does. And you will find that one, if not all, of those you have taken to your bosom, will bite you like the proverbial viper when the time comes."

"Oh, you are prejudiced," he said, laughing, and quite inoffensively. "You're English."

"I'm only English by marriage. I'm a pure Spaniard by birth. It's just because I'm not English that I see more of the game."

At that moment their attention was attracted to an Arab, who had gone up to where Sir Francis and Lady Vere were standing, just in front of the grand-stand. He

was such an incongruous figure amid the trivial surroundings of a race-course—a tall, gaunt man almost black with the suns and dust of the Sahara, and wearing the tinselled head-dress and striped burnoose of the men of the western desert. He had magnificent features of the eagle type, which went well with his physique, and he strode up to the General with the majestic desert swing. As he held out his hand to the General, Lady Vere hooked his wrist with her parasol—almost simultaneously two shots from a revolver rang out; but the woman's quick eye had baulked the assassin, and the bullets passed between them. Before the Arab could fire again the General's left fist had shot out with all the force of that strong, heavy man, and his assailant was lying half-stunned on the ground. Sir Francis leapt on him and pinned him down, while Lady Vere picked up the revolver which had fallen from his hand, in case an accomplice should seize his opportunity. But the Desert-man had come alone; and in one minute the stand was full of young officers headed by Tom Cobbe, who thought it might be a riot and rushed to help.

Then policemen arrived and secured the prisoner; and the General got up and smiled to his wife. "I have to thank you for that, Kate," he said, and added with a little laugh: "It was a near thing."

Her whole soul was in the woman's eyes, but all she said was "Dust your knees, Frank;" while the tall Horse Artilleryman half held out the gold cigarette case, attached by a chain to something under his waistcoat, and said: "Hadn't you better, sir?"

"Thank you, Bigge. It's a good thing to steady the nerves, I suppose."

Mr. Considine's feelings were mixed. He would have felt deeply grieved for Lady Vere if she had been made a widow. But he was conscious that Sir Francis was the pillar of England in Egypt, and that if he had fallen before the revolver of the Senoussi, his own arch-enemy would have been removed, and the most important of the assassinations, advocated by Mulazim Bey and the party of violence, would be achieved. But he was moved to the strongest admiration by more than one feature in the episode. The quickness and coolness of Lady Vere; the blow which had knocked the strong Desert-man senseless before he could take a fresh aim; the pretty little

bit of romance between man and wife ; the little comedy of the dusting and the cigarette ; the look on those stern young faces as they swept in like a storm-wave to take their part in danger.

But the cup of tragedy and comedy was not full yet. There was a cry of alarm from an attendant in the refreshment enclosure behind the grand-stand. Stephen Considine was one of the first to rush round. He was a man of notable courage, physical as well as moral. The sight which presented itself was extraordinary. An old Egyptian voluptuary, evidently a man of wealth—he was dressed in an immaculate racing suit—was lying dead beside an upset chair and table. He still held the stump of a broken tumbler in his hand ; the whisky-and-soda, which had been in it, had flowed down his white waistcoat as had the blood from a fatal wound. His *tarboosh* was lying in the sand a couple of yards away.

There was much in the sight for Stephen Considine, which was lost on the officers and police who crowded round ; for he secretly recognised one of his colleagues on the Committee of Independence, Mohammed Hilmy, the only person of considerable means or position who acted with the Extremists—a zealous Mohammedan. Here was one curse come home to roost.

The back of the grand-stand was only canvas ; one of the bullets of the Senoussi had found its billet.

After this second catastrophe, it was thought advisable to close the meeting.

"General, I congratulate you," said Mr. Considine, as they took their places in the American saloon carriage, which had been reserved for the General's and the British Agent's parties. His sincerity was not assumed, though he would have been glad to see Sir Francis dead. To Mr. Considine's mind this was not difficult. The private and the public man were separate in his eyes. And he was congratulating the General (to whom it was certainly a matter of congratulation), not himself.

"Thank you, Mr. Considine," said the General, with more cordiality than he had used before.

"I grant that you really have some evidence of a conspiracy now," Mr. Considine continued.

"It doesn't follow," said Sir Francis stiffly ; he felt annoyed at the other's starting a political discussion at such a moment ;

"I think it does," insisted Mr. Considine; his insistence confirmed the General in his belief that it was a sporadic case of fanaticism, which was exactly what Mr. Considine desired.

But if he succeeded with the General, he lost to Sam Page, in whom he aroused suspicions. Sam, from his secret intelligence agents, was perfectly aware of the rather intimate connection between the murdered man and Mr. Considine. Yet Mr. Considine had not given the slightest overt sign of recognition, when he saw the body of his murdered friend. There must be more in this than met the eye.

In the interval he drew his wife into paying rather increased attention to Lucrece, who, he felt, would need it. When a father plays with fire the children may be burned.

Tom was with Mrs. Krafft and Captain Wemyss, who were talking as if nothing had happened. If they remembered the attempt on the General's life, and the murder of what was to them an innocent bystander, at all, it was of less importance than what they had gone to see—the performances of the horses. He was not listening to what they were saying, and escaped the disgust he would have felt at their callousness. Nor was he thinking. He might have had plenty of food for thought, if he had known what was passing in Sam Page's mind.

CHAPTER X

AN UNPARDONABLE OFFENCE

UNDER hot skies deeds of violence attract less notice. Most of the people of any consideration in Cairo, except the officials and their families, went to the "Savoy" to dine and dance, as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened.

The Considines did not go! Lucrece did not feel as if she could dance, fresh from the first glimpse of battle and murder and sudden death, which had come into her young life. She would have felt even less inclined, had she known that the murdered man was her father's friend and colleague, though her father seemed so little affected personally. There was, in fact, nothing to like or admire about Mohammed Hilmy. His whole value consisted in the fact that he was the only Egyptian of wealth in the Extremist party.

Stephen Considine did not stay at home to mourn him, but to decide if anybody else should mourn him, except his relatives.

An Egyptian Independence Committee meeting had been summoned by a code telegram from Helouan. If his connection with the Nationalist party were known beyond the limits of the Committee, Mohammed Hilmy would have to be a martyr, and receive a monster funeral. But this would emphasise the attempt on the General's life, and would spoil the effect of Mr. Considine's finessing with Sir Francis in the train. In a cold-blooded way he decided that Mohammed Hilmy was not a martyr. The dead man's relatives were not aware that he was a member of the Nationalist Inner Circle, though they knew his proclivities. The Committee had also to discuss the probable effects of the precipitate action of the Senoussi, for which they were not responsible.

One effect of it was to make Sam so busy at the British Agency, that he had to telephone to Lucrece to ask her to excuse him; in the middle of the morning Lucrece called a cab and drove to Mrs. Krafft's.

Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Krafft was in; but there was an agreeable surprise for her in the shape of Hoseyn Hassan, who was sitting there, fascinatingly handsome and romantic in his graceful robes.

He was now a constant visitor to the Kraffts. The race between Dan Climo and Mr. Krafft to exploit the Egyptian Nationalists for political use in the House of Commons had become very keen. "There is only one thing to be done," said his useful helpmate to Mr. Krafft. "I must bring social influences to bear on the Sheikh; he is the most important and the most amenable of the Nationalists, and he likes visiting European houses."

Julius Krafft blessed heaven for giving him such a good wife, and the siege of Hoseyn Hassan began.

Before a week had passed she was able to say, "See how easy it has been." The polygamous instinct is hereditary in the Arab. Hoseyn Hassan was genuinely in love with Lucrece, but this did not prevent him from discerning the charms of Sophia Krafft. Sophia was a beautiful and alluring woman, as tall and as well-set up as Lucrece herself. It was true that it required the best of dressmakers and corset-makers to keep her figure youthful, though she was only three years older than Lucrece. But this was not a drawback in the eyes of an Arab any more than her alluring expression.

Sophia lavished her attractions on him to keep him about the house; he became her ardent admirer. He often cursed in his heart that instead of being a fair goal for his practice, in fulfilment of his vow, she was the non-English wife of one of the best friends of the Cause.

For Hoseyn Hassan was not slow to perceive what a powerful ally Julius Krafft, M.P., was—a man whose political shibboleth was the cant which makes England the prey of her enemies—a doctrinaire free-trader; a socialist in favour of any and every reduction of the Army or Navy; a Little Englander willing to grant Home Rule to Ireland, India, Egypt, anywhere; a man who would like to see South Africa an independent Dutch Republic; Canada amalgamated with the United States; and Australia and New Zealand insulted into cutting the painter.

This perfervid enthusiast for the rights of anyone against England, lived in a profuse style, and clothed his revolutionary projects in a soft voice and philosophical language. So he was a pillar of the Liberals, both in the House and in his constituency—exactly the man to advance with effect at Westminster the wildest theories of the Egyptian Nationalist. Therefore Hoseyn Hassan became an almost daily visitor to the Kraffts' flat, and constantly took Mr. Krafft to the Independence offices to consult with Mr. Considine. Mr. Considine's views on the colour question, as well as Mr. Considine's desire to work in secret, made this advisable. Lucrece had therefore no idea how intimate Hoseyn Hassan was with the Kraffts.

His delight in seeing Lucrece was genuine and unmistakable. He received her with the exquisite gestures and phrases of salutation of which Arabs are masters. His eyes shone; his face assumed a charming expression of deferent affection. Her heart went out to his manly beauty, his romantic appearance, the prestige of his descent.

"Do I intrude?" he asked, with fine Arab politeness.

"Why, no," she replied. "It's delightful to see a friend when your host and hostess are not in; and you think you will have a long time to wait for them."

"How has the world been treating the beautiful Miss Considine?"

It did not occur to Lucrece that she should have resented the familiarity of the phrase; it gratified her to feel that he thought her beautiful.

"I am *triste*. I came to Mrs. Krafft for consolation."

"Then you did well, for Mrs. Krafft is a fountain of enjoyment."

"I suppose she is; but I came to her because she is my only real woman friend—in a place where one has so many acquaintances."

"May I inquire the reason of your sadness?"

"I am disappointed."

"In what way?"

"Mr. Page, Lord Clapham's secretary, was going to take me to see the old part of the Bazzars, and some lovely old mosques; and he cannot go, because he has business at the British Agency."

Hoseyn Hassan could form a pretty shrewd guess as to what the business was.

"Might I not be permitted? I must know the mosques, at any rate, better than he does."

Lucrece admitted the force of his reasoning, though from the spectacular point of view it was fallacious, and still more from the archæological.

He read her face. "Let us arrange to meet," he said.

She looked at him rather puzzled.

"We cannot meet here," he said, "because I do not wish Mrs. Krafft to come. She is a most charming lady, but she will not be serious. Mosques do not interest her; and if she does not hold my attention, she will begin to——"

"Flirt," said Lucrece, with an outspokenness he had not expected.

Lucrece was sure that she did not want Mrs. Krafft's presence that afternoon. From this moment she began to regard her as a rival.

"And I should prefer not to call for you at your own home, because it is in the Independence Building; there might be people there, whom I should not want to see me going out with you for an afternoon's pleasure."

Lucrece looked at him inquiringly.

"I belong to Egypt, you see, not to myself. Every minute of the day I ought to be working for the Cause. But I want this afternoon so badly, and I can only have it if I am discreet and meet you in some safe spot."

She looked at him in a way that showed he had made a false move; she did not like that word *safe*; he saw that.

"Have I used the wrong word? Do you Americans not use the word *safe* for a place you are *sure* to find?"

Lucrece was mollified. "Why, yes, I think so, though *sure* is more usual. Where shall it be?"

"In the Arab Museum. None of our people ever go there. Alas! they are dead to the artistic glories of our country."

"How dreadful!"

"That is one of the first things we must alter in the New Egypt."

Her look signified that she agreed with him. But she only said:

"What part of the Museum are we to meet in?"

"The room of the mosque-lamps, the first on the left. You did not say at what time, Miss Considine?"

"Three o'clock, if that suits you?"

"Perfectly."

Hoseyn Hassan felt as if he had the Genie's ring. From the moment that he put Lucrece into her cab to return home, he began to frame excuses to Mrs. Krafft's Arab butler. He had suddenly heard of important business, which would engage him for the rest of the day.

Mrs. Krafft, when she came in, was furious. She was now consumed with a passion for the Sheikh. She had known all along that he was more in love with Lucrece, but Lucrece had kept out of his way, and her desires seemed in a fair way to fulfilment. What had possessed this malapert girl to interfere at this moment, and why did instinct keep repeating to her that Lucrece had but to whistle for the falcon to settle?

Feeling mischievous and bored, she telephoned to Captain Wemyss at the Abbassiyeh Barracks, to know if he would take lunch with them. He telephoned back, "Good egg. Was at the loose end. Match with the Rifles fallen through. Can skip out of uniform, and be with you just before one-thirty."

Captain Wemyss had been assiduous. Mrs. Krafft was undeniably handsome, and a very well-turned-out woman. At her house you were always sure of good entertainment in both senses of the word. The table was liberal, the wines were unexceptionable, and Mrs. Krafft's saucy tongue was kept pleasantly in check by an amorous temperament. The big Guardsman was much interested in this pretty spirited creature, whom most soldiers began by voting bad form, and ended by thinking the most amusing woman in Cairo. He was not the less interested because Mrs. Krafft, who, in spite of her temperament, had a very good idea of taking care of herself, had, so far, succeeded in keeping him at arm's-length.

She was rather disturbed by her husband's not turning up to lunch, for though Julius took no more interest in her affairs than a boy takes in a sermon, he acted his part to perfection, when she wished to pose as a pattern wife. She had always been the pattern, when Captain Wemyss called, but he continued to have hopes, and hailed with satisfaction the M.P.'s absence.

Before they had been in the smoking-room ten minutes he had half-betrayed himself in several ways to such an experienced general. He allowed his admiration to be seen : he came close ; he asked to be allowed to look at the scarab she was wearing—which was really of high interest and value ; he paid her compliments with a ring of sincerity in his voice ; and slipped into calling her " little woman."

It was as much to protect herself as in malice that, after lunch, Mrs. Krafft told him about Hoseyn Hassan and Lucrece, and suggested that they should take a cab and try and catch them together. It may have been instinct, or it may have been merely jealousy, that convinced her that Hoseyn Hassan's important business was with Lucrece.

" Rather like hunting for a needle in a haystack, isn't it ? " said the Grenadier. He had been looking forward to an interesting *tête-à-tête*, and would have shirked going altogether, if he had not owed the Considine household a grudge for its unconcealed disapproval of him.

" I don't think so. Every Egyptian in Cairo knows Hoseyn Hassan by sight. There's a cab-stand opposite the Considine's flat. The cabmen will know which direction they took."

" Oh, all right," he said, still not very pleased.

A cab was called for them, and a few minutes later Mrs. Krafft's dragoman was interrogating the *arabeah* drivers in the Sharia Boulak.

" Had they seen Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan and an American lady ? " asked the dragoman. " His mistress and the officer-gentleman with her had arranged to meet the Sheikh, and he had not told them where he would be."

" No. They knew him well by sight, and were positive that he had not passed down the street all day."

" Euchred ! " cried Captain Wemyss, with undisguised satisfaction.

" Not at all," she replied. " I have still a good clue." She ordered her dragoman to tell the *arabeah* men that the lady with the Sheikh was the American lady who lived in the Egyptian Independence Building."

" He is not with her," they said, " for she took an *arabeah* not five minutes ago, and drove towards the Ezbekiyeh."

Mrs. Krafft, with her practised eye, picked out the

best horses on the stand, and made her dragoman ask their driver if he knew the lady by sight.

"Of course," he replied. "They are the best customers we have."

"Well, pay off our cab, and take this one and tell the man that he is to find Miss Considine."

"How's he going to find Miss Considine?" growled Captain Wemyss.

"Nothing easier. She is sure to have a nickname among the natives. As he drives along he will hold his whip in a certain way, and call out this name; and then the people in the street will tell him in which direction she has gone."

"Well, I'm damned."

"What did I hear you say, Captain Wemyss?"

"I said I must be careful."

"Yes, I think so."

"Tell the man to fly," she said to the dragoman. But *arabeah* drivers always do this, without being told.

At the head of the street cabby gave the signal with his whip, and said a word they could not catch. He turned to the right; the quarry must have gone to the Ataba-el-Khadra, not to Cook's. There was nothing she would stop at before she reached the Square. At the Ataba cabby signalled again, and was directed down the Sharia Mohammed Ali, not the Mousky. Half-way to the Citadel stands the Museum of Arabian Art. A cab was standing outside it. "That is her cab," said the *arabeah* driver to the dragoman.

"Oh, I like this game," cried Captain Wemyss. "But it does not follow that Verdigris is here."

"I think we may take that for granted, but Youssef shall ask." Youssef heard what she said, and, springing down from the box, ran up the steps. He returned immediately, saying that the Sheikhi was inside with the American lady.

"What are you going to do now, you female Sherlock Holmes?"

"Wait outside, of course, to see how long they'll stay, if they're left to themselves."

"What a cheerful prospect?"

"I don't mean at the door, like her cabby. There's a turquoise dealer at the opposite corner, behind the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' fountain. I shall buy

turquoises, and you can keep an eye on the Museum, or help me choose the stones, just as you prefer. Youssef can keep a look-out."

When they went into the turquoise shop, the proprietor, an almond-eyed Persian, produced a new bag of stones which he said had just come from Mecca, but otherwise displayed no interest in their arrival.

"You're recognised," said Captain Wemyss. "I suppose you're like most women—turn everything in the shop over, and say you'll come back to make your purchases."

"No. I've spent pounds and pounds with this sphinx."

"What does the death's head mean by it, then?"

"He's just a Persian, that's all; they never speak," said Mrs. Krafft, and was soon absorbed in judging the new stones, too absorbed to note flirtatious advances, which, at an interesting point, were broken off by the dragoman's crying "Coming now," and rushing out of the shop.

Mrs. Krafft's heart smote her ribs with jealousy. She had never seen Lucrece so animated before, or, of course, so lovely; and Hoseyn Hassan's romantic face was eloquent of his happiness: they had been in the museum for more than an hour.

Youssef frustrated the pretty little scheme which was in Mrs. Krafft's mind. She had forgotten to take him into her confidence, and, as he knew what intimate friends of hers both Hoseyn Hassan and Lucrece were, he took it for granted that all four had really arranged to go out together, and somehow missed connection. So before his mistress could call him back, he had stopped their *arabeah*, and informed them that Mrs. Krafft wished to speak to them.

But Mrs. Krafft's frustrated scheme could not have produced a result which worked better. She did not spare Lucrece.

"Our coachman pointed out a cab, which he said belonged to you, outside the museum, rather more than an hour ago; we did not come in, because we did not wish to disturb you. We thought we'd just wait for you here."

Lucrece had not noticed how the minutes fled in the museum. She had passed an absorbingly interesting time

there, for a high official had come out of an office, when the door-keeper had informed him that the Sheikh was in the museum, and had opened the glass cases, in which the priceless Korans of the Early Caliphs, some of them more than a yard high, were kept. He turned them over, showing the interesting points till Hoseyn Hassan looked at his watch, and said they must be going on to see the mosques.

Perhaps even the Descendant of the Prophet felt that it was a waste of time looking at Korans, under the circumstances.

For many girls the afternoon would have been spoiled. But Lucrece was quite unaffected by the contretemps. She did not feel that she was accountable to Mrs. Krafft for her actions. She was not aware that she was poaching; and the pleasure she sought in going out with the Sheikh was purely æsthetic. So she said, perfectly naturally, "I am sorry you should have had so long to wait. I can't stay, dear, because we have a string of mosques to see. Tell the man to drive on, will you, Sheikh?"

The fact that she was rapidly falling in love with the Sheikh certainly increased her pleasure; every little attention he paid her was performed with adorable grace and reserve.

Above all, she appreciated visiting the mosques with him. His knowledge of their art was not more exact than his knowledge of their dates. But he could explain what interested her more: the meaning of their symbolism, the part played by their sheikhs in the life of the people, and the functions of religion for Mohammedans. He was full of their legends.

What pleased her above all was that, wherever he went into a mosque, an atmosphere of reverence went with him. It was a beautiful sight to see his fine, rapt face, and his stately figure in its robes of the sacred green, standing in the *liwan* of one of the great old mosques: he seemed an ideal servant of the Lord.

When Lucrece got home, driving in a cab by herself, but with a trusty agent of the Sheikh's on the box outside, her father did not inquire where she had been, or she would have told him. Since she was very small, he had acted upon the motto, "Ask no questions and you will be told no stories." Always interested if she told him

about her doings, he was never inquisitive if she did not.

Hoseyn Hassan was less fortunate, for, after dinner, Mrs. Krafft, telling her husband that she was going to one of the hotel dances (which he never attended), went on from the dance to upbraid Hoseyn Hassan in his palace. She telephoned from the hotel to say that she was coming.

He showed his sincerity by the cordial way in which he volunteered that his major-domo should be on the lookout for her at the door, to let her in without delay.

She had dressed with great care in the ball-dress in which she looked her handsomest.

"What a pretty woman you are," her husband had said to her as he put her in her cab.

The Sheikh thought so too, as the door closed behind her, and they advanced to meet each other.

But lovely and voluptuous as she looked, his thoughts immediately reverted to her as the German wife of his Little Englander ally; also as a friend whom he had treated rather badly.

"Why have you cheated me like this?" she asked. "It was I who introduced you to Miss Considine. I know that you have always loved her more than me. I should have been reasonable, and allowed you to do all the talking and hanging-on to her. I love you so much that it would have been sufficient consolation for me to see you putting forth your graces."

Hoseyn Hassan might have thought that he had taken leave of his senses but for the fact that in almost every case, where he had besieged an Englishman's wife or daughter in pursuance of his vow, submission had come quite suddenly, as if she were carried away by a rush of feeling.

He was much distressed by the turn things had taken. He meant to play fair with the Kraffts. Apart from his vow, he was not what is called a bad man, though he was a passionate Oriental; and his affairs with women more beautiful, more interesting, more initiative than are to be found in the harem, had made him keenly appreciative of the charms of European ladies.

He defended himself. "No love-making has ever passed between me and Miss Considine."

She smiled incredulously.

"I have never seen her without you till to-day."

"You managed rather well, then," said Mrs. Krafft, bitterly.

"And to-day my meeting her was entirely unsought."

"Oh, throw the blame on the woman, like your forefather, Adam."

"I pray you to be just, if one beautiful woman can be just where another beautiful woman is concerned."

He thought her beautiful. She was mollified a little.

"Listen," he said. "I swear that I had no thoughts of her when I left home this morning to come and see you as usual. You were out when I came, but I sat down to wait for you. Then she came in, very *triste*. An Englishman, Mr. Page, in the employ of the British Consul-General, had promised to take her to some old mosques. But the English have been very active to-day, preparing some blow, perhaps; and his employer could not spare him. So beautiful Miss Considine——"

The woman beside him made a gesture of impatience. He was unperturbed; the sentence he had begun was an answer to it. "Came to you for consolation. You were not there. I found out her trouble, and offered myself."

"Of course; and immediately ran away so that I should not come into the arrangement, and spoil your sport."

"You have stated the facts almost correctly."

The callousness, as it seemed, of the admission, took Mrs. Krafft's breath away; he proceeded: "I wished to go with her alone because she was evidently much interested in mosques, and I wished to give my entire attention to explaining things to her."

"Very pretty. I should like to have heard all you said. I can understand that I should have been in the way of such explanations."

"Yes, you would," he said, sturdily. "You would have demanded my attention for yourself, and you would have been restless, as often as it wandered from you."

"And what of that? You are my friend, not hers."

"But this expedition was to be for her, not you!"

"And may I ask what you did with yourselves in a lonely place like the Arab Museum, together, for more than an hour?"

"We looked at the Korans chiefly."

"Oh, you remind me of the duke who went to a Brighton

hotel for a week-end with another man's wife, and, when he was being cross-examined in the divorce suit, which followed, told the Counsel that they had gone there to do some reading together."

"But they did not have the Director of the Arab Museum with them all the time," he said sweetly.

"Of course they didn't; why do you talk such nonsense?"

"Because we did."

"Will you swear this to me, Hoseyn?"

He made the beautiful Arab asseveration.

"And, now, since you are more reasonable, allow me to offer you another cup of coffee. You have let that get cold."

"No—brandy," she said, hoarsely. "Have you any in the palace?"

"I have everything for my foreign guests."

The servant who was summoned, and brought the brandy in a beautiful old Arab crystal flask, only brought one glass with it. Many Mohammedans hold that it is merely the use of ordinary wine that is forbidden by the Koran, choosing to interpret it literally; the Sheikh was a strict formalist. Yet he yielded when Mrs. Krafft bade him drink the full glass which he had poured out for her. He felt that he needed nerving for the ordeal he had to go through.

But when he had drunk the spirit, of which he had never partaken before, it made the ordeal seem no longer an ordeal. She drank a glass too. It composed her, and she began to abandon herself to the restfulness of the sensuous surroundings. They were in the Hall of the Fêtes of the Harem—a smaller edition of the Great Hall of the Caliphs, with a musical fountain in the sunken marble pavement of its centre; and cushioned floors and low divans under the graceful arches which surrounded it. It was lit with electric lights behind flowers of red venetian glass, which threw a glamour over everything.

"Now, I will have a cigarette," she cried, sinking back on a divan with a fine carelessness. "But first arrange my cushions for me, Hoseyn."

As he bent over her with facile hand but grave self-restraint, she held out her arms to him, and let her whole soul appear in her eyes.

* * * * *

It was almost midnight, when Dan Climo saw a cab drive up to the door of Hoseyn Hassan's palace and Mrs. Krafft come out. He could see her quite plainly, for an electric light had been inserted in the old-fashioned lantern over the door. She looked gloriously handsome, and strangely elated.

He felt vindictive, for he had been waiting more than two hours in the shadow of the doorway opposite.

Her cabman had betrayed her. Knowing Hoseyn's reputation, and the frequency of his visits to the Kraffts, Climo had felt certain that a liaison must result from it—and as he hated both him and the Kraffts, he determined to find the lovers out and get the whip-hand of them. He consulted Dimitri, the Greek scoundrel on the Nationalist Committee, who kept the *café* where the Nationalists crimes were hatched. Dimitri introduced him to one of his spies, who agreed to catch Mrs. Krafft for him for five hundred piastres. The spy offered a reward to the cabman on the Savoy Hotel stand which was opposite the Krafft's flat. Consequently, her cabman, the moment he had deposited his fare, drove off furiously to the *Parliamentary Mpar*, as Dimitri called his *café*. The spy happened to be there, as did Climo. So within a quarter of an hour Dan Climo was installed in his observation post in the opposite doorway, which the spy had arranged for him.

Five pounds was a large sum for Dan Climo, but it opened up noble possibilities of blackmail, if he bided his time.

CHAPTER XI

HOW LUCRECE CONSIDINE WAS BOYCOTTED AT THE KHEDIVIAL SPORTING CLUB

To none of the numerous festivities which they had attended in Cairo had Stephen Considine looked forward so much as to the United Sports of the Three Higher Schools, the Khedivieh, the Tewfikieh, and the Saidieh, held in the Khedivial Sporting Club. For this is the festivity in which the Egyptians themselves take most interest, and this is the occasion on which the Egyptian student, who is the backbone of the Nationalist movement, is treated seriously by the foreign colony and visitors, who all come in their best, headed by the British Agent, and the other high British officials, to grace the event. And this is one of the few occasions which the Khedive himself almost invariably attends.

There was no doubting the interest evinced by the Egyptians. Outside, the crowd, assembled to watch the dignitaries pass, extended from the Nile Bridge to the Grand Stand entrance, in the long avenue of lebbek-trees, between the back of the K. S. C. and the west bank, which makes a glorious effect in the sunset. Inside, the whole course, in which the sports were to be held, was ringed in with black-coated and red-*tarbooshed* Egyptian males of all ages, five or six deep, which thickened till you could see nothing but serried lines of *tarbooshes*.

The crowd outside watched the arrivals in interested silence: they made no demonstrations. The only noises were the sound of carriage wheels, and the shouts and galloping of the handsome and well set-up police troopers, mounted on splendid white Arabs.

Inside, too, so far, there had been unusual quietness, though the Commissioner of Police expected trouble, and half a battalion of a British regiment, the Welsh

Fusiliers, was drawn up as a Guard of Honour—a Guard of Honour to whom ball-cartridge had been served out by secret orders from the General—round the enclosure in which the stands were erected.

Tom had taken care to procure excellent seats for Lucrece and her father, a little way from those assigned to the Kraffts and the Prestages, as representatives of the British Parliament. He stood behind Lucrece monopolising her. The only thing which interfered with his happiness was Stephen Considine's inquisitiveness. He wanted to know all about every Englishman who drove up to the special stand reserved for high officials and their families,—what their names were, what their ranks were, if they had influential posts, if they were influential in British Society. He might have been the Cairo Fashion Correspondent of the *Paris New York Herald* by the trouble he took in the matter. Tom was not very well up in the subject, and had the ordinary Guardsman's objection to being catechised like a policeman on duty; but Mr. Considine was Lucrece's father, and Tom was very much in love, so he looked round for some other officer who knew more about it than he did. There was not one near. He thought nothing of this: he accepted it as a recognition that Lucrece was his preserve.

There is no occasion on which the British officers show a better feeling to the young Egyptian than at these United College Sports. For here the Egyptian is meeting them on their own ground, the sacred field of Sport. He has English masters at the three colleges, who try to make a plucky and athletic man of him, like the English Public School and University man. And to a limited extent they succeed, for physically, the Egyptian is often a fine man, and he will take infinite trouble over anything that interests him. In drill the Egyptians equal the finest European troops; in tent-pegging the Egyptians carry off all the prizes at gymkhanas, because they are willing to practise it for several hours a day; in Swedish gymnastic exercises they are magnificent. The English go to these sports, eager to applaud every fine performance.

At first Lucrece had all her thoughts filled with the charm and interest of the sight. In the background was the beautiful park, which had once formed the pleasure-grounds of a sovereign, and now had its expanses of green

turf, fringed with palms and acacias, devoted to the fashionable games of the Englishmen, polo and golf. In the foreground were the well-kept lawns, ringed with the scarlet *tarbooshes* of expectant Egyptians, and a serried line of British infantry; and gay with splendidly developed boys in running-tights, and the servants of the three colleges, in their long white robes and green tarbooshes and sashes, who were present like theatrical shifters, to move the various appliances for the jumping and the Swedish gymnastics. Overhead the sky was blue and the sun bright but not strong.

Lucrece was even pleased with a certain amusing and childish touch, about the sports, which was lacking in the keenly contested sports of America.

Her father was conscious of her isolation before she was. For one thing, he was so proud of Lucrece's popularity; for another, he was cut off from his own associates on such occasions, because it was agreed among them that it was better for the Cause, that his connection with them should be unsuspected.

However, Tom was with them, and very devoted, and the desire not to poach might be the reason for the other officers keeping away, though a presentiment to the contrary was growing.

Presently, the time for tea arrived, and all the foreigners swarmed down to the tea-paddock. It was full of officers, but none of them approached, and evidently, none of them meant to approach Lucrece. They took off their hats at a safe distance with a watery smile. Mr. Lavender, the Grenadier, cut her dead: Mr. Polkinghorne looked sheepish; Mr. de Grammont was icily polite and showed the whites of his eyes. The boycott was not at all to the taste of the two sturdy Scots, Renshaw and Esslemont, who did not belong to the half battalion of the Fusiliers on duty, so they went without their tea, rather than run the risk of a *rencontre*. Captain Bigge never knew what to say to Lucrece, except at dances, to which he went little in the polo season; and Colonel Went had not spoken to her since the first evening; he was a serious person. So these two, who did not belong to either of the Messes, were not called upon to act. And Major Carleton, who, as a senior officer and a personage, besides being a good fellow, might have acted with more independence, was not present.

The cruellest stab was that Mrs. Krafft was surrounded by them, and seemed to make no effort to include Lucrece in her circle. She had dragged in Mrs. Prestage instead. How was Lucrece to know that Mrs. Krafft's first thought had been to send her an invitation by one of the soldiers, and that she had been told that it would break the party up if it was given? Beau Aylmer did glance at her from time to time, with a sad little smile. But it was clear that none of them meant to come. The Army had proscribed her.

Whether it was that he was living at the British Agency, and not in barracks, or that there were rumours of their being engaged, the word had not been passed to Tom. And he was so infatuated, that he noticed nothing till Stephen Considine, with American bluntness of taste, said: "Tell me, Mr. Cobbe, what have we done to offend the Almighty?"

Tom looked at him blankly.

"Why aren't the Army 'taking any' of us to-day?"

Thus squarely confronted with the issue, Tom perceived that Lucrece had been sent to Coventry, and, eyeing the total abstainers steadily, he saw that Aylmer was little in sympathy with the movement; so, as they were sauntering up the grand-stand steps from tea, he pulled him aside.

Aylmer knew quite well what he was going to refer to.

"I'm awfully sorry about it, Cobbe; it's none of my doing: and it seems a bit rough to drop on a girl who doesn't know that she is transgressing. The Grenadiers are at the bottom of it. They're awfully down on the 'Gypies.' One of their chaps almost married one. But the four Messes have agreed to back each other up in this business, so individuals can't do anything."

"But what can she have done to incur their resentment? She's the most particularly behaved girl in Cairo. She couldn't have done anything off colour!"

"My dear chap, what she has done is to be seen in the Bazars going about alone with a 'Gypsy.'"

"Do you believe it?"

"I can't help it."

"What 'Gypsy' could she go about with?"

"The man they call Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan."

"The deuce!" said Tom. "But, after all, Sheikh

Hoseyn Hassan isn't an ordinary 'Gypsy. On some occasions he ranks before the Khedive himself."

"I know that, Cobbe, but she was not going about with him as the Descendant of the Prophet. I am afraid that she was going about with him as one of the best-looking and most fascinating Arabs you could meet."

"I'll take my oath she wasn't!"

"What do you mean?"

"Shall I tell you why she was going about with him?"

"I wish to God you could!"

"It's quite plain. It's to please her father, who is plotting with these Nationalist swine. Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan is the big gun in Nationalist circles."

"Speak to Considine."

"I can't."

"Oh, nonsense, man. It's your duty."

Lucrece herself was quite unmoved by the desertion of the Army. She had enjoyed its attentions very much; but she had not sought them, and she did not appear to notice their withdrawal, which was mortifying to those who had engineered the boycott.

Tom was right and wrong in his gauging of Stephen Considine. Sturdy Stephen's blue eye was as indicative of temper as of will-power. He was not the type of man, whom it is pleasant to haul over the coals upon a delicate domestic matter.

But Tom was in love, so he dared greatly. He was surprised at the result.

Stephen Considine declared with heat, that it was infamous for his daughter to have gone unchaperoned with Hoseyn Hassan, especially to the Bazaars. He would apologise to her English friends for the slight she had put on them by so doing, if any apology were possible. "In our country," he said, "much as we may admire the coloured man as a citizen, we cannot contemplate our sons or our daughters united with persons who have the smallest drop of coloured blood in their veins."

Tom gradually became aware that Stephen was comparing a man of the purest Arab blood, a Descendant of the Prophet, with the slave-descended coloured population of the United States; even he stared, though he was against the admission of the Egyptians to British social functions.

Stephen continued, white hot : " It's the greatest insult but one that he could offer."

" Did you hear that ?" said Tom. But Stephen did not listen. He hissed out : " Men have been lynched for less in the South."

" Hark !" cried Tom, laying his hand on his arm to interrupt him. " What's that noise ?"

Stephen listened for a few moments. " That's the Egyptians booing ; that's their way of hooting an unpopular person."

" Then I expect it's my father arriving," said Tom with a queer smile.

" No. He's here already. Mr. Page is on the lawn."

" The course—oh, yes. There's Sam."

By the athletes who were taking part in the sports, at any rate, Sam Page was being received with signs of welcome. One of the best features of the Egyptian is his cordiality and desire to make himself pleasant. And no Englishman was more popular at the Three Higher Colleges than Sam, who had exerted himself on many occasions to get Lord Clapham to ask for concessions for them, and had taken a strong personal interest in all their sports. The fluency with which he could converse with them in Arabic was a claim hardly less strong.

Sam's own powers as an athlete may also have counted for a little among the older students—some of them were of distinctly riper years, for schoolboys. Sam was at that moment enjoying a hearty laugh with the handsome, manly-looking Egyptian, who had just won the hurdle-race, and was informing him that he was a father with two children.

The booing had been coming from the outside, but now it broke out inside as well, while the Khedive's carriage dashed in.

The Sovereign of Egypt was in a difficult position. Now that he was the virtual, as well as the nominal, sovereign, he did not feel inclined to diminish his authority ; but Lord Clapham had been sent out by a Little England Government with instructions which, translated into slang, meant " to let things slide." So, whenever any firmness was to be shown in resisting the Nationalists, it had to come from the Khedive. Therefore the Khedive was unpopular, and, knowing that he was unpopular, he came after tea,

instead of in time for the opening event; and not feeling completely secure under the escort of Egyptian Lancers, who were all tainted with the Nationalist conspiracy, he committed the unpardonable outrage of surrounding his carriage with British Cavalry. The crowd without, and the students within, were, with a fine impartiality, booing equally at his British escort, and at him for employing them. And the British escort, troopers of the famous Scots Greys, were caring not at all, but riding in their full dress scarlet, as if all the soldiers and crowds of Egypt were as nothing to the men whose charge at Waterloo forms one of the red-letter pages of military history. Epoch-making, too, in a way were the events of this moment; for Egypt was putting her monarch, to whom she had been so constant, through fair and foul, on the side of the English, whom she shrieked against as enemies; though they had given her prosperity, such as she had never known, since the last of her great Pharaohs was carried to his tomb in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes.

The scene was a strange one: the huge ring of scarlet *tarbooshes*, six deep round the course, was booing angrily and intermittently, while on the course young men of the Three Colleges were going through elaborate Swedish gymnastics in honour of their sovereign. The Khedive may have been a little disturbed by the manifestations of disloyalty, but the crowd of Europeans hardly noticed the booing: they were accustomed to natives making loud and extraordinary noises, and, so long as there were half a battalion of grim Welsh Fusiliers standing at ease between them and the thousands of angry *tarbooshes*, they would attend to their pressing concerns of amenities between the sexes.

There was one exception. Stephen Considine was still at white heat, and his anger had veered round from the offending Hoseyn Hassan to the officers who had dared to show their displeasure with his daughter, till the sight of Hoseyn Hassan turned it back.

The vision of his colleague was the more exasperating, because the demonstration was resolving itself into an acclamation of his influence.

For, when the booing was at its loudest, the tall figure of the Descendant of the Prophet, clad in the accustomed green robes and turban, passed swiftly round the ring of

tarbooshes, with the right hand uplifted in its favourite attitude. It bade them desist from disrespecting their Sovereign. The booing died away.

Stephen Considine found it difficult to judge Hoseyn Hassan's motive. Was he concerned for the Khedive? Did he wish to show the Khedive his power? Did he wish to show all the world of Egypt, English as well as Egyptian, his power? It did not strike him that Hoseyn Hassan's demonstration, like the other, might be directed to his own daughter Lucrece.

At that moment his attention was distracted by the arrival of Kennedy, who had been in attendance on the General. As Kennedy was obviously making his way to Lucrece—he was already at the foot of the steps up to the stand, where she and Tom were forgetting the world—Captain Wemyss came up to him, and, before half a dozen other officers, who were standing about, said, "I want to speak to you, Kennedy."

"What is it?" asked Kennedy impatiently. He had no love for Wemyss, and was impatient to get to Lucrece.

"Are you going to Miss Considine?"

"What the devil is that to you?" asked Kennedy, in quick anger.

"Only this: that the four Messes have decided that none of their officers are to be seen speaking to her."

"And what have you got to do with it?" Kennedy's dry tones were withering, and he was hitting the nail hard on the head, for Captain Wemyss had engineered the whole affair; and he had also another connection.

"As the secretary of the committee it was my duty to pass the word round to the four Messes, as it is my duty to pass it round to you." He had not lost his temper, because he was taking such a malicious pleasure in wounding his enemy, Kennedy.

Kennedy turned his steely blue eyes on Captain Wemyss, and looked him up and down for a minute. He translated the impudent face correctly. Then he said:

"You got up the whole of this dirty business, Wemyss. I wonder how many lies you have told about her."

Captain Wemyss was cool no longer. He was now blazing with temper. Two or three of the other officers started forward to restrain him. They were afraid that he would fling himself on Kennedy there and then. Whatever his faults were he was absolutely reckless.

But he managed to restrain himself, merely saying : " You'll have to make those words good somewhere else, Kennedy."

" Nothing will give me greater pleasure than to knock them down your throat," replied Kennedy, with a coolness that was terrible. " I suppose that is all you have to say to me, Wemyss."

" No. I don't think you understood what the four Messes decided."

" The whole thing is a put-up job. And if it wasn't, I shouldn't care. I shouldn't listen to my own Mess, if I thought it was wrong."

" Well, you won't be able to go into the Citadel Mess, if you speak to Miss Considine."

" Then I shan't mess with them," said Kennedy calmly. " Let me go, please. I don't want to waste any more time now." He passed on up the stair, thinking no more of the impending fracas than he thought of the end of the world. His only thoughts were of Lucrece. If she was being subjected to the cruelty of a boycott, he must exert himself to show her that he had no part in it, to show the world that it did not exist.

He had been in attendance on the General, who was in attendance on the Khedive, so he was wearing his full dress kilt. He was glad of this, for it helped him to emphasise the fact that one more soldier was taking no part in that conspired boycott. It made Mr. Considine feel proud and grateful, and it made Tom feel mightily more comfortable. The serene, imperturbable Kennedy was a tower of strength under these trying circumstances.

Lucrece was astonished at the change in him. The silent, retiring Kennedy was almost lover-like in the efforts he made to interest her, and exhibit his devotion.

Before they left the K. S. C. Mr. Considine had tried his best to persuade both Kennedy and Tom to dine with them, and Lucrece had seconded the invitation warmly, but Tom had promised to be present at the dinner-party which his father was giving in honour of the auspicious day, to the various public functionaries who had taken a leading part in it; and Kennedy had a yet more important dinner to attend.

It was not his habit to take a defeat lying down; he meant to present himself at the Fusiliers' Mess in the

Citadel, to which he was attached, and see if Wemyss's threat would be carried out.

Now, amongst the spectators of his giving the lie to Captain Wemyss, had been the two inseparable Scotch cronies in the Welsh regiment, Renshaw and Esslemont; their sympathies had all been with Kennedy. They were enamoured of his pluck. They liked the defiance of public opinion on behalf of a friend, which was so typical of Kennedy: and they thought the way he had given the lie to a man twice his size like Ronald Wemyss was superb.

At the same time they could only foresee one end to it. That Kennedy would fight him was certain, but they did not see how he could win against Wemyss's superior weight and strength. For Wemyss had science, too; he had been champion of the Army in the Officers' heavy-weights, and was a man who stood six feet one, and at the present moment scaled fourteen stone; while Kennedy was only five feet nine, did not weigh more than ten stone and a half; and though he was probably a fair boxer had never thought it worth while putting in for a boxing competition. The only thing in his favour was that he was a man who lived a regular life, and was always in pretty good training, while Wemyss had put about two stone on to his fighting weight. Unless Wemyss managed to use his strength and get in a knock-out blow, the fight was likely to be a long one. No one who knew him, would expect Kennedy to give in till he was knocked senseless.

At the same time they had no hopes of Kennedy's winning, and they thought the whole thing would be disastrous for the Army at such a crisis.

But what were they to do? Among the dozen or more officers who had witnessed the affair, there was only one captain—a very junior captain—and no one senior; and it was dead against the code for a junior officer to lift a finger in the matter.

One thing they could do: and these two slow-moving Scots woke up into fierce energy over that.

Kennedy, after he and Tom Cobbe had seen the Considines off from the club with every attention, drove quickly in his cart to the Citadel, and dressed for Mess.

At first he meant to present himself early. Afterwards he changed his mind, and determined to go into

the Mess just before dinner, his object being to face the full current of public opinion.

The Mess was crowded. At the door he met Major Wynne, an absent-minded man who wore glasses. He had not been taken into the confidence of the junior officers, and said, "Good-evening" in his nervous, half-hearted way.

Kennedy took it as a sign that the Mess was against him, but that the Major was making a mild assertion of himself.

The effect on Kennedy was to make him feel all the more determined to go through with it. He met no one else till he entered the smoking-room, but he could see the state of tension the moment he was inside the door.

Was it heads or tails?

The next thing he heard was Renshaw's hearty voice: "Here's Kennedy! Knock the head off the boy."

Then came a popping of champagne corks, and a fire of "Your health, Jock," "Your health, Kennedy"—toasts at dinner being tabooed. It was on this that Renshaw and Esslemont had expended the one fit of energy they had ever been known to show outside of the polo-field. They had button-holed every junior Fusilier officer they met for an informal meeting at the Mess, where they had propounded the theory that, as Kennedy was a guest, the agreement they had come to with the other Messes about the boycott need not be binding on him. Their task was not a difficult one, for Wemyss was very unpopular with the Welshmen, and Kennedy highly popular; and they were secretly delighted at the way that Kennedy had trounced him in public. Major Wynne apparently knew nothing about it. He had been on duty with the Guard of Honour, and only just come back.

Kennedy stayed longer than usual after dinner. He expected to hear from Wemyss, and was not disappointed, for Lavender came up from Abbassiyeh in a motor. He found most of the Fusiliers in the billiard-room playing a big and noisy pool, in which Kennedy seemed to be the central figure.

Kennedy had already asked Renshaw and Esslemont to act for him. So they politely invited Lavender to come and have a drink, which he politely accepted.

After this, it did not take long to settle that Kennedy was to meet Wemyss in the ring, behind the mosque of

the Descendants of the Prophet, out in the Tombs of the Caliphs, at six the next morning. Renshaw went in to get Kennedy's final assent.

Having settled this, Lavender accepted a cigarette, and departed, followed by Kennedy as soon as the game was finished, because he was burning to see Lucrece.

He could no longer play the philosopher after the events of the afternoon.

CHAPTER XII

MR. CONSIDINE'S INFAMOUS PROPOSAL TO KENNEDY

LUCRECE had a *tête-à-tête* dinner with her father. It was not the *tête-à-tête* which Tom pictured for her. He had felt very sad at having to leave her to the mercies of an infuriated parent, but he was going to his father's dinner-party, more or less in attendance on the General, and could not excuse himself.

He need not have been concerned for that. The relations between Stephen Considine and Lucrece were not those of an ordinary father and daughter. Lucrece was sorry that her father's afternoon had been spoilt; but she came down to dinner as placid as if nothing had happened, wearing that delightful smile of affection, which always played about her mouth when she was regarding her father; and Stephen had recovered his composure. It was his habit to treat her as much like a sister as a child, except in the matter of affection.

He did, however, speak to her more sternly than he generally allowed himself to address her. He spoke of her being seen out with Hoseyn Hassan exactly as he would have spoken of her having been seen out with a coloured person in America. Lucrece merely opened her eyes a little wider. "But, father," she said, "you know I go out with Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan. I thought we had the matter out before, after I had been with Mrs. Krafft to his house. You know I went with him to see El-Azhar, and I thought you seemed rather pleased."

"I was not pleased. In fact, I was very displeased when you went to his palace. I did not raise any objection to your going to El-Azhar, though I should have preferred your not going; but in both these instances you had Mrs. Krafft with you; and that is entirely different from going out with him alone."

"I had no idea that you minded, or I should not have gone. There! are you happy now, you stupid old thing?"

"Happy in my daughter's ready concurrence with my wishes, but not altogether happy, for I can see that this man will lay desperate siege to you from many different sides."

"Fancy a man like Hoseyn Hassan thinking of a girl like me! You saw how all Egypt looked to him this afternoon!"

If Tom could have seen into Lucrece's heart, he would have been sorrier for himself than her. For on that afternoon his image had been completely obliterated by Kennedy's. It was Lucrece's first intimation how much Kennedy cared for her. And he was so much more worth the having, though she was not conscious of wanting either. But, if it had to be either, Lucrece was too serious a girl to compare a gay boy like Tom, with the Highlander, who impressed every one who crossed his path by his rare spirit of manliness and devotion. Lucrece, when she was a child, had heard American women saying that the ideal Englishman (meaning the ideal Briton) was the ideal man; that nowhere could you find the fine flower of manhood as you found it in the British Islands. Kennedy seemed to be the sort of man they were thinking of. But she felt as if she wanted something more exciting to go through life with than this ideal man.

And her father's admonitions had, as so often happens, put the very idea into her head, which he sought to banish. She had not thought of Hoseyn Hassan as a lover except, in the vaguest way, on the day that she went to his palace. But she gathered that this was what her father dreaded, and it made her measure things in her mind. It would be a wonderful thing to be the wife of a man, who was regarded as holy by an entire people, and, the more she saw of him, the more romantic and fascinating he appeared in her eyes. She had enjoyed that expedition to the mosques with him more than she had anticipated enjoying the mosques with Sam Page, who could have told her far more about them than Hoseyn Hassan, since the Sheikh had no definite knowledge of anything about them except the ritual. He knew in a vague way which were most worthy of a visit; their age and principal attractions were an easy matter, for the officials of the mosques followed

him about like a sovereign, and were only too proud to explain. His presence lent magic. To go into a mosque with one of the most sacred personages in Islam, and to see the reverent reception accorded to him, would have made each place worshipful of itself. Added to this he had the heart of a poet; he had the capacity to love every mosque they entered; his face grew very eloquent as the spirit of the place took hold of him. He was romantic even for an Arab.

When her father left her, Lucrece's mind dwelt on him. She could not help contrasting him with Kennedy to Kennedy's disadvantage. Unconsciously she no longer thought of Tom. She had a very warm feeling for the Highlander, who had shown his devotion to her that afternoon, when all the other officers except Tom avoided her. And the feeling might have been warmer, if she had, like her father, heard of his defiance of Wemyss.

But he seemed so ordinary, so merely gentlemanly; to have no interests beyond his profession and sport, neither of which offered her much, though by all accounts he bade fair to be as distinguished in the one as he was already distinguished in the other. His clean-cut resolute face was to her most unromantic. The *mens aequa in arduis* written so plainly on his firm lips and steady blue eyes seemed to her mere stolidity—absence of imagination. He dressed severely. She had never heard him express an opinion about the Arab city with its treasures of Mediæval Art, or the ancient Egyptian temples on the banks of the Nile, which he had passed. His life seemed entirely wanting in the hues of romance, for which she had such a craving, and in which Hoseyn Hassan's was so rich.

To be with Hoseyn Hassan, on the other hand, was like reading the romances which had fired her childhood; and, though neither of them ever made love to her in the ordinary sense of the word, the one surrounded her with a poetical atmosphere, the other only enjoyed her society.

She was so *distracte* that night, that Kennedy was glad for once when Stephen Considine carried him off to smoke a cigar, and have a whisky and soda. Stephen had an idea cooking in his mind of the highest importance to Kennedy.

First he was much impressed by Kennedy's giving Wemyss the lie; he had heard all about it from Mr. Chody; Americans are differently constituted to English people;

they like scenes. And, secondly, he had come to the conclusion that there was only one way of keeping Lucrece out of harm, and that either Kennedy or Tom must be the instrument. But, in the third place, he did not think that Tom had sufficient seriousness for the other functions, which he meant to demand of him. So it must be Kennedy. As Mr. Considine generally had things his own way, he lost no time in coming to the point.

"Captain Kennedy," he said, "have you ever thought of marrying?"

"Not since I went to school, sir. Up to that, I was desperately anxious to."

"We will put that aside," said Mr. Considine. "How old are you?"

"Thirty."

"An excellent marrying age—for a man—and eight years is just about the right difference."

Kennedy could only think of one thing which was twenty-two, and that was Lucrece; his heart began to beat quickly.

Stephen did not leave him in doubt many minutes.

"My daughter is a very desirable young woman."

Kennedy smiled his assent.

"You will allow that she is lovely. She is homely as well."

This mystified Kennedy, who did not know the American sense of *lovely* or *homely*. The shrewd millionaire noticed his mystification, and said, "I mean that she has a nature of sufficient sweetness."

Kennedy was sure she had, as he had noticed nothing to the contrary, in the hours that he had spent watching her; but he did not see what he could say, so he said nothing.

"And you might suppose that she will inherit a very large fortune."

He looked at Kennedy, as if he expected him to say something. But Kennedy had no desire to do the talking; he simply puffed at his cigar till Mr. Considine resumed.

"Under certain conditions, there is no one whom I should prefer as a son-in-law to yourself."

It seemed too good to be true. Lucrece was not only a millionaire's daughter, but beautiful enough to make a royal Duke renounce his claims to the succession for her hand. Kennedy could not help feeling a little anxious:

he expected hard conditions; when he heard them, he was almost stunned.

"In the first place, I want you to use your constant access to the General to suggest to him the complexion, which I wish affairs to wear."

Kennedy uncrossed his legs: he could hardly sit still while Mr. Considine was making such propositions. He was to be England's enemy, to deliberately mislead the General, as Boer spies led our armies into traps in the South African War. That was the price of Lucrece's hand.

He was starting up when Mr. Considine said, "Please hear me right through, before you answer, Captain Kennedy."

Kennedy sat down again, and Mr. Considine proceeded. "Secondly I wish you to inform me of every transaction, every order, every dispatch, in the General's office, which is of any consequence to those who are working for the Independence of Egypt, so that we may be able to check-mate and frustrate it."

"Mr. Considine, I will hear no more," cried Kennedy, bounding up from his chair. "How dare you suggest to me that I should betray my country."

"These are big words," sneered Stephen. "What one person calls betraying England, thousands would call devotion to the sacred cause of Egyptian liberty."

"I shall show devotion to England, and betray you," said Kennedy recovering the cold, dry manner which characterised him in a crisis.

"Oho," said Stephen, in an insulting singsong voice, "so it is quite possible for us to betray something, only not that precious England."

"That's not the same thing," said Kennedy, with dignity. "When a person asks a soldier to break his oath of allegiance, to denounce the tempter is not betraying, it is loyalty to his oath."

"You can juggle with words as you like. The fact remains that you intend to betray me."

"Yes, I intend to denounce you."

"And that after to-night you will never speak to Lucrece again."

"I suppose so," a tone of despair crept into the stern voice.

Stephen Considine had the wisdom of the serpent. He thought he saw his opportunity and seized it.

"Go and say good-bye to Lucrece," he said. "You shall see her alone, and for as long as you please, to-night; but remember—I warn you—that you shall never speak to her again, if you betray me."

"Lucrece," said Kennedy with emotion, which was strange to him, as he entered the room.

His using her christian name startled her, and prepared her to receive a proposal. It was not the first time that a young man had suddenly called her Lucrece.

"May I call you *Lucrece* to-night? I am come to say good-bye. I am never to be allowed to see you again."

"Call me anything you like." She brushed that away as a minor matter; Lucrece was practical, and saw that there was a crisis to be dealt with, which dwarfed this question.

For a minute he was at a loss how to begin. At last he said, "Your father has offered me your hand as the price of betraying my country."

"I will tell him that I could not marry you," she said simply, imagining that the difficulty lay in the refusal.

As he did not seem reassured, she continued.

"I like you awfully, Captain Kennedy. You are my oldest friend in Egypt, and you were a trump this afternoon. But I could not marry you. I could not love you. I could not contemplate going through life with a person, who sees so little of its colour as you do. Our ideas of it are so different."

"I am afraid that this isn't the question," he explained, "though to marry you has been the dream of my life, ever since I met you. I must give it all up for England."

Lucrece could not entirely see what England had to do with it. The element of patriotism was lacking in her conception of duty. The only idea approaching to it, which she had, was a mild Anglophobism. That appeared to her in the light of the protest of Liberty against England, the Tyrant of the World—in other words, England who refused to Ireland the right of secession. She did not see that what Ireland demanded was the same principle of secession, against which the United States had fought that bloody four years' war. She did not see why affection for a country should be allowed to affect anyone's domestic peace. Half of the population of her country consisted of people who had given up their own nationality—most of them gladly—to become Americans.

"What is the question, then?" she asked, with her beautiful face sweetly serious, a little mystified, very sympathetic.

"The question is whether there is any way out of my denouncing your father——"

"Denouncing my father?" she asked anxiously. "For what?"

"For trying to make me break my oath of allegiance, and betray my country's secrets to the enemy."

"How serious an offence is it?"

"The greatest in the world for me if I yielded to the temptation. But I suppose you mean for your father."

"I was thinking of that. What could they do to him? Could they kill him?" she demanded with white face and husky voice.

"Kill him? No. I don't even know if they could banish him. But something far worse than either of these would happen to him: no honourable man would speak to him."

Lucrece was stunned. She felt as if she was recovering from a blow, which had bereft her of her senses. She had never done a dishonourable action in her life; the open, flawless type of her beauty was an index to her character. She had never felt tempted, though she had had hardly any restrictions placed upon her liberty, since she was a child. She was a sincerely good woman. But in the western community, where her father had made his money, many of the great fortunes had been made by "slimness"; and the men who made them openly boasted of it. It might make their neighbours afraid to enter into business dealings with any one so clever, but it did not exclude them from Society. If their plot was detected and they failed, they might be despised for failure; but the law was their conscience; if they could keep out of its clutches their moral sense was satisfied.

Yet, if her ears had not deceived her, in Kennedy's eyes, it was as great a punishment for her father's attempt to corrupt him to be known, as for him to suffer death or banishment.

Lucrece sat on in silence, sorely troubled. She told herself that he was right, that this was what the English would think, and that theirs was the only good opinion in Egypt worth the having. She confessed this for great things, though she did not care two pence for the ostracism

to which she was subjected for going about with Hoseyn Hassan. There their sentiment was false and she would not bow to it. But here! No, her father's disgrace must not be known. She could not bear to contemplate obloquy being poured on that beloved head, to contemplate his being an outcast.

"No. You must not denounce him, Mr. Kennedy, you must not," she cried.

"How can I help it?"

"I don't know. Oh, I don't know; but I entreat you not to."

Her voice was almost a moan.

"I must."

"Will nothing stop you?" she asked in desperation.

"Nothing."

"You told me just now that you loved me, that the dream of your life, ever since you first met me, had been to marry me," she began.

"And you saved me from temptation by telling me that you could never marry me, because you could never love me," he replied, as a martyr might have answered a promise of life from Bishop Bonner.

"I've changed my mind," she said, in a low firm voice. "I will marry you, if you promise me not to denounce my father."

Not a second did he hesitate. "I cannot promise," he declared.

"Then you cannot love me," pleaded Lucrece.

"I not love you?" he cried. "After the greatness of England, there is nothing in the world I desire like marrying you."

"You do not show your love," she said gently.

"I shall show it."

"How?" she asked, eagerly. Was he relenting?

"I shall never marry anyone, because I cannot marry you."

"And yet you will not spare my father?" There was bitterness in her voice now.

"To spare him is to sin myself," maintained Kennedy.

"How can you sin, if you do nothing?" asked Lucrece, unconvinced.

"Because it's my duty to England to warn the General of the moves of our enemies," said Kennedy decisively.

"But no harm is done," she insisted, "you would not

listen to him : and there is no one else in the same position for him to corrupt, if he wanted to."

"Yes : there's Cobbe," he said. The name was evidently on the tip of his tongue.

From the way that Lucrece received his name, Kennedy could see that there was no danger in this quarter. But he repeated, "I must do it. So I suppose it is good-bye for ever. I would to God, that I could see any way out of it !" he cried.

"Why must you decide at once ? Do sleep on it," she entreated.

For the first time he wavered.

"Do that for me, Ailsa."

The name from her lips touched him. No one had ever called him Ailsa since his mother died. He could not remember his father.

He did not speak for several minutes. He was turning her entreaty over and over in his mind. He did not see any way in which the Service could suffer by his granting her this : so at last he consented. He held out his hand, but she would not take it.

"Perhaps it will not be good-bye," she said.

When he had gone, she knew that she came nearer loving him now than she had ever done before.

That he would denounce her father she was certain. But she was conscious of a longing that he should stand to his principles. She could see how much he was in love with her, and yet he was willing to risk his life's happiness for what he owed to the country, which had given him birth.

CHAPTER XIII

HOW MR. CONSIDINE DENOUNCED HIMSELF TO THE AUTHORITIES

WHEN Kennedy got back to the Citadel he found Renshaw and Esslemont waiting for him. They announced their intention of sitting up all night, to see that he was called at the proper time, and got what he liked to eat and drink before starting. They meant him to have as good a chance as possible; and as they were good Scots, and also Welsh Fusiliers, "making a night of it" did not mean much to them, while it allowed Kennedy to go and snatch a few hours' sleep, free from all anxieties.

He was an old campaigner, and was soon fast asleep. Indeed, when the waking and breakfast arrangements were secure, there was nothing left to make him forego this necessary sleep. He was ready to fight Wemyss, and he had written a brief note to the General denouncing Mr. Considine's attempt to corrupt him, which he asked Renshaw to leave at the General's office, in case he was not in a condition to go there himself.

Not a doubt arose in his mind as to whether he should denounce Mr. Considine. He had made the decision irrevocably. He had deferred its execution for a few hours to please Lucrece. But he did not understand why she should have asked him. She should have known how useless it was to expect him to change.

There would be plenty of time to realise his loss, when he had seen the General about it. For the present he needed sleep. He dismissed all thoughts and went to sleep.

Esslemont came to wake him, while the practical Renshaw saw that the bite and sup he had ordered for breakfast were absolutely right.

Well ahead of time they started—in a couple of *arabeahs*, because the regimental doctor insisted on going with them.

As they drove to the place, where the fight was to be fought, he was the only one of the four, who noticed how gloriously beautiful the domes and minarets of the stately mediæval tombs looked with the rose of sunrise on them. Their minds were fixed on the great event. He would not ordinarily have noticed the tombs at all; but his senses were more than usually acute after the drama with Lucrece and her father the night before, and in anticipation of the double ordeal he had in front of him—the fight with Wemyss, and the annihilation of all his hopes in life by the denunciation of Mr. Considine to the General.

He was not thinking of the former. Its importance was so extinguished by the latter. It was characteristic of him that he said hardly a word to his seconds. Many men would have made an effort to appear in good spirits. He made none. But the two sturdy Scots knew Kennedy too well to be perturbed: the possibility of being thrashed within an inch of his life would not weigh on him: they understood that it was Lucrece's affairs, which were worrying him.

Captain Wemyss arrived soon after him. They had chosen a place behind the lofty walls of the Mosque of the Descendants of the Prophet, because there the sun could not get into either combatant's eyes.

They did not go through the pretence of shaking hands before they began; they hated each other so; there was no question but that they would fight fairly.

Stripped to the waist the Grenadier was a magnificent looking man. He was splendidly developed, his skin "was a picture." Kennedy's development was not anything remarkable, and his skin did not look so attractive, though he was in far better condition.

But he presented a very determined figure.

"Mark him, Jock—take care to mark him," whispered Esslemont as they entered the ring, and Kennedy answered: "I will, if I die for it."

The fight was a remarkably interesting one, for Kennedy, if not such a good boxer, was an expert in *jujitsu*, and made fine use of it. Not, of course, in catching and throwing Wemyss. If he had done that, he could have put him *hors de combat* in a few minutes. He used his Japanese

art in avoiding, and once the Grenadier almost fell as the Highlander dodged a knock-out blow in the new way.

Neither of them had received any punishment, when an interruption came from an unexpected quarter. They heard a loud and authoritative voice call "Stop!"

Both recognised the General's voice; they retired into their corners as Sir Francis Vere pulled up his galloping charger in the ring, in uniform, but unattended.

Kennedy had never seen him so angry before. He looked implacable.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I shall not ask you to shake hands; but you must give me your word that the matter shall go no further. When the country is on the brink of revolution, it is not the time for unseemly private quarrels between officers."

With a man like Sir Francis Vere, there was nothing for it but to give their words, and go home.

He did not wait to see them go: he would have considered that an insult to them. He rode on for his canter in the desert in grave displeasure, but looking neither to the right hand nor to the left.

The seconds had chosen this place, because it had, on account of its privacy and the sun being shut out, been a noted duelling-place in the days before the English Occupation. Neither of them had thought of the General's early morning ride, which indeed he generally took in the other direction, in the stretch of desert behind Old Cairo.

His appearance on the scene was not accidental.

The Egyptian is eternally thinking of *bakshîsh*; late the night before, the man who sold oranges in the Citadel had come to the General's house, and demanded to see him. When the General heard who he was, he gave orders for him to be admitted. This was the type of man who often has important information to give. He expected to hear of some plot to blow up the ammunition or cut off the water supply.

The Egyptian came to his point at once. "Sir, will you give me a pound for the information I am going to give you?"

"Yes, if it's worth it," said the General.

The orange-seller was content to leave it like this. He knew that Sir Francis Vere was a man of his word, and he believed that he would be glad to have the information, which he was going to give him. He was not going to

have all the money, half of it was to go to one of the Arab employees in the Mess, who had played the eavesdropper to the conversation between Lavender and Kennedy's seconds, and, because he could not get away himself, had employed the orange-seller to try and sell the secret to the General.

The General was disgusted when he found that the orange-seller's secret was not a plot, which threatened the public security, but only an unpleasant piece of scandal about his officers.

Still he gave the man his pound ; when a General stands on the brink of a revolution, he cannot afford to alienate the good-will of a man in a position like the orange-seller. Then he dismissed the man, and lit his pipe. Before he had finished smoking it, he came to the conclusion that the orange-seller's information was well worth the sovereign ; he rang the bell and ordered his horse to be brought round an hour earlier than usual, and said that he should not require the orderly.

This fight must be stopped. Nothing could be worse for the interests of the Army at such a time : and one or both of the combatants would be badly hurt, for they were, both, men of great courage and determination.

Therefore it was that the General suddenly galloped round the corner of the Mosque of the Descendants of the Prophet. And the reason why he was so nearly too late, lay in the Arab incapacity to give a direction. The man might have been able to take the General straight to the mosque blindfolded, but he could not explain where it was.

The General was smoking his after-breakfast cigar in the garden, when Mr. Considine was announced. He was not in the best of tempers. He was exceedingly annoyed with Kennedy ; and he was annoyed because he had not felt able to tell his wife about it. It always lightened his soul to make her his confessor. But, for one thing, he did not like talking about the incident at all ; he hated the whole affair. And, for another, he knew that she would approve of what Kennedy had done, and think him a hero.

And here on the top of it all, was Mr. Considine, whom he would like to have hung as a traitor.

He did not, the General noticed, offer to shake hands, a welcome omission. " Are we alone ? " he inquired.

" You mean that you have something to say which you do not wish to be overheard ? "

"Yes."

"Then you had better come into my library," he said, going up to a French window which looked on the lawn, and holding it open for Mr. Considine.

"Will you smoke?" he asked, reaching down a cigar-box.

"Thanks, I prefer not."

"You won't mind my smoking?"

"No, no." Mr. Considine was evidently preoccupied.

The General motioned him to a seat: "What can I do for you?" he asked.

"You know that boy Kennedy?"

Sir Francis nodded.

"He's a jewel. Take care of him."

"Yes, he's a good fellow. But how does it apply?"

"Well, it isn't often that a man comes to write himself down a villain. That is to say, a villain in your eyes. But this is what I have come to do. Mind, I say in your eyes, for I have done what was quite right in mine."

The General was glad that he had retained his cigar. It saved him from having to say anything. He was wondering what queer kind of surprise the American was going to spring upon him.

"You know my daughter?"

"Yes, I know your daughter." The General was glad to be asked anything so direct and simple.

"You would call her a good-looking girl enough?"

"I should call her the most beautiful woman I have ever met; but I don't see what it has to do with me," he said dryly, almost curtly.

"And she will have her million."

"Did you come here to tell me that?" asked the General impatiently. He was at no pains to conceal his dislike of Mr. Considine.

"Partly: it all comes into the story."

"Well, do please give me the story, as you call it."

"Shall I give it to you naked?"

"The nakeder the better."

"Well, I offered young Kennedy my daughter's hand if he'd sell British official secrets to me."

"And you dare to come here and tell me this, you vile scoundrel?"

"I do dare. You'd have known it all in another hour. He is on his way to denounce me now."

"And I think it would have been a deal more decent if you'd let him. I don't know which I am most amazed at—your vileness or your effrontery."

"Talk all you want. I thought as how that would be better too; but you see, it wasn't possible."

"I'm damned if I see."

"That's safer than putting money on it. You see, it's like this. I told the boy that, if he denounced me, he should never speak to my daughter again; and he's in love with her. I knew that before I made him the offer." The General's set face softened a little as he thought of the young Captain giving the world away, his world away, to save his country, when he could so easily hold his tongue.

"It was my daughter that thought of the way out."

"I suppose she's in love with him," said the General, the first unbitting word he had spoken.

"It seems not. She told him, flat out, that she could never marry him, when he was telling her that I had offered her as the price."

"Extraordinary," said the General, out loud, but addressing himself.

"But she likes him well, and knows his feelings: it was her idea that I should save my word with him by denouncing myself."

"How did she make you do it?" inquired the General, decidedly interested. "Fathers do not generally let their daughters dictate to them on matters of life and liberty."

"She asked me, that was all. But it was the first time in her life that she had spoken out, and shown a real desire."

The General sighed, then threw his cigar savagely into the grate. The human side had touched him, but the vileness was inexpressible. He could understand a murderer being a good father now. The same man, who could do such a deed and come and talk about it with such calm effrontery, wanted to spare the young lover, who would not spare himself.

For this reason, this human touch, he was desirous to know what possible excuse Mr. Considine could advance for his conduct.

"Mr. Considine," he said. "I should like to know how you dare come and look me in the face, after doing such a thing as making this proposal to Captain Kennedy."

"Because, General Vere, I consider it my duty to make my side win, by every means in my power."

"Fair or foul?"

"Yes, fair or foul. What you call *fair* or *foul*. All nations have their secret agents and secret service money. It was fine of Captain Kennedy to refuse, but I can't see that I did anyways wrong in trying it on."

"The man who uses a traitor, Mr. Considine, stoops to conquer. And I acknowledge that England has often failed for want of stooping. But the man who makes traitors is like the procurers who corrupt young girls."

He was prepared for Mr. Considine, a man of strong passions, to flare up at this: Sir Francis Vere was a man without fear.

But Mr. Considine, that strange compound of humanity, who also was a stranger to fear, instead of resenting, ruminated. "I believe you're right," he said, at length. "But I should do it every time: I'm built that way."

"Have you anything more to say?" asked the General, curtly. This man disgusted him.

"Yes. What do you propose to do?"

"I propose to make your conduct known everywhere, and to take every step in my power against you." He rang the bell.

His *aide-de-camp* came in.

"Not you, Blake; send a servant, please."

The servant came.

"Show Mr. Considine out."

At the door was the General's horse, held by an orderly, a noble chestnut up to his great weight. As soon as Mr. Considine's cab had driven away, he mounted it, and rode off to the British Agency on the banks of the Nile.

Chiquita was looking out of one of the windows over the avenue as he rode up: she was expecting her dressmaker.

"Here's the General again, Sam—come to say just the same things to uncle. This or that must be done, or England will lose Egypt: this or that isn't done, and he is advised to be patient. Why doesn't he do it without coming. Uncle wouldn't be able to stop him any better than he stops the Egyptians."

"It will be the only way," laughed Sam, as he went off to tell the General a good story.

That story was never told. The General told his tale instead, as soon as Sam had taken him in to Lord Clapham.

The General was quite unprepared for Lord Clapham's outburst of indignation. Lord Clapham's fortitude was usually Christian.

But he had been touched on a tender point. He felt himself a poor hand at coping with traitors.

"Well, what are we to do?" asked the General. "Can't we have him laid by the heels, or deported?"

"Not without proclaiming martial law," said Sam, whom Lord Clapham always treated more as a privy councillor than as a secretary. "Those Capitulations are the very devil, and the Americans, especially, always have a chip on their shoulders. Mr. Considine's an Irish-American too; the very worst sort."

"We ought to have had martial law long ago. I've said so over and over again," grunted the General: "then I could do something."

"I can hardly conceive any evil as bad as the evils of martial law," said Lord Clapham sententiously.

"You're a bit like the Colonels in the Indian Mutiny, who were murdered by their own sepoys, Clapham."

"I should certainly have shared their fate, and would rather have shared it, than doubted the men I had led for so many years."

"That looks bad for martial law."

"Besides, I should have Winston George down on me by telegram: nothing would convince him that it was necessary."

"I suppose not. Well, what is to be done with Mr. Considine?"

"One can't even expel him from the Turf Club and the K. S. C.," said Sam. "He isn't a member."

"I never quite like a man who doesn't belong to clubs," said the General. "It is so difficult to get hold of him." He mused a minute. Then he said: "The Army must certainly send him to Coventry."

"I'm afraid it's been done already," said Sam. "That nice daughter of his has been going about with Arabs, and none of the junior officers will look at the Considines."

When the General, an hour after his usual time, rode up to the pleasant old green-latticed Headquarters in the Sharia Kasr-el-Nil, and the orderly had taken his horse, and every employee had been looking out for his smile as he mounted upstairs to his office, he found Kennedy waiting

for him, with a look that the Man of Battles hoped never to see on a young man's face again.

"Leave us, Blake," he said to his A. D. C.

"I have something to tell you, sir, of great importance," said Kennedy.

The General took it for granted that it referred to the incident he had witnessed a few hours before, and, angered as he was himself, could not imagine why Kennedy took it so seriously.

On the other hand, it did not deter him from speaking more seriously to Kennedy than he had ever needed to speak before, when he had asked for and received an account of the whole occurrence. Kennedy told it in his unexaggerating, unextenuating way, after exacting a pledge from the General that he would take no notice of the events, that led up to the quarrel.

What Kennedy told the General he told him not in an official capacity, but as a friend in the strictest confidence. He had seen a great deal of Sir Francis, and knew he could be relied upon to forget, as a General, what he had only been allowed to hear as a friend.

But this did not prevent Sir Francis from censuring Kennedy severely. "That man, Wemyss, is a brute," he began, "and I have no doubt deserved what you said to him. And I applaud your moral courage with regard to Miss Considine. But I did not expect you, Kennedy, to commit so grave a breach of discipline as to practically invite a fracas with another officer, in a public place, on a semi-ceremonial occasion. It is destructive of all respect for the British Army among natives, and members of other nations, at the most critical period in the history of the British Occupation. You seem to have lost your temper completely, and to have behaved as badly as it was possible to behave without actually striking Wemyss. And I must tell you that, bad as he was, and though he was the original transgressor, I think that, at the climax, Wemyss behaved a deal better than you did."

Kennedy listened to him respectfully, without replying a word. It was only when the General had finished and asked him, "Have you anything else to say, Kennedy?" that he came out with:

"Yes, sir. It wasn't about this that I came at all. I have something to tell you of great importance about Mr. Considine."

The General's whole face softened : he felt more personal attachment to Kennedy than to any man in Egypt. And the words " Mr. Considine," showed that Kennedy had come deliberately prepared to sacrifice all his hopes of future happiness for his duty to his country.

He got up, and held out his hand to the junior he had been rating so soundly.

" Not a word of that, Jock," he said, " or you'll incur the penalty, all for nothing. That extraordinary man, Considine, has just been to me, and confessed the whole thing himself. And he's not a bit ashamed."

The General's next remark stunned him. " You haven't incurred his penalty, because he came to confess himself, to save you from it; but I'm afraid it's no good to you, because, after what has happened, the Army cannot possibly hold any communication with these Considines. I shall ask the Commanding Officers to see to this."

There seemed no more to be said, and as Kennedy knew that the General's correspondence always took him an hour, he said : " You don't want me any more, do you, sir ?"

" Indeed, I do, my boy. I want to say that I think the thanks of the whole Army are due to you for standing to your guns in this matter : and that if you never get what seems at this moment to be the only possible happiness in the world for you, you will have the undying satisfaction of feeling that you put your country before yourself, as truly as the man who earns a Victoria Cross."

The next two days were two of the worst Kennedy had ever spent in his strenuous existence. Providentially there was a golf tournament both afternoons, though he was right off his game, for he had no zest to carry him through : and the Veres made him dine and go to hotel dances with them, to show scandalous Egypt that his position with them was undamaged.

Do what he might, there always was that leaden feeling at the heart which we have when a person very dear to us is dead.

Lucrece was, of course, not at either dance : the combined influence of the boycott on account of her being seen with Hoseyn Hassan, and of her father's scandalous attempt to corrupt Kennedy, rendered that impossible.

In forty-eight hours the story was all over Egypt, meaning the European communities in Egypt. For the

Commanding Officers of the Regiments had let the General's wishes be known at Mess on the first evening; and the officers had discussed it at the club and anywhere else that they happened to congregate; and the correspondent of *The Egyptian Gazette* had telegraphed the matter in full to Alexandria; and the next issue of *The Egyptian Gazette* (which made the most of it) had reached Cairo and set the ball rolling again. Cairo seemed to be talking of nothing else.

On the third day, in the desperate hope of hearing something about Lucrece, Kennedy had asked himself to lunch with the Kraffts, knowing that Sophia Krafft was Lucrece's most intimate woman friend. The obliging Julius was lunching out. Experience had perhaps taught him that, if he wished his afternoons to be his own, it was wiser to keep out of the way at lunch. And cause and effect may have been interconnected. He was certainly not wanted to-day. Mrs. Krafft looked forward with honest pleasure to entertaining Kennedy and his sorrow alone. She was prepared to talk Lucrece with every course, and with the coffee and cigarettes afterwards.

Mrs. Krafft admired Lucrece inordinately, and stood the assaults of jealousy pretty well. She thought her so elegant in her white cloth golfing skirt—it was a little long, made more for effect than play—that she had it copied: she thought her so irresistible in her favourite lace blouses that she bought some. Her passion for pleasing made her wear this skirt and one of these blouses to-day, and order her maid to dress her hair like Lucrece's. She was much the same height. It gave Kennedy quite a thrill as he came into the room. She was standing, back to the light, in one of Lucrece's favourite attitudes.

She had been to see Lucrece each day. She was the reverse of an ill-natured woman when she was not crossed; she enjoyed visiting her friends when they were in distress, to see how they bore it. To Kennedy she was adorably gentle.

"How is Lucrece looking?" asked the banished lover.

"Extremely well."

Kennedy's relief was obvious. He was not the sort of man to wish regret for him to tell on the health of one he loved.

"What does she do with herself?" He meant to imply now that the Army no longer patronised her.

"Just the same as usual. She messes round with her photographs, and does a lot of driving about in cabs."

He summoned up the courage to ask: "Doesn't she feel the boycott?"

"Not in the least. She does not notice that she is boycotted."

"Surely she feels her father's position."

"Not she! She is so obsessed with the idea of his nobility in going to confess to the General, instead of letting you denounce him, that the cause of the confession is quite unobserved and forgotten. She is lavishing a passion of filial attentions on that injured man."

It was obvious that Mrs. Krafft did not love Mr. Considine. She knew that his penetrating eyes read her undisciplined nature, and that he disapproved of her, though he found it useful to employ her for the very purpose for which he considered her least suitable—chaperoning Lucrece.

She had enjoyed much success in amateur theatricals, identified with some of her pleasantest flirtations; so it was not difficult for her to suggest Lucrece's attitudes and gestures. She reminded Kennedy of her so much that he could hardly take his eyes off her.

She had her own axe to grind. She had heard that Hoseyn Hassan soon wearied of affairs with women whom he vanquished; still sooner was he like to weary of an affair into which he had been forced. She had, besides, no mind to become observed in his company, and be ostracised by the military like Lucrece. She had quite a passion for the society of the gay young officers, which she was enjoying for the first time, and they were nice clean men. The only one of them all who had made any attempt to stalk her was Captain Wemyss; and, though she loved playing with fire and was rather fascinated with his amusing and audacious conversations, she would have missed him less than the others, because military *roués* of his type were apt to stray into the entertainments of the Jewish plutocracy in Park Lane.

She had no desire for a flirtation with him.

But if she gave up Hoseyn Hassan she must have someone to be in love with besides her husband. Her nature demanded it. So the smiling and tender woman had a true fellow-feeling for Kennedy, and laid herself out to comfort him.

She would not even smoke after lunch—she remembered that Lucrece did not allow herself to smoke—until he insisted, lighting her cigarette for her.

After lunch they went into the Kraffts' comfortable smoking-room, where that little while ago Sophia and Wemyss had evolved the conspiracy which struck Lucrece down from her place in Society at one blow. And there Mrs. Krafft sat on with the lover, discussing Lucrece the good, Lucrece the beautiful, Lucrece the *ingénue*, and saving herself from being bored by giving living pictures of Lucrece in all these parts, as closely as she dared, with deference to his suspicions.

Before he left he felt better. He made various appointments with her: she seemed his one link with his lost happiness.

The wily Sophia betook herself to tea at Lucrece's flat. In the part she meant to play now it was necessary for her to run with the hare, and hunt with the hounds. Lucrece was far from being as easy to handle as Kennedy. She liked him exceedingly; she was grateful to him for many kindnesses; she was exceedingly sorry for him. But, though she had offered to marry him to save her father, she could not contemplate herself as his wife, or as feeling the *force majeure* for him; and in spite of her frank and hospitable manner, Lucrece was reserved. She had never broken through her reserve to her own father till the catastrophe came.

Mrs. Krafft was careful to change her clothes, and have her hair dressed in a different style, before she went round to Lucrece: the girl might have some of her father's penetration.

It was on her lips to say, "I've been having your Captain Kennedy to lunch to cheer him up." But she checked it and said, "Captain Kennedy came in to lunch. He was so anxious to have news of you, poor man; he's dreadfully cut up by his banishment."

"But he isn't banished," said Lucrece simply. "It was for that very reason that I asked father to go and confess to the General himself, instead of being denounced."

Mrs. Krafft gasped, when she realised the magnitude of the *faux pas* she had made. Of course Kennedy was banished not by Mr. Considine, but by the decree of the General, which made the Considines out of bounds for the Army, like a Mohammedan festival. And as the news-

papers had not gone to the length of stating this in the rare hot dish of scandal they had served up, Lucrece was not in a position to know that she was *tabu*.

"My dear," began Mrs. Krafft, and, if Lucrece had been more versed in the habits of cats, she would have known that there was a slap in the face to follow, "technically Captain Kennedy may not be under your father's ban. But after what your father said—if you told me the story correctly—you can't expect a man of spirit like Captain Kennedy to come near you again, until there is some earthquake in your household."

Lucrece opened her eyes very wide and said nothing.

"But," continued Delilah, "he is honestly in love with you, and he'll waylay me at least four times every day to know all about you."

Lucrece was distinctly moved, though she said: "I think he'd better forget me."

"Oh, nonsense! I shall come round every morning, and collect the manna which is to be his meat and drink for the day. And I'll sometimes talk to you about him, if you deserve it."

She noticed that Lucrece kissed her with more warmth than usual when they parted.

The oddest feature in the whole situation was, that Sophia honestly meant to feed them with scraps of love from each other, while she was doing her best to make Kennedy fall in love with herself.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW TOM COBBE TOOK FEVER

EVERYBODY seemed to have forgotten Tom, though Tom was more madly in love with Lucrece than Kennedy, and, until that fatal day of the Sports of the Three Schools, was in the eyes of the world the accepted lover. So absorbed in Lucrece had Tom been that afternoon, that he had not noticed the altercation between Kennedy and Wemyss on the steps of the stand, in which she was sitting.

He had been *distract* all the evening at his father's state dinner, for he was wondering if the guests, especially the General, would leave in time for him to go and show his devotion to Lucrece. He turned glum and taciturn as the evening wore on. This did not signify, because almost everybody, except his father, was taciturn, in the endeavour to conceal what he thought of the events of the afternoon. These were not easy to discuss in a mixed assemblage of English and Egyptians. The sports of the schools suggested to Lord Clapham's mind the Professors of the El Azhar University, who were not intimately connected with sport; and the Professors of El Azhar suggested his "History of Philosophy," in which he had been unable to gain any assistance from them. So he talked of the great Arab writers upon Philosophy; whom some of the Egyptians knew by name, and one knew well. He was the Prime Minister: the conversation became a duologue, which was resumed after dinner.

Seeing the Prime Minister and the British Agent in such long, earnest confabulation, the onlooker might have imagined that the insult offered to the Khedive, and the imminent perils of the state of Egypt, were their topics. But the Prime Minister was telling Lord Clapham of materials for his book to be unearthed in Cairo. The

General, who had had a classical education, was reminded of Nero's fiddling while Rome was burning, and sat biting the ends of his moustache.

But his chagrin was nothing to Tom's, as people sat on and on, concealing their thoughts, until it was long past the time at which he could call upon Lucrece.

When they did leave at last he did not go to bed, but sat up half the night smoking cigarettes in the little arbour over the Nile, in the gardens of the British Agency, regardless of the strong, chill, north wind which was blowing up the river; indeed, he welcomed it: he needed something to cool the fever in his veins, after Lucrece's treatment of him, and the world's treatment of Lucrece.

He was conscious of a heavy feeling in the head, and an aching in the bones, when he dragged himself to Headquarters next morning.

There the General, when he had dismissed Kennedy, spoke to him about the Considines, to point out how impossible it was for a British officer, especially when he happened to be the son of the British Agent, and on the British General's staff, to have any further communication with that household.

There was nothing for Tom to do but to obey. Indeed he felt stunned physically as well as mentally.

That night he was in a high fever, which lasted for many a long day. Sitting out in white summer Mess kit, on a dewy river-terrace in a high north wind, can be as deadly as a poisoned well to a body disarmed by anguish.

CHAPTER XV

HOW THE NATIONALISTS INVITED THE MAHDI OF THE SENOUSSI TO INVADE EGYPT

STEPHEN CONSIDINE was the type of man who is roused by finding himself with his back to a wall, and his enemies closing round him. He over-estimated the powers of the British General, not knowing how he was subordinated to the British Agent,—a relic of the Cromer *régime*. He was prepared for instant arrest, followed by an appeal to the American Consular authorities, who would liberate him on bail, and might be answerable to Irish pressure in the United States. In which direction his Confessor was of importance, and had to be consulted at once.

Father Jeremiah Dwyer had got himself appointed to Egypt for the pleasure of assisting the Egyptian Nationalists in their attack on England. Though of Irish name and parentage he was practically a Levantine, having been brought up in an Asia Minor port, where his father kept a hell for sailors, after he was driven out of the hell he kept in Liverpool by the fear of penal servitude. This had made him an Oriental linguist of a cheap kind: he was useful to the Church authorities in a land where there were numerous Syrian Roman Catholics, whose language was Arabic.

When the golden streams began to flow for Nationalists from Mr. Considine's coffers, Dwyer was brought in to partake of the good fortune, without his value being known by those who introduced him. Stephen Considine lost no time in recognising it. Here was a man who could write against the British in both his English and Arabic newspapers; one of the most fertile liars in Egypt, and a man whose early bringing up among the Port Irish of Liverpool, taught him what political lies would be most effective. It was he who fed Mulazim Bey with

some of the chief falsehoods, which he turned to such good account.

He was the priest of a Syrian Church, whose only approach was a passage under a block of old houses at the back of the dried-up canal, a relic of the days when Christian Churches had thus to be saved from Moslem outrage. In the matter of doctrine, and extracting money for the Church, he looked after his congregation severely; but he was agitating all the time for the success of the Pan-Islamic conspiracy, which would deprive Christians of all rights, and inflict death on all Christians who would not turn Mohammedan or fly the country. It suited Stephen Considine to have for his Confessor a man who could also be his confidential adviser. A conspirator never knows whom he can trust, except one who would sink in the same boat with him.

Stephen reposed boundless confidence in his Confessor-adviser, for he was a bigoted Roman Catholic. "The Committee must be convened at once," said Father Dwyer. "The General is a man of action: you may be arrested or deported at any moment, and, though it will all be decided in your favour, when the American Government has time to move, much damage might be done to our cause by your temporary absence, if you have not settled everything."

The Committee were accustomed to be convened at very short notice by code-words on the telephone.

Although he carried his story to Father Dwyer in a private room of *The Banner* publishing offices, instead of at the Confessional, Mr. Considine related what happened without the smallest embellishment or suppression. He had got into the habit of speaking the unvarnished truth to Father Dwyer.

"Let us send for Jeffery," said the priest. The three formed a little junto, who settled the policy of *The Banner*, and to a great extent that of the Egyptian Nationalists. For Mr. Considine had more confidence in this junto than in either of the other machines of which he was the head.

It was characteristic of him that he should have three different sets of political machinery, in all of which his money and abilities made him the autocrat, working for Egyptian Independence.

The first of them was the Committee of National In-

dependence, consisting, except himself and Dimitri, of Egyptians, under whose management the movement nominally lay.

But anxious as the Egyptians were to see the last of the English, and have a parliament of their own, they had never, before the advent of Mr. Considine, had enough money to carry on the business of a revolution. Wealthy Egyptians, with one exception (the Mohammed Hilmy, killed at Helouan), fought shy of it; and the others expected to make money out of it, not to have to put subscriptions into it. When Mr. Considine came forward, and offered to provide the money for any movement of which he approved, his offer was unanimously accepted. Some wiser heads must have perceived that this practically made him the dictator of the Revolution, seeing that they were not likely to be able to raise the money for any movement without his consent. But these wiser heads were likely to perceive also, that, though the party included many brilliant orators, plotters and intriguers, there were practically no natives of sufficient grip, grit, and knowledge of the world, to carry through a great business like a revolution. They could welcome the famous millionaire almost as much for his administrative capacity as for his money.

He could easily have secured the election of other non-Egyptians on the Committee of National Independence, but he forbore, as he claimed, out of consideration for Egyptian susceptibilities. But he was aware that his position was stronger without them. There was no likelihood of any scheme of insurrection or agitation, for which he was willing to provide the funds, being refused by the irresponsible Egyptians; and no great movement could be carried through without his money. He could supply money, he could supply arms, he could supply indictments against England, and newspaper agitation. The task of turning every able-bodied Nationalist in Egypt into an armed rebel against England, had to be effected by the prestige of the Descendant of the Prophet, and the fiery exhortations of men like Mulazim Bey. None were jealous of Mr. Considine, for they could see no private purpose that he had to serve, except that very excusable hatred of England.

But Egyptians were poor conspirators, not very capable of keeping a secret, quite incapable of planning a *coup*

de main, or workable campaign, so he preferred his cabinet, as he called his working committee, to remain outside of the Committee of National Independence. It consisted only of himself and his fellow Irishmen, the priest and Jeffery, all animated by an implacable hatred of England. But Jeffery and the priest had no administrative capacity, their only value lay in lying to order, to support the policy which he enunciated. They wrote articles, in which the truth counted for nothing; they invented their facts and clothed them with abuse; but they were undeniably clever, for they had a fighting politician's knowledge of English history and policy, and had a genius for inventing the most damaging charges, which were not only served up in the English and Arabic newspapers of the office, but used for the prining of firebrands like Mulazim Bey. As far as Egypt was concerned, the campaign of lies was conducted with great ability. One of the worst indictments against Mr. Considine's honour was, that although he knew most of the statements to be lies, he spent his money on propagating them because "all is fair in war."

The third political machine, of which he was the head, was far more dangerous and more original, more dangerous alike to himself and the English, for he spent vast sums of money every year on distributing fire-arms gratis, and circulating sedition among all classes of Egyptians, especially in distant parts of the country. There was something really great about the elaborateness and success of this machinery, which was evolved out of the operations of the American Hardware Trust.

When he introduced this gigantic corporation, of which he was chairman, into Egypt, he announced that he required agents in all parts of the country. They were to be men of position, with some established commercial business of their own, who held his agency, as they might hold the agency for an insurance office. Gradually all those who did not share his politics were got rid of: his agents everywhere were the most active Nationalists. That was fairly simple, but their efforts were supplemented by an army of spies and agitators, who were also travellers for the goods of his firm. These two lots of agents were employed by him in the propagation of sedition, and the free distribution of arms. Backed by the influence of the leading Nationalists, so popular

did these proceedings make his firm, that it secured all the hardware business in Egypt, and made the free distribution of fire-arms even profitable financially.

To-day, Stephen Considine hoped to hear such reports from the Nationalist leaders, and from his own agents, as would justify preparing to deliver a blow. But the reports were conflicting, and the more responsible the source the less encouraging was the report. The fierce and surly Mulazim spoke to the Committee as he would have addressed a mob—"The English were doomed and no quarter was to be given—" in his speech, but in these matters Mr. Considine was a shrewd business man. He dismissed Mulazim from his mind as unworthy of consideration. Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan, on the other hand, was dubious; the feeling in favour of the insurrection against the English was, he admitted, universal; and there were very few able-bodied Nationalists but had fire-arms; yet he gave it as his opinion that, unless the regiments of the Egyptian Army revolted, and made common cause with them, and were able to carry their artillery along with them, the Egyptians would make no serious effort to rise against the few thousand English soldiers who held the country.

Mr. Chody, summarising the reports of the agents and travellers of the Hardware Trust, reported that, although the *fellahin* had largely been bought over by the presents of the coveted fire-arms, and showed their gratitude by dealing only with the agents of the company, they had no ill-will against the British, whom they regarded as the authors of their water supply; and, in any case, that they had no cohesion to make them act together. They were a negligible quantity.

Then the priest got up and said: "There is only one possible means of freeing Egypt, and that is the co-operation of a large Senoussi force."

"What do the Senoussi want as their reward?" asked Mr. Considine, ever practical.

"Nothing," answered Father Dwyer; "except the right of expelling all Christians who will not embrace Senoussi Mohammedanism."

"The Christians must go," said Mr. Considine, "if we cannot do without the Senoussi."

"Yes," said the priest; "the Christians must go."

CHAPTER XVI

HOW HOSEYN HASSAN ASKED LUCRECE TO MARRY HIM

DIRECTLY you step out to meet Fate, instead of waiting for Fate to come to you, you begin to take risks: the more innocent you are, the more likely you are to suffer. Fate will often give you exactly the same thing a little later, without any risks, if you let her take her own time. These are facts which you notice every day, in the life round you, and for this reason they are coined into proverbs.

Lucrece was not conscious of this, but she was herself an illustration.

It was in the innocence of her heart that she had consented to make that *tête-à-tête* archæologising expedition with Hoseyn Hassan; and though his thoughts had all been personal and directed towards winning her love, hers had been solely archæological, except for the sensation of pleasure and happiness at being taught by one, for whom she had such a strong and romantic admiration.

On the night of that same day, Mrs. Krafft had gone to Hoseyn Hassan's palace, and forced him to yield to his passion. Yet on the following day, at the Sports of the United Schools at the K. S. C., the officers, who had been buzzing round Lucrece like bees round honey, cut her dead, while, including some of Lucrece's most constant admirers, they crowded round Mrs. Krafft.

Mrs. Krafft had been responsible for this. She had a guilty desire for Hoseyn Hassan's romantic Arab beauty. She had been cultivating his society assiduously for several days, when Lucrece stepped across her path, and she determined to deal her condign punishment. At that moment entered Captain Wemyss, intent on making Mrs. Krafft a captive. She saw the chance of killing

two birds with one stone : she could save herself from a fate which she had risked, but was unwilling to suffer ; and could punish Lucrece by enlisting Captain Wemyss against her. He was not loath, for Lucrece, in her marble innocence, had felt a repulsion for him, which she had shown uncompromisingly. It was Mrs. Krafft who planned the detection of Lucrece : it was Captain Wemyss who spread the intelligence that she had been going about with an Arab alone, quite sufficient an offence against the Mrs. Grundy of Cairo to secure her social ostracism by the British officers. And he had added gratuitously an insinuation as to how she had spent the hour in the Arab Museum, which was, as everyone should have reflected, impossible, since the Museum is full of attendants who watch the visitors like hawks, to guard its treasures.

Now Mrs. Krafft, who tired of her toys as quickly as a spoilt child, found an Oriental lover unsatisfying to her intellect ; she was as anxious to have done with him as she had been anxious to win him. So she wished to entangle him with Lucrece.

Some little way outside Cairo, on the banks of the Nile, are some beautiful old gardens belonging to a palace of the Khedive. Mrs. Krafft suggested to Lucrece, when she was beginning to feel the lack of occupations in her social exile, that she should go and take photographs there of the magnificent vegetation. "The Sheikh can easily get you permission." She promised to arrange it for Lucrece when the Sheikh came to see her husband on the next afternoon : Lucrece was still ignorant of the fact that she was actually under a ban, and therefore had no cause to suspect its origin.

She did not feel lost when her father forbade her to go any more to hotel dances, or the entertainments of the K. S. C., on the ground that the feeling between the Egyptians and the British officers was so bad that she would not be safe from insult. This was literally true, but she thought he referred to insults from the Egyptians, whereas he referred to the great negative insult of her being ignored by every self-respecting Englishman.

She was, indeed, glad of a rest from the incessant gaiety, glad to be able to give all her thoughts and energies to her photography, and the enjoyment of Arab monuments.

But she missed Kennedy horribly, though her imagination was captured by Hoseyn Hassan. Why did he not come and see her? Did he not know the sacrifice her father had made that they might not be divided?

She tried to encourage herself by remembering how long he had once before remained without coming near her; he was so little of a ladies' man.

But Lucrece was essentially truthful, even to herself, and she confessed that the Kennedy of those days was not the Kennedy of the Sports Day, the Kennedy whose physical hand she had refused after he had refused hers metaphorically.

She knew now how much she was to him. She felt that she did not know how much he was to her. But it was borne in upon her with increasing force that he was a man of the unyielding principles, which seemed to her the only possible rules of life.

Her imagination demanded romance. The ordinary distractions of a millionaire's daughter had never been hers. Her father had been too occupied to enter the social whirl, and she had been bound up in him. Her excitements had to be æsthetic. Her knowledge of books was insignificant. Her æsthetics must needs be in a concrete form: they were materialised in Hoseyn Hassan. She must marry him; all her chances of having the larger interests in life seemed to lie in that marriage. The one question of the emancipation of Moslem women opened a larger vista to her than any she could picture as presenting themselves to her father's daughter, if her father succeeded in leading the Egyptians into the Promised Land. But she could not let Kennedy go out of her life.

She missed Tom, too, and was astonished at his not coming to see her, till she heard that he was down with a raging fever. His attentions had been so unremitting.

Nature, who struck him down when he defied her authority by exposing his ill-protected constitution to the river-dews and the river-wind, was not unkind. Had she not mercifully deprived him of his senses, he might have offered up his own career, and the duty he owed to his country, of absenting himself from the Considines, as burnt sacrifices on the altar of passion.

Lucrece had had enough of her own society to be willing to fall into the arrangements about the Khedive's gardens

at once: as did the Sheikh. "You can meet at my flat," said the obliging Mrs. Krafft.

Lucrece felt amply repaid when she got to her destination. The gardens were glorious. They were almost like a Chinese garden in their skilful disposition of water and fountains and summer-houses, and their vegetation was incomparable. The gardens were rich alike in masses of colour and perfume to salute the eye and nostril. There was a screen of bougainvillea a hundred yards long; there were coppices of magnolias, and purple-blossomed jacarandas; there were cascades of roses. But to the ardent photographer, the superlative charm of the garden lay in the massing of tropical foliage at different elevations; a thicket of bamboos, with leaves over-lapping like a bird's plumage, which filled a hollow with a rivulet at the bottom; a clump of rare and superb palms, outlined against the sky on one gentle rise; and a tangle of aloes and euphorbias on another, with their trailers coiling and rearing like serpents. The agaves, with their gigantic sword-like leaves, looked as if they had themselves been cut out of stone, as they sprang from the great old vases, which flanked the broad steps leading down to the waters of the Father of Rivers; the brilliant-crested hoopoes played their strange games with uncanny familiarity in the open spaces; the shyer long-tailed bee-eaters, with their glorious green-bronze plumage, flew in and out of the avenues of shady lebbeks, where the old Khedives had defied the summer heat.

Lucrece sparkled with delight. She forgot her usual reserve in her enthusiasm over photography. She gave Hoseyn Hassan a hundred opportunities of ingratiating himself by pointing out fresh glimpses of paradise, fresh bits of the fantastic.

He showed himself swift to learn her requirements—a level spot for the camera at such a distance, the right direction for light, the effects she desired for a composition. He had hired a couple of gardeners to carry the cameras and plates, but he worked harder than either of them in fetching and carrying and handing.

And when she was tired, he took her to the summer-house which commanded the most beautiful view of the garden, and sent one of the gardeners for coffee. There was no *café* in the gardens; but it was easy for him to arrange with the servants.

Hoseyn Hassan understood women well. On this occasion, he devoted his whole energies to making Lucrece enjoy the expedition, he tried to efface his own personality. "Don't leave us," he said to the second gardener, when he sent the first for the coffee. "Be ready to hand the camera the moment the lady requires it."

It was a most skilfully conceived traverse for carrying the heart of Lucrece. She was able to abandon herself to admiring his unselfishness and his unconsciousness, as well as his romantic appearance and delightful manners. It was easy to make this the first of a series of expeditions, none of which she enjoyed more than the drives in a carriage with sand-wheels into the desert, to the Petrified Forest, and the Well of Moses: and the visits to the Sheikh's summer palace on Roda Island.

Here they were sitting one afternoon at sunset, in the magnificent Arab pergola of old carved wood, interlaced at this season with thousands of red and white roses. She was very happy. She had made many expeditions with him now, and he had always treated her with the finest chivalry and reserve.

Hoseyn Hassan's vow had made him a connoisseur in northern beauty, but he had never seen any woman approaching Lucrece in loveliness, and she had a yet stronger fascination for him. The white women who had fallen victims to him, fell because they were passionate or undisciplined. But Lucrece was marble in innocence, as well as the fairness and purity of her skin. Such a nature was only to be won by the romance of love, and it made him regard her with the passionate devotion of a Persian poet. While to her he was the personification of the romance with which Washington Irving has surrounded the knightly Moors of Spain.

She desired the Independence of Egypt, which was the dream of her father's life, solely for his dear sake. She could not be blind to the unworthiness of the Egyptians. Each day brought some fresh proof of their rottenness, of their need to be saved from themselves by some strong, just people like the English. But with Hoseyn Hassan as their ruler, all things seemed possible.

And all things seemed possible in an old romantic place like that, with the glory of the Egyptian sunset making the Nile as golden as the sands of Nubia; and

painting the tall three-cornered sails of the Nile boats, blown out as stiff as stone on the north wind.

Presently a boat, with a yard like a Roman galley, laden down to the water's edge with spademen returning from their work to their homes at Ghizeh, put out from Old Cairo, and swept past the corner of the island. Lucrece sprang up to photograph it. It came so near, that it almost ran on the long, low spit of mud below the wall, at the end of the garden.

"They nearly grounded at the same place as Moses," said Hoseyn Hassan.

"I don't understand."

"Why, that is the place where they say that the ark of Moses was found hidden in the bulrushes."

"How wildly interesting to have the place, where Moses was found, on your own property."

"It is very interesting to our family. The property was bestowed upon us because we are the Descendants of the Prophet; Moses is one of the six great Prophets of Islam."

"I should love to have associations like that in my family."

"That is easy," he said; "you have only to be my wife."

The rosy flush that spread over her face, the light in her blue eyes, were eloquent. "If only it were possible," she said, with wistfulness in her voice.

"Then the idea is not hateful to you?"

"Oh no. Imagine my feelings. I, a nobody, belonging to a land with no past, to be one of the family of the Prophet, who has the greatest name in the world after Our Lord."

"You don't think of me," he said.

"Oh yes, I do. But I cannot help thinking first of what you are. Is there anyone with such a glorious ancestor? I should rather be you than anybody in the world. What is it to be the descendant of the greatest king compared with being the descendant of the founder of a religion believed by two hundred million people. Didn't you say two hundred million?"

"I did."

"And it is not as if your descent was forgotten, and you were doing something paltry for your living, which would make people smile if your ancestry was mentioned.

as they did at the descendant of Irish kings, who kept a saloon in our township. You are recognised all over Africa as the Descendant of the Prophet, and hold *levées* and give titles like a king. It is glorious."

"Then why cannot you marry me?"

"Because my father would never permit it."

"How do you know he would not?"

Lucrece was silent.

"You do not return my love, and I love you better than all the world."

"I would to God I did not. For I see nothing but unhappiness to come of it."

"If you love me we cannot be unhappy."

"Not if you are content for us just to love and see each other as we do now."

"But I want you for my wife, for the mother of my children."

A look of indescribable softness and sweetness spread over Lucrece's face as he said these words; but it died away into sadness as the sunset was sobering to grey.

The Arabs are a poetical people: he noticed that the dying-away of the radiance out of the sky seemed to have a physical effect on her. "Nothing has happened to our lives," he said. "It is only Nature's warning that night is coming; in so many minutes we shall have the after-glow, which is the most beautiful thing in the sky, welling up from behind the hills like water."

She smiled that wonderful smile which transfigured her whole face, and said, "I'm very foolish, Hoseyn; of course, it must be that."

Her eyes rested lovingly on that eloquent face, that beautiful and romantic figure, with its flowing robes of the sacred green, so noble and antique in their lines, taking the spectator back a thousand years, framed against the evening sky as he had been on the first day that they met, which seemed so long ago. And her heart was fired within her, for at that moment the golden after-glow crept up from the hills of the desert, throwing its warm radiance on the aqueduct of Saladin, and the noble Roman bastions of the Egyptian Babylon.

Hoseyn Hassan was unacquainted with the legend that this was the river gateway of Heliopolis in the days of her glory, of the On where Joseph went to woo Poti-pherah's daughter. But his heart leapt up within him

as he cried : " The light returns—be happy again, Lady of my Heart ; it is of good omen that it comes from the desert : the Arab came from the desert, and returns to his mother, the desert, in his hour of need or peril."

She accepted the omen, and talked happily and practically of what they would do, if the impossible happened, and they were speedily married.

Presently he turned round to see how the after-glow was progressing. Her eyes followed his, and she gave a little cry, for the after-glow made everything on the west bank startlingly black and near. And straight behind Hoseyn Hassan were the dark forms of the two Great Pyramids. Never had they seemed so malignant to her.

CHAPTER XVII

HOW HOSEYN HASSAN PROPOSED TO MR. CONSIDINE FOR LUCRECE'S HAND.

HOSEYN HASSAN had Lucrece's permission to ask her father for her hand. She had given it unwillingly, because she knew that it would be useless ; but it was easier to let her father refuse than to explain why he would refuse. Besides, it was the desire of her heart.

That night, as Mr. Considine was sitting with Lucrece after dinner, a cypher message came down from Mr. Chody, that Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan wished to speak with Mr. Considine.

This was nothing unusual. Mr. Considine raised himself up to the offices in his private lift with a feeling of nonchalance ; he felt certain that any news the Sheikh had to tell him could only be of minor importance. He wondered why he troubled to come, and wished Egyptians had a better notion of relative importance.

But he entered the room with a good semblance of cordiality ; his continual dealings with Orientals had given him their facility in concealing his feelings.

"Any news, Sheikh ?" he asked, after the great business of salutations had been got through.

Hoseyn Hassan entered upon the task of telling nothing in great detail. It was not until he had sifted the air for half an hour, that he sprang the real object of his visit upon his amazed host. He had prophesied, very unnecessarily, as Mr. Considine thought, the outcome of the various operations which were to be executed against the British, and he wound up by saying : "We shall succeed of course. Egypt will be free. But how many of us will fall by the way, who shall say ? The English are fools in the manner that they let a danger which they

have foreseen overtake them without doing anything to stop it. But when they are caught, they defend themselves like lions. No one knows how much blood may flow before the lions are dead."

"I know that," replied Mr. Considine. "Otherwise, I should not go to the Senoussi. You can imagine my feelings as a Christian in having to consent that every Christian shall be driven out of Egypt."

The Sheikh only answered with a sign. He had another matter to discuss, and this question of the Senoussi was the most difficult that came before them. When he spoke he said: "One or both of us may fall."

Mr. Considine nodded.

"Yours should be the first life for the English to take. You are not an Egyptian. You are their enemy for nothing."

The American started involuntarily. He was a man of high courage, but he had never thought about any risk to his own life accruing in the hell he was about to raise. He did not expect assassination from the English. What could the Sheikh be driving at?

"If you fall, and I do not," said Hoseyn Hassan, deliberately, "I should like to know that I have your permission in marrying your daughter."

"Marrying my daughter!" shouted Mr. Considine. "Why, you have a whole harem full of wives already!"

"I have none."

"Have you divorced them?" he demanded fiercely.

"I have."

"With the object of marrying my daughter, I suppose?"

"I divorced them before I allowed myself to raise my eyes to her."

"You were not aware," said Mr. Considine, making a strong effort to control himself, "that our Church does not allow marriages with a divorced person, even if it had not an almost insuperable objection to the marriage of its children to persons of other creeds?"

"The circumstances are special," said the Sheikh; "like they are for your consenting to the expulsion of all Christians from Egypt."

Mr. Considine took swift counsel with himself. He had a violent and immutable objection to the marriage. He never meant to consent; the bare notion of consent-

ing filled his soul with loathing. But he did not wish to come to grips with the Sheikh if he could help it. The Sheikh was his most important colleague ; the liberation of Egypt depended on the cordiality of their relations. After a short deliberation, he thought he saw a line of strategical retreat.

"In great public affairs like the liberation of a nation," he said, "we have to subordinate our individual conscience ; but in private affairs, where it is only a question of our pleasures, we have no right to be deaf to the voice of conscience."

But if he was determined not to come to grips, Hoseyn Hassan was equally determined to force him, and when an Arab drops the pretence of politeness, and comes out into the open, he is, if anything, more dangerous than when he is working underhand, with his proverbial cunning ; for it means that he is sure of the result, and does not mean to spare.

"Will you not drop this pretence of conscience ?" said the Sheikh ; "and if you will not give me your consent, tell me plainly why ?"

"You will understand," said Mr. Considine, keeping his temper admirably—he had now got a sort of second wind with it—"that I have spoken of my conscientious objections, which are honest and insuperable, out of consideration for the feelings of my most valued colleague, trusting that he would not force me to state other reasons not less cogent which would be less agreeable for him to hear. But since you will have it, you must know that I cannot under any circumstances consent to the marriage of my daughter with an African."

"I am not an African ; I am of Mecca."

"Or Asiatic, if you prefer to call yourself that. I am totally against these mixed marriages. I believe them to be wrong, and contrary to the interests of morality, and almost always resulting in great unhappiness. From what I know of you, and your vow to ruin the domestic happiness of Englishmen, I imagine that the risk of unhappiness in this instance would be more than ordinarily great. I cannot, and will not, risk the future of my child, who is the apple of my eye."

The Arab wit was the quicker. "If it is not right for a Christian to unite with a Mohammedan in a private affair like a mere marriage, it cannot be right for them

to unite in a great public affair like the liberation of a nation. If your daughter is a Christian and an American, our nation is Mohammedan and Arabic ; if you continue on the Committee of Egyptian Independence, I shall not. No Egyptian would expect me to, after the insult you have offered me."

Mr. Considine felt as if he had been shot. The whole fabric of his hopes was to be shattered at a single blow. The backbone of the Egyptian movement for independence was Pan-Islamism. It was based on those words of the Koran which are held to mean that it is not permissible to a Mohammedan to remain under the rule of a non-believer, though more than half the Mohammedans in the world live in the dominions of three infidel emperors, disregarding the interpretation. It was to range the forces of Pan-Islamism on the side of the Egyptian Nationalists, that Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan, the Descendant of the Prophet, had been made the nominal head of the movement, with which he, up to that moment, had not concerned himself. Since his appointment, his popular personality had made him the real head of the Pan-Islamists in the movement. If he drew back, and the Mohammedans lost their cohesion, there could be no question of striking an immediate blow.

Mr. Considine's hatred of England triumphed over his natural feelings as a parent, over the conscientious objections he had just honestly boasted, over his morals, over the outcry of his senses. He saw one line of compromise open to him, and clutched at it as a drowning man will clutch at a straw.

"Did you say my daughter had consented?" he asked hoarsely.

"I did."

"Did she make no reservation?"

"No."

"But you forced her into it against her will, as you have forced me by using unworthy means."

"She desires it ; she is ready to entreat you."

"Then she is no daughter of mine," he cried, with his blue eyes blazing fiercely. "Why should I ruin our cause for her?"

"Then you give me your permission?"

"Look you, Sheikh. I cannot see her polluted before my very eyes. I would rather kill her. But, if I fall for

the cause, and you survive, I shall not be here to see the disgrace."

"Disgrace?"

"Yes, disgrace. I have told you what I think of these mixed marriages. I know that you are the Descendant of the Prophet, so that in point of family the world hardly holds your equal. I know your position in Africa, in all the Mohammedan world. But to me this marriage is an offence against nature."

"We will let this pass," said the Sheikh coldly.

"But when I am gone Lucrece will not have a single relation left to suffer, so I give my consent." The strong man bowed his head upon the table.

How these two men, who had to work together like Titans for the great object of driving the British out of Egypt, hated each other! Stephen Considine could hardly restrain himself from murdering the Arab where he stood, and was praying that he might fall as soon as the cause was won. Hoseyn Hassan went further. He meant to have Mr. Considine assassinated as soon as he could be spared.

Stephen Considine did not even yet know of his daughter's meetings with Hoseyn Hassan alone. He was so furious that he had not paused to consider how and where the proposal of marriage had taken place. It seems strange that he, who had an army of spies in his employ, should have been left in ignorance of the mine that was opening up under his feet. But the spies who had seen it were Arabs, and could not have uttered a word against the Descendant of the Prophet. Also, they would think it an honour, not an offence. And few would doubt that Mr. Considine knew and approved. There had been a long silence. Mr. Considine was the first to break it.

"Look you, Sheikh. I have given my consent in this shape; but I warn you that if you meet my daughter again during my lifetime, things will go badly with you."

"I must see your daughter again once, to know if you have kept your word with me, and made her understand that she is free to marry me after your death."

"Well, it must be in my presence."

"It shall not be in your presence, and it shall not be in your house. It shall be out at the Tombs of the Caliphs, where I have promised to show her the Tomb-Mosque of our family."

"Never!" cried Mr. Considine.

"You know the alternative," said the Sheikh stonily.

"How can I trust you?"

"Send all your spies; there will be nothing that they cannot see and hear. But I will not have you there, because in your presence she would not be free."

Stephen reflected. At length he said: "I will trust you. I shall send no witnesses." But down in his deep heart he said to himself: "Why should I trumpet my disgrace to the world? If I did not know it, perhaps they may not. Whatever happens, I can do nothing but take his life, and I need him alive. For the moment he has me in a cleft stick. But my turn will come."

Hoseyn Hassan had not finished yet. "This shall be our last meeting now," he said. "But when the British are driven out, if we both survive, I shall come to you again; and there will be more to say."

"There will be more to say," repeated Stephen Considine grimly.

CHAPTER XVIII

OF THE TOMBS OF THE CALIPHS AND HOSEYN HASSAN'S DISMISSAL

It is difficult to imagine anything more mediæval and Oriental than the Tombs of the Caliphs at Cairo. The tomb-mosques, which are their glory, are four hundred years old and more, built of stone now rosy, now golden. They rise, like all Egyptian tombs, in the desert where it meets the city; it is in the Eastern desert, which is golden through the day and rosy at the approach of sunset; and, at this hour, the oldest traveller, beholding them from the mounds at the City Gates, might well exclaim, "Earth hath not anything to show more fair."

For the unearthly splendour of the Egyptian sunset paints the graceful arabesqued domes, the lofty battlemented walls, and the noble flights of steps, which lead up to their chief mosques, with hues as rich as the gayest hangings and carpets, till the traveller can imagine himself back in the days of splendour-loving Caliphs like Ibn Tulun and his prodigal son; while all around is a city of minor domes, and desert.

"Where have you been meeting my daughter?" Stephen Considine had demanded. "Has she been imperilling her good name by sneaking through some garden gate into your palace?"

"She has never been in my palace since the day you know of. We meet at the house of an English Member of Parliament, Mr. Krafft."

Stephen started at the name. Hoseyn Hassan did not mention the meeting at the Arab museum. That was exceptional.

"Will you meet at Mr. Krafft's—I should say, Mrs. Krafft's—again for this expedition?"

"Unless you wish us to meet at your house?"

"I do not wish you to meet at my house."

Ever since she had thrown them together, Mrs. Krafft had shown her best side to both of them. Without words, Lucrece had made Mrs. Krafft her confidante. Without words, Mrs. Krafft had impressed upon Hoseyn Hassan that the secret of their past liaison was safe; that he had her perfect good-will in trying to marry Lucrece. This strange woman, impulsive, undisciplined, where her desires were concerned, was prodigal of her affection to the people she had injured or deserted. She gave them God-speed with positive emotion, as they departed to repeat their troth at the shrine of his ancestors.

They left their cab at the Windmill Hill at the foot of the Mousky, telling him to meet them again at dusk. The Sheikh wished to climb the mounds here, and let the spectacle break upon her eyes entire.

As they clambered up the mounds Lucrece caught her foot against something. She looked down, expecting to see a stone, but saw the base of an antique Arab bowl glowing with lustre blue.

"Oh, look, Hoseyn!"

"There are many such pieces here. We are walking over a suburb of the City of the Caliphs."

"Walking over the grave of a city," she said. "If Cairo was destroyed by the sword you are going to draw, would it be like this for the generations to come?"

"Cairo will not be destroyed, little Foolish Fears; there will be no fighting except in the foreign quarters, and the Citadel, where there is English resistance to overcome. But do not trouble your head about that—for see, here there is a sight you cannot match in the world," he said, pointing to the glorious procession of shrines of the Caliphs of the fifteenth century, starting from the tall Mosque of Kait Bey, restored and perfect, and falling further and further into decay as they stretched toward the horizon with domes innumerable.

"I shall not show you the shrine of Kait Bey," he said, "though there is none comparable to it for the richness and grace and symmetry of its architecture, since it would rob our family's shrine even of respectability. But if you go to ours direct, and enter no other afterwards, it will have a nobility of age for you." They had not far to walk before they came to a shrine of great size, far larger,

indeed, than Kait Bey's, though not so lofty. Its steps, almost falling away from the great apse which contained the door, had been majestic. At each end of the front there was an arcaded window carried round the angle. A grand dome, richly arabesqued, rose over the tomb, and smaller ones over each corner of the vast enclosure. This was the Mosque of the Descendants of the Prophet, behind which so many duels had been fought, and where the General had interrupted Kennedy and Wemyss in their fight.

The servant at the door greeted the Sheikh with profound respect.

"He's forgotten my overshoes," cried Lucrece, raising her skirts. It gave her pleasure to present the beauty of her feet and ankles to the man to whom she had given her heart. Only his old servant was by.

"No," he replied. "See, I have not put off my slippers. The mosque is not used except when the family come here on a Friday to pay the observances at the tombs."

Lucrece was not satisfied, but she followed Hoseyn Hassan into the courtyard. It was a mosque of the antique type, a court surrounded by colonnades, one of which was deepened six-fold to form the *liwan* for the services. They threaded their way through the *liwan's* forest of columns. Everything was falling into decay. The roof had lost its colours; the fretted plasterwork was dropping from the arches; the carved dark wood and ivory of the soaring pulpit were reduced by dust and stains to a melancholy drab; the mother of pearl had fallen out of the mosaics of the *mi'rab*. There were no carpets, not even rush mats. Hoseyn Hassan walked on, till, in the right hand end of the *liwan*, they came to a huge grated screen of some hard wood that looked like oak, very massive and richly carved. Lucrece peeped through the grating, and saw a number of splendid tombs shaped like mediæval altars, but having tall shafts at head and foot with turbans carved on them. All of them were in two or three tiers, covered with inscriptions in exquisite Arab writing picked out in delicate colours. All had banners, and burnt-out tapers, and other offerings before them.

The chamber was circular like the great dome above it. The tombs were arranged round the edge of the circle; the space in between was filled with a rich carpet; from chains crossing the dome hung down the original

crystal lamps of great age and beauty, and a row of ostrich eggs.

The walls of the chamber were tessellated with gay marbles below, and adorned with texts from the Koran, in beautiful Kufic characters, just under the spring of the dome.

Everything was rich and well-cared for, though the decorations could not be called beautiful, or in the best taste. The Sheikh produced a key and opened a door in the screen.

"You can come in," he said, putting off his own slippers.

"No. I did not have my overshoes put on."

"It does not signify."

"But it is against the rule of mosques."

"The tomb is mine," he said simply.

"No. I won't come in: I can see quite well from here. Do all these tombs belong to your ancestors, Hoseyn?"

"Yes; each of the men who lie in them held the position that I hold now—of the chief Descendant and Representative of the Prophet."

"Is no one of your family buried here, but them?"

"The others, and the women, are buried on the other side of the mosque."

"Tell me one thing: Why is this part so well-restored, and all the rest of the mosque left in decay?"

"It is not restored: Mohammedans are not accustomed to restore their mosques or tombs. It has never been allowed to go into decay because of the reverence for these tombs."

"Will you be buried here? There seems to be no place left."

"They have begun a fresh circle inside for me."

"You don't mean to say that your grave is made already?"

"Yes."

"What an ill-omened idea. I should hate to feel that my grave was waiting for me."

"How else can one be buried in a vault? We are buried the day we die: if possible, before another sun sets."

"Do you know where your grave is?"

He rolled back the carpet. "There is the entrance,"

he said, pointing to the spot where the marble pavement had last been disturbed. "If you dug down here, you would find the low cell which keeps the earth from slipping into the vault. The vault is behind. So you see, they're quite ready for me when my time comes. They have only to lift the pavement and remove a little earth."

Lucrece shuddered; in her imagination he was already lying in it, with the mosque and the desert outside crowded with mourners.

But he was in high spirits; and, coming out, locked the door and stepped into his slippers. "I must take you round the courtyard quickly; I want to show you the ruins of the great college like the college in Sultan Hassan's Mosque, which one of my ancestors founded round our tombs. That is why our mosque is so large."

There seemed to be hundreds of tiny chambers behind the colonnades, right and left of the *liwan*. To be honest, Lucrece was less interested in these than in the old fountain of lustration, half-tumbled down, in the centre of the court, with aged palm-trees bowing and crossing over it. She was making up her mind from which point she would photograph it when they came back.

"We must hurry on," said the Sheikh. "There is a house below the mounds with an arcade which commands a view of the whole scene. I want to be there two hours before the sun sinks. For it is impossible not to look at the sunset, when you are at the Tombs of the Caliphs, and I have so much to say to you."

When they had seated themselves in the cool arcade looking out on the tombs and the pink mountains behind, he lost no time in commencing.

"You said that you could not marry me, love of my heart, without your father's permission, even supposing he were dead."

"And has he given it?" she asked, trembling with excitement.

"Provisionally."

"Provisionally? How do you mean?"

"I mean that if anything should happen to him in an event which is very near."

"You mean that if he is killed?"

"I mean that if he is killed, he gives his consent to our marriage."

He looked for an expression of joy; none came.

"Are you not glad, beloved?"

"Glad! Glad! How could I be glad? I should not care to be alive if Dad were dead—Dad, who has been father and mother to me ever since I was born."

"But are you not glad for me?" he asked in tones full of tragedy. Had it not been his purpose to kill Stephen Considine?

"Yes, glad for you, dear; I really am. I couldn't have believed that he would consent. How did you win it?"

"He refused absolutely at first; he would not listen to the suggestion of it."

"Yes," she said excitedly; "and how did you convert him?"

"You see, I had to get his consent in case he gets killed, or you would never have married me. If we all get through that event alive, there will be plenty of time to work for it afterwards. I am not forty, and you are only twenty-two. But you said that you must have his consent."

"And how did you win it?"

"I told him that, if he refused, one of us would have to leave the Committee of Egyptian Independence, that I would not sit upon it with him."

"Do you care for me so much as that, Hoseyn?"

"I care all the world for you, Light of my Darkness."

"But could you contemplate giving up the honour of being the leader of the Egyptians in achieving their National Independence?"

"I never sought the honour. Your father thrust it on me."

"That is true, I know. But it does not make up for losing it. Honour must be put before love."

"There was honour in the matter, too, not only for me, but for our entire nation. How could I, an Arab of the purest blood, suffer him to treat me as belonging to an inferior race?"

The Arab is born dignified; and Lucrece had never admired Hoseyn Hassan more than in the heat of this protest.

Stephen Considine did an ill deed when he opposed this marriage. Granted that Hoseyn Hassan had divorced a harem to have decency in asking Lucrece to marry him; granted that he had that hateful record of which Mr. Considine was aware; he was honestly in love with

Lucrece, and had reformed for her, and was willing to live like a European for her. Granted that he was an Oriental, and that mixed marriages between Europeans and Orientals are usually horrible, he was no common Oriental, but a man who knew the rules of European behaviour, and whose birth was so illustrious that no stigma of *mésalliance* could attach to the union.

There was another feature of which Stephen Considine lost sight, that the marriage of his daughter with this progressive and liberal-minded Sheikh, who enjoyed such extreme importance in the Mohammedan world, would do more to raise the lot of Mussulman women than any conceivable alternative; whereas the revolution for which he was slaving would be almost as certain to retard their liberation for an indefinite number of years.

From a man like Sir Francis Vere, who had been the dam against a flood of barbarism and reaction for many a year, such a refusal would have come with justification; but from Mr. Considine, who was willing to use the most unsavoury sweepings of the gutter in his anxiety to injure England, the refusal, sincere as it was, came ill.

One thing justified him: Hoseyn Hassan's determination not to keep his bargain. It seems impossible for an Egyptian to run straight. Few would have been as strict as Hoseyn Hassan.

He had promised Mr. Considine that, after this one meeting to make arrangements, he would not see Lucrece again till the Revolution was over. That was when he was with Mr. Considine. But now that he was with her, he felt that he could not cut himself off from all that transfigured life. He was not of such stern stuff as Ailsa Kennedy.

"Before we go we must settle where we are to meet to-morrow," he said.

"But we are never to meet again till it is over." By *it*, she meant the Revolution. "You know, you promised my father."

This was his first intimation that Stephen Considine had told Lucrece the terms of their compact. It seemed that Mr. Considine had told Lucrece that this was to be her farewell meeting with Hoseyn Hassan; but had not told her any more, in order to shift a discussion, which he dreaded, on to the Sheikh.

"I had to promise it," he confessed, "or he would

never have given us even that qualified permission to marry."

Lucrece looked at him in astonishment. She had never consciously told a lie in her life; and Stephen Considine, crafty and unscrupulous as he was, had probably, in his whole career, never departed from his given word; though, if it were capable of bearing two interpretations, he might not have been governed by the spirit of the promise. It was her first experience of deliberate lying; she was aghast at it.

He saw that he had made a false step. "Forgive me," he pleaded, "I love you so much that I am desperate."

His distress was so obvious that she could not steel her heart against him. "If you love me," she said sorrowfully, "never tempt me like this again."

He could see how she was grieved, but he could not understand it. He was sad too, for the event had thrown a gloom over their last afternoon. The after-glow of an incomparable sunset was pouring a flood of red-gold radiance over the gorgeous and fantastic outlines of those tombs of dead Mohammedan Conquerors, and the free desert, and the mountains behind. But the sympathy that weaves magic into such scenes had fled; and there was no luring it back again.

His very touch was like hot iron to Lucrece.

He had pictured to himself sitting in that arcade with Lucrece till the wane of the after-glow—young lovers with the intensity of their feelings increasing every minute until the end; and their making merry over the intricacies of the paths between the tombs and across the ruin mounds in the soft darkness, till they came upon their cab, and drove through the streets where natives do their humble shopping by the light of flares at night.

But for that two souls must be as one, or the weariness of the flesh asserts itself.

They were back in their cab before the dusk fell. They dismissed it at Mrs. Krafft's door; Lucrece took a fresh cab home.

The Sheikh gladly accepted the hospitable Kraffts' invitation to stay and dine with them. He was sure to have a chance of a talk with Mrs. Krafft afterwards, and he needed her help sorely to win back the ground lost in the afternoon.

It was a curious situation, the man's late mistress

helping him to win back the love of the woman he wished to make his wife. But the romance between Hoseyn Hassan and Sophia was dead, and, against precedent, had been succeeded by a genuine friendship.

"You should have had more intuition, Hoseyn ; Lucrece is not capable of being a lover—she is only capable of loving you. It takes a lover to forgive the means for the end. The more a lover sinned for me, the greater would be my desire for him. He had done it for me ; he had plunged into danger ; he was willing to face shame or punishment for me. But Lucrece has the stern morality of our Hebrew God, who required a sacrifice without blemish."

"What shall I do ?" he asked gloomily.

"Oh, I don't know," she said. "But I may be able to do something for you, if you always come the instant I telephone for you."

When Lucrece was trying to go to sleep that night, a storm of revulsion of feeling swept over her. She starved for the love of Hoseyn Hassan. She prayed and prayed that his exquisite presence might be granted to her again. The next day, without one glimpse of him in all its interminable hours, was intolerable. And Mrs. Krafft intended that it should be. On the third day, when she was lunching with Mrs. Krafft, Hoseyn Hassan called, and Mrs. Krafft insisted on his coming into lunch. Lucrece's first impulse was to rise and fly from the house, but an entreating glance from the guileful Mrs. Krafft, who had arranged the incident, kept her in her seat.

Hoseyn Hassan, carefully drilled by Mrs. Krafft, had the self-control not to address a word to her beyond saying, "How do you do ?" His eyes never left her—Mrs. Krafft allowed that ; a girl of Lucrece's beauty was, she felt, accustomed to be stared at. This made it easier for Hoseyn Hassan, and was silent homage to Lucrece. Mrs. Krafft had a tender feeling for the man who, for a few days, had been the world to her, and trained her conversation to show him at his best.

After lunch he stayed with Mr. Krafft when the ladies retired, and Julius, when he joined the ladies, made excuses for him. The Sheikli had been obliged to go—obliged by Mrs. Krafft.

The second time he came in was when Lucrece was at a tea-party at the Kraffts'. At the lunch she had shaken

hands more constrainedly than with a total stranger, but she had been in a tumult of emotion when she went home.

This time she shook hands with him as a dear friend, smiling with her eyes. But Mrs. Krafft's signals forbade him to stay beside her, or to return, and before long, bade him leave the house.

The third time he only put his head in at the door, and beat a retreat. The plot succeeded. Lucrece picked up her skirts and chased after him. "Hoseyn," she cried, "come and speak to me, I can stand it no longer. Come into the smoking-room. There's no one there."

Once there she poured out her heart to him, and spent an hour or more with him. Mrs. Krafft, eager to be their guardian angel, to wipe out the evil she had done, saw to it that they were not disturbed.

And, after this, they met every day at her house.

CHAPTER XIX

HEARD ON A DAHABEAH

THE three English M.P.'s were lingering on in Egypt. Parliament had been sitting for a long time, but the Radical majority was still large enough to obviate all risk of a catch vote. Dan Climo and Julius Krafft were for fishing in troubled waters, and Charles Prestage was independent.

The Prestages, who had just returned from their *dahabeah*-trip up the Nile, were dining with the Kraffts. Dan Climo, hearing of Mr. Prestage's return, went to call on him after dinner, and learning at the "Savoy" where he was, followed him on to the Kraffts.

Mr. Krafft and Mr. Prestage were well-groomed men, and their wives were noted for their elaborate evening gowns. Dan Climo came into the room without any ceremony, wearing a striped alpaca coat like a barber, and carrying a sun-helmet by its chin-strap. He had a great liking for his helmet, because he felt martial in it, though he was a furious anti-militarist.

"'Ow are you—Charlie Presteege?" he said, oblivious of the circumstances under which they had parted.

"Quite well, thank you," said Mr. Prestage, not vouchsafing another word, and resuming his conversation with Mr. Krafft.

"You don't seem very glad to see me."

"I'm not."

"*Vice verser.*" He leaned forward and helped himself, uninvited, to one of Mr. Krafft's fine cigars, and sat down to listen to the conversation he had interrupted.

"Well, how did you enjoy your trip up the river, Prestage?" asked Mr. Krafft. "Your wife seems a little off it."

"Oh, of course the voyage itself was heavenly. You can't conceive anything more beautiful than gliding up the waters of the Nile, between villages and agricultural scenes teeming with picturesqueness, in absolutely perfect weather; stopping and turning your boat into a hotel whenever the spirit moves you; landing to see the most wonderful temples and tombs in the world; and visiting places like Luxor and Assouan."

"What were the drawbacks?"

"It was often most unpleasant to go ashore—the people were so threatening to strangers, and the whole way up we heard of nothing but outrages. So different from the Egypt that I remember! Why, when we were here last, a woman might have walked from Cairo to Assouan alone, with all her diamonds on her, without being molested."

"What sort of outrages?" asked Climo rudely.

"All sorts. Take, for instance, what happened to a rich Englishman travelling up to Wady Halfa on a *dahabeah*. Out of the kindness of his heart he had taken up with him a man whom he had only met at the hotel, named Anderson, who was in a rapid decline, and was recommended a voyage on a *dahabeah* as the sole means of prolonging his life. He had to bring his medical attendant with him, a young Egyptian from the Kasr-el-Ainy, Dr. Selah. When they got to Abu Simbel, the poor fellow insisted on going ashore. He had such a desire to go into that temple which has the sixty-foot images of the Pharaohs outside. It was too much for him; when he got on board again, he expired of heart failure.

"As soon as life was extinct, his host called the doctor into his cabin, and asked him to sign a certificate of the cause of death.

"To his amazement, instead of taking up the pen to fill in the details, the doctor turned round in his chair, and said: 'My fee is a hundred pounds.'

"'A hundred pounds,' cried the Englishman. 'I don't believe it is a hundred piastres.'

"'We shall see,' replied the doctor. 'I had my suspicions of you from the very first. This man was either your enemy, or you meant to kill him for his money. You have been giving him doses of poison every day since he came on board. It is for this reason that you have so often brought him food and drink with your own

hands, when he has felt too weak to get up. And you allowed him to bring me on board to be made your accomplice, by signing a certificate of death from ordinary causes. I know you, you villain !'

" 'I bet you don't,' said the Englishman.

" 'Well, unless you pay me this money,' said the doctor, in a bullying voice, 'I shall lay an information against you directly we get to Wady Halfa, and you will be tried on the charge of murdering this man. And let me tell you, that you have very little chance of getting off, with me, a doctor, on board making notes of your suspicious behaviour in my diary every day.'

" 'I will not pay you this money. I would rather you took me to the police-station and made your accusations.'

" 'Very well,' said the Egyptian threateningly.

" 'His wife was in an awful fit. Drawing him aside, she said : 'It will be better to pay him anything than have this terrible charge brought against you. A hundred pounds is not such a great matter to you ; and you can't tell what may be the result of a trumped-up charge in a land which is such a mass of villainy and corruption.'

" 'He absolutely refused. She said : 'What if the Egyptians of the courts are as bad as he is ? It may be an organised conspiracy for all we know.'

" 'He answered : 'I don't care. I'm going through with it'

" 'He would not listen to her entreaties ; so, when their *dahabeah* ran alongside the landing at Wady Halfa, instead of going ashore in high spirits, and watching the dragoman charter donkeys for an excursion to the Second Cataract and the Temples, he had to go with the doctor to the police-station.

" 'The doctor made his accusation in voluble and excited Arabic. The officer in charge of the police-station was an Egyptian, and spoke very little English. He either could not, or would not, understand the Englishman. He may have only been suffering from the Egyptian dislike to take responsibility, from the Egyptian inability to follow anything but the letter of his instructions. At all events, he locked the Englishman up, and refused to allow him to communicate with anyone. Of course, when he was taken down to Cairo, his case would have come before the British Consular Court, and the thing would have been cleared up. But in the interval he was in a

beastly nasty fix, locked up in Halfa gaol, with his wife all alone on the *dahabeah*."

"Well, how did he get out of it?" asked Mr. Krafft, very much interested, as he would have taken a *dahabeah* himself, if he had not been so busy.

"Well, fortunately he had taken his boat from Cook, and one of Cook's dragomans with it. Cook's dragomans are splendid chaps. They'll always fight like the very deuce for a foreigner who gets into trouble with the natives; and they know a thing or two.

"This chap went straight to the Mamour. The Mamour was an Egyptian, but his methods of administering justice were not Egyptian. He sent at once for all parties concerned. The doctor began to pour out his accusation in Arabic, but was a bit disconcerted, when the Mamour told him to speak English, so that the accused might understand what he was saying.

"In a very few minutes the Mamour had satisfied himself that this was an impudent attempt to extort blackmail. Hearing that the death had only taken place a few hours before, he ordered the body to be brought ashore for a *post-mortem* by the English doctor attached to the Mamouriye, detaining the parties to the charge while the *post-mortem* was being executed. The Mamouriye faces the landing.

"In the interval he talked hard to the Englishman about Khartoum, urging him to leave his *dahabeah* at Halfa, and make a flying visit by the Desert Railway to see it.

"He was keeping an eye on the doctor while he talked, and presently reaching out his hand for the telephone on his desk, spoke a few words down it; then he went on to describe the Gordon College.

"The doctor had been growing uneasy for a long time. He probably expected the Mamour to take sides; and it worried him, because the old gentleman was making himself very pleasant to the Englishman, and had not spoken a word to him since the case was adjourned for the *post-mortem*.

"At last he could stand it no longer, and suddenly made a bolt for it, but he fell into the arms of the policeman, who had been telephoned to look out for this move.

"When the English doctor returned, he reported that

there was not the slightest trace of poison. So the Mamour handed the Englishman the Government doctor's certificate of the cause of death, and told him what fee there was to pay, and sent the rascally Egyptian to the cells, and had him brought up for trial the next day. As the offence had fortunately been committed in the Soudan, the matter was settled at once; he got an exemplary sentence."

"They seem to be very 'igh and mighty in the Soudan," said Dan Climo.

"They are," said Mr. Prestage, nettled by the man's intrusion and impudence. "If you thought of going to the Soudan, I should recommend you to take the advice Lord Cromer gave to the French, 'who wanted to know what they were to do without a consul in the Soudan.'"

"Give it us."

"'Keep north of the twenty-second parallel:' that is the boundary line, Mr. Climo."

"Oh, they'd put me in choky, would they?"

"No. I think they'd only drop you in the desert at a convenient distance from the Soudan border."

"Do you mean that they'd kick me out?"

"There isn't a doubt of it."

"What other outrages did you hear of, Prestage?" asked Mr. Krafft, in order to get the conversation away from Climo.

"Trains stuck up; highway robberies; all sorts of intimidation; some actual murders of Englishmen; many of the natives known to be opposed to Nationalism; one particularly bad one of an Englishman."

"Of course it was particularly bad, if it was an Englishman," croaked Climo in his evil voice.

"It was," said Mr. Prestage; "one of the very worst I ever heard of. He was an English contractor near Abydos. He did more good than anyone in the district. He not only gave the best wages to his workmen, but was a regular father of the poor. Our friend Considine's agents say that he was murdered by an emissary of the Egyptian contractors of the district, because his benefactions made him too popular, and all the labourers wanted to work for him. But I'm terribly afraid that the Nationalists had something to do with it."

"Oh, I don't believe that," said Mr. Krafft. "There was very likely some woman at the bottom of the case."

When a man's wife or daughter is tampered with, he becomes more like a wild beast than a human being."

"Not all of them," said Mr. Climo, with an odious leer, the meaning of which was lost on his brother legislators, though not on one person who was present.

"We were within an ace of another incident which would have set all Egypt aflame, another Denshawai incident. It was only prevented by the courage and coolness of the Englishmen concerned."

"They're perfect, these English," sneered Dan Climo.

"I wish I'd let those Ethiopian chuckers-out of Con-sidine's break your neck the night I saved it," cried Prestage angrily.

This sobered the horrible little man. A look of something like gratitude came into his eyes. "I do owe you one for that," he said. "I'll try and not interrupt for a bit."

Mr. Krafft took up the running. "What's this new bogey, Prestage?"

"Well, just this. Two Englishmen wanted some pigeon-shooting."

"I can't think why they don't keep off this beastly pigeon-shooting, which causes all the trouble," said Mr. Krafft impatiently.

"Nor can I. But these chaps set about in a perfectly fair way. Their dragoman found a man who was willing to let them shoot his pigeons for a certain price; they paid the money and then they began shooting. Instantly the whole village swarmed out with staves to attack them. They began by throwing stones when they were a goodish way off, but two can play at that game; one of the Englishmen was a cricketer, and his throwing alarmed them, though he took care not to hit any of them. So they fetched the Omdeh. Under cover of the Omdeh, the whole gang of villagers, armed with staves, began to close in on them till they told the dragoman that if the crowd came any nearer they would fire on them. Then the Omdeh, who, according to the dragoman, had got up the whole disturbance, advanced alone and ordered them to give up their guns. This they positively refused to do. Then he said they must pay him 500 piastres each. They also refused to do this. Finally, he said that if they did not, he would bring them before the Mamour's court, and they thought it better to let him. It took

them two hours to get back to the station, for they had to walk backwards, covering the crowd with their guns. They only just caught the last train. They would probably have been murdered if they had lost it. They had the greatest difficulty in getting into their railway carriage; they only managed it by taking turns to cover the crowd with their guns. When the case came before the Mamour's court, they were fined 2,000 piastres each—this Mamour wasn't in the Soudan—for creating a breach of the peace; and the Omdeh, who had got up the whole row, which nearly resulted in several deaths, was complimented on his courageous conduct in not allowing the English to destroy the subsistence of the poor."

"I am sure that these disturbances are only sporadic, Prestage. One must not attach much importance to them," said Mr. Krafft hopefully. But in reality he was terribly disappointed. Murderous outrages, tumults that only needed a spark to cause an explosion, were not at all to his mind. Why could not the Egyptians go in for passive resistance of a kind to suit local requirements—refuse to buy the Government cigarettes, refuse to sell the English anything, refuse to pay their taxes, if they ever did pay them?

He kept these thoughts to himself. When he did speak, he said: "At any rate, we have had none of these outrages in Cairo; we shan't have any disturbances here."

"How can you say that, Julius," asked his wife, suddenly breaking in, "when we've had information that Cairo is divided into districts for rising?"

"I know how you came by that information," said Climo maliciously.

"If you were more responsible," retorted Mrs. Krafft, "perhaps the Egyptian leaders would take *you* into their confidence too."

"I'm not a beautiful woman," he said, with a pretence of gallantry that veiled an odious insult; Mrs. Krafft thought it wiser not to retaliate. How much did Climo know? She wondered.

Her husband unconsciously came to her rescue; she had given him time to think of some platitudes about alarmists, which sounded statesmanlike, and showed his skill as a politico-epigrammatist.

But Climo was not to be suppressed. "I haven't your inside track to information, Krafft; but I tell you

that there will be blood, blood, blood ; that the whole population has arms concealed in its houses ; only it has the straight tip not to produce them until an army arrives to deal with the hired murderers of England, or they get another tip. But the man, who says that the Egyptians are going to do nothing for themselves, is a liar and also a fool."

"Nettie," said Mr. Prestage to his wife, "this is no place for us. Say good-night. I wash my hands of the whole business. God save the King !"

CHAPTER XX

THE RIOT AT "SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL"

UP to this, a few of the principal streets such as the Sharia Kasr-el-Nil, in which the "Savoy Hotel," and practically the "Semiramis," are situated, and the Sharia Kamel, in which Cook's and "Shepherd's" and the "Continental" Hotels are situated, had been safe while daylight lasted; though it was considered unwise for ladies to go out without the protection of a gentleman, since some had been rather grossly insulted.

Between eleven and one, tourists took their walks in these pleasant streets, and did their little shoppings. The outing was enjoyable, and, indeed, necessary, as the European population was practically besieged.

This morning the tourists walking in the Sharia Kamel heard the cymbals and pipes and hand-drums of native music approaching, but did not pay much attention to it, unless they had kodaks; the pilgrims from Mecca had now been returning for some days, and each pilgrim of means was escorted from the railway station to his home with a procession and a band.

It was a fortunate thing, that either because they wished to keep out of the crush, at a time when native insolence was outrageous; or because they wished to be above the crowd for taking photographs, nearly all the Europeans had taken the advice of the old Copt, Girgis—who usually stands on the steps of Thomas Cook and Son to run the messages of the firm—and gone up on the garden terrace which flanks, on either side, the steps leading to "Shepherd's Hotel."

Among the people who were taking photographs was Lucrece Considine, who had brought out her Tom Thumb cinematograph camera, and was winding the handle with no little satisfaction. For this was much the best

procession she had seen. The shield-shaped banners, made of mirror in inlaid frames of red and gold, were unusually splendid; the band of six performers, headed by a Sheikh, who stood up on his saddle, balancing a battle-axe, was the band which accompanies the Holy Carpet, on camels with spangled scarlet housings; the troop of jesters and mummers, gaily apparelled and wearing Guy Fawkes masks, was unusually large. Instead of one or two there were at least half a dozen of the gorgeous ivory palanquins inlaid with silver and ebony, which are supposed to convey the ladies of the harem in their lord's procession, and which are slung between two fine camels, one before, and one behind with his head fastened under the palanquin. The scarlet housings of these camels were richly encrusted with shells and pieces of mirror. They were preceded by a crowd of standard-bearers, carrying the queer banners which look like turbans on staves; and strangely attired musicians, playing on Scotch bagpipes, still adorned with streamers of Scottish plaids. Lastly, surrounded by a swarm of sheikhs riding on white asses, in an *arabeah* covered with spangled cloths and leopard-skins, was the Pilgrim, a man of particular sanctity. All the kodaks were at once focussed on him.

The Egyptian Mohammedan, as a rule, only objects to being photographed in the street, as a European of the same class would object to it, on the score of rudeness. The poor Mohammedans, the women often, as well as the men, regard it as an easy way of earning a small piastre. The well-off condone the act of photography, if it is done unobtrusively. With polite precautions, even the Holy Carpet and its *entourage* can be photographed openly.

Most of those on the terrace had already taken photographs of pilgrims' processions in the preceding days, and did not give the matter a thought: nor did the incident occur until the cameras were focussed on the Pilgrim himself. Then the crowd, which was enormous, spreading past Cook's and the square beyond, into the road from the railway station, grew ugly.

A youngish man, masked and disguised as a jester, made his way to the hotel porter, who was standing on the steps, and demanded that the cameras should be given up. "Shepherd's" was practically defenceless. Thanks to Lord Clapham, there was no organisation for

defence among the men staying in the hotel and its numerous servants; and there was no hose arrangement for driving away a mob with jets of steam, like that of the "Savoy." Kennedy was in the hotel at this very minute, with a mission from the General, to urge the necessity for some such arrangement upon the manager.

The porter went round and collected the cameras, while the crowd surged below the hotel terrace. The thousand or two, who had already passed, turned back and ran towards the hotel. The porter did not reveal what he wanted the cameras for; he only said: "Ladies, there must be no more photographing! Give me the cameras, please."

Seeing the threatening nature of the crowd outside, they all complied, imagining that he was going to take them into the hotel and put them out of sight. They grew as furious as the mob, when they saw him carry them down the steps and hand them to the man disguised as a jester, who flung them on the ground to be stamped to pieces by the crowd. There was a rush of the owners, frantic at seeing the imminent destruction of their valuable instruments, and the valuable exposures which they had contained. But when they saw the aspect of the mob, none of them descended the steps. They turned on the porter. How had he dared to do this? The mob would never have ventured to force its way on to the terrace!

"But, yes," he cried. "But yes." He was a German by extraction, and his meals left very little room for heart in his large body.

Orientalists read gestures almost as easily as words. They saw the fury of the visitors, whose cameras had been destroyed, and as the porter had acted as their interpreter in demanding the instruments, they imagined that he was receiving denunciations for them, not scoldings for himself. Their temper grew higher and wickeder: a tide set in towards the steps.

The porter had already sent a boy for the manager.

The manager, who was not English, was at that moment arguing that the contingency of an attack was too remote to need the precautions which the General had sent Kennedy to urge. He looked as if he had been thunder-struck; he neither spoke nor moved.

Not so Kennedy. Judging that the hotel passage would be blocked by frightened people running in from

the terrace, he went to the manager's room, and, jumping out of the window, strode straight to the steps. He was in uniform, as all officers in Egypt are in the morning.

He drew his sword.

A rush could have beaten it down as easily as a blade of grass, but it counted for much. The pure Arabs, fanatics, ready to spring like a leopard, are not politicians : if they had been numerous in the mob, the massacre would have begun. The Nationalist sedition-monger—the slum-Egyptian, Arab by religion, but not by race, has a great respect for his skin, though he is as ready to murder and pillage as a fox in a poultry-yard, when there is no chance of his victim turning. The sturdy *fellahin*, who made such good soldiers against the Mahdists, are slow to anger, and were still minding their own business.

This was a city mob, not a leopard, but a treacherous dog, making ready to spring.

To them the sword spoke. They were not yet airing the fire-arms supplied to them by Mr. Considine : they were not armed, except with the walking-stick which is as natural to the Egyptian as a cigarette. Some one would have to taste the edge of that sword before it was beaten down ; and Kennedy stood waving them back with his blade. Though his imperfect Arabic fell on deaf ears, by sheer force of will he made them evacuate the steps and a yard or two behind. Then the wave stopped ebbing, and began to flow again with gathered strength. But Kennedy pointed imperiously to the foot of the steps with his sword, and there it stopped.

The mob and its enemy faced each other squarely, and began a battle of eyes.

Meanwhile the servants and most of the ladies had retreated to the hotel, but the Englishmen, led on by Mr. Prestage, and the young Americans, and a few of other nations, took up their places behind Kennedy, though they could hope to do little, unarmed. Lucrece stood upon the terrace, as if she had been spell-bound. She was in as grave peril as if she had been the wife of the most unpopular Englishman, because not one of the mob of Nationalists knew her as the great conspirator's daughter. Kennedy had not seen her. Mrs. Krafft was not there, or she would undoubtedly have rushed out on to the terrace to drag her in.

The servants flew to close the shutters of the lower

windows. They even began to close the door, but the Swiss manager kicked them away. He was a brave man, though he had been slow to act. He stood a little outside the door himself, so as to see round the gentlemen who were guarding the top of the steps. The first floor windows were lined with the white faces of the women, whose husbands and sons and brothers were waiting to stem the onslaught of the mob below.

The jester, who had originally caused the trouble, wriggled his way to the front and began to incite the mob to rush the hotel. He had his back to the steps, his face to the crowd.

Kennedy drew his revolver and walked down the steps. A cry from the crowd made the man turn round. Kennedy lowered his revolver so that it covered the centre of the firebrand's stomach. He knew enough Arabic to say: "I shall have time to shoot you, and if the crowd tries to enter, I'll shoot you and a few of them. Tell them to go back."

The jester saw his peril, and cried out in agony to the mob: "Back, back, or we shall be shot."

But there were some sterner spirits in the mob; and those behind ran no danger in pressing those in front forward. A few of the front rank might be shot—what of it? It was each for himself—and then there would be glorious revenge and loot. But the front rank saw their danger from the grim Scot, as he noticed the pressure from behind.

He kept his presence of mind. "Walk up these steps," he said to the jester, keeping him covered with his revolver. The man hesitated, and cried for help to the crowd. But the men round him saw death for themselves. In a few minutes the pressure from behind would throw them on Kennedy, and two or three of them, it might be only two or three, would pay the penalty. So they forced their leader, now their scapegoat, to go up with this grim man.

When the jester reached the top, Mr. Prestage came forward, and seized him by the collar, and gave him a shake which almost broke his neck. "I'll kill him if they come on," he said; "you keep your eye on them, Kennedy."

The jester, on his knees, with the Englishman's strong hand on his collar, wept and whined for mercy, and turned

hideous colours, for he saw the crowd which he had set in motion, pressed forward from behind, and knew that his last minute could only be delayed a span.

The crowd, with the movement of a gathering wave, kept their eyes on Kennedy, the only man who was showing a weapon, the master who was holding them in leash. They had missed the prime moment for a rush, while he was ascending the steps with the jester, and that steely eye was half distracted from them. Now they met its full force again; the wild beast and its tamer were having a battle of will, but the end could not be far off; the pressure from behind, from those who were outside the spell, was at breaking point.

At that intense moment came an incongruous interruption, such as has sometimes saved a situation of this kind, the merry music of a cake-walk :

“ Tarum, titummit, tum-ti-tum ;
 Tarum, titummit, tum-ti-tum ;
 Tarum, titum ;
 Tarum, titum ;
 Tarum, titum, tarum titum.

“ Tarum, titummit, tum-ti-tum ;
 Tarum, titummit, tum-ti-tum ;
 Tarum, titum ;
 Tarum, titum ;
 Tarummit, tum, titum.

“ Tum tarummit, tumtarummit ;
 Tum tarummit, tumtarummit ;
 Tumty, tumty, tumty, tumty,
 Tumty, tumty, tumty, tum ;
 Tumtarummit, tumtarummit ;
 Tumtarummit, tumtarummit ;
 Tum-ti-tum ; tum-ti-tum ;
 Tum, tarummit, tum.”

Tarum, titummit, tum-ti-tum went the music.

Many heads turned involuntarily towards the sound. Who could be playing the “Mosquito Parade” in this jaunty fashion at such a moment? Kennedy’s eyes never moved, he was wrapped in his task; so much depended on him.

Suddenly there was a new movement in the crowd. But it was lateral, towards the station, instead of towards the steps. And this movement grew till it began to

sweep the street like the turn of the tide at the Severn's mouth.

At first it moved slowly.

Tarum, titummit, tum-ti-tum brayed the music, drawing nearer and nearer.

As it approached, the tide flowed faster and faster, and began to swirl. And then came a cheer, which was half weeping, from the white-faced women, who had just seen the flicker of steel in the sunshine.

Tarum, titummit, tum-ti-tum blared the bugles with all the breath that can go into brass. The tide raced so strongly that the Holy Man, and the white asses with the sheikhs, and the camels with the ivory litters, and the band of bagpipes, and the bearers of the turban standards, and the mountebanks, and the camel band, and the bearers of the mirrors, were all pushed tumbling over each other up a side street.

Tarum, titummit, tum-ti-tum blew the bugles from where they had halted a little up the road—and those on the steps could now hear the tramp, tramp, tramp!

Tramp, tremp! tramp! tremp!

And the head of a horseman in khaki appeared, and bayonets in fours, moving at the quick Rifle time. That was all which the women at the windows could see, above the terrace, of the dashing Irishmen. As soon as the first bayonets had reached Cook's offices, just beyond the hotel, the Colonel gave the order: "Halt, front, stand at ease, stand easy," and rode back to the hotel steps.

There a fresh surprise was awaiting him. Kennedy had moved along the terrace, and was kneeling over the body of a woman, spraying cold water on her face. He did not notice the Colonel's presence till he looked up to bid the bystanders stand back, and give her more air. His whole soul was in his face. The Colonel marvelled at the tenderness and solicitude in the face of the man who had just been holding back a huge mob by the glare in his eye. He did not know that it was the woman Kennedy loved and had lost.

All the time that he was having that silent battle with the mob, Lucrece had knelt, like the statue of Niobe when the darts of Apollo were falling on her children, praying that no harm might fall on him. To her personal safety she never gave a thought. Yet, if Kennedy had been struck down, she must have been one of the first to follow.

Then the merry Rifle tune came dancing up the street, and the mob paused like a stag on the mountains of Argyllshire, which has scented its enemy, man. It listened till the tramp, tremp, tramp, tremp of disciplined feet fell on its ears, and it realised that the soldiers were upon it, and broke and fled. It knew nothing about the delays of reading Riot Acts, and the lack of martial law, only that it was transgressing, and that force had come. In its panic, it crumpled up the procession, and almost trampled under its feet the man who was too holy to be photographed.

When the crisis was over, and her prayer was heard, Niobe fell forward insensible.

Kennedy had put up his sword and revolver, and was going into the hotel for a whisky-and-soda, when he saw a woman lying on her face on the terrace. He feared the worst. Some missile must have struck her. He rushed up. He almost fell himself: "My God, it's Lucrece." *He* had saved a whole hotelful of strangers, and he could not save her.

"Quick, water," he cried, as he knelt down to loose her dress at the throat. Half a dozen willing helpers raced for it. He could see that she was not dead—he knew death so well. He could find no wound on her head, no bullet-hole in her dress.

But she was still insensible when the Colonel arrived, and for several minutes afterwards.

"I wonder what it means," said the Rifleman to himself. Beside the hero Kennedy, oblivious over the body of this beautiful woman, stood Mr. Prestage, holding an Arab prisoner by the collar, and shaking him like a rat, whenever he showed signs of moving.

Presently the woman came to, and opened her eyes. As they fell on Kennedy, the old smile irradiated her face, and she asked in a weak voice: "Ailsa! Are you wounded, Ailsa?"

"Sound in wind and limb;" he used slang to save himself from sentiment. "Can you get up now?"

"I think so."

He just had time to help her to her feet before his eyes fell on the Colonel.

He would have given a year's income for half an hour's talk with Lucrece, thus delivered into his hands. Surely he might speak now to this wicked Considine, who was

under the General's ban; surely she would listen to his explanations.

But this was one of the Colonels to whom the General had notified the ban on the Considines, and, as Commander of the Regiment which had dispersed it, he was waiting to hear the account of the riot.

"Will you help Miss Considine into the hotel?" Kennedy said to one of the Americans. "Good-bye, Lucrece. I'm wanted."

"Good-bye, Ailsa," she said, in a voice whose wistfulness he would not forget.

Mr. Prestage, with no particular expression on his cool English face, was asking: "What are we to do with the prisoner?"

After a few minutes' discussion between the Colonel and Kennedy, the prisoner was sent with a strong escort to the Rifles' barrack-guard-room; the police would have allowed him to escape.

The visitors living at the "Savoy" took advantage of the escort to return to their hotel. Kennedy remained at the top of the steps. He was telling the Colonel what had happened, in the same dry way as he would have described a court-martial on a drunken private, who had assaulted an officer.

"What did my sergeant telephone to you, sir?" he asked. "I did not expect you for another five minutes."

"I had no telephone from the hotel. My word was from the General at Headquarters."

"Then he must have telephoned there."

"Well, the General was pretty vague about it, then; he did not mention 'Shepherd's'?"

"But how did you know where to come to, sir?"

"I was marching to the railway station."

Kennedy said nothing, but his impassive look demanded further explanations.

"The General telephoned that there was a very large crowd at the railway station, gone to meet a sort of saint who was returning from Mecca. And that he should like me to march half the battalion through the principal streets, with the band playing noisy tunes, to remind the mob that there were British soldiers about, and to fill the narrow street that leads down here from the station; so that the procession might find it more convenient to

go through the streets by the Sharia El-Faggala, where they wouldn't meet any foreigners."

"May I ask you a rather cheeky question, sir?"

"Under the circumstances I think you may, Kennedy."

"Did he suggest that you should play the 'Mosquito Parade'?"

"No, that was the band-master's idea. Perhaps he wanted to show the Egyptians what he thought of them. It may have been only because it is a good marching tune. It gives the men a lively step."

CHAPTER XXI

THE BLOWING UP OF THE MILITARY TRAIN AT WASTA

THE anxiety in Cairo was intense. In this great city of six hundred thousand people, the lives of the foreigners and the upper class Egyptians depended on themselves and the handful of British troops; three Regiments of Infantry, a few mounted Infantry, a Battery of Horse Artillery, a Company of Garrison Artillery, a Company of Royal Engineers, and a Regiment of Cavalry.—The loyalty of the Egyptian Army was an unknown quantity; or, rather, it was not known if in any regiment the loyal element was sufficiently strong to prevent it going over to the revolvers, when the revolt came. The police were rotten to the core, Nationalists almost to a man, except a few of the higher officers. Their being in the police at all was a grievance. They were conscripts, compelled to serve for a further period in the police when their five years in the army was up. The conscription was also the cause of the disloyalty of the army. Hardly a man in the ranks had entered it willingly. The whole system of conscription was odious to every Egyptian who was too poor to pay the twenty pounds required to purchase exemption. And the Nationalists were chiefly drawn from the class to whom twenty pounds was sufficient to be a serious matter.

The leaders of the Nationalist conspiracy were not restrained by any feelings of mercy from ordering a massacre, in the style of the Sicilian Vespers, of all the foreigners in Egypt. The safest and easiest way of exterminating individuals was to have so many assassins told off to dog the footsteps of each foreigner; and at a given signal—say a gun going off an hour before midday, to strike him down. But not many soldiers could be cut off this way; there would therefore be the Army of Occupation to deal with; and among the leaders were men who

knew enough of the British temper to be aware that, so many weeks or months afterwards, a British army would be landed, and would overrun and conquer the country, and turn it into a British province or protectorate, after taking who should say what vengeance for the murder of their fellow countrymen.

Actual outbreaks of military force were deprecated for the same reason. Rioting and brigandage, where the police were in sympathy with rioters and brigands, were much safer methods; they might even be used as arguments in the British Parliament to prove that it was unsafe to withhold the right of Representative Government any longer, owing to the state of Egyptian feeling. But several attempts, which involved less risk to their perpetrators, had been made against the military. At the Abbassiyeh Barracks well-poisoning had been frequent, resulting in a good many fatalities; and a bomb, sent into the Citadel in the form of a tin of beef, had killed a sergeant and five men of the Welsh Fusiliers; not to mention several abortive bomb outrages. But it was the scattered English in the Nile towns who suffered most. In places where there were only a handful of them, it was easy for the Nationalists to incite murderous outrages against them by pointing out the prospects of loot, when they were dead or gone. The designs against them were generally betrayed to them, partly for *bakshish*, partly because it was safer to frighten them away than to fight them away. They were often allowed to depart peaceably if they abandoned their property: though if they showed signs of spoiling the prospects of loot, dastardly outrages were committed to frighten them into immediate departure.

But at some places where fanaticism ran high, like the notorious Tanteh in the Delta, and Nag-Hamadi near the Nile Bridge of Upper Egypt, Englishmen were murdered without warning.

The net result was that in most places, where less than ten Englishmen were residing, they were murdered or driven out, the whole way up the Nile. And the prospects of loot made the Greek merchants, though they had been trying to curry favour with the Nationalists, often share the fate of the English—a circumstance which was to have important results.

The Nationalists did not have it all their own way in hunting these lonely Englishmen out of their homes.

Where even two or three were gathered together, they often held out for days and inflicted serious loss on their assailants; and, if their servants were faithful, they sometimes got their principal effects on the steamers Thomas Cook and Son sent up to their relief.

But the same movement was always in progress: that of the outlying English having to come into the big centres, on peril of their lives.

What action the Khedive might take was another unknown factor in the situation. He was proceeding with great caution, and he was after all an Egyptian. He had, at any rate, shown no overt sympathy with the disaffection, and seemed in perfect agreement with the British Consul-General with regard to the precautions that must be taken against disorders.

That he could carry the Egyptian Army with him in support of the Nationalists was certain; the question was, could he, and would he carry them with him against the Nationalists?

This was the crux which made the General commanding the British Army of Occupation anxious. British residents and tourists had far graver reasons for anxiety. It was no longer quite safe for ladies to go out at all. There were very few streets in which it was safe for any foreigner to be out at night. Robberies of banks and trains were becoming alarmingly frequent. Foreigners were beginning to be murdered in lonely places, and were frequently mobbed and insulted in the streets, even the principal streets of Cairo. Boycotting and intimidation were becoming almost universal; as the police were Nationalists, and the troops had to be kept together at the barracks in case they were needed for military operations, there was no means of coping with intimidation;—or of patrolling the line between Cairo and Alexandria. No foreigners could therefore leave the capital without the calamity of falling into the hands of the railway highwaymen.

The General, on his own initiative, it was said, had telegraphed to Winston George for reinforcements.

The British Agent on the other hand persisted in the attitude which has sacrificed so many thousands of valuable British lives—of women and children as well as men.

The Egyptian Government, he said, were going through a very trying time, they needed our sympathies, not our interference. They were doing everything which could

be done, and if only English people would not fuss, everything would settle down.

The Egyptian Government were undoubtedly having a very trying time, and stood in much need of commiseration. But if they were doing all they could to prevent rioting, arson, brigandage, boycotting, intimidation and murder, it was high time that somebody interfered who could do better. Very likely they were doing all they could, since the police, and probably the army also, would only obey them if they sided with the conspirators.

But it was flat folly and flatly untrue to say that the disturbances would cease if things were allowed to drift. Violence would spread as a runaway horse, which begins by walking away from where its master left it, breaks into a trot, then into a canter, then into a wild gallop, ending in widespread destruction and loss of life.

The General had, it must be confessed, a soldier's dislike of seeing combinations of worthless cowards injuring and intimidating good citizens, because they were not called to their senses by having to fight their way through resolute and disciplined men, when they sallied out to commit outrages. Within the Khedive's dominions there was but one ray of light, the attitude of the Soudanese.

The Soudanese have never loved the Egyptians, and have always been sincerely attached to the English rulers who freed them from the awful tyranny of the Mahdi, which in thirteen years did to death three quarters of their population, reducing them from more than eight millions to less than two. The Soudanese, unlike the Egyptians, are fond of military service, and have therefore no conscription-grievance. Their one disturbing element was the religious question. The astute men who were organising the great Senoussi movement in the Sahara and the adjoining provinces, with a view to establishing a universal Mohammedan Empire in North Africa, brought forward with great prominence the mandate they read in the Koran for the declaration that it is wrong for a Mohammedan to live under the Rule of a non-believer. They ignored the fact that more than half the Mohammedans of the world do live in countries ruled by the King of England, the Czar of Russia, the Emperor of China, and other non-Mohammedan potentates.

The Egyptian Nationalists recognised that this doctrine was the only lever for raising the contented *fellahin* against

the *fellah's* benefactors, the English. They did not recognise that they were being made catspaws themselves by Mohammedan agitators; that Egypt is not strong enough to stand alone; that Egypt is bound to be absorbed into some stronger combination. Loyalty to the Sultan of Turkey as Caliph of Islam had been made an excuse for driving the English out of the dominions of the Khedive. The Sultan, while in the hands of the Reactionary party, was believed to look with a benevolent eye on the catspaw, which was pulling chestnuts out of the fire for him.

But when the Young Turks who, with the good will of the real religious authorities of the Turkish Empire, suddenly established a Representative Government in Turkey, declared that the English were the friends of the human race, and quoted the English rule in Egypt as the ideal government, it became plain that Turkey, to which Egypt looked for her religious inspirations, would countenance no agitation against England. Then the hollowness of the religious pretensions of the Egyptian Nationalists, the hollowness of their protestations of loyalty to Turkey, became apparent; with it their chances of inflaming the *fellahin* against England disappeared.

The attitude of Turkey had even further-reaching consequences. For the Soudanese, freed from the religious agitation against the English, felt a great reaction against the Egyptians, and petitioned for the removal of their Egyptian officers, most of whom they abundantly proved to have been in conspiracy against the British Occupation of Egypt, and joint ownership of the Soudan. In the troubled condition of Anglo-Egyptian politics the Sirdar thought it right to yield to their wishes. Now, therefore, while Egypt was on the verge of revolution, and no one knew if her army would not once more take the lead in establishing it, the Soudanese regiments were in a state of perfervid loyalty to England.

The foreigners who were detained in Cairo by the brigands stopping the trains between the Capital and Alexandria, were, many of them, filled with apprehension. There were others who divided their time between the Turf Club and the K. S. C. just as usual. They were so convinced of British superiority that they "did not think those fellows would dare to do anything." The officers, except the strong contingent who were kept on duty, were encouraged to show themselves at the clubs and

the hotel dances as much as possible, so as to give the idea that everything was going on as usual.

Still the British Consul-General would not move, and foreign ladies began to grow sick with anxiety. Even if the authorities in England sent reinforcements at once, it would be a matter of a couple of weeks at least before they could reach Egypt.

A spick of help came from the Sirdar, to whom the General had sent a verbal message by Kennedy. Feeling that he could trust his Soudanese, he ordered half the battalion of the King's Highlanders, who were at Khartoum, to go to headquarters at Cairo. He could do this without consulting Lord Clapham, who, having, while he was a Member of the House of Commons, done his best to involve Great Britain in wars against the rest of the Powers by his untimely agitations on behalf of the Armenians, was now atoning for his past vehemence by allowing the almost daily assassinations of Armenian and Syrian British subjects, by Mohammedan Nationalists, to pass without so much as a protest.

Things looked as bad as they could without an actual outbreak of hostilities, when the welcome news arrived that the Sirdar was sending the half battalion of Highlanders down from Khartoum. It was true that the journey would take four days at the least reckoning. But the intelligence that they were coming did something to quiet the Nationalists in a week that was a dark week for Cairo.

It was likely that some dastardly attempt would be made to wreck the train. To obviate this the Sirdar allowed it to be known in the vernacular papers that the Nationalist emissaries who had been sent to Khartoum to corrupt the Soudanese soldiers and been denounced by them to the Sirdar, would be sent to Cairo in chains, in a truck in front of the engine of the train, which carried the Highlanders. As these men were among the most active and influential and devoted spirits in the Nationalist movement, he assumed that nothing would be done to risk their lives. A smaller man than the Sirdar might also have kept the hour of their arrival a secret. But he communicated to the Press the fact that they would detrain at the Ghizeh station outside Cairo at 3.5 p.m., and would march in by the Nile Bridge. The bridge had been carefully guarded for some weeks by detachments of the Royal Irish Rifles, the Regiment in barracks at the bridge head.

But conspirators are proverbially careless of each other's lives, and the Nationalist Egyptians showed in addition an inordinate jealousy of each other. All aspired to be leaders, to cut great figures and pour forth floods of talk. The people who were content to endure, to die nameless deaths in the trench so that others might pass over their dead bodies into the citadel, were few.

To the leaders in Cairo, the prospect of combining a blow at the English with the thinning down of the candidates for the leadership of the Nationalists was too alluring.

The train had just steamed through the big junction of Wasta ; the officers were admiring the rich green of the fields after the arid Soudan, and kodaking the strange outlines of the false Pyramid of Medum, when there was a long dull rumbling followed by a terrific explosion. Everyone jumped to his feet and seized his weapons. Other explosions would follow ; every minute might be their last.

The place was very well chosen. The line, for some miles here, runs along a high causeway thrown up-between the Nile and an irrigation canal. Any of the regiment, therefore, who were not killed by the explosion, were likely to be drowned as the train toppled into the waters. Hardly anyone probably would have been saved if it had not been for the cowardice and incompetence of the conspirators detailed for the destruction of the train. Fearful of risking their own skins by shots from chance survivors, they fired the mine too soon, and ran away.

When the Highlanders had time to ascertain the mischief done, it was perceived that the line in front of the engine had collapsed into the Nile. The tremendous charge of dynamite tore up a long strip of the causeway so completely that the waters of the canal and the Nile mingled over its foundations ; and every minute thousands of gallons of the precious water stored up to save the crops of the *fella-hin* from perishing in the summer, escaped into the Nile. But the train, except the open truck in which the prisoners were sitting by themselves, chained together, under the rifles of the Highlanders stationed on the engine, escaped uninjured. The line under the truck-containing the prisoners collapsed and the truck turned over : but it was so much lighter than the engine that, instead of dragging the train down with it, its couplings broke, and it fell into the

river, where its wretched occupants, hampered with their irons, sunk like stones.

The train was safe ; but the Nationalists had succeeded in their object, which was to prevent the reinforcements reaching Cairo.

Colonel Cassilis's dumb rage was terrible. Not only would the garrison of Cairo be short of his five hundred splendid Highlanders in the crisis, but his failure would prejudice the whole situation. The success of this stroke would embolden the Nationalists to try others. Until Cook's steamers could be telegraphed for and come up—which would mean two days, there seemed no earthly means of getting on. The line was broken beyond repair for many yards, and with it the high road to Cairo on the other side of the Irrigation Canal.

To tantalise him still further he could see on the far bank of the Nile some of the great Nile boats, whose huge shoulder-of-mutton sails make them look like gigantic birds, as they fly up the great river before the strong North winds. Their sailors, like true country Egyptians, were so occupied with their business of unpacking their cargoes of *goullahs* that they had paid no heed to the explosion ; their vessels were nearly empty, and they were anxious to get through with their work, and commence the long voyage up stream to their homes at Kench.

In any case it would be no good signalling to them, for their owners would be hostile.

If only they had been on this side of the river, they could have been rushed before they could have cast loose, and with them the soldiers could have been embarked with their baggage, and transported to the other side of the breakdown, to wait for a special train to be sent up for them. The telegraphing would be no difficulty, for they had not yet gone many minutes' walk from the Wasta Station.

Was nothing to be done—except dispatch that cypher telegram to the General to announce his failure ? It was maddening.

Suddenly Kennedy, who had gone back to Khartoum with the message from the General to the Sirdar which brought the regiment down, came up and saluted. He pointed to a smaller boat fishing in the shallows, further down the stream, away from the others, which was capable of holding a dozen men, if they sat on her gunwales and her nose as well as inside.

" May I try and get that boat over for you, sir ?" he said.

" I don't see how you're going to do it, Kennedy ; but if you could, we might get enough men across to capture one of those big fellows, and then the rest would be easy."

" It's a bit of a chance, I own, sir. But there is just the off-chance, and I'm game to try. It's only risking one life to get out of this awful hole."

" Well, if you'll volunteer, it is not for me to prevent you ; but I would not order anyone to go on such a forlorn hope. How do you think you can manage it ? "

" Swim across, sir, with my revolver slip-noosed to my helmet to keep it dry. As soon as I get to the shallows I shall slip my revolver free, cover the man in the boat with it while I board her, and make him sail her across."

" Suppose he refuses ? "

" Then I shall shoot him and sail her across myself."

" It does not seem possible, but it's not like you, Kennedy, to say that you can do a thing unless you can do it. Can you sail one of these Nile boats ? "

" Yes, sir."

" And swim across the Nile ? "

" It isn't so much of a swim, here, sir. I've swum from Khartoum to Omdurman—that's four or five miles."

" Have you ever tried to do it with a helmet and a revolver on your head ? "

" Yes, sir, I've often swum across the Blue Nile like that, practising for this sort of occasion."

" Well, try, my boy. My blessing and your country's are on your devoted head."

" It isn't so very risky, sir. There are no crocodiles here. But one thing, sir, if I do get back, don't let the men make a noise, or show more than they can help, till I've made the return voyage with half a dozen file and secured one of the big boats. And while I'm gone, sir, will you telegraph to Cairo for that train to meet us ? "

In a minute or two Kennedy was stripped, and had his revolver noosed to his helmet, to which he had firmly attached in front a bit of a withered cotton bush picked up on the line. This going down stream made the swimmer look like a bit of rubbish carried along by the current. So like, that more than one big *gyassa*, flying before the wind with the current swishing round her bows, almost ran him down.

The excitement of officers and men was intense—the

officers, not so excitable naturally, had their anxieties increased because they could see through their glasses what hairsbreadth escapes he was having.

Most of the crews must have seen what the cotton bush really was, when it had crossed their bows. But the buffalo-like stupidity of the country Egyptian proved his salvation : they were not even interested in a man swimming across the Nile in a helmet with a revolver tied to it : they themselves get so intimate with the Nile that they will do anything in it.

When he had passed all the *gyassas* that came flying up the great river, the anxious spectators of the regiment saw him running into a fresh peril. He was heading not for the little fishing bark but direct for the six great boats laden with water-jars. They had so many men that they thought he must be attacked.

But just as he was on them they saw that he was only holding up stream for the current, for he turned at that moment and drifted down on the fisherman.

The fisherman paid not the slightest heed to the cotton-bush, not even when, feeling the water too shallow to swim any further, Kennedy knelt and unnoosed the revolver hanging on the back of his helmet. Then he rose to his feet, and covering the man with his pistol, waded up to the boat and climbed on board. That moment was the man's chance if he had been quick enough to seize it, but he was paralysed with fear. Once on board Kennedy assured the man in broken but fluent Arabic that he would not be hurt and that he would receive a pound—which is an Egyptian coin as well as an English—if he sailed him across the river and back again as quick as he could ; but that if he did not obey he would shoot him dead on the spot, and sail the boat himself. The man had no wish to disobey ; his eyes glistened at the idea of making a pound. Nor would he have disobeyed even if he had known the significance of what he was doing. He was a very poor and simple man, to whom Egypt was not even a geographical expression. He pulled up the stone which was his anchor, poled his boat out into rather deeper water and hoisted his sail. " You attend to the sail," said Kennedy, " I can steer."

The wind carried the boat swiftly across, though Kennedy had to head her almost for Wasta Station to allow for the current.

The glasses of all the officers and five hundred pairs of eyes were on that dilapidated sunt-wood boat, with its shred of dark sail, which carried Kennedy and the fortunes of an army. He steered it skilfully alongside of a mass of masonry from a culvert, which the dynamite had hurled into the edge of the river.

In a minute he was in his shirt and his uniform—he did not wait for stockings or boots or belts—he did not even buckle on his scabbard, but laid the naked sword on his knees while he steered. He had felt in his pockets to make sure that he had the sovereign for the poor boatman. A sergeant and ten men managed to squeeze into the little craft; willing hands pushed her off; and with wind and current to help she was soon across the river.

The men in the big pottery boats paid no heed to her being full of soldiers. Perhaps they had not heard of the great events which were going on in their country. Perhaps they did not heed them, or connect them with this strange apparition for Wasta, which is far from any British garrison. At any rate the men of the boat which they boarded needed no more than the implied threat of the rifles to make them unmoor from the shore, push out and sail over, when they heard that they were going to receive five hundred piastres hire for transporting the soldiers. The fisherman told them how easily he had earned his hundred piastres.

Before they started Kennedy sent for the *reises* of the other boats, and told them that he would engage them all on the same terms, if they came across at once. They assented willingly. He thought it likely that, when he had started, they might attempt to escape, and meant to give them a volley if they did, so as to frighten them into remaining, till he could bring back a big boat-load of his men and capture them.

But evidently they were not politicians. They almost raced across the river in their hurry to make the five hundred piastres.

This time, as Kennedy neared the shore, the regiment sent up three ringing cheers. While the boats were being secured, the telegram had been sent and all the ammunition and baggage emptied from the arrested train.

Kennedy had reckoned that even with half a dozen of these big Nile boats they would have to make three or four trips to transport five hundred men and their baggage

from the bank above the breakdown to the bank below it. But the boatmen made a sort of bridge of boats out of two of them, across the channel, which the dynamite had opened between the river and the canal. The men and, as it proved, the greater part of the baggage, were able to be transported across it, which saved much time.

Before the train could arrive from Cairo everything was standing on the line ready to be shipped into it. The boatmen acted as porters willingly. They were overpowered with their good fortune; and much valuable assistance was given from an unexpected source.

As the train had been jogging along from Wasta, the junior officers, who had not been in Egypt before, had been watching with interest the procession of Egypt which passes from the dawn to the setting of the sun, along every high road by a river bank—the Sheikhs on their white asses; the humbler heavily-panniered market asses; the forage camels swaying like desert ships; the buffaloes led by children with ropes drawn over their shoulders as they are painted on the tombs of the Pharaohs; the herdsmen of sheep and goats, carrying the weakest kid or lamb in their arms like the Good Shepherd, as they drive their flocks before them; the women draped in black, all grace, from the pitchers poised on their heads to the gleaming anklets on their slender legs.

Then came the explosion. The road as well as the railway was buried in the waters, and the procession came to a halt, and soon swelled into a crowd like Ghizeh Market.

All saw that the soldiers had had an accident; and so little were the *fellahin* touched by all the history that was in the making, by all the hopes of young Egypt, that most of them, except the rich Sheikhs, waded waist deep through the irrigation canal to help the regiment.

The unspoiled *fellah* is one of nature's men.

CHAPTER XXII

HOW THE KING'S HIGHLANDERS MARCHED INTO CAIRO

THE Nile Bridge at Cairo is one of the landmarks of Egypt. It is not very convenient, being too narrow for the immense traffic which passes over it at certain hours. It is a light iron structure, with high sides, and a turn-bridge at the Cairo end, which is opened for an hour or more a day, to let the *gyassas*, with their towering sails, pass through—a pretty sight.

For the rest, it is so much higher than the bank on either side that it is approached by an incline; and the bridge-ends at the top of these inclines are decorated with the lions which come into so many pictures.

At its Cairo end a huge crowd had been waiting for some hours to see the Highlanders march in from Ghizeh. After the manner of Arab crowds, who sit on the ground when they need a rest, it had come ridiculously early. It arrived at the bridge before the English arrived at Wasta, and enjoyed the wildest ups-and-downs of rumour. The ill news travelled quickly. The entire half-battalion of Highlanders had been annihilated by the brave Nationalists; then a portion of them had escaped, but were on a piece of the bank cut off by the explosion, and surrounded by the Nile, entirely at the mercy of the Nationalists; then a few had made their escape in boats and were flying to Cairo; finally, it was admitted that a few had arrived at Ghizeh, and would try and force their way into Cairo, to take refuge with the regiments there.

And now the hour had come. The vast expectant crowd had been confined to the Cairo side by keeping the turn-bridge open, though no vessel was allowed to come near it. The Commissioner of Police, a strong man, had given the requisite orders, and the police, with the bayonets of the Royal Irish Rifles behind them, had carried them

out in spite of their sympathies. Nor had the crowd been allowed to come within fifty yards of the bridge. A strong detachment of the Irishmen, with loaded rifles and fixed bayonets, "backed" the police here too. The soldiers were drawn across the road in a double line facing the crowd, instead of with their backs to it. So it was a wild cheer from the rest of the Rifles who were confined to the Kasr-el-Nil Barracks at the bridge-head, and craning their heads out of the top windows, which announced that the Highlanders were in sight. And it was the dust of a regiment on the march—a familiar sight—which they recognised so far off, that it seemed an eternity before the turn-bridge closed, and the sergeant and a dozen men thrown out in front of the regiment emerged from between the lions.

The crowd misunderstood the meaning of this handful of dust-stained men, and took them to be the sole survivors of the accident. Depression and alarm reigned on the face of every foreigner; the crowd of natives made ugly and contemptuous demonstrations. As the bridge has high sides and the police and soldiers barred the way of the crowd, nothing of what was passing on it could be seen.

The tension was terrible. Suddenly from the head of the bridge debouched twelve pipers, big red men of the real Highland breed, with their great shoulders thrown back to support their pipes, and their plaids blown out in the wind. There were three fierce snorts, as the pipers cleared for action, and then the twelve pipes brayed out the fighting air, "Blue Bonnets over the Border," as the regiment swept out from the bridge, with the Colonel riding at its head,* followed tramp, tramp, tramp, by the fours of fighting Scots, black with the suns of the Soudan, half in front and half behind their baggage train, and with the King's Colours carried in their centre.

As they came to the bridge-head the officer commanding the Rifles gave the order: "Right company, right about turn, left wheel—left company, right about turn, right wheel." And as they reached the sides of the road, he sang out: "Inwards turn! Shoulder arms!" and as the Highlanders' Colours passed: "Present arms."

A fresh roar of cheering, double as long and strong,

* The Colonel came between the pipers and the regiment.

burst from the Rifles off duty in the barrack windows as their comrades *came to the present*. And as the Highlanders poured out from the bridge, a visible change came over the temper of the crowd. There is a tradition in Egypt about Highlanders, and these men looked superb and terrible. The long column of five hundred, with their baggage train, swept up the broad Sharia Kasr-el-Nil, with magnificent verve. Quarters were to be found for them in the Citadel. The General was to be in the porch of the Headquarters of the Army of Occupation to see them march past.

The pipers were still playing their fierce "Blue Bonnets over the Border" as they passed the great "Savoy Hotel," and every inch of its terrace, its steps and its balconies, was crowded with foreigners of many nations, though the English and Americans predominated. But the outburst of cheering was almost universal, and countless hats and handkerchiefs waved.

Though it can be imagined that he did not go as a sympathiser, Mr. Considine took Lucrece to the Kraffts' balcony opposite the "Savoy," to see the Highlanders march into Cairo. He wished to see how the populace was impressed, and for a hostile witness, it was pleasanter to accept Mr. Krafft's invitation. To have sat on the "Savoy" terrace without sharing in the general enthusiasm would have been marked.

Mr. Krafft hated the British Army as an institution, though he liked entertaining officers at his hospitable table; he viewed the arrival of the Highlanders with strong displeasure, as a sign that the British authorities in Cairo were retrograding from concessions to the Nationalists. He sat looking like the Brutus of a famous actor (whom he resembled facially) on the night before the Battle of Philippi. Mr. Considine regarded the scene with an Olympian frown; Mrs. Krafft and Lucrece viewed it as they would have viewed a Lord Mayor's Show, if they had been in the company of men who looked down upon the City; they did not dare to say how they loved seeing the soldiers on the march with their band and colours.

All of a sudden Lucrece's eye fell on the captain walking with the subaltern, who was carrying the regimental colours. She had never seen Kennedy doing regimental duty before. But now, the moment she set eyes on

him, she recognised the typical soldier. His thin lips and nose, his firm jaw, his steely blue eyes, with their white gleaming against the deep tan of his skin, fixed on a distant goal, his high cheek-bones, all spoke of heroic self-abnegation in the hour of duty and danger.

The fighting blood in Lucrece rose. She sprang to her feet. "England for ever!" she cried, forgetting that they were Scotchmen, and, tearing a bunch of beauty roses out of her belt, she flung it before the feet of the soldiers.

Mr. Considine continued as blind as an Olympian to the ebullition.

Kennedy did not see her. He never so much as deigned to look at the hotel and its galaxy of the most distinguished travellers in Egypt. He was obsessed with the military idea. Sympathising deeply with the frightened ladies, he was for his own part glad that the time had come for active duty, when the cowardly Nationalists were to be taught that there was a risk to their own skins in making assaults.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE ATTEMPT ON THE GENERAL'S HOUSE

KENNEDY was a little disappointed that life came so near the ordinary routine. Except that a squadron of the Dragoons were lent to the Commissioner of Police, to act as European constables at night to escort the officers, who had been at a dance, to their various barracks, and the visitors to their various hotels, under the command of a police captain, there was nothing to attract notice. It was as much the wish of the British Agent, as it was of the General, that things should go on as usual ; the one wished to show his confidence in the Egyptians, the other to give confidence to the foreigners detained in Cairo. This meant, in brief, that the officers were to do their best to keep the dances at the hotels and the sports and entertainments at the K. S. C., the Ranelagh of Cairo, going. At all times, the success of these functions depends largely on their patronage. This was not the sort of military service for which Kennedy was eager. He hated standing about at social functions. And it was many a day since his chief attraction had been seen in a Cairo ball-room.

Not that Lucrece shrank from the ordeal of going to a ball under a ban which she considered unjust. Not that she would have lacked partners. The Americans alone would have given her full programmes, and some of the English who had striven in vain for dances, while she was the idol of the subalterns, would be charmed to have the opportunity of dancing with one, who was so beautiful and so admirable a dancer. But the best of them would have tabooed her as her father's daughter ; the Prestages had already shown that they meant to follow the lead of the military

It was Stephen Considine who kept her away ; he was

too proud to allow his daughter to go and face humiliation, where she had been the undisputed queen. So Lucrece stayed at home, and worked at her Egyptian photographs. Mrs. Krafft more or less took her place as first favourite.

As Kennedy did not dance he never had gone to balls much, but he made an exception for balls at the General's and Lord Clapham's; and it happened that invitations had gone out, while the disturbances were less serious, for a ball at the General's house, rather an important move in the game of inspiring confidence. It would, therefore, be a triumph for the Nationalists if it were cancelled. It was decided to celebrate it with unusual pomp, though half the officers would be absent. The same order which confined the men to barracks had laid down that not less than half the officers should be with them; the married officers were all sleeping in barracks. But there was no jealousy on the part of the men at the officers frequenting social gatherings, while they were confined to barracks. They understood perfectly that it was to induce confidence.

The long train of *arabeaks* drawn by fiery white Arab horses conveying the officers from their barracks and the visitors from their hotels under a cavalry escort, was in itself a picturesque feature, which gave Mrs. Krafft, who was too volatile to indulge in vain fears, a lively sense of satisfaction. Going to balls guarded by Dragoons was something beyond her hopes of adventures in Egypt. At the General's gates they were met by a fresh bit of colour. The whole way from the gate to the porch was lined with the King's Highlanders, wearing their scarlet coats and their historical "Blue Bonnets." No civilian knew that their rifles were loaded with ball cartridge; the fixed bayonets were accepted as ornamental. The General would have thought it too dangerous to give the Nationalists the chance of depriving his regiments of half their officers by a surprise, even if the Highlanders had not been there for another reason. Much as he disliked the precaution, a half-company of them were kept there night and day, to prevent any attempt at kidnapping or assassinating him, the General's house not being in a military enclosure, or near any barracks, but simply a fine private mansion in a very unprotected part of the town.

Another half-company guarded his neighbour, the British Consul-General.

The tall, kilted Highlanders lining the drive gave a fine effect, as fine as that of the ball-room itself, which was thronged with officers: Guardsmen in their scarlet mess-jackets, with Oxford-blue facings; Scots Greys in their scarlet mess-jackets and yellow striped overalls; Highlanders in their kilts as their regiment was furnishing the guard; Welsh Fusiliers in their scarlet mess-jackets with blue facings; Royal Engineers, also in scarlet, with black waistcoats; Royal Artillery clinging to their old mess kit, the gold-laced dark-blue jacket fastening at the neck, the gold-laced scarlet waistcoat, and the broad stripe down their overalls; Irish Rifles, also clinging to their old pattern of mess-jacket of Rifle green, fastening at the neck; Army Service Corps in dark blue and white; and English officers of the Egyptian Army in dark blue and gold.

The uniforms circled round the prettiest and best-dressed women, making brilliant groups.

No woman was more besieged than Mrs. Krafft. She had long since become an institution with the Army. Her dinners were as famous as her wit, and as she grew more popular, and surer of herself, she looked far prettier. For she no longer had to push herself to attract people, and it suited her style so much better to be retiring and pursued. It was natural to her to be womanly and gracious. But she had not lost her spirit, as Captain Wemyss, who would not take her repulsing of his attacks as final, was to discover.

She had given him the seventh dance. His conceit in himself and his family seemed to swell every day. He patronised everybody except the captains in his own regiment. His colonel did not escape. The girls he danced with writhed under his presumption, but forgave him for his dancing.

Even this was more than Mrs. Krafft could manage, and when he pressed her with his odious hints, though they had only danced a couple of rounds, she suddenly stopped, saying that she wished to speak to Lady Vere. Kennedy was with Lady Vere; he and Captain Wemyss exchanged the stiffest of nods. Mrs. Krafft paid Kennedy the highest compliment in her *répertoire*; she was shy with him. But she was obviously glad to see him; he had been away in the Soudan, and had only just come back with his

regiment. He was, it appeared, a guest staying in the house. Nominally, the officer in command of the detachment guarding the General's house, he was acting as a sort of A.D.C. The General had observed, when Kennedy was attached to his staff as his intermediary with the Sirdar, that he was a man of exceptional firmness and judgment; of a great deal more use in meeting an emergency than the prepossessing young Guardsman who had been admirable as private secretary, while the only duty required of him was to be smiling and cordial to the people, who came to call upon the General, but were not to be allowed to see him.

Kennedy was quite as anxious to see her. He felt a warm friendship for her, and he was starving for a talk about Lucrece. He was just asking for a dance when the General's head Arab came in and saluted him. He did not say a word, but the Highlander followed him out, only pausing to ask Mrs. Krafft if she would sit out the last dance, and to say, "Duty. If there's anything to do which takes a lot of time I'll send word to the General's wife; Mustapha might not find you."

The ball went on—a brilliant scene. The happy and excited *mêlée* of gay uniforms and costly ball dresses—gold, scarlet, dark blue, dark green, thrown up by white chiffon, white satin and white silk, with here and there a pale blue or pale green or a black, whirled round as if there were no such thing as the serious business of war. All the *élite* of the visitors were there; Sir Francis and Lady Vere were great diners-out.

Kennedy had sent word to Lady Vere that Mrs. Krafft was not to wait. The discreet Mustapha knew Sophia quite well, and discovered her before he discovered Lady Vere, who was having supper, but he did not give her the message till Lady Vere told him to take it on.

Mrs. Krafft had not, however, taken another partner, when Kennedy came in just after the dance had begun. She thought he seemed rather flushed, as he tendered his apologies for being late; he had had some unexpected business.

"Don't apologise. It's of no consequence now that you have come. I wanted to see you for a second to know if you can put in a meal with us to-morrow."

"I think I can manage lunch, unless you hear to the contrary in the morning. Your husband's friends don't

do much at lunch-time." He was refering to the Nationalists.

It was the unexpected business which flustered Kennedy, not the apology for duty interfering with a social engagement.

When he was first called out matters had seemed quite serious. The sergeant in charge of the Highlanders, who were guarding the General's house under Kennedy's command, reported a telephone from the officer at headquarters in the Sharia Kasr-el-Nil, that a mob were on their way down the street, and that the spies said their destination was the General's house.

Kennedy had not the slightest fear for the result. His Highlanders could account for any number of them if it came to fighting, and the Dragoons were just across the road in the garden of the Ministry of Public Works, waiting to escort the dancers back to the barracks and hotels. But the question was how to avert a fracas, how to avoid alarming people. It took him less than a minute to decide. He telephoned to the non-commissioned officer stationed with a couple of men at the "Savoy Hotel" (as at all the principal hotels), to report any emergency, that a mob would shortly be passing the "Savoy," and that as soon as it appeared, word was to be telephoned to the officer commanding the guard at the Kasr-el-Nil barracks, and to himself.

Then he sent Mustapha, whose discretion was beyond all doubt, to the Colonel of the Royal Irish Rifles, whom he had passed on his way to the telephone room.

"Excuse my sending for you, sir. But I can't leave the telephone, and there's a mob of Nationalists coming down past your barracks."

"What are they after?"

"The spies report this house, sir."

"Have you told the General?"

"I don't think it's necessary, sir. He told me to deal with things unless they got too far, so that——"

"So that the ladies may think that nothing of importance is going on."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, what can I do, Kennedy?" he asked, in a tone which showed confidence and sympathy.

"Don't think me impertinent, sir, but would you send a telephone for me?"

"To my barracks, I suppose?"

It was easy to guess this, as Kennedy had shown his intention to take the responsibility.

"What are my orders?" asked the Colonel, smiling.

"Will you tell the officer commanding at the barracks, sir, that a mob is coming down the Sharia Kasr-el-Nil now directly, with this house as their objective, and that he is to be prepared to resist them in force? But ask him as a precautionary measure, when he gets word that they are abreast of the 'Savoy Hotel,' to order the bugles to sound the 'Assembly,' and a few good loud calls like that, at short intervals, till the mob comes in sight, and then to have all the electric lights in barracks turned on, so as to show that the Rifles are ready."

"And send out a company to guard the road-end, which leads here," said the Colonel.

"They won't need that, sir," replied Kennedy.

The Colonel telephoned his directions.

When he had rung off, he asked this extraordinary young man what he intended to do if the mob disregarded the fire of bugle calls and electric lights.

"I sent word to the cavalry across the road while you were telephoning, sir. Their trumpeter is here, and as soon as he sounds they'll wheel out into the road."

"Is there an officer with them?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is he under your orders?"

"My orders are as from the General, sir."

"And are you going to give the order to charge without consulting the General?" asked the Colonel. "It's rather a grave matter, Kennedy."

"I'm going to give the order to gallop up the road, sir. Engleheart, the Captain in charge of them, and I have had a chat about it. He enters into the humour of the situation. He knows that the mob will cut and run long before his men get up to them. He's willing to take the chance of that."

The Colonel sighed. The gallant Irishman had for weeks past been itching for more decisive measures. If these two young officers precipitated matters, it was so much the better from his point of view; so he laughed.

"Well, let me get away before you give the order to charge. You'll get cashiered, if you hurt anybody."

"I should like to get the chance," said Kennedy grimly.

"Tum, tum, tum, tum," went the telephone. And half a mile away, at the Kasr-el-Nil barracks, they could hear a bugle screaming through the night air :

"Tarumpity-tum, tarumpity-tum,
Tarumpity-tum, tarumpity, tum ;
Tum-tum, tum-tum, tum-tum, tum."

"They're past the 'Savoy,' sir," cried Kennedy, as he went to the telephone.

He listened to the message and said : "Yes, sir, they're past the 'Savoy.'"

"Won't they attack the 'Savoy?'"

"The 'Savoy' is guarded by steam jets. There'd be plenty of time to send relief from your barracks before the steam had exhausted its arguments."

The bugles went on for a short time. Then came another telephone. The mob, already disconcerted by the bugles as they came round the corner, had seen the barracks a blaze of light, and had turned incontinently.

At the suggestion of Kennedy, while they were on the 'phone, to him, the corporal at the "Savoy Hotel" had asked the manager to test his steam jets on the terrace in front of the hotel to see that they were in working order. The crowd broke into a run.

The other houses in the street were barricaded ; all Cairo was in a state of siege in those days. But much damage could have been done if the Nationalist leaders had not given orders that property was to be respected. This was necessary, if there was still a chance that the Khedive was to be on their side, as *The Banner* confidently asserted.

The telephone rang again ; the non-commissioned officer at the point which commanded the approach from the other side, from Old Cairo, Seyyida Zeynab, and the low quarters round the Ibn Touloun and Kait Bey Mosques, 'phoned that a mob was approaching from that direction. They obviously meant to effect a surprise, while the eyes of the defenders were on the other mob.

"Shall you want any of my men for them, Kennedy?"

"Oh no, sir. They won't come on when they find that the others have turned back. News flies like wildfire among natives. There've been too many of those muffled-up sheikhs on donkeys to-night for my liking."

"What shall you do if they do come on?"

"Have the Dragoons out in the road, and send one of their trumpeters half a mile up it, and order him to sound when the mob comes in sight. Then we'll give the Dragoons a gallop. The sound of their hoofs will be quite enough for our friends. They won't stand."

The Colonel did not believe that they would, and thought what a blessed thing it was that the affair was in the hands of irresponsible juniors instead of seniors, who might have stickled about form, while the mob was getting really dangerous, and the civilian guests were being frightened to death.

There was no bugle call. The second mob had got wind of the discomfiture of the first, much exaggerated, and were sulkily retracing their steps.

When the news was telephoned to Kennedy, he went back to claim the dance that Mrs. Krafft had promised to sit out with him.

She was flattered by the unwonted excitement in his eyes, and his heightened colour, and felt very gracious.

"It's so good of you to keep the dance for me, when I was so late for it."

"Half a loaf is better than no bread, Captain Kennedy."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that I wanted this dance with you more than anything in the evening, and would rather have half of it than none."

He knew that she liked him very much. It never occurred to him that she loved him.

"I hope you'll believe me when I tell you that I'm not the kind of man, who skips a dance, except when he's on duty."

"I believe you. But I am afraid that I should not like you any the less if you were."

"Oh, I'm sure you would."

"I shouldn't. I don't think that there is anything you could do, which would make me like you less."

Kennedy would have hated most women for saying such a thing, but he could see that it was genuine; and it was very flattering coming from a woman so pretty, so brilliant, so blessed by fortune.

He thanked his stars for her goodwill. She would be ready, it might even give her pleasure, to talk Lucrece to him.

"Tell me of Lucrece?" he said, in his direct fashion, with glowing eyes.

He did not see her wince at the name. It was on her lips to tell him that Lucrece was out with Hoseyn Hassan daily in a delirium of romance. But she was too fond of Kennedy to hurt him. So she said: "Lucrece keeps well, and happy in her way. She always was occupied with her own concerns. It is her salvation now."

The dance was over, but when everyone has to go home together, so as to be under the protection of the escort, starting takes quite half an hour. Mrs. Krafft had left nothing in the cloak-room; the Egyptian summer was fast approaching.

"If you won't be betraying any secret," she said "tell me what you were doing when you were called out? I knew it was some alarm when the servant came and fetched you so mysteriously."

"There isn't any secret about it. It will be in the papers to-morrow morning. A Nationalist mob was on its way here to break up the ball. But they found the Rifles ready for them, and broke back. I can't tell you what I think of the Egyptians, because your husband . . . because you sympathise with their aspirations."

"Oh, I don't; indeed, I don't. I thought I did until I knew them. I tried hard to see them with my husband's eyes. I've entertained all sorts and conditions of them for several months, and I have had the privilege of knowing most of you, though you were very shy of me at first, you dear clean men. And I don't believe that the woman has been created yet, who has known both lots as well as I have, and could side with those flabby, cowardly, untruthful wretches. I sometimes feel like Lucrece felt when your regiment marched in. I want to get up and shout 'England for ever,' and I have more excuse than she has, for my husband is a naturalised Englishman."

"And did Lucrece get up and shout, 'England for ever,' as we marched past?" asked her lover.

"Yes. She was sitting with us and her father. Mr. Considine and my husband were trying to look like marble. Everybody else was shouting and clapping and waving their handkerchiefs. When the Colours came past the people seemed to go off their heads with excitement, and it was then that Lucrece stood up and shouted, 'England for ever.'"

"I was walking beside the man who carried the Colours," said Kennedy.

"Bless the man! Do you think she didn't know it?"

"Do you think she saw me?"

"Do I think she saw you! I saw you too, and if you came by again, I should get up and shout with her."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE REBELS' DEPUTATION TO THE KHEDIVE, AND THE MUTINY OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMY

THE jester became the epicentre of the Revolution. His release was demanded on plausible pretexts—the Egyptian is as plausible as the Babu ; and, although the police, being Nationalists, would certainly have let him escape, his detention by the military was as certainly *ultra vires*, until the Khedive, acting upon the advice of the British Agent, should declare Cairo to be in a state of siege, and proclaim martial law.

As far as the life and property of law-abiding people were concerned, Cairo *was* almost in a state of siege. They were only saved from destruction by the orders of the Nationalist leaders themselves.

But Lord Clapham would not move. The Nationalists might take umbrage at it, he said, as if that signified, when there was only one way of averting the conflict, the show of force which must come sooner or later.

In the same way he was against foreigners organising themselves. Mr. Prestage, who was staying at the "Savoy," had been most anxious to enlist all the foreigners in Cairo as volunteers, organised into commandoes according to the localities, where they would be likely to be found in the case of an outbreak. "Are," he said, "all we men in the 'Savoy' to be like a flock of sheep waiting for the butcher, if the mob broke in, when if we were organised, with the men in the offices all round us, we should be quite a regiment, and able to account for any number of City Egyptians."

Lord Clapham opposed the scheme as likely to give the Nationalists a genuine cause of complaint.

The men staying at the "Savoy" laughed at Lord Clapham, and did arm themselves, and form themselves

into a commando, drilled by Mr. Prestage on a system which would enable them to act promptly, with a concerted plan, in case an attempt were made on the hotel or the foreign business houses near. Lord Clapham's malign optimism prevented their good example spreading further. The Egyptians lost no time in stultifying it.

But neither would Lord Clapham authorise the handing over of the jester Youssef to the police. For if any friction with the General arose, the General had grounds enough, in the present temper of the Egyptians, for falling back on the clause in the regulations, which allowed him, in case of a military necessity, to act independently of the British Agent. The General, he knew, would have the support of the Sirdar. He may have explained this to the Khedive, who certainly turned a deaf ear to the demands for the release of Youssef. The Nationalists decided to go in a procession to the Abdin Palace to present a petition demanding his release, as they had failed to obtain it by ordinary channels.

The General made plans to meet this with other methods than bands playing the "Mosquito Parade."

Lord Clapham, still believing in the constitutional character of the Nationalist designs (he met their leaders daily, as he met the Khedive), had thrown the responsibility of the military preparations on the General. He could not respect the susceptibilities of his Nationalist friends without precipitating the conflict of his authority with the General's.

For Lord Clapham the future was almost as much in the womb of the gods, as it was for the Tommies; and probably more than it was for the police and Egyptian soldiers, who lined the square, as he drove across it and into the Abdin Palace, with Kennedy and Mr. Prestage.

The journey would have been a pretty severe test for his courage, if he had not been filled with a philanthropist's blind confidence in his fellow-men; for to anyone who knew the Egyptian well, the whole scene was suggestive of a mine only waiting for the fuse to be fired.

The British Agent was received without a sound by the glowering crowd, and with a sullen salute by the Egyptian regiment, massed in front of the palace, in gay, bright blue uniforms. The lining of the square was left to a few police, whose control of the crowd was unusually perfect.

Kennedy noticed how bad things looked, but he was a brave man ; and, as a soldier, it was his profession to risk his life in moments of conflict. He saw no object in warning Lord Clapham. It seemed rather presumptuous considering their relative positions, and the words would fall on a fool's deaf ears. Even if physical fear made the British Agent listen for once, he could do nothing now but make an exhibition of himself. No, it was better to get under the Khedive's protection as soon as possible, and trust to his influence to save them. There was no doubt of his humanity.

When they reached the palace the doors were closed, but they were immediately admitted. Perhaps the doors were kept closed, to avoid drawing attention to the fact that the hall and staircase were lined, not with the usual Egyptian Guards, but with a detachment of Royal Irish Rifles, who saluted as the British Agent passed up the stairs.

When Lord Clapham and his companions were crossing the wide landing at the top of the stairs, the Khedive came out of his reception-chamber to meet them, and shake hands.

If it had not been for the British Guard of Honour, the massacre of the Mamelukes might have come into Kennedy's sagacious mind : unexpected politeness is the hand-maid of treachery in an Oriental—and was not the Khedive the descendant and heir of Mehemet Ali ?

They entered the room. The Khedive led the way to the far corner, in which four chairs were arranged. He motioned Lord Clapham into the farthest on the right, and Mr. Prestage into the farthest on the left, and Kennedy into the chair next to the M.P. Then he drew the other chair closer to Lord Clapham, and sat down.

The conversation was almost entirely between the Khedive and Kennedy, and related to the incident at "Shepherd's Hotel." The monarch could not but be impressed by the way in which Kennedy told his story, with a soldier's respectfulness to authority, but with no attempt to extenuate, because he was describing an outburst of Mohammedan fanaticism to a Mohammedan prince ; and without a trace of feeling, as he described the extraordinary crisis, in which he was the chief actor.

The Khedive knew that he was hearing fact, and noted every word. At its conclusion, he rose and led Lord

Clapham by the arm to the corner of the room farthest from all doors and windows—a necessary precaution in the eavesdropping Orient.

Kennedy and Mr. Prestage heard a curious sound. They turned round, and looked out of the window. The crowd was showing its feelings in its strange Oriental fashion; the Deputation had arrived. Then they heard the unbolting and rebolting of the palace doors: the bolts worked as if they were unaccustomed to use.

When the Deputation entered the room, they saluted their prince with the exaggerated humility they would have shown to Mehemet Ali. This was to betoken a return to the old *régime*. The Khedive, on the other hand, looked almost as uncomfortable as an Englishman would have.

There were three envoys, of whom Mulazim Bey was the chief and spokesman. There had been four, but Dan Climo, behaving in his usual manner at the entrance of the Khedive's palace, had been summarily put out by the officer commanding the detachment of the Royal Irish Rifles, who were furnishing the Khedive's Guard. His instructions were to admit a deputation of not more than four *Egyptian* Nationalists, to present a petition to the Khedive for the release of the jester Youssef.

Mulazim's speech was delivered with his accustomed violence and disregard of fact.

"A quiet procession of peculiar sanctity had been insulted and assaulted by infidels. He did not mention that the assault was only the technical one of a lady using a kodak. The jester Youssef, a famous figure in these religious processions, who had taken upon himself to expostulate against this outrage, had been seized and almost killed by the infidels, who had moreover imprisoned him in some secret place (the guard-room of the barracks of the Royal Irish Rifles) where they intended to starve or torture him to death. Would the Father of his people interfere, to deliver this protector of the National religion from the dungeon and tortures of the infidel invader and oppressor?"

This was the vein in which Mulazim spoke.

The Khedive rose to reply.

"Go back and tell my people," he said, "that they are ill-advised to petition for the release of this man, whose wicked and unseemly conduct caused a riot, which might

easily have ended in the massacre of a number of innocent persons, and have plunged Egypt into a civil war."

He laid emphasis on the word *civil*—that word declared his attitude.

The dismissed envoys were shown out by a door at the back of the palace, more as a military precaution than as the snub for which they took it. They might attempt some theatrical *coup* in announcing the Khedive's refusal to the crowd. But when they had passed through the small iron door in the fortress-like wall of the garden, they had a *détour* to make, and reached the crowd at its back.

"You had better wait till the crowd disperses, your Excellency," said the Khedive to Lord Clapham.

The British Agent acquiesced without protest. His small escort of British Cavalry were waiting with his carriage in the palace yard; but he disliked the assertion of British force.

The crowd, however, did not disperse, and shortly after their envoys had reported themselves, Colonel Went, the British Colonel, whose local rank is *Kaimakam*, in command of the Egyptian regiment outside, rode forward to the palace door, which opened to admit him as he approached and closed immediately behind him.

He asked for the British Agent.

The way in which Lord Clapham asked, and the Khedive gave him permission to retire, showed what real cordiality there was between them. Lord Clapham returned almost immediately to introduce the Colonel. He had come to give a warning. His men sympathised with the agitators for the jester's release, and could not be relied upon in repressing any demonstration. He asked what he should do.

The Khedive gave no direct reply. "This is a grave matter," he said, "I must summon my Ministers."

The Colonel left the room with Lord Clapham. It was arranged that he should simply let the information reach the crowd that the Khedive had summoned his Ministers.

The crowd received it with mixed feelings. A few believed that the Ministers were being summoned to give effect to their wishes. But the great majority believed that the Khedive, if he had intended to comply, would have ordered the release himself, to win popularity. And as the various Ministers drove up in their carriages, the soldiers as well as the crowd made hostile demonstrations.

Colonel Went took the bull by the horns. He rode up to the line, and issued his orders sharply and intrepidly. But not a man moved except the Egyptian Bimbashi, who came up to him without saluting, and informed him that the regiment had mutinied, and would be much relieved if its three British officers would retreat into the Khedive's palace. It did not intend to receive any further orders from them, but it wished them no ill. It was afraid that the mob might try to injure them, and it would not fire upon the mob in their defence. Ascertaining that the Egyptian officers intended to mutiny with the men, the Colonel held a consultation with the other two British officers, and decided that there was nothing to do but to accept the situation. Three men armed with swords and revolvers could not coerce a whole regiment with fixed bayonets, whose rifles were in all probability loaded with ball cartridge. A guard was sent to escort them to the palace gates, to prevent a fracas, which must have resulted in loss of life to the mob. They dismounted at the gate and passed in, servants taking their horses round to the stables.

There was now hardly sufficient space left in front of the palace for the carriages to drive up, the soldiers had allowed the crowd to force them forward. The vast Abdin Square was full of demonstrators, and the noise of the tumult grew.

Then came a fresh noise from the direction of the Sharia Abdin. As it grew louder the trampling of horses could be distinguished.

A group of Egyptian soldiers were keeping watch on the roof of the Abdin barracks. One of them descended, and, running across the barrack yard, made his way through the crowd, which parted to let him pass, to take an important message to the Bimbashi, the Egyptian officer who had assumed command of the regiment.

The trampling was the noise of galloping. British Dragoons in their full dress scarlet came charging up the street, and formed into line at the *débouché* from the Sharia Abdin into the square; the crowd had been thinner there, and had crushed back into their comrades, when they heard the Cavalry coming.

The Egyptian officers were troubled. With their rifles they could empty a good many saddles, and it would be difficult for the cavalry to get at them through the

crowd. But the Egyptian hates responsibility. The soldiers did not contemplate any overt action against the Khedive. They meant to leave that to the crowd. Even if the crowd did not do much, the military were in no hurry to start a civil war.

There were other sounds which went on for some time behind the double line of cavalry : fresh messengers came down from the roof of the barracks to the Bimbashi. But still the regiment did nothing. Then the Cavalry parted right and left, and there, also in full uniform, as if it were a parade in honour of the Khedive, were seen the Royal Horse Artillery with their guns unlimbered and in position, trained in a semi-circle from the end of the palace on the left, round to the barrack gates on the right.

The carriages of the British Agent and the Egyptian Ministers, which had been taken into the palace yard, were brought out ; and Lord Clapham's escort came out, and took up their position just outside the line of gunfire, ready to accompany the carriages when they moved.

The Ministers were, however, evidently not quite ready, for the palace doors had not opened yet.

There was a considerable delay—between half an hour and an hour.

Then from two different points came the martial strains of " The British Grenadiers " and " Georgia ; " drums and fifes were approaching from the south, and bugles from the west. From the east came the skirling of bagpipes.

There was defiance in the fifes and drums of the Grenadiers and the bugles of the Irish Rifles ; and the pipers of the King's Highlanders played the regimental " Blue Bonnets over the Border " with deep snorts.

As the bands of the three half-battalions reached the square, the music stopped and the bands received in quick succession the orders, " Line right front—halt ! " so as to let their respective battalions pass, and form lines on the west, south, and east sides of the square, covering the roads by which they had marched in. At the same time a squadron of the cavalry moved to its right to cover the barrack gates.

Every egress from the square was now blocked.

Then the carriages of the British Agent and the Egyptian Ministers drove back into the yard, and one of the palace windows opened, and the Khedive stepped out on to a balcony, and raised his hand to show that he meant to

speaking. The crowd listened in astonished silence, while with his own lips he proclaimed martial law.

Immediately after this the gates of the palace opened, and Colonel Went came out alone and mounted his horse, which was brought round by one of the Khedive's servants from the stables. He drew his sword and rode straight up to his regiment. A score of rifles were pointed at him as he advanced, but he rode on unmoved. For a few seconds his life hung on a thread. It was saved by the presence of mind of the General, who was with the Cavalry and the Horse Artillery at the end of the square. He had ordered the guns to be loaded with blank cartridge in case any demonstration was necessary, and seeing the Colonel's life in danger, ordered them to fire.

There was a moment of awful tension in the crowd. Then, as no iron hail of death came tearing through them, they knew that the guns had fired blank cartridge.

But every mutineer's muzzle dropped. The guns had spoken. If the Colonel fell, there would be more guns; and next time the cartridge would not be blank.

Colonel Went took no notice of the guns. He rode straight on till he occupied his usual place, and in his ordinary parade voice gave orders for the regiment to remove their equipments, pile arms, and march ten paces to the rear.

If they had had the grit to resist, it would not have been a very easy matter to handle them, mixed up as they were with the crowd: but they did not recognise the strategic value of the crowd. All they saw was, that they were surrounded by a British army—Horse, Foot, and Artillery. The wearing of full dress uniforms by the English soldiers had been a ruse to give the manoeuvres the appearance of being a parade in honour of the Khedive.

The order to disarm and retire to the barracks was obeyed without hesitation. Then the General sent a strong detachment of Highlanders, who marched them as prisoners into the Abdin barracks, and mounted guard over them to preserve order. Their arms were taken to the Citadel. Cairo was petrified by the news.

The General had his programme cut and dried for all eventualities. When the Khedive telephoned to him about the mutiny of the Egyptian regiment in front of his palace, he telephoned back to the palace the ruse for occupying the attention of the native soldiers, and the

crowd, for an hour, while he was executing the manœuvre to surround them ; and he accompanied the Cavalry and Artillery himself, because they might have to act before the Infantry came up.

His plans were well laid all round. There were two other Egyptian Infantry regiments, and a squadron of Cavalry, in the capital, whose British officers reported that their loyalty could not be depended on. All of them received orders from the Minister of War, who was with the Khedive, which took them away from their barracks, and when they received the orders to return, found their barracks occupied by British troops, who had Maxims covering them. They were then disarmed and confined to barracks. As an extra precaution, the Cavalry horses were picketed in the Dragoon barracks.

Though they were full of mutinous intentions, there was no one prepared to take the responsibility of giving them the orders for resistance, and the orders from the other side were very precise. The regiments obeyed. The only other soldiers in the capital were some Artillery ; and a Soudanese guard in the palace, who were known to be untainted by the conspiracy.

The Artillery for some reason appeared not much tainted with the conspiracy, and in any case had not access to their ammunition.

Egyptian-like they were glad to be relieved of the responsibility of taking sides in the case by being deprived of their guns and ammunition. Instead of offering any resistance to the strong force of British Infantry, which was ordered to deprive them of their equipment, and transfer it from the Polygon Barracks at Abbassiyeh to the Citadel, they lent all the assistance they were allowed to. The other Egyptian regiments were all in the Soudan in the midst of a loyal population.

Three regiments of Soudanese were ordered down from the Soudan. The Sirdar was convinced of their loyalty, and the value of replacing the mutinous regiments by loyal native soldiers was obvious.

They were sent by the Port Soudan and Suez route. It was thought prudent, when the trains which brought them from Suez arrived at the Capital, to have the station guarded, inside and out, against any nefarious attempt to surprise them, while they were detraining or issuing from the station.

The half-battalion of Highlanders, whom they knew at Khartoum, were detailed for the purpose, lest the Soudanese should suspect a trap when they saw the station lined with soldiers.

The tall blacks were immensely gratified when they saw their own Khartoum regiment waiting to receive them. They shook hands with everybody. They were almost as pleased to see the regiment, as their British officers were to meet the Highlander officers, whom they had last met in the club at Khartoum, or on the polo-ground at Omdurman.

But their special gratification and pride was to show the Egyptians, on their march through Cairo, that their bands could play like Englishmen, instead of in the extraordinary Oriental time which the Egyptian bands use.

The three regiments of coal black Soudanese tribesmen, Baggara, Dinka, Shilluk and what not, marched off the station square playing "The British Grenadiers," "The Girl I left Behind Me," and "The Lass of Richmond Hill."

CHAPTER XXV

THE MURDER OF HOSEYN HASSAN

THERE had been a meeting of the Committee of Independence on the afternoon before, to settle the details of the march of the citizens to the Khedive to demand the release of the jester. Dan Climo was present at the meeting, by special request. His fame for getting up demonstrations, and combining intimidation and rioting with the presentation of petitions, was world-wide; the Nationalists determined to make use of his abilities, in spite of the objections of Stephen Considine, expressed before and during the meeting.

The objection with which he had, up to this, successfully excluded Climo, no longer applied; Climo's inability to keep a secret did not signify, as word had already been sent to the Khedive, that a mass meeting of the citizens would reach the palace at 10 a.m. to present the petition.

It was left for Stephen to urge that Climo was vain, undisciplined, and without local experience: that he might precipitate a conflict with the soldiers, and that his bad manners would make the Khedive deaf to every argument but fear.

Hoseyn Hassan, in spite of their quarrel, supported Mr. Considine at the meeting. He saw too well how unfit Climo's manners were for an audience with an Oriental sovereign. Mulazim and the Extremists, on the other hand, were equally in favour of Climo's accompanying the Deputation, because his influence would be on their side, and he stood in no awe of Hoseyn Hassan or Mr. Considine. The discussion grew heated. Climo was detestably rude, and both Mr. Considine and Hoseyn Hassan denounced him furiously.

When order was sufficiently restored for business to be

transacted, it was agreed that Hoseyn Hassan should head the deputation, and present the petition. It was no good for the Extremists to oppose this, for Hoseyn Hassan's influence with the population in Cairo, and still more in rural Egypt, was a hundredfold compared to anyone else's; and the Khedive could not refuse the Descendant of the Prophet an audience or a hearing.

Climo waited till everyone had left, except Stephen Considine and Mulazim Bey. Then he swaggered up to the former, and said: "I want a word with you, Mister."

"Go on," said Stephen sternly; "he," pointing to Mulazim Bey, "cannot understand English."

"He's taking a hand," said Climo.

"Well, what is it?" cried Considine impatiently.

"Don't crow so loud, my fine bird. You'll be trying to make me whisper in a minute."

Stephen Considine could have spat at him.

"I won't waste time," said Climo. "I want to see how you take it; whether you'll lie down under it."

Stephen saw that there was nothing to do but to await patiently.

"Your fine *Hussin Hassun*, the friend who joined you against me, is having one of his affairs with your daughter—ha, ha, ha!" He went off into screams of fiendish laughter.

"Silence, or I'll kill you," said Stephen, taking out his revolver.

"All right. I've done. Good-bye." Climo made for the door. He had no mind for the company of that revolver. He had shot his bolt, and his going now would be Mr. Considine's loss, not his.

"Come back," cried Mr. Considine, covering him with his revolver; and Dan Climo came. He realised that his life hung on Mr. Considine's impulses, and that he must now dance to the tune that Mr. Considine played. He came back and sat down without any of his usual bravado.

"Now, tell me simply what you know, and don't anger me into using this," said Mr. Considine, touching the handle of his revolver.

"They're meeting each other every day, and some Arab bloke has told Mulazim here that she's always getting disguised letters from him. He's gone away to send one now, while we're sitting here talking."

"The devil!" shouted Mr. Considine; and sprang up, and left the offices by his private door, which he snap-locked behind him.

Dan Climo and Mulazim could not speak a word of each other's languages. All they could exchange was a look of triumphant malignity.

Climo's instinct was right. Neither Hoseyn Hassan nor Lucrece was there. But there was a porter, from Lucrece's dressmaker in the Sharia El-Maghrabi, who had brought a note, which he said he must put into Lucrece's own hands, and take back her answer.

Finding that the man spoke English, Mr. Considine said: "I know what that is—it's a bill—and I know the amount." He went into his study for a moment, and returned with ten sovereigns on an ash-tray. "Can you take the money?" he asked.

The Arab knew that it was not a bill; and he knew that Mr. Considine knew that it was not a bill. But the money temptation was too great. The Sheikh only paid him at the rate between Arab and Arab, though liberally for that. He had never had two sovereigns in his possession. His eyes sparkled; and he took it.

"Wait a minute in the hall," said Mr. Considine; and as soon as he had closed the door behind him, opened the letter and read it. It was from Hoseyn Hassan to Lucrece, saying that a fast motor would be waiting at the "Savoy Hotel" to take her out to the Pyramids, at nine o'clock. She was to make the excuse of going to the dance at the hotel.

There were still dances at the "Savoy," which the officers were encouraged by the General to attend, to keep up the confidence of the visitors, as it was impossible to pass from Cairo to Alexandria or Port Said. Hoseyn Hassan was unaware that Lucrece had left off going to the dances.

He said he must see her to say good-bye. To-morrow he was going to head a deputation of the people to the Khedive, and the result might be a conflict, with no one knew what consequences.

She was not to write a reply, but to send one of her gloves scented with jasmine for him to kiss, and as a signal that she would be there. She would know the motor by its having a big acetylene lamp behind.

Mr. Considine went into his daughter's room. A pair

of long gloves, of her favourite pale biscuit colour, still with the impress of her hands in them, were lying on a little table by her parasol. He took one of them, and, going to her dressing-table, poured some drops from a bottle of scent labelled Jasmine, first putting it to his nose, to make sure. Then he went to her writing-table, and picked up one of the very large square envelopes which she used. The glove went in easily, and he gummed the flap down.

He returned to the hall, and handed it to the messenger, who was much relieved, because he had been told that there was something to come back.

He gave the messenger time to get away. Then, having ascertained by telephone that Mrs. Krafft was at home, and that his daughter was not with her, he went down into the street, and took a cab to the Kraffts' flat.

"I want you to help me, Mrs. Krafft," he said.

"How?"

"By impersonating my daughter this evening after dinner."

"How can I impersonate your daughter?" she asked, though she knew she could do it perfectly. She guessed that his object was something hateful.

"There's no difficulty. You are both fair, and about the same height, and as it will be in a motor, and after dark, a motor-coat and a thick veil will do the rest."

"What if I refused?"

"I don't think you will refuse."

"I shall."

"In that case, it will be my painful duty to invoke your husband's authority to compel you."

"I'd risk that. My husband has never compelled me to do anything, that I did not wish."

"Oh, perhaps he won't. But my request is a reasonable one. I shall say that Hoseyn Hassan is going to try to-night to make my daughter, what he has made you."

"I don't understand you, Mr. Considine."

"Don't let's beat about the bush, Mrs. Krafft. I have, in my employ for political purposes, an army of secret agents. Perhaps you would prefer to call them spies—they are not spies, but no matter—and I can assure you honestly, that I would rather not have known what I know about you. But in dealing with Arabs in a political conspiracy—you see, I take you into my con-

fidence—it is necessary to watch your friends, as well as your enemies, and the watch I have had to keep upon Hoseyn Hassan, has resulted in my knowing that you—have become the victim of his baseness. It is not necessary for anyone else to know this, if you will help me out of my own trouble.” There was real feeling in his voice now.

Mrs. Krafft wavered. She had never had much hesitation about saving herself at the expense of others, if there was no alternative way. But she had a presentiment of danger ; elemental questions were at stake, inflammable people concerned.

He saw her hesitation, and put it down to fear.

“ You think that Hoseyn Hassan will kill you, when he discovers the cheat. You need not fear. I shall be there to protect you.”

Still Mrs. Krafft was not convinced. Injuring Lucrece was not like injuring another person. She was so absolutely unsuspecting, so incapable of doing such a thing herself, so entirely in this terrible father’s power.

“ I will do it on one condition,” she said. “ You shall swear to me, by all that is most holy, not to punish Lucrece in any way for what you may discover. No,” she said, “ swearing is no good—you shall write me a promise to pay me one million pounds if you break your word to me about Lucrece.”

It meant a great part of his fortune, but he sat down and wrote the promise. Just as he was about to sign it, she said : “ No. Stop. We will step over to the ‘ Savoy Hotel,’ and have two European witnesses to that signature. It might mean life or death to Lucrece, whether that document were binding or no.”

“ As you wish,” he said. “ I will sign anything, because I don’t mean to injure the one thing I have in life. But before we go, I will show you the letter of assignation, in order that you may know what you have to do. It is of no use to draw unnecessary attention by my returning to your flat with you. You have some investments of your own, haven’t you ? ”

“ Yes. A good many : but I don’t see the connection.”

“ It is this. You can ask me when I have signed that contract, if I am sure that it is a safe investment.”

As they were going down the stairs, he said : “ I must get a coat of Lucrece’s across to you.”

"There is no necessity. She has no regular motor-coat. She always wears one of mine when she is motoring."

To make sure of Mr. Krafft being out of the way, when it was time for his wife to start, Mr. Considine arranged that the editor of *The Banner* should ask him to come and dictate the leading article, which Mr. Krafft wanted to put in the paper about the duty of the British Liberals to Egypt.

It was odd that neither Mr. Considine nor Mrs. Krafft spoke of the difficulties and perils of the journey. The tramway out to the Pyramids had not run for weeks, partly on account of the danger of outrages at the lonely parts of the road, partly because there were few visitors who would have ventured out to the ill-protected Pyramids, while the natives were in such a dangerous mood. It was only Lord Clapham's confidence-fad which kept the Nile Bridge open for traffic. If the General had had his way, the turnbridge would always have been disconnected.

Sophia did not know the danger she was running. Nothing deterred Mr. Considine when his purpose was fixed.

When the hour for starting approached, Mrs. Krafft's spirits rose. She loved adventure, and she had to get the whole way out to the Mena House without betraying herself to the chauffeur, and from Mena to wherever Hoseyn Hassan meant taking Lucrece, without betraying herself to him. She even chortled at the idea that he would show her their secret meeting-place.

She had put on a dress she did not care about for dinner, so that she could keep it on under her motor-coat. She would have to be in evening dress when she came back at midnight, because in theory she would have been to the dance. She did her hair low on the neck, like Lucrece, instead of in her usual fashion.

The first part of the adventure was easy. She stepped across the way to the "Savoy," and gave the required signal. It was not necessary for her to speak to the chauffeur. He had received his directions.

When they got to Mena the chauffeur ran past the hotel to where the road stops by the Great Pyramid. The Sheikh was waiting for her, and led her rapidly to the little basin in the desert, in front of the Sphinx. She put her finger to her lips, to show that he was not to speak ;

she must keep up the illusion till Mr. Considine could arrive to protect her. She had no fear of being recognised till she spoke; she could mimic Lucrece's gait and gestures to the life, and the darkness and the motor-coat and the veil did the rest.

She knew that Mr. Considine could not be long, because she had seen him seated in a forty horse-power motor at the "Savoy" pharmacy, keeping his eye on the motor which was waiting for Lucrece. There was nothing odd in Lucrece coming out of the Kraffts' flat. Dining with them was the easiest way of getting off unobserved.

"At last," he cried, and threw his arms round her. He had no suspicion that she was not Lucrece. She let him embrace her, and gave her whole efforts to keeping down her veil. Earnestly she prayed for Mr. Considine's arrival: she dreaded the wrath of the Sheikh when he discovered the fraud, which had been practised on him.

The loneliness was terrible. The Mena House, round which the whole European and City-Egyptian life of the Pyramids revolves, was closed, and guarded by soldiers. The Pyramid Arabs kept out of sight: a word from Hoseyn Hassan had secured this, as it had ensured that his motor would be allowed to pass. A word from him only to let his own motor pass, would have changed the current of this history.

There was not a sound, except the barking of the dogs in the Bedouin villages, and the answering howl of the desert jackal, who came in close in the unwonted stillness.

It seemed as if Mr. Considine would never come; and now the Sheikh was struggling with her, almost fiercely, to remove her veil.

"What is it, dearest? Why will you not speak to me? Why will you not let me see that beloved face?"

In another moment her veil would be off. She was desperate. Gathering all her strength she tore herself free. Oh, why did not Mr. Considine come?

To fly, would be to confess that she was not Lucrece, to remain might cost her her life if she was discovered. While she hesitated, the Sheikh's arms were round her again; and this time he tore her veil off, and poured, for a delicious minute, hot kisses on her face. In that minute she knew that he had never loved her as he loved Lucrece.

So passionate was he, that many seconds passed before he discovered the cheat. Then he flung her from him, and she knew that the next moment might be her last. Now it was her turn to fling herself round his neck, and pour caresses on him.

"Hoseyn," she cried; "don't kill me! remember that you have loved me! Remember the hours of bliss we have had together."

He shook her so fiercely that she thought he would shake the life out of her.

Then he dropped her. "I won't kill you," he said, "for I have loved you. For one week I loved no one else. But why did you do it?"

A lie sprang to her lips.

"I did it because I loved you. I did it because I was jealous, and could not endure being supplanted by that girl. Why did you want her?" she demanded, so fiercely that he did not know she was acting. "She could not give you love like I gave you."

Before he could frame his reply, Stephen Considine was standing before him. If he could have heard that reply, as he had heard the rest, it might have held his hand, for the Sheikh was about to tell her of the purity of the love, the depth of the romance, the feeling of unworthiness, with which he was inspired by Lucrece. But Mr. Considine gave him no time. He had witnessed the whole scene from the beginning. He had kept his word to Mrs. Krafft that he would protect her, for he had held the Sheikh covered with his revolver, in case he should draw a weapon; he had been standing only a few yards away from them, unperceived in the darkness. But he had waited to have ocular proof, and the Sheikh's embraces of Mrs. Krafft told him that he and Lucrece were lovers. He could not know how pure their love was.

Hoseyn Hassan had delivered himself into his hands. But for the commands of the Descendant of the Prophet, the noise of the motors would have brought out a swarm of Bedouins, who would have murdered Mr. Considine for his money, or carried him off for ransom. But the Bedouins had obeyed and kept away, so Mr. Considine was undisturbed; and now, without a word to the unfortunate Sheikh, he committed one of those cowardly, cold-blooded, brutal murders, which Americans justify by appeals to the Unwritten Law.

He put the muzzle of the revolver against the Sheikh's heart, and fired it three times over to make sure; the concussion alone so near the heart would have been fatal.

"Kill me too, you base, cowardly, wicked murderer," cried Mrs. Krafft. "I don't want to live, to have this sight before my eyes for the rest of my days."

"Never! You are the best friend I ever had. You need not spare me. You have a right to use hard words!"

"I shan't spare you," she yelled. Her blood was up with what she had witnessed. "I warn you that I shall denounce you."

"As you please. Perhaps I shall denounce myself. My work is done. My daughter's honour is avenged."

He was obsessed with that idea: the great events of the morrow had faded from his mind, as completely as a child's castles in the sand are swept away by the high tide of a stormy sea.

And just so, for that moment, Sophia Krafft forgot him, and threw herself on the sand by the dead man, and clasped his hands, not cold yet, and kissed his beautiful face. She laid her lips to his, and made them move.

"Oh, Hoseyn," she cried. "Was it this very day that I told myself that the brief romance between us was as dead as an Egyptian mummy? And no mummy is more dead than you are now."

Then she took him by his shoulders, and looked into his eyes as if she expected him to answer her. But the sightless orbs stared blankly up to the unheeding Egyptian skies, which have witnessed deeds of devilish cruelty for untold centuries.

And then she flung herself across his body and wept, and wept, for the love that had passed between them, and for the loss of so much goodness to the world. And last of all she rose, and closed his eyes with sovereigns from the little watch purse on her *châtelaine*, and laid his body out as decently as she could, and arranged the robes, and covered the face. When she had finished, she walked with steps at first tottery and then firm, to the motor which had brought her there; and which was to have carried Lucrece to and from the Land of Heart's Delight. She did not trouble to veil her face again, she simply stepped in, and said, "Home." Mr. Considine followed her closely, and as soon as she was ready, sprang into his own motor. The two reached Cairo together.

When she got in she found her husband sitting up for her.

"Have you been to the dance at the 'Semiramis'?" he asked.

She nodded.

"What persuaded you to put on a hat and a motor-coat? Are you cold?"

"Yes, shivering."

He poured a little whisky into the bottom of a glass, and brought it to her. "Take that, Sophy, dear."

She tossed it off wildly.

"Why, bless me, the little woman seems to have seen a ghost!"

"A ghost? I have seen the devil. I shall see him for the rest of my life."

"What is the matter, dearest; are you ill? Shall I send for a doctor?"

"Oh, no; I am not worth bothering about."

"Why do you say that? Have I ever done anything to make you?"

"No, Julius. No. But I'm fearfully upset. I've had a most awful shock. Perhaps I'll tell you about it later—I—I—thought I should be killed."

"Where have you really been?"

"Out to the Pyramids."

"What have you been doing there?" he asked, not inquisitively or inquisitorially, but with the interested politeness of the perfect husband.

"I don't know whether I ought to tell you."

"As you like: I never wish to know more than you care to tell me."

She turned her wild eyes on him inquiringly. "Thank you, Julius; you have been a very good husband to me: and I often have not deserved it."

"Don't get morbid, little woman. I can forgive you anything but the loss of your sprightliness."

"O God! I wonder if you could!"

"Go to bed, Sophy," he said, kindly; "and sleep it off."

"Please don't send me away, Julius: I'm quite unhinged. If you're going to sit up late, as usual, let me go to sleep on a chair beside you."

"Certainly," he said, and devoted the next quarter of an hour to making her comfortable.

Stephen Considine, meanwhile, had returned home and passed straight up to the offices of the National Independence Committee. He at once telephoned to Dimitri's for Mulazim, who he knew would be there. Mulazim was with him within half an hour, having just caught one of the trams which run from the Citadel to the Sharia Boulak.

"You will have to head the deputation to-morrow," he said. "Hoseyn Hassan will not be present. I have his own authority for it."

Mulazim Bey went back to Dimitri's, and quoted the Arab equivalent for the proverb, "When rogues fall out."

And then Mr. Considine, returning to his daughter, kissed her good-night, in just his usual manner, and said he must retire.

But he did not retire to bed: he meant to spend all night with his papers, and a good part of it with Mr. Chody.

For his arrest could only be a question of time, and there were many documents which had to be destroyed, or the whole workings of the most monstrous conspiracy of the twentieth century would come out, and an almost incalculable number of people be incriminated. The task was not so gigantic as it might have been, because he had always contemplated a visit from the English military authorities, when they had the sense to proclaim martial law. He had kept the papers together, and provided a sort of crematorium on the premises, with a wonderful new combustible which would reduce them to ashes in a few minutes.

The papers which he had to go through were chiefly his own private papers, and the papers relating nominally to the affairs of the American Hardware Trust, which employed the army of secret agents, who acted as spies and propagandists and distributed fire-arms, while they were collecting orders for agricultural machinery. Although he was the proprietor and dictator, and real editor-in-chief of *The Banner*, his name did not appear in connection with it, so the documents of *The Banner*, like the documents of the Committee of Egyptian Independence, should be safe from seizure and scrutinisation.

In case by any chance he escaped arrest, the destruction of the secret papers of the Hardware Trust would not create irreparable confusion, because their details were

committed to Stephen Considine's marvellous memory ; and the agents, whose secret reports he had to destroy, were also the regular trade representatives of the company, whose names appeared in its accounts, and who could send in fresh reports whenever they were required to.

While Lucrece was sleeping peacefully, and her father was turning night into day at his desk, Mr. Krafft's studies of Nietzsche were terribly disturbed. Parliament had given him the habit of late hours. Whether the House was in session or not, he seldom went to bed before three or four o'clock in the morning. His wife did not sit up with him : if she was not entertaining, or being entertained, she went to bed at eleven to postpone wrinkles.

His vigils would not have been of much use, if they were often broken into as much as they were to-night. Sophia, whose sleep was always childlike in its serenity—her sins sat lightly on her soul, and she put off excitement as a garment—kept starting up, wild-eyed and white-faced, telling an imaginary person to kill her.

He went over and sat beside her, with his arm round her, to wake her right up and banish the nightmare.

She crept closer to him, and let herself be kissed.

" I wonder what's disturbing your sleep so to-night. It must have been a terrible fright you had, Sophy."

She nodded. " I wonder if I dare tell you."

" I think you dare. Home would be very dull without you, Sophy. There are not many things I would not forgive the little woman who has made life so interesting for me. I know you've been a bit wild. ' But I did not deserve the good fortune to win such a lovely and charming woman for my wife ; and I haven't made home very lively for you."

" I'm afraid that there's a good deal that you wouldn't find it very easy to forgive, if you knew," said the reckless Sophia.

" Are you in an awful scrape this time ? "

" Not worse than usual. It isn't my affair that's worrying me."

" Then I shouldn't worry about it. Try and go to sleep again."

She lay down again on the invalid chair, and was quite still. It was because she was not asleep. Presently she sat up.

"Julius!"

He put his book down to come to her.

"No. Sit where you are. I have something to say to you. I am going to tell you what I have been doing to-night. I told you that I had been out to the Pyramids."

"And you got a fright. What on earth did you trust yourself out there for, at night, when it is not safe in the middle of the day now."

"To impersonate Lucrece Considine."

"Oho! This sounds interesting. What did she want to go out there for at night. I thought she was such a very good young person: she looks as if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth."

"She is good," cried Sophia fiercely. "Promise that you will never split on her, or I won't tell you any more."

"Oh, I won't split, as you call it. I like Lucrece Considine. Besides, I want to hear."

"She went to meet the Sheikh."

"The deuce."

"They were engaged to each other."

"I hope it was all right. This man has a very bad reputation."

"Perhaps he deserved it," she said softly. "But it was all right in this case. He gave Lucrece the finest kind of worship. Everything would have been right, if Mr. Considine had let her marry him."

"I don't see how Considine could. I expect he had a whole lot of wives already. An Arab of his position always has a harem."

She shook her head. "He had sent them all away."

"How do you know he had, Sophia?" His voice showed that he was not cross-questioning her.

"Because both of them made me their confidante."

"Wasn't it a great responsibility? I suppose Considine was violently opposed to it, or they would not have needed your help."

"He was."

"Well, why did you do it?"

It was not easy for her to answer this: she turned the question. "The Sheikh wanted to meet Lucrece, to say good-bye to her before to-morrow."

"You mean this morning——"

"That deputation affair to the Khedive."

"Why, is it going to be dangerous?"

"I don't think so," she hesitated, as if she had something important to tell. He perceived this, and listened with increasing attention.

Again she changed her front. "I impersonated Lucrece so as to save her going."

"You're an excellent actress, Sophia, but you don't mean to tell me that you succeeded in passing yourself off for Miss Considine, on a man who loved her."

"Only for a little."

"Then he discovered you: what did he do then?"

"Frightened me terribly."

"So that's the story of it."

"Yes, that's the story," she said, in a mechanical voice.

"Well, go to sleep again, now that you've got it off your chest!" He wished to collect his thoughts. "The thing can't be left like this," he said to himself.

An hour passed. Then she sat up and called him to her.

"I have not been to sleep," she said, when he was crossing the room. When he had seated himself, she said: "Julius, you are my husband, you have never failed me, when I have come to you for help. I need your help horribly now."

His arm tightened round her.

"It isn't myself, I told you. I've seen a most awful murder."

"Heavens alive!" he cried. "Where?"

"By the Sphinx."

"Were you mixed up in it?"

"Yes."

"It was that cursed Arab."

"Hush! He's dead!"

"It was he who was murdered?"

"Yes. It was he."

"Not by the Pyramid Arabs. No. It could not have been them. They're a bad lot: but the green robes would have kept them off."

"No. It wasn't the Arabs. Think who it could have been."

"Considine?"

"Yes. Stephen Considine. It was the most wicked, cowardly, premeditated murder you could imagine. He walked right up to him and put a pistol to his side. He

did not say one word to him : he did not give him time to say a word. He came up to him, unperceived in the darkness, and shot him three times through the heart."

"What a beast! He ought to be torn in pieces by an Arab mob."

Then she felt his arm slacken, and he asked sharply :

"Did you know that Mr. Considine was going, Sophia?"

"Yes. But I did not know that I was to be his lure, or that he had this terrible plan in his mind. I went to save Lucrece."

The arm tightened again.

"What happened after he had murdered Hoseyn? Did he turn on you?"

"No. He didn't. And I told him to. I had lost all fear, and was beside myself with rage at his baseness. I swore I would denounce him. And now, Julius," she said, pressing him off the chair, and getting up and standing in front of him : "What am I to do?"

She expected him to say, "Give Considine the chance of denouncing himself—or wait and see the day through."

What he did say was : "I cannot have my wife compounding a felony. After breakfast you must go to the Chief Commissioner of Police, to lay the charge."

He trusted that Mr. Considine would use the delay to escape. His anxiety was not for Mr. Considine's arrest : he was interested in the success of the Revolution. He wanted to clear his wife—which could only be done by denouncing Mr. Considine.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE ARREST OF STEPHEN CONSIDINE

LUCRECE CONSIDINE awoke that morning with a presentiment of ill. She was convinced that her father was going to get into trouble. But the trouble was associated in her mind with the deputation to the Khedive. Little as her father's political projects were brought to her notice, she could not help being aware that something colossal was in contemplation, something which might lead to bloodshed on a large scale, something that might alter the whole face of Egyptian politics. In such a crisis a calamity might easily happen to her father.

Mr. Considine himself seemed to have no such presentiment. He ate an excellent breakfast, and commented on his bad luck in not being able to accompany the deputation to the Khedive, when he had done so much for the Cause.

But in any case he would have stayed at the office of the Nationalist Committee, to direct the rising, when he had word of the revolt of the Egyptian troops.

After breakfast he went up to the Nationalist offices, and, for two or three hours, was almost incessantly at the telephone ascertaining that the Committees, who were to manage the risings in the various districts into which he had divided Cairo, were ready to act when he gave the signal.

He hardly expected this before eleven o'clock.

But eleven o'clock passed, and no word came, and he began to wonder if the Egyptian soldiers were waiting for Hoseyn Hassan. That would be serious. He had not thought of this when he killed him. He telephoned in every direction for information. The only information he could obtain was that nothing had happened yet, but that there was likely to be trouble: that the General

must have had wind of it, because the square in front of the Abdin Palace was full of British soldiers.

The sound of the artillery had just fallen on his astounded ears when word came up the tube from his flat that the police, accompanied by an officer from the American Consulate, were inquiring for him.

The Egyptian Independence building had been erected with a view to his escaping if the police raided it. But Mr. Considine had no idea of escape. He had no hope of being able to get away from the city, if he did succeed in escaping for the moment. Had his crime not been discovered, the police would not have been on his track ! If it was discovered, there was no chance of his finding concealment in the native city, because Hoseyn Hassan was so universally beloved that every Mohammedan's hand would be against his murderer.

He determined to be arrested in his own flat, because if the arrest took place in the Nationalist offices, the authorities might take possession of them, which would bring inconvenience, if not misfortune, to the Cause. So without waiting to inquire even about such a cataclysm as the artillery firing, he walked down the stairs, and let himself into his front-door with a latchkey.

Lucrece met him at the door. "Father, quick, fly ! The flat is full of police. The British have found out your connection with the Revolution !"

"I am not going to fly," he said ; and, putting her aside with his hand, passed on into the flat.

The police and the consular officer met him in the hall. The officer said : "These policemen do not speak English, so I must inform you, Stephen Considine, that they are here to arrest you on a charge of wilful murder."

Lucrece heard the awful words, but she thought that the charge was connected with the Revolution ; that there had been a fracas in which someone had been killed, and that her father was being made responsible for it.

Then she saw a sight which made her face flush crimson with shame, and her eyes flash fire. One of the policemen had taken out a pair of handcuffs, and was approaching her father to put them on him. Were the British going to have him manacled like a common malefactor for a political offence ?

The American officer intervened. He exchanged a few words with the men in Arabic, and informed Mr. Considine

that he need not be handcuffed, if he would give his word not to try and escape.

Mr. Considine assented immediately ; it seemed a farce to ask him.

Then the door was opened, and he walked downstairs between the policemen. Lucrece followed them down, weeping. There was an *arabeah* waiting. Two of the policemen squeezed themselves into the seat, one on each side of him, the third mounted the box beside the driver, and the fourth, with the officer from the American Consulate, sat down on the little seat facing him.

All these men to guard one prisoner, who had given his word not to attempt to escape, thought Lucrece bitterly. They were not there for that. They were there to protect him from the vengeance of the crowd.

But no one who knew him saw him. Hardly anybody was in the streets between the Sharia Boulak and the police station in the Governorat, to which he was being taken. They were all round the palace of the Khedive, taking part in the demonstrations which he, a passive prisoner in the hands of the police, had ordered.

Lucrece felt as if the skies had fallen. How abominably desolate everything looked.

The sumptuous flat she was in seemed as empty as the earth on the day of its creation, for the titanic personality, which had filled it, was gone ; like Samson, he had been led away to prison.

Her life was, oh, so empty. For she was robbed of the friends on whom she would have leaned. Of the tragedy out at the Pyramids she knew nothing yet ; but she had an instinctive feeling that she could not trust Mrs. Krafft. And there was a great gulf fixed between her and Ailsa Kennedy or Tom Cobbe.

What a comfort Kennedy would have been ; he was so strong, so just ; and, like Tom, he had shown that he was no fair-weather friend who would leave her at the first breath of misfortune ; when the other officers had avoided her for being seen out alone with Hoseyn Hassan, he had shown her more attention than ever.

But it had been impossible, she did not fully know how impossible, for him to come near her, since her father had made that infamous proposal to him, and, even if it were not, he would be on duty now. He was an arch-fighter against her father's plans. And it was more

impossible—for a new reason—for poor Tom, who would have been contemplating suicide, but for the healthy fillip of danger.

Lucrece ate no lunch, in spite of the fatherly protestations of Probyn. She would not go through the farce of sitting down to table. She hated to cross the hall with the policemen sitting in it, who had been placed there to prevent anything being taken away from the house, or anyone coming into it, without a permit. Of which last fact Lucrece was ignorant.

For an hour or two she lay down and tossed on her bed. Then she felt that she must talk to some one, and went into the drawing-room, and rang for Probyn, who had always been on rather a special footing, as it had been his duty to inform Mr. Considine upon points of etiquette in great English houses—a duty he performed well, because he knew, and did not presume.

He had been with them long enough to have seen Lucrece turn from a child into a woman; and he worshipped the ground she walked on.

But Lucrece felt sure that he would have been discussing the disgrace which had fallen on the house.

“Probyn,” she said, in a weary voice, “tell me about it.”

He understood what she meant. He was such a respectful servant that he could not resist demonstrating first that he had come by the information accidentally. As a matter of fact, he had gone down to discuss it with the Arab house-porter, who spoke English, directly Lucrece had retired to her room. The shock had been almost as great for him as it was for her. When he saw his master, the great millionaire, being taken to prison as a murderer, he, too, thought that the heavens were falling.

But when he heard from the porter, who had been up to have his gossip with the policemen (they belonged to the same Secret Society of Nationalists), that his master was arrested for shooting Hoseyn Hassan, and that he had caught him with his daughter at the Pyramids, last night; instead of being ashamed of his master he was wild with enthusiasm over him. He had heard of Lucrece’s going about with Hoseyn Hassan, and the bare idea of her being seen alone with an Arab, of whatever degree, had struck the old English servant as abominable. He had several times been on the verge of expatiating upon this

point of etiquette, but had been disarmed by Lucrece's innocence.

Lucrece was wondering why he hesitated.

"Please tell me about it, Probyn," she said; "I have to bear it, so I may just as well hear it."

"Well, miss," he said, after much feeling about for words. "Your father, it seems, was out at the Pyramids last night, and saw an Arab fellow insulting a lady, and thought it was you, and shot him."

To the porter, Probyn had denied stoutly that Lucrece had been out at all the night before. He declared that she had taken her coffee as usual after dinner, about nine; that she had rung for a lemon and soda-water about ten; and that she had answered when he knocked at her bedroom door, to ask if she required anything more, about eleven.

Seeing that he was hesitating again, she said, "What is it, Probyn?"

"Might I ask you something, miss?"

"Certainly."

"Was you out at all last night, miss?"

"I? No, Probyn; you know I wasn't."

"Well, I told the porter you wasn't, miss; but he says that all Cairo knows that you was with him, when your father did it."

Lucrece wondered what business it was of the porter's. Probyn should have known better than to discuss her father with the porter. It was in a tone of offended dignity that she said:

"You can tell them that I was here all the time, that I never left the house."

"Thank God for that, miss; I knew I was right!"

"But, Probyn . . ."

"Yes, miss."

"Who could it have been? There must have been someone, like enough to me, to be mistaken for me."

"I'll try and find out, miss."

"Do you know who the Arab was, Probyn?"

"Yes, miss. The man in the green dress, who stopped the hooting at the Key-dive on the day of the sports."

By a strong effort Lucrece restrained herself from fainting. Not that she minded if Probyn did see how much Hoseyn Hassan had been to her. Americans have more emotion and less dignity than the English. She was an

American, and therefore did not mind showing her feelings, and she was her father's daughter in the courage of her opinions. Indeed, she felt almost compelled, by *noblesse oblige*, to declare her feelings for him. For Probyn had called the Descendant of the Prophet, her affianced husband, an Arab fellow. She turned as white as marble ; her face, usually so statuesque in its serenity, was contorted by the conflict of feelings—grief, rage, humiliation, despair, disbelief, belief.

When she found words she said : " You mean Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan. It could not have been him ; he would never have insulted any woman ; he was the mirror of chivalry ! "

Probyn disapproved strongly of her speaking of an Arab at all in such a way, and he had heard some queer stories about Hoseyn Hassan and white women ; but he loved his young mistress, and said nothing.

She felt that he was unconvinced, and said : " Besides, he was father's greatest friend and ally."

" I can't help it, miss ; your father did catch him, and he has killed him."

" I won't believe it ! I won't believe it ! " she cried.

" But, miss, you can see for yourself. That's why this terrible thing has happened." He meant the arrest.

" I can see that he killed somebody, but it could not have been the Sheikh. The whole thing is impossible."

But Probyn knew by her tortured face that her words were braver than her thoughts. His soul was wrung for her. He tried to cheer her by telling her of the great events of the day, which meant so much to his patriotic English soul. The proclamation of martial law he did not yet know ; the hall-porter's news had come from the crowd filtering back from the palace square ; and they did not understand what the proclamation meant. But the firing of artillery, and the disarming of the Egyptian regiment by an overwhelming British force, were things which everybody could see with his own eyes ; and there were rumours that the other Egyptian regiments had been surprised in the same way.

His great news was not welcome news for her. One man's meat is another man's poison. England's success was Mr. Considine's defeat.

" Poor father ! " she murmured. " I am glad that he was spared this."

Probyn, with the quietness of the perfect servant, who appears and disappears like magic, moved towards the door.

Lucrece mastered herself. "Thank you, Probyn," she said. "You meant well. You can go now."

But when he left her, she flung herself on the great ottoman, face downwards, and buried her eyes in the cushions.

She tried, as she excluded the light of day from her eyes, to shut out from her thoughts the hateful knowledge that Hoseyn Hassan, the young, the beautiful, the romantic; Hoseyn Hassan, who had the love of her heart; Hoseyn Hassan, to whom millions looked as their leader and their prophet, was assassinated—assassinated by her own father; that she would not ever see that gracious form, not ever hear that musical voice again; that her day-dreams were all shattered; that she was alone in the world.

"Oh, how could her father have done such a thing?"

Her mind went back to the rumours that her father had caught her alone with the Sheikh. If this had been true, she could picture her father doing it.

It was at the Pyramids, too; she knew now why they had always filled her with a feeling of loathing and dread.

But she had never been near the Pyramids except that day with Tom; she hated them so. And she had not been out at all last night.

The rumour was so positive that there must have been somebody with the Sheikh. She racked her mind to think who it could have been. The more she thought, the more certain she was that it must have been Mrs. Krafft. Who else knew her well enough? Who else could have managed the resemblance? Mrs. Krafft was about the same height; she had even that motor-coat which Lucrece had used several times. But what was her motive? Was she not her greatest friend in Egypt? How could she bear her malice?

A light dawned upon her. She knew how impressionable Mrs. Krafft was with men. She must have been in love with Hoseyn Hassan. She must have disguised herself as Lucrece to effect secret meetings with him. Mr. Considine must have caught Hoseyn Hassan making love to her, and thought she was his daughter.

What did it matter? Hoseyn Hassan was dead. Hoseyn was dead. And her heart would break. She even forgot her father's arrest in her desolation for Hoseyn. She lay there in an agony of sobbing, mourning for him. She wept and wept. She would never have noticed the increasing crowd and disturbance in the street, but suddenly the door opened, and Probyn came in, followed by Mr. Chody, looking as white as a sheet, and carrying her father's revolver. There was no difficulty in *his* getting past the Nationalist policemen. She rose from the ottoman. Her eyes were fiery with weeping; her face was drawn, almost beyond recognition. But she had not lost her dignity.

"What do you want, Mr. Chody?" she asked coldly and courageously. She felt certain that he had come for no good. She had hated him for the flowery Oriental compliments which he paid her beauty whenever he was a minute alone with her, and had always snubbed him relentlessly. Now, of course, the worm had turned. Even Mr. Chody felt that he could trample on her. Of violence from him she was not afraid. The police were there; it was the humiliation of having to put up with his presence that she felt.

"The mob," he said, in a voice whose terror reassured her, and pointed to the window.

She followed him to it, and saw the broad Sharia Boulak filled from the houses on one side to the houses on the other, with excited Arabs, who were all of them pointing in her direction.

"The mob," said Mr. Chody again, so terrified that he could hardly make himself heard. "They mean to tear the house down and kill everyone in it, in revenge for your father killing Hoseyn Hassan."

Then it was true! Her father had killed Hoseyn Hassan. Mr. Chody could not be mistaken. He knew them both too well. And she . . . while her heart was breaking for Hoseyn Hassan, his followers were thirsting for her blood. Let them kill her! What did she care? Nay, she would like to die as a sacrifice on the altar of his memory.

Full of this exaltation she had gone to the window. Her appearance was the signal for a wilder outburst of fury. And a rush up to both doors which they tried to burst in.

Fortunately they were built with a view to standing a siege ; it was important for Mr. Considine if the British Authorities raided his house, to be able to keep them out for a time, while suspected persons were escaping and suspicious documents were being destroyed. He had never contemplated its having to stand a siege from his mob allies.

Lucrece did not wish to die now ; her instinct of self-preservation had triumphed. How often in the history of battles has a man who wished himself dead fought desperately to save his life. And Lucrece was a woman, and had a horror of what the mob might do to her if she fell into their hands. But she expected every moment to be her last.

The street was filled with a furious and fanatical mob thirsting for her blood, not only because she was her father's daughter—though that would have been enough for Mulazim Bey, who, having been an uncompromising enemy of Hoseyn Hassan during his lifetime, had maddened them with his incitements to revenge themselves on the cursed Christian who had dared to shed the sacred blood of the Prophet. His rage was genuine ; he was such a fanatical Mohammedan, and revenge and self-interest were spurring him on. He had more than one grudge against Stephen Considine which only blood could wipe out ; and, now that Hoseyn Hassan had gone, only Stephen Considine stood between him and the undisputed leadership of the Nationalists of the Revolution. The Egyptians had arms now, they no longer had need of this interfering, domineering foreigner and Christian. And Mulazim's fury against Lucrece was hardly less than his fury against her father ; she was the temptress, who had lured Hoseyn Hassan to his doom ; none of the Arabs knew that Mrs. Krafft had impersonated her.

The behaviour of the police filled Lucrece with apprehension. They kept informing her through Mr. Chody that they would be unable to keep the mob out much longer. The Egyptian policeman has no desire to perish at his post. But that was not all : the police were Nationalists, who would have been just as much under the influence of Mulazim Bey as the mob itself, if their uniform had not made them desirous of doing something to keep up appearances. They did not wish to forfeit the office of policeman in the New Egypt, which was dawn-

ing. Under a National Government its opportunities for bakshish would be unlimited.

"Oh, what do they mean?" asked the terrified Lucrece. Instinct told her that the Levantine meant her well, and that resource must come from him, and not from the slow-witted Probyn.

"They mean to desert," said Mr. Chody.

"Is there nothing we can do?"

"We could escape by the private elevator," he said, "if your father has left the key in his study."

All three of them rushed into the study to see. No key was visible. It was a forlorn hope. Mr. Chody was sure that Mr. Considine would have it in his pocket, for he had used it that very morning.

As Lucrece looked round the room in despair, her eye fell on the telephone.

"Quick, Mr. Chody! What is the number of the General's house?"

"K. 00-65," he said. He had a marvellous memory for names and figures.

Lucrece rang up K. 00-65. By good fortune the General himself answered and heard her extremity. He promised help in half an hour.

"Half an hour!" cried Lucrece, as she repeated his words to Mr. Chody. "Can we ever keep them out for half an hour?"

"We might if the police don't betray us. Is the private front door secured, Probyn?"

"Yes, sir; fast as we can make it."

"And the big front door?"

"The police are there, sir."

"Are the English footmen still in the flat?"

"Yes, sir."

"Call them."

"They were in the room in a flash, and Mr. Chody ordered them to bolt the front door; the police started forward.

"Stop! Hands up! or I'll shoot you," called Chody to them in Arabic, covering them with his revolver.

The police did not believe that he meant it, but they were true to their principles; they did not take the risk. In a few seconds Probyn and the footmen had done their work. The fastenings of that door were intended for sudden surprises.

"It'll take a lot of breaking down now, Miss Considine," said Mr. Chody, "unless they've brought dynamite," he added.

"Will they have dynamite?" she asked, with a white face.

"I don't think so. It was only served out to special people for special jobs, like the Wasta business." He suddenly remembered the presence of Probyn, and thought how lucky it was that he had not used *we* instead of *it*. Probyn did not seem to have grasped the conversation. Mr. Chody had work for him. "Take these men's swords and revolvers from them," he cried. The police, covered by his revolver, still had their hands up. Probyn hesitated. "They're in with the mob," explained Mr. Chody.

Probyn understood, and obeyed—very quickly.

"You can drop your hands now," said Mr. Chody to the policemen, still keeping them under his pistol.

The police were resigned. The mob would make short work of Mr. Chody when they broke in, and they themselves could claim merit from both sides.

The mob were smashing at the door with some heavy weight.

"Will they break it in?" asked Lucrece.

"Perhaps. But even then I may be able to keep them back with my revolver, like Captain Kennedy did."

If she had not been so terrified, Lucrece would have laughed. Mr. Chody and Captain Kennedy! What a comparison!

But now even Mr. Chody was something to lean on.

"They shan't touch you except over my dead body, Miss Considine."

He meant it. She did not know, and she never would know, that the funny little man was as desperately in love with her as any of them. And, indeed, it would have been odd if a passionate Levantine, thrown into daily contact with a woman as beautiful and unaffected as Lucrece, had not loved her. It was perhaps more surprising that he had never offered her any attentions more objectionable than his florid compliments. Now he was showing his love in a practical way: it had given him a courage entirely foreign to his nature.

Smash! smash! went that weight against the door.

"Would help never come?"

Not so many minutes before, the General had ridden up to his house with a little escort of cavalry, who left him at the gate and rode over to join their comrades of the squadron, which had temporary quarters in the huge Office of Public Works opposite, in case the Revolutionists contemplated any movement against the General or Lord Clapham.

There was a smile of satisfaction on his strong, soldierly face as he rode up. He was able to tell his wife that in all the grave military operations of the day not one drop of blood had been shed. She was on the doorstep waiting for him.

The General was promising himself numerous cups of tea, while he described the burden and heat of the day to her. He had just unbuckled his sword, and laid it on the table beside him, when the telephone rang, and Lucrece's despairing message came through. He telephoned to the officer commanding the squadron in the Office of Works across the road, while he was buckling on his sword again. He left his tea untouched, and rang the bell for his horse: it had just been unsaddled; but a fresh horse was ready in a flash, and he mounted. There was a prayer on his wife's lips that he might be in time, as he trotted out of the gate. The squadron was there—they had had plenty of alarm drill lately—and in another minute they were galloping up the Sharia Kasr-el-Ainy as if their lives, and not only a foreign girl's, who was the daughter of a rebel, depended on it.

The grey horses galloping up the broad street were a glorious sight, and, when they turned into the Sharia Kasr-el-Nil, where there were the great "Savoy Hotel" and many other houses full of foreigners, everyone rushed to the windows to look.

Cavalry galloping in a town make a spectacle so unusual; their clatter on a street is so fierce that they always suggest danger and revolution. And when people saw the General galloping with them they knew that the matter must indeed be serious. Where were they going in such fiery haste?

They swept round the corner into the broad Sharia El-Madebegh, and galloped on. The thunder of hoofs could still be heard in the Sharia Kasr-el-Nil. It fell on the ears of the terrified girl in her lonely flat. But the mob of fanatics, who were thirsting for her blood, if

they heard it, did not heed it, till the Cavalry were in sight.

Then, when they saw the grey horses flying up the stately Madebegh, there was one of those wild stampedes to which Egyptian mobs are prone. Their fighting has all to be on one side. As the Cavalry debouched on to the street of Boulak, the trumpet rang out for the halt. The mischief was nipped : the street had cleared itself by magic. Then another trumpet sounded, and the squadron walked their horses up to the building of Egyptian Independence. There the General dismounted, and, with a couple of troopers at his heels, ran up the stairs to Mr. Considine's flat.

The footmen had been leaning out of the window, and ran into the hall and commenced unbolting the door.

"What are you doing?" asked Mr. Chody.

"It's the General, sir—he's here with the Greys."

The door opened and the General stepped in.

The two policemen, who had been terrorized by little Chody, at once assumed the air of authority to the great Sir Francis Vere, whom they did not recognise at first. They had been instructed to let no one pass in without a permit, and stepped forward to stop him.

But when they recognised that it was the General, in uniform and attended by soldiers, they hesitated backwards and forwards, like reeds in the wind. It was a terrible responsibility for them to resist a man in the General's position. But if the General had come to examine Mr. Considine's papers for evidence of conspiracy against the British, he was the man of all others whom they ought to stop. And as Nationalists in politics their desires lay in this direction. The General brushed these hesitating creatures aside, like flies, in his anxiety to see Lucrece; and, Egyptian-like, they submitted to the *fait accompli*, especially when they saw that he made no attempt to go beyond the hall, and was entirely occupied with Lucrece.

The beautiful, tearful, terrified girl almost fell into his arms. She felt humiliated to the dust. She was the daughter of a murderer, the daughter of the treacherous conspirator who had only the other day been detected in trying to corrupt the General's Aide-de-camp. Yet here, in her hour of need, when her father's false allies had turned on her, was the British General himself, the

hero of a score of battles, who had just been six hours in the saddle, checkmating the combinations her father had brought against him.

There was not a suggestion on his face that he remembered her father's crime, or his attempt to corrupt Kennedy—he was just the relieving commander, who had arrived at the twelfth hour,—just St. George, with the dragon vanquished, standing before the captive princess. Lucrece wept. She could only pay her rescuer in tears, and Sir Francis Vere, the true Elizabethan knight—it survives in khaki—stood shamefaced before her.

The Considines were under his own ban—by his own orders it was an offence for anyone in the Army to have any dealings with them. But an imperious necessity had arisen. He gulped down the lump in his throat, and when he did speak, said, “Miss Considine, this house is not safe for you. You must be our daughter in the place of one in England—till, in the words of the Bible, ‘this tyranny be overpast.’ If your maid can have your things ready in half an hour, or an hour, I will wait for you with an escort.”

When this was arranged, he sent one of the troopers back for the officer commanding the squadron. Lucrece was still with him, when the tall young soldier came in, and had to be introduced: Captain Engleheart—Miss Considine. Her eyes were red with tears, her face was white with grief, but he did not know which to admire most, her beauty or her dignity.

The captain received his instructions about taking the squadron back—minus the escort—and the General scribbled an order on a leaf of his note-book, which he handed to him. A minute afterwards the noise of the trotting horses died away.

When Lucrece's baggage was ready, and the footmen brought it out into the hall, Probyn helping them, for his adored young mistress, the policemen summoned up heart to do their duty. “Our orders are not to let anything be taken out of the flat, or to admit anybody into it without a special authority,” they informed the General in Arabic.

“Stand aside, my good men. There is no authority against me. At twelve o'clock to-day the Khedive proclaimed martial law; I am the master of the city.”

The police were sorely troubled. They were deeply

involved in the Nationalist conspiracy, much concerned lest the General should be taking incriminating documents out of the flat concealed in Miss Considine's baggage, which, of course, he must be doing.

"Our orders are positive," they said; nothing can be more positive than the Egyptian abiding by the letter of his orders, when they do not disagree with his inclinations. "Nothing is to go out of this house without a written authority, and you had no right to come in."

Neither Dogberry nor Verges had ever heard of martial law.

The General went into the drawing-room and flung up the window. This was a fresh infraction; he had not attempted to go beyond the hall before. They rushed in to tell him that he must come out at once, and leave the house.

Then, hearing feet on the stairs, and in the hall, they rushed back again, only to find themselves confronted by a sergeant and guard of Highlanders, sent across from headquarters by that sheet of the General's note-book Captain Engleheart had taken along; they were waiting in the street below for the General's signal.

The police made no further demur. Like all Egyptian policemen, they had served their time in the Army, and they understood now that military operations were going on, which superseded their duties.

So they saluted respectfully, and asked for a written order. They were given one, ordering them to report themselves as relieved by a military guard under the General's orders.

The sergeant received the same orders as they had received, with the addition that he was to fire on anyone who attempted to disregard them, and at once ring up on the telephone for reinforcements. Later on an officer was sent in to take possession of Mr. Considine's papers and convey them to Headquarters. The General naturally attached extreme importance to them; the entire Independence Building was seized and its occupants expelled.

When Lucrece's baggage was ready, an *arabeah* was called, as one had been called for her father in the morning. But what a cruel contrast: the father a prisoner, with a strong guard of police in the cab, the daughter with the escort that is given to a princess.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE KIDNAPPING OF TOM COBBE

THAT night the Nationalists scored their first success. The brilliant suggestion came from one of the Irish conspirators, that as Lord Clapham and the Khedive would not release the jester, a hostage should be seized, and used as a lever. The hostage they decided on was Tom Cobbe. He was Lord Clapham's only son, and, therefore, the British Minister would be hit in his tenderest place; nor could anything persuade him to take precautions.

Hearing that Lucrece was at the General's, he felt that he must see her. The General's house was only a few minutes' walk from the British Agency, and he did not wish to attract attention by taking an escort; it might invite opposition. So, waiting till everything was very quiet, he slipped out alone and unarmed. He meant, if he could, to reach Lucrece unobserved. But if he failed, he would throw himself on the mercy of Lady Vere, and get her to let him see Lucrece first, and make his peace with the General afterwards. He trusted that he would not have to see the General till he had had his interview with Lucrece; because, if they met, he would have to ask his permission, and he could not go behind Sir Francis's prohibition.

So overpowering was his purpose to see Lucrece, that he wondered how he would have kept away from her all this time, if he had not been ill.

He was well again, thanks to Chiquita's practicality, though he had not yet been outside the garden of the British Agency.

The trained nurse had done her part of discipline and doctoring, but what had brought him round was Chiquita's vivacity and affection. Chiquita needed occupation in

these dangerous days, when going about was so restricted, and she devoted herself to interesting and winning back to life the playmate of her childhood, the cousin who was a brother in everything but birth. In the sick-room she was adorable. It added gentleness to her other charms.

The road between the British Agency and the General's house is lonely at any time, for the space on either side is taken up with large gardens. It was doubly lonely in the present state of siege. Before Tom was half way to the General's, a cloak was flung over his head and a rope wound round and round him, and he was pushed into a harem carriage with all its shutters down, and driven, as he thought, towards Old Cairo, though he soon lost all idea of direction.

He was so often out at night that he was not missed till morning. As he was unusually late for breakfast, Chiquita sent up to his room. The servant came back to say that he was not there, and that the bed had not been used.

No importance was attached to his absence. They concluded that he had spent the night with some friend to avoid the risk of passing through the streets late. The bomb burst through the telephone. Lord Clapham was informed by a voice that he did not recognize that his son had been kidnapped, and that unless the jester was released, he would never see him again.

Lord Clapham's reply was so fatuous that they thought he was yielding. "Where is my son?" he asked.

"In a place where you cannot find him. I shall require your answer in one hour's time," said the voice.

Lord Clapham sent for Sam, who summoned the General in haste.

"What are you going to do?" asked Sir Francis.

"Nothing," said Lord Clapham. "There is nothing to be done."

"Aren't you going to lift your little finger to save your son?"

"I cannot release this man."

At this moment the General felt a higher respect for Lord Clapham than he had ever felt before. It was Principle that withheld him from releasing the jester; for the jester was a person of no consequence; as a leader he had no capacity, no following. He was not worth reckoning beside Tom, and Tom was all Lord Clapham had.

Yet never for one moment did the Consul-General contemplate yielding to their demands. Lord Clapham, the individual whose house was plunged into the deepest grief, did not count.

Even Sam, his secretary and constant adviser, could have no idea of the poignancy of Lord Clapham's grief. Tom's illness had brought them so close. Wandering at all hours in and out of the room, where the boy lay, had brought back to Lord Clapham the old days in his father's lifetime, when he was a Secretary of Embassy at Rome, living with his Spanish wife and her sister in the palace at the top of the Spanish Steps, which the two women chose for its proximity to the idle life of the Pincian.

How well he remembered having the cage bars put into the windows of the big room looking right over Rome, which he made the nursery for its southern aspect, after he had found the two children sitting on the window-sill with their legs hanging over a drop of fifty feet. How well he remembered bargaining in the early mornings, as he sat in the fragrant acacia avenue of the Pincian—as to how long a drive they should have in the carriage drawn by four goats, for each penny. How well he remembered finding Tom with his clothes stuck all over with tooth-picks, and his hands crossed over his head, playing San Sebastian to the little Chiquita, after he had taken him to the old Borghese Palace Gallery; and covered with his mother's and his aunt's watches and bracelets and necklaces after a visit to the Holy Bambino at Araceli.

Tom was such a bright boy, that, tiny dot as he was, the student father had oftener made him his companion in picture galleries and churches than he made his lovely and frivolous Spanish wife, who chose the most hideous modern churches for her Mass.

Those two Spanish sisters from the Argentine, beautiful and fascinating creatures, who had become his wife and his sister-in-law, when he was in the British Legation at Buenos Ayres, had both been carried off by typhoid in a villa which they insisted on taking at Monte Carlo for the only real holiday he had ever known in his long official life, and had left him father and mother to the two children. General Palafox, Chiquita's father, had been dead before the young diplomat's marriage.

Being Tom's sole parent had brought him peculiarly close to the engaging boy before he sacrificed his home life on the altar of a British public school. But Tom had never been the same after he went to Harrow. From his cattle-ranching Argentine grandfather he had inherited eye and activity and nerve, and he soon became adept at sports, and impatient of the æsthetic occupations of his father. By the time that he got into the Harrow eleven he would not have belonged to his father at all, if it had not been for his affectionate nature; life in the Guards took him still further away.

But visions of Tom's dear boyhood crowded upon Lord Clapham as he wandered in and out of the bedroom, where the volatile Grenadier lay as docile as when he had been a little child. And now, just when Tom seemed to be his own again, he was gone for ever. And there could be no ram caught in the thicket to save the sacrificed Isaac for this Abraham.

To Chiquita the idea of sacrificing his only child to duty was nothing short of terrible. She was a selfish little creature, and, to her, sacrifice—the throwing away a thing you prize for an idea—seemed immoral.

It was not only the imminent threat of death, from which they had just won him back with such loving care, but the cutting of all communication with him for eternity—the never seeing him, never hearing from him again, even if he remained in the world of the living, was absolutely appalling.

Her nature was as widely severed as the poles from Lord Clapham's. To him sacrifice was a fetish; the more he loved a thing the more he felt called upon to sacrifice it to duty. It was the same feeling that made him ready to sacrifice his son which had made him ready to sacrifice his country.

Sam Page ground his teeth. He loved Tom like a brother, and could not raise a finger to help him now, when every stitch would save nine. But he knew that nothing could be done. Lord Clapham, so easy to sway at times, was adamant, when he was bowing before his fetish.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE FUNERAL OF HOSEYN HASSAN

No private or English grief could be compared to the wild grief of the people, when the body of the Descendant of the Prophet was found lying before the Sphinx, like the prey between the paws of a lion.

The sun was high ere the body was discovered ; there were no police or *gaffirs* patrolling the Pyramids now, for there were no foreigners to be guarded. And as the Pyramid Arabs were all keen rebels, there had been an influx of them into Cairo, to participate in the first act of the revolt.

But there was in this village an old guide, who for three-score years and ten had not missed a day in visiting the Sphinx. He was not poor ; he owned a few houses in the village and their rents were sufficient to keep him in comfort ; the sums he received from visitors were often humiliatingly small for a person of his means. But all he did was to walk them round the Sphinx, pointing out different aspects of the magic monster. He would have taken them round for nothing, because he liked to talk of his hobby, but he accepted the piastres ; they kept him in luxuries.

When all the other men went into Cairo, he crept out to the Sphinx secretly, lest he should be reproached for not going to swell the chorus of revolt.

As he approached the monster over the tomb-riddled rise from the village, he expected to detect some unwonted phase, for never had its face seemed more malignant. The sunken eyes, the heavy cheek-bones, the battered pugilist's nose, the thin, long, straight, merciless mouth—one and all seemed intensified in their forbiddingness ; and the early morning sun gave the face a kind of

triumphant smile ; it was as if the old gods of Egypt were making hideous mirth.

Their mirth was over the fallen Prophet of a later creed. He saw this the moment he stood before the monster. No other corpse would have worn those green robes. Besides, he knew the Sheikh would die there. Hoseyn Hassan had often conversed courteously with him about his theories. More times than he could remember the old man had urged upon the Sheikh that the Sphinx bore him special ill-will ; and entreated him to avoid this place.

And now his prophecy had been fulfilled. Hoseyn Hassan lay there dead, as if the monster had slain him, and was about to devour him.

The old man moved slowly down and uncovered the face. He saw the sovereigns laid on the eyes to keep them closed. It was, then, the work of a foreigner. He took them off indignantly, but he put them in his purse ; they had done their work ; the eyes were reverently closed, instead of staring in protest at the heavens ; there was nothing to mar the sweet and stately repose of the face. Death had been too instantaneous to torture it ; it seemed at peace with all the world.

The old man went to the little police-station. The police were there ; they could not leave their post and go into Cairo with the rest ; they were following events on the telephone, a pleasing and exciting form of duty.

They looked up crossly at the intruder, who told his tale with Arab deliberation.

Suddenly he came to his point ; they nearly sprang from their skins ; they raced at full speed to the Sphinx. It was true what he had said : the robes were charred over the heart ; they found three wounds that would have killed him.

One of them flew back to telephone the news to Cairo ; two others to fetch the ambulance stretcher ; the fourth remained.

The " Abrar " was forthwith chanted from the minarets of El Azhar, and from every minaret in the city, as the news flew round.

It was this news which emptied the Abdîn Square. The mob melted away ; some to walk or drive out to the Pyramids, others to line the various points of the road. Mulaziin sent out a hundred of the *fikees*, who recite

passages from the Koran, and all the *neddabehs*, the professional mourners, that could be found in Cairo.

Time was short, because the Mohammedan law ordains that when a man dies in the morning he must be buried before night, and when a man dies at night he must be buried on the following day. The Sheikh had been killed the night before. Much haste had, therefore, to be made to fulfil the ordinance; it takes a crowd four hours to walk eight miles; the plain coffin-cover of the Descendants of the Prophet had to be fetched from their shrine in the Tombs of the Caliphs. For the sympathizers who remained in Cairo, the hours, which must elapse before Hoseyn Hassan could be laid beside his ancestors, went slowly; to beguile them they determined to destroy the house and family of the murderer.

It was no secret who had done the deed. When the telephone from the Pyramids reached the office of the Commissioner of Police, Mrs. Krafft was there with her husband, denouncing the murderer. The news was not allowed to transpire until Mr. Considine's arrest had been effected, or a regiment would have been necessary to protect him on his way to the police-station.

Late in the afternoon, when the *Mughassil* had washed and anointed the body of the Descendant of the Prophet in the deserted Mena House, the vast funeral procession started for Cairo. It was superb alike in its numbers, and its stately ritual, used no longer save when a Prince has fallen in Islam. So enormous was it, that it had to be formed in the open desert, halting at Mena for the coffin to take its place.

First came four camels bearing bread and water to be distributed to the poor at the tomb; then came the *Yemeniyeh*—twelve blind men, who chanted without ceasing in sorrowful tones: "There is no deity but God; Mohammed is God's Apostle; God favour and preserve him."

There were no male relations. Hoseyn Hassan was the last of his race; his children were only girls of tender years. But he had friends innumerable—devoted personal friends, as well as colleagues, like Mulazim Bey and Ahmed Mahdi. Then came the public officials, the Grand Kadi and the Grand Mufti in their robes of state; and the Sheikh and all the *Ulemas* of El Azhar in their purple; and many other learned and devout men, who

were followed by four groups of *fikees*, chanting different *soorats* from the Koran, and *munshids* chanting the *Burdeh*, the celebrated poem in honour of Mohammed, the dead man's ancestor. Then, with their resplendent banners half furled, and raising strange chants, came representatives of all the Dervish Orders in Cairo, followed by schoolboys, one of them bearing a Koran on a cushion, and all of them chanting the "*Hashriyeh*," the song of the Day of Judgment, which begins :

" The perfection of Him who hath created whatever hath form ;
 And subdued His servants by death :
 Who bringeth to nought His creatures, with mankind :
 They shall all lie in the graves :
 The perfection of the Lord of the east :
 The perfection of the Lord of the west :
 The perfection of the illuminator of the two lights ;
 The sun, to wit, and the moon :
 His perfection : how bountiful is He !
 His perfection : how clement is He !
 His perfection : how great is He !
 When a servant rebelleth against Him, He protecteth."

Then came the body of Hoseyn Hassan. A mere merchant would have had his bier covered with a rich cashmere shawl. But it was the tradition for the Descendants of the Prophet to be carried to their burial in a plain wooden bier, decorated only with the sacred green turban. Each few yards of the journey its bearers were changed ; not only did everyone in the procession, from the Grand Kadi, who stands next to the Khedive, to the poorest *fellah*, or porter, take his share in bearing the sacred burden ; but for the whole eight miles the bystanders pressed forward to gain the merit of having borne so holy a person.

Behind the bier walked the female mourners, a sad spectacle, for not one of them was distinguished by the fillet of blue cotton, which marks the relatives of the deceased, though among them were those who had been his wives till he divorced them to woo the American. As the late Sheikh was so holy a personage, it was forbidden for these bereft women to mourn ; they had to rend the air with the shrill and quavering cries of joy, called *Zaghareet*.

Last came the buffalo, which was to be sacrificed at the grave, and the carriages of the dignitaries who were walking in the procession.

The *neddabehs*, as they tore their hair and rent their garments, and threw dust upon their heads, and beat their tambourines, uttered loud cries of "O my Master!" "O my Camel!" "O my Lion!" "O my Glory!" "O my Resource!" "O my Father!" "O my Misfortune!"

Lucrece, from her window at the British General's, heard the shrill cries of the mourners before they came to the Ghezireh, and almost till they reached the Ezbekiyeh. There was no need to tell her what it was; she wished that she, too, was dead.

The effect of this multi-coloured, unarmed army marching at mourners' pace past the irresponsible Pyramids, was indescribably grand. And as the melancholy cortège pursued its slow way under the long avenue into Cairo, and through the Cairo streets, its route was lined with ever-thickening crowds, all showing hopeless grief in the ancient forms of the Orient.

In this solemn procession there was no disorder. The General's commands were that it should be allowed to proceed unchecked where there was no rioting; and he had sent information of this to the authorities of El Azhar, requesting them to make it known. He knew that El Azhar was the axis of revolt.

But he kept his troops under arms, and in evidence, to show the crowd that riots would be sternly dealt with. The Royal Irish Rifles were drawn up on the parade ground of the Kasr-el-Nil Barracks, as the procession came over the Nile Bridge. The resentment, which the people felt first at their appearance, changed to another feeling when, as the coffin passed, the word of command rang out and the long lines of British soldiers presented arms. With measured tread the procession, headed now by a troop of martial-looking police on their white Arab chargers, moved up the broad street of the Kasr-el-Nil, round by the Ezbekiyeh and the Ataba, and down the Mousky, which had been cleared for it, to the Sacred Mosque of El Azhar, the focus of Islam in Egypt.

The funeral service in El Azhar was as pathetic as the death of a nation. The bier was borne into the vast and dimly lighted *liwan*, and laid in front of the *mihrab*, with the right side of the dead in the direction of Mecca. The Sheikh-ul-Azhar stood behind it with his hands raised to his head. "God is most great!" he cried, and

recited the opening chapter of the Koran. Then he cried again : " God is most great ! " and prayed aloud : " O God, favour our Lord Mohammed, the Illiterate Prophet and his Family and Companions, and preserve them ! "

A third time he cried : " God is most great ! " And said : " O God, verily this is Thy servant and son of Thy servant ; he hath departed from the repose of the world, and from its amplitude, and from whatever he loved, and from those by whom he was loved in it, to the darkness of the grave, and to what he experienceth. He did testify that there is no deity but Thou alone : that Thou hast no companion : and that Mohammed is Thy servant and Thine apostle ; and Thou art all-knowing respecting him. O God, he hath gone to abide with Thee ; and Thou art the best with whom to abide. He hath become in need of Thy mercy ; and Thou hast no need of his punishment. We have come to Thee, supplicating that we may intercede for him. O God, if he were a doer of good, over-reckon his good deeds ; and if he were an evil-doer, pass over his evil doings ; and of Thy mercy grant that he may experience Thine acceptance ; and spare him the trial of the grave, and its torment ; and make his grave wide to him ; and keep back the earth from his sides ; and of Thy mercy grant that he may experience security from Thy torment, until Thou send him safely to Thy paradise, O Thou most merciful of those who show mercy ! " Then, for the fourth and last time, the Sheikh-ul-Azhar cried : " God is most great ! " adding : " O God, deny us not our reward for him, and lead us not into trial after him : pardon us and him and all the Moslems, O Lord of all creatures ! " Thus he finished his prayer, greeting the angels on his right and left with the salutation of " Peace be on you, and the mercy of God." And then addressing the friends and dignitaries present, he said : " Give your testimony respecting him." And they replied : " He was of the virtuous."

Then the bier was taken up and placed by the Tomb of the Saint of El Azhar, while the *fikees* once more recited the opening chapter of the Koran, and the passage in the second chapter beginning : " Whatever is in heaven and on earth is God's."

While the service was proceeding in the *liwan* the shades of night had fallen, and torches were brought into the great court of the Mosque from all the surrounding

streets and markets. When the bier was carried out into it, it looked almost unearthly in the glare of the torches which filled it, with its six wild minarets and innumerable arches. The great procession reformed, and swept down the street of Es-Sharwani, and round to the Bab-el-Ghoraib, where the road to the Tombs of the Caliphs runs through the low hills outside the eastern wall.

The moon had now risen and showed these hills to be black, white and blue with the masses of human beings, the frequency of black showing that it was here, where the slope let them see over the heads of those in front, that the women had gathered. As the cortège emerged from the city with its torches and banners and bread-camels, the cries of the people on the hills ascended with the smoke to the deep-blue, million-eyed skies of Egypt: "O my Father! O My Lion! O my Misfortune!" till the volume of sound seemed to smite the stars.

And so the procession passed, winding between the hills, then threading its way through the City of the Dead, till it came, at the edge of the desert, to the Mosque of the Descendants of the Prophet.

The grave was ready for them. At the spot where Hoseyn Hassan had indicated to Lucrece on that afternoon of trouble, the earth had been removed by a score of willing hands, revealing a plain vaulted chamber with a little square cell in front of it. It was a tomb that had never been used, specially prepared for the Sheikh, when his time should come.

The grave-digger and his assistants lifted the holy body down into the tomb, and turned it on its right side, facing Mecca, supporting it in its position with new unbaked bricks. Then the precious cashmere shawl, in which the body was wrapped, was rent in twain, and a little earth was gently placed upon the corpse by the dignitaries, as there were no relations, and the Instructor of the Dead began his solemn address:

"O servant of God! O son of a handmaid of God! know that at this time there will come down to thee two angels commissioned respecting thee, and the like of thee. When they say to thee, 'Who is thy Lord?' answer them, 'God is my Lord,' in truth; and when they ask thee concerning thy Prophet, or the man who hath been sent unto you, say to them, 'Mohammed is the Apostle of God,' with veracity;

and when they ask thee concerning thy religion, say to them, 'El-Islam is my religion ;' and when they ask thee concerning thy book of direction, say to them, ' The Koran is my book of direction, and the Moslems are my brothers ;' and when they ask thee concerning thy Kibleh, say to them, ' The Kaabeh is my Kibleh ; and I have lived and died in the assertion that there is no deity but God, and Mohammed is God's apostle ;' and they will say, ' Sleep, O servant of God, in the protection of God.' "

And then the buffalo was sacrificed, and its flesh, with the camel-loads of bread and water, was distributed to the poor sitting in the dust with dust upon their heads.

And then the body of Hoseyn Hassan, the Descendant of the Prophet, was left for the visit of the Angels Nakir and Nekir to whom he would have to account for his actions.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE MOURNERS IN HOSEYN HASSAN'S PALACE

THE dignitaries stepped into their carriages and drove home, but the *fikees*, lighted by the torch-bearers and followed by the multitude, marched by another way to the Bab-en-Nasr, to pass to the palace of the dead Sheikh, where his body, had it not lain undiscovered for so many hours, would have rested ere it was borne forth to burial.

As the mourners entered the city gates, a rare spectacle met their eyes, for not only the *haret* in which the palace stood, but the whole length of the Gamaliyeh, the chief Arab street of Cairo, was hung with the huge oil lanterns of an elder day, which are stored in the vast old mosque of El Hakim. The effect of the long street, with the fantastic outlines of its antique mosques, and fountains and oriels, thrown up by the glitter, which roofed the road as far as the eye could see, was worthy of the Birthday of the Prophet. But no such crowd had ever filled it at the *Moulid-en-Nebbi*, as that which escorted the *fikees* to celebrate the Night of Desolation in the Palace of the Caliph.

The first of the ceremonies of the Night of Desolation had to be omitted, because the Descendant of the Prophet had not died in the house. But the *Sebbah* was conducted by a hundred *fikees* in the Hall of the Caliphs, where the American woman, whom he loved and who loved him, had sat at his feet on that first day.

The *Sebbah* was a rosary of a thousand beads. Each bead was the size of a pigeon's egg. Three chapters from the Koran were recited; three times the *fikees* cried out: "God is one!" Three times they prayed: "O God, favour, with the most excellent favour, the most happy of Thy creatures, our Lord Mohammed, and his family and companions, and preserve them." Three times they

proclaimed : " All who commemorate Thee are the mindful ; and those who omit commemorating Thee are the negligent."

Then they thrice repeated a thousand times : " There is no deity but God," counting the repetitions on the beads of the *Sebbah*.

As each thousand repetitions was finished, coffee was brought, and they rested a little. And when they had rested and refreshed after the third thousand, they cried out, a hundred times : " The perfection of God and His praise."

And they cried out another hundred times : " I beg forgiveness of God, the Great."

And then they cried out fifty times : " The perfection of the Lord, the Eternal—the perfection of God, the Eternal."

Then they repeated these words from the Koran : " The perfection of thy Lord, the Lord of Might ; exempting Him from that which they ascribe to him ; and peace be on the Apostles ; and praise be to God, the Lord of all creatures ! "

And some of them recited an *ashr* of two or three verses from the Koran, and then one *fikee* asked the others :

" Have ye transfered the merit of what ye have recited to the soul of the deceased ? " And they replied : " We have transfered it. And peace be on the Apostles, and praise be to God, the Lord of all creatures."

The sun was high when the *fikees* came out of the palace of Hoseyn Hassan, telling the multitude, still thronging the streets, that the spirit, being that of a martyr, was resting in the crops of green birds, which eat of the fruits and drink of the rivers of Paradise.

CHAPTER XXX

THE INVASION OF THE HUNDRED THOUSAND SENOUSSI

SIR FRANCIS VERE was suddenly called on to face a greater peril than had ever threatened a British general commanding in Egypt.

The news reached him from the watchful Sirdar at Khartoum, who sent an officer down to inform him by word of mouth, since the Egyptians were doctoring the telegrams, that the great Mohammedan *jehad* to sweep all the Christians in North Africa into the sea had broken out at last; that a force of Senoussi, which the native spies estimated at a quarter of a million, had left Jarabub and were marching down the old pilgrim route of North Africa, which passes close to the Pyramids, upon Cairo. The numbers were, of course, greatly exaggerated, but the Sirdar put them down at not less than a hundred thousand men, and he estimated that they would be at Cairo in a month. How so large a body of men were to find food and water seemed beyond the wit of man to devise; but the organising ability of the Senoussi, who had divided up the whole Sahara with rest-houses and wells, four-and-twenty hours apart, was extraordinary.

Instantly there was a panic among the foreigners, for the Senoussi had made it a condition that no Christian who would not embrace Mohammedanism was to be left alive in the country. That, and the right for the Senoussi to spread their doctrines in Egypt, were to be the rewards of the Desert Men for an expedition which must cost them many thousands of lives. The long march across the desert alone might cause more fatalities than a great battle.

It was easier to make preparations now that martial law had been proclaimed. Without that the General's orders might have been checkmated at every step by the action of this or the other Consulate.

The General's first move was to telegraph to England, announcing that a huge Senoussi army was marching on Cairo, and asking that an Army Corps might be despatched from home, and that every man that could be spared from Malta and Gibraltar might be shipped to Egypt at once. His second was to erect huts, and to utilise the agglomeration of buildings in the vast old Citadel of Saladin to receive the entire white population of Egypt, except those who could find refuge in the seaport towns, under the guns of the Fleet. The Copts, who chose to come in, were free to do so, but few were likely to avail themselves of the permission. Being Egyptians, most of them expected to remain unmolested; and those who were frightened, preferred to take refuge in the numerous little citadels, called *ders*,* all over the country, in which they had sheltered themselves from Moslem invasion and oppression for many centuries.

When once it was known that the Senoussi had started, the other white nations represented in Egypt prepared to support the English loyally. They formed legions to drill and fight; the Germans, most of whom had been in their army, being the first. The Italians, who, except the Greeks, were much the most numerous, made themselves even more useful in another way. They had an immense number of masons and navvies among them, as much of the building trade of Cairo is in their hands; these, in an inconceivably short time, walled in the huge space between the Citadel and the high ground on the Mokattams, which the Army were converting into a vast fortified camp. As soon as these walls were finished, they filled the whole space with huts arranged in streets, because it had become obvious that even the Citadel would be unable to house the multitude of refugees. This accommodation camp served the further purpose of guarding the communication between the fortress on the Mokattams and the Citadel.

The Greeks, whose probable attitude had given the General a good deal of anxiety, because they had many of them been Nationalists in politics, now began to display their customary faith in the success of the British arms by making gigantic preparations for provisioning the Army and the refugees.

* Literally "convents," but used of "fortresses" too.

He need not have doubted their intentions. The massacres of Tanteh and Nag-Hamadi had shown that supporting the Nationalist party was not sufficient to save the Greek grocers, and general store-keepers, from being murdered or frightened away by outrages, so that the mob might loot their shops. The Greek is not slow to take lessons.

The refugees were not to be received into the Citadel till the General fixed the date. It was not necessary, now that the foreigners were armed and organised. And there was a great deal to be done in the way of getting the guns and munitions out of the Citadel, and the various barracks, into the fortress on the Mokattams, which was the key of Cairo.

Should reinforcements not arrive before the approach of the Senoussi, the entire British force, as well as the foreign residents, would have to retire into the Citadel and the lines above it ; while the native population would rise and join the invaders.

Sir Francis had no doubts of his ability to hold the lines, till the landing of the Army Corps. The persons of the foreigners would be safe, and Egypt would have to pay for whatever damage it did to their property. It was the Egyptians who would suffer by the business of the country being brought to a standstill, even if they suffered nothing at the hands of their barbarous allies, and entered upon no military operations. But he was vindictive enough to hope that the wilder spirits among the Nationalists, who had been responsible for the numerous outrages of the past few months, would be tempted to try and storm the British position, so that he might teach them a lesson.

To Sir Francis, the person responsible for the lives of all the white Christians in Cairo, it might seem simple enough. Granted his reinforcements in time, he would move out and give the Senoussi battle, before they reached the city. If the British Government failed him, he would await the Senoussi here and defy their attacks till aid came. He did not credit them with having artillery of any value, and he had deprived the Egyptians of theirs. So he had no fear of not being able to maintain himself. But to the thousands of foreign residents in Cairo how different the prospect ! They were surrounded by five hundred and fifty thousand hostile citizens, and a country with a population of ten millions of Moslems, more or less implicated in the

revolt. A Little Englander Government was in power in England, a country notorious under the best circumstances for its backwardness in sending military aid. The most formidable Mahdist army ever known in Africa was marching on Cairo to help the Egyptians to rise. And they were compelled to linger on in their homes in daily terrors of risings, till the General should judge their state perilous enough for them to have to fly to the Citadel.

Providentially, the Nationalists were deprived of their best leaders, for Hoseyn Hassan, who from his sacred capacity could move them with a wave of his hand, was dead; and Stephen Considine was in prison. Mulazim Bey, egged on by Jeffery and Father Dwyer, who had so far eluded arrest, was terrible for working a mob into the proper state of frenzy for perpetrating a massacre, but he was not a man of sufficient education or parts to be able to conceive and carry out large concerted movements. Nor did he make any effort to get in touch with the distant Senoussi. But as the most influential leader among the huge insurgent population of the capital his powers of potential mischief were very great.

Moreover, the Egyptian army and police were with them, though the three Soudanese regiments in the capital, who had an ancient feud with the Senoussi, might probably be loyal to the Government.

When nearly half the time before the Senoussi would arrive had passed, anxiety culminated. Winston George and His Majesty's Secretary of State for War, though they had ordered the Aldershot Expeditionary Army Corps to be got ready, had not yet promised the General that it should be sent. It was not known whether they disbelieved in the urgency, or were afraid of their Socialistic supporters, or had so depleted the Army that it was impossible to send an Army Corps from Aldershot, till they had called up reservists, and requisitioned men from other stations in the United Kingdom. The situation was terribly grave. It was not expedient to move the regiments from Abbassiyeh and Kasr-el-Nil until the last moment. Therefore, to guard the huge front of the Citadel, the new Mokattam fortress, and the long lines between, there were only the Welsh Fusiliers, the half battalion of the King's Highlanders, and a few Gunners and Sappers. And most of these had to be sent up into the Mokattam fort, as that was the key of the city.

When word was given to the foreign residents to move into the Citadel and the accommodation camp, a great part of the Greeks and Italians, who were the very people that would have suffered least by the restricted accommodation in the Citadel, their own houses being small and unluxurious, refused to go. They feared the vengeance of the Egyptians less than they feared the loss of their property. They preferred to stay and defend that from looting. They had no great belief in indemnities, and for some years past they had been currying favour with the Nationalists. The Syrians and Levantines, who also preferred to stay in their homes, relying on their Arabic tongue and their intimate relations with the Egyptians, many of them, lived in splendid houses and in great luxury. With the exception of the Italians, however, the subjects of the Great Powers sent their women and children into the Citadel, and took over the guarding of the various parts of the city, in which foreign property was chiefly situated, with their legions.

The high functionaries, like the Consuls-General, had official quarters provided for them in the Citadel, and were requested by the General to move in at once. A *coup-de-main* against their persons might have serious consequences. To the General's great relief, the Khedive had already moved into his dilapidated palace on the Citadel. His presence was of immense value, since he took his Ministers with him, and thus, when the British Consul-General arrived, transferred the seat of the Executive to the Citadel. The Khedive was soon joined by the Ottoman Commissioner, who handed over his palace and gardens to the General to strengthen the approaches from the Nile Bridge.

The Khedive's principal residence, the Abdîn Palace, was given over to a strong detachment of the Soudanese regiment stationed at Abdîn, who were clamouring to be allowed to take part in the defence of the capital, from which they saw that they were being left out. The General began to appreciate their attitude at its proper value. He had seen so much of them in the River War that he knew their temper. Treachery was not what he apprehended from them. He had been sure that they would not mutiny against the English, though he had not been quite sure that they would like to fire upon their co-religionists. But he was confident that he could accept the assurances,

which they now sent him through their officers, that they were ready to fight for the British against the Mahdi of the Senoussi, and all who wished to help him, as they had fought for the British at the Atbara and Omdurman.

Their British officers reported that there was a feeling very like hostility between them and the citizens, because the Cairenes resented their having displaced the Egyptian regiments, and had been uncivil to them since they found that they were deaf to the emissaries of the Nationalists. The enthusiasm of the three regiments reached a high pitch, when the General visited them at their barracks to announce that they would be given charge of the barracks of the British regiments, and the latter be sent into the camp on the Mokattams. They took it as a complete vindication of their loyalty that they should be allowed to guard the barracks and the property of their British comrades.

It was a woeful day for the women and children in the Citadel when the British regiments from Abbassiyeh and Kasr-el-Nil retired from their barracks into the fort on the Mokattams. It was true that they had more armed men to guard themselves; it might be true, as the General said, that they ought to regard it only as the garrisoning of the impregnable fort on the Mokattams; but the fact for the refugees was that British regiments had been compelled to evacuate their barracks, which were at once taken possession of by native soldiers. The Soudanese inspired them with no confidence. In another two or three weeks the Senoussi would be upon them. Winston George meant to abandon them to their fate, as Gladstone had abandoned the noble Gordon to his fate.

Things were at their gloomiest when light dawned from an unexpected quarter. News came from Alexandria, which petrified them. The Mediterranean Fleet was there, and the Duke of Ireland, Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean, was on his way to Cairo with a strong escort of sailors.

The emotion of the refugees in the Citadel, foreign as well as English, was profound. Though he had brought no relieving force with him, the idea that the King of England's brother had come to join them in their peril showed that the Royal Family were not blind and deaf to it, if Winston George was. The Duke's reception as he rode into the Citadel on a Scots Grey charger, brought

for him by the Cavalry escort who went to meet him at the railway station, was such as even his brother the King had never received.

Tears poured like rain, as the band played "God Save the King," and the long lines of Infantry presented arms.

But the Duke had not only come to put heart into them by his presence. He had come in reply to the General's despairing appeal for reinforcements. Something warned him that the peril was genuine. He could not understand the deafness of Winston George; he had come to see for himself. He could grasp the danger only too easily when the General put the points before him, and ere the day was out had sent long and earnest telegrams to his brother the King.

Now it is an established principle of the British Constitution for the Sovereign not to interfere, except in a national crisis. But it seemed to His Majesty that this was a national crisis. The Premier and the Secretary of State for War and the Foreign Secretary were summoned. The King could not be answered with sphinx-like silence, or debating-society repartees. And, when they were compelled to act, instead of playing the parliamentary mountebank, the three Ministers were Englishmen at heart and men of sense. The Duke had his way. The Army Corps received its orders; the French Government were communicated with and gave leave for the troops to be despatched across France, so that they could be in Egypt five or six days after leaving Southampton; and the Duke had a free hand to send his whole force from Malta and Gibraltar.

As suddenly as he came, he departed. He could be of more use in Malta expediting the despatch of troops and material of war. Before he left he obtained from England leave for the Admiral at Alexandria to land a great naval brigade of five thousand sailors.

Those five thousand sailors were worth their weight in gold to the General. For they enabled him to fortify the positions out at the Pyramids, where he had to give battle to the Senoussi, while he was waiting for the regiments from Malta and Gibraltar, which would enable him to move the force out from Cairo to occupy the Pyramid fortifications. The Duke had promised him two regiments of Infantry from Gibraltar, four regiments of Infantry, four companies of Garrison Artillery, and some Engineers

and other units from Malta, in addition to the five thousand Blue-jackets landed from the fleet at Alexandria. When they arrived, Sir Francis intended to move out his own regiments, trained to the conditions of warfare in Egypt, with the sailors and the two Gibraltar regiments and the powerful Artillery from Malta, while the regiments from Malta and his own Artillery held the Citadel and the Mokattam lines.

The defence of the barracks was left to the Soudanese regiments, with small detachments of sailors to work the machine-guns, and assist the Sappers in throwing up defences.

At Abbassiyeh, where there was plenty of room, the fortifications had been a fairly simple matter; the difficulty there was the large number of men needed to line so extensive a front. The more important barracks, from the point of view of position, at Kasr-el-Nil, presented greater difficulties, for they were sunk below the level of the road and were in construction a mere palace.

Here it was not only a question of guarding military property, but of holding the bridge-head. To assist the British in doing this, the friendly Turkish High Commissioner had placed at their disposal his palace on the opposite side of the road, which stood on much higher ground, in a large garden with high, strong walls. The Engineers had opened up a wide subterranean passage, which they had found connecting this garden with the barrack yard, both having originally formed part of the same grounds. This was very useful, for it turned the High Commissioner's palace and the Kasr-el-Nil barracks into one position.

A fort had also to be constructed on Roda Island at the point where it is crossed by the new Nile Bridge, to hold the bridge. This, too, was garrisoned by sailors to work the machine-guns, and half a battalion of Soudanese.

The General viewed these positions with anything but equanimity. The force of Bluejackets he could spare for them was very weak, because he needed every available man to meet the Senoussi. He was trusting for the reinforcements he had so earnestly demanded from the Home Government, weeks and months before.

He had no fears for the well-entrenched little army on the Mokattams, which with its powerful artillery was safe from any attack that the Egyptians could bring against it; and beneath its guns no one would venture to molest the

Citadel, or the camp where the European refugees were collected.

With royal consideration the Duke of Ireland offered to take down under his escort to Alexandria anyone who wished to get away from Cairo. Most of the foreign visitors, who had been prevented from returning to their own countries, and many of the residents whose usual summer flittings had been interrupted by the unsafe condition of the railways, availed themselves of this courtesy. But Mr. Prestage, who sent his wife, felt compelled to remain with his commando, and Mrs. Krafft, who was bubbling over with courage as well as other things, persuaded her husband that this was a political opportunity not to be lost. Dan Climo, undeterred by his position as a Member of the British Parliament, was openly assisting the rebels.

As soon as the regiments from Malta and Gibraltar arrived, the General would take up his position with his main force at Ghizeh, covering the approaches into Cairo, both by the Roda Bridge and the Kasr-el-Nil Bridge. Before they could enter Cairo, the Senoussi would have to carry this position; he could, therefore, choose his battle-field. This he had already chosen, and as soon as his five thousand sailors marched in from Alexandria, set them to work to entrench it.

It was chosen with great daring. He took risks with an eye to the fruits of victory, as well as to the guarding of the bridges.

His main force was to be entrenched on the elevation occupied by the "Mena House Hotel." This was inevitable, because it stands at the head of the causeway on which the tram, his chief line of communication with Cairo, was laid, and the big hotel itself was invaluable for hospital and commissariat purposes.

But he also meant to have a strong force holding the Pyramids, which are connected with the "Mena House" by a single steep road; and a small force, with two of his most powerful guns, on the crest of the hill overlooking the Arab Cemetery by the Sphinx. This was a dangerous and isolated position to hold, but it guarded the left flank, and could inflict much damage on the enemy as he came up.

The key of the whole position was to be the great Pyramid, four hundred and eighty feet high, which has a

platform thirty feet square on its top; for here the General and the officer commanding the Artillery would have their posts for directing the battle. To protect them the sailors were to build a high breastwork of rocks and sand-bags. They had fortunately been able to commandeer, giving receipts for them, an immense number of grain-bags at the corn port of Rod-el-Farag, outside Cairo. These heavy weights, together with four machine guns and a huge supply of ammunition, were to be transported to the top by an ingenious hoist constructed by the sailors on the side of the Pyramid towards the Mena Road. Here, too, with the aid of two hundred Italian stone-cutters, they were to improvise a workable staircase to the top of the Pyramid and carry a telephone line from it to the main force at Mena. In addition to this, they were to rig up an aerial line from the Pyramid top to the main position, in case the base of the Pyramid became isolated, and the Senoussi had sufficient knowledge of modern appliances to locate and cut the buried wires.

To protect the Pyramids from isolation, and to secure the road leading from the main position to the Pyramid platform, a good deal of the latter was to be enclosed in a breastwork of rocks and sandbags, advantage being taken of the *mastabas* and various ruins scattered round the Pyramids. On the north side, where the *mastabas* were numerous, they would be of great value for machine-gun platforms, even these few feet of extra elevation enabling the guns to play on the enemy some hundred yards earlier, and to be used on either front.

The weak point in the position against an enemy like the Senoussi was that the ground on the side of the attack presented no natural difficulties, but sloped gently upwards; while the sides of the gullies which separated the three British positions were very steep, and in places precipitous; indeed, the back of the Pyramid plateau was so steep that there could be no retiring from it in the face of a rush by fanatical spearmen. But in the General's opinion the impossibility of retiring was more than balanced by the fact that the positions would be correspondingly difficult to rush from the rear, since it was almost certain that, in the progress of the battle, the two outlying positions would constantly be isolated by the flood of spearmen.

The greatest difficulty of all with which the General

had to contend was his ridiculous paucity of numbers. To destroy a force of a hundred thousand superb desert fighters he would only have a tenth of the number; the other four thousand men were required to hold Cairo, where a large proportion of the five hundred and fifty thousand Egyptians were Nationalists, and not many of the rest disposed to take any active part in resisting them.

In case of a disaster at Ghizeh, the lives of all the Christians in Egypt, except in the cities which lay under the guns of the ships, depended on the great entrenched camp on the Mokattams, which, well fortified, well watered, well supplied with artillery, ought to be able to beat off the attacks on itself and the Citadel, made by an enemy without heavy guns, until a relieving force could arrive from England or India. As all the guns in Egypt, except those at Ghizeh and Alexandria, and immense supplies of ammunition were contained in the camp and Citadel, Sir Francis considered it absolutely necessary to have two of the regiments from Malta in Fort Mokattam, and two in the Citadel, with the local company of Garrison Artillery, and some sailors to help them, divided between the two positions.

This left him with the bulk of the sailors, with his own three regiments of Infantry, his regiment of Cavalry, his battery of Horse Artillery, the half battalion of Highlanders the Sirdar had sent down from Khartoum, the four companies of Garrison Artillery from Malta, and the two regiments from Gibraltar. Taking the Infantry regiments each at nine hundred strong—which was rather over the mark—and the Cavalry at six hundred, he might be considered to have a force of about ten thousand combatants. But the grim Sir Francis never doubted of the expediency of waiting for the Senoussi at the Pyramids and forcing them to give battle.

The hill overlooking the Sphinx, having a comparatively small top, could only be held by a few companies of soldiers, and the sailors who would haul up and serve the two big 4.7-in. Naval guns.

On the Pyramid platform a much larger force would be disposed. The top of the Great Pyramid itself, where the General and his staff were to stand, was to be held by a force of sailors chosen for their trained agility. It was of the highest importance, because it commanded a view over the desert for several miles, an advantage not to be

exaggerated, since the desert is so undulating that when you are on its own little hills, you can only see a few hundred yards; and is so full of depressions that large bodies of men, skilled in taking advantage of this kind of cover, could creep up to within a few yards of you undiscovered.

Being on the Pyramid top would be almost like having a balloon for observation, and would double-treble-quadruple the zone of machine-gun-fire.

The machine-guns on the *mastabas* might, of course, be very much exposed to the rifle-fire of the enemy, and it was known that the Senoussi were well supplied with magazine-rifles. But Sir Francis was old in desert warfare, and he reckoned on the Senoussi firing wildly or neglecting their rifles for spear-rushes; and, even if his machine-gunners suffered severely from their rifle-fire, this would be more than balanced by having the machine-guns playing on their solid columns so many hundred yards earlier.

A large force of the General's own infantry, and a force of sailors, whose handiness was of incalculable value in working such a position, would hold the Pyramid platform.

The main position round the "Mena House Hotel" and the permanent camp would be of a more ordinary nature. Fortification was a comparatively easy matter with rocks, and an unlimited supply of grain-bags to fill with sand. Here would be the four companies of Garrison Artillery from Malta with their eight six-inch howitzers and smaller guns. And here would be the rest of Sir Francis's own Infantry, the two regiments from Gibraltar, and the rest of the sailors.

CHAPTER XXXI

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE REFUGEES IN THE CITADEL

THOSE were great days in the ancient Citadel of Saladin. Once more the ruler of Egypt was inhabiting the palace of his famous ancestor Mehemet Ali; and he was showing himself a ruler.

He had now frankly thrown in his lot with the men who were trying to secure his throne for him. This meant much. For there were still a great body of Egyptians loyal to his house; and, when they saw him going round with the British officers, examining the defences and inspecting stores, they worked as few but the Egyptian can work at a pinch.

His presence was valuable for another reason.

Lord Clapham's impulse had always been to do nothing himself, and not to stop others, unless they placed themselves in his shoes by asking him to give them permission to act. He was growing more impracticable, for he was afraid that any force he showed would be put down to private vindictiveness for the loss of his son.

While the General was out at Ghizeh superintending the fortifications of the Pyramids, non-military questions often arose which could not be settled by the officer left in command of the Citadel and Fort Mokattam. And Lord Clapham would have been incapable of immediate decisions. But His Royal Highness Abbas Hilmi II. was business-like and sensible, and ready to give any decision or order. They felt his absence severely on the day when he drove out to the Pyramids, with an escort of Greys, to see the lines, which the British had thrown up there to force the Senoussi to give battle.

The Khedive had always been noted for his royal graciousness, and he used it now to every British officer whom he passed working to save Egypt from the new

Mahdi; and sometimes when he passed a group of the ladies who were taking refuge in the Citadel. He admired the fine spirit of the English ladies, who bore themselves with such good heart, and believed in the stalwart General as if he had been an angel from heaven: who used to assemble in hundreds to cheer him when he rode away with his little escort in the morning, and when he reined his charger up at night. The Khedive, and his Egyptian Ministers, were often there to take leave of and receive Sir Francis.

There were few Englishmen in the Citadel except the soldiers; most of the others who had not left with the Duke of Ireland, were organized into commandoes, and remained on guard in the city. But one who stayed in the Citadel was that naturalized Briton, Mr. Krafft, looking strangely out of place among the sheltering women with his keen, capable, resolute Jewish face and tall, strong figure. Mr. Krafft was no fighting man; perhaps that was the reason why he had made the move from Hamburg, which had been blessed a hundredfold. But he had seen enough of the Egyptian question to know now that, to use his wife's phrase, he had not been backing a winner.

The Senoussi might be able to sweep all before their mighty host, and establish for a brief period an Egyptian Parliament in the capital of a country, which was not to retain one Christian within its borders. But it could not last. It would only mean fresh armies from England, and the total subjugation of the country. And for the moment the spectacle was particularly dispiriting. The Khedive and all the leading Egyptians were in the Citadel taking refuge behind British artillery and bayonets. And the sacred cause of Egyptian Independence, about which he had spoken with much feeling in the House of Commons, depended for its realization upon the lowest elements in the population of Cairo, who were waiting for the aid of the barbarians of the Sahara to kill the foreigners, against whom they had not the stamina to revolt alone.

It was a constitutional *evolution* that he had hoped for, an awakening of the English people to the liberation of Egypt. This *revolution*, if it succeeded, was going to begin with a relapse to barbarism worse than anything in Ismail's evil days. The poor-spirited Mr. Krafft, deceived by his wife, despised by his adopted fellow-countrymen,

had one point in his favour—the courage of his convictions. He had been willing to go to any lengths as a Little Englander. Now that he had changed his mind about Egypt, he wished the world to know it. There were other ways in which he could do England more good than by serving her as a volunteer, as there had been ways in which he could do Germany more good than by serving her as a soldier. He wrote to *The Times*.

The situation in Egypt, he said, had entirely changed. And he proceeded to give a picture of its condition, painted in the lurid colours, which distinguished his parliamentary compositions. It affected the judgment of the British Premier as nothing else could have. He knew that Mr. Krafft was not a jingo.

Dan Climo remained unregenerate. He did not come into the Citadel. Now that the control of the Committee of Independence was entirely in the hands of Red Revolutionists like Mulazim Bey, Father Dwyer and Jeffery, he was welcome to their councils, held in some secret place in the Arab city, which the British General had been unable to locate.

Sir Francis had occupied the entire Independence Building as soon as martial law was proclaimed, in spite of Mr. Considine's well-meant efforts to confine the search to his own flat. In the store-cellars of the American Hardware Trust he had found a good many thousand repeating rifles of the pattern with which the Nationalists throughout the country had been armed; and these, and the ammunition discovered with them, had enabled him to arm the entire force of foreigners who had enrolled themselves in legions to support the British authorities.

An Anglo-American commando, formed of visitors in the "Savoy" and "Semiramis" hotels, and the business men with offices near them, had unanimously chosen Mr. Prestage as their colonel. This was doubly useful, because Mr. Prestage had secured the horses from the various hotels and livery stables, and had more than half his commando mounted. There were plenty of good riders among the visitors. Mr. Prestage had the huge gratification of his commando's being employed by the General in a variety of ways to eke out his scanty force of Cavalry.

The finest compliment he received was from Dan Climo, when he and his commando galloped out and dispersed a Nationalist mob which Climo and Mulazim were inciting

to destroy the Coptic churches in Old Cairo. Climo was captured, and, as he was being made to get into an *arabeah* to be escorted to the Citadel, the impertinent little man said, "'Ullo, Colonel Presteege, you've found your job at last !"

And so he had. The fine horseman, riding at the head of a hundred armed gentlemen into the Citadel Gates with his prisoners, looked like a professional soldier in mufti, rather than a retired manufacturer and Member of Parliament from the Midlands. It was a quaint turn of the wheel of fortune which made him the Colonel, who captured Climo as a rebel in arms.

Kennedy was left to represent the General at the fortifications out at the Pyramids when Sir Francis rode home at night—he always rode, partly to spare the horses of the escort, half of whom were Prestage's Horse, partly because he noticed strategical points more on horseback, than when he was being whirled along in a motor. Otherwise Kennedy must have seen something of Lucrece, for she was staying with the Veres.

Here was an even quainter turn of Fortune's wheel. The beautiful daughter of the arch-rebel, who had created this wide revolution, which was setting half North Africa aflame, night by night waited, as impatiently as Lady Vere herself, for the splendid martial figure of the General, who had to meet the storm, to ride up. They waited at the gate of the quarters which the Colonel of the Fusiliers, who acted as Governor of the Citadel in times of peace, had given up to the General. Lucrece felt herself sorely in need of the magnetic presence of the man of battles, who came back every night with the heart of a boy from his anxious tasks at Ghizeh, like the great Sir John Chandos in her favourite Froissart. For at times her trouble seemed almost greater than any woman could bear without seeking her own life. Her lover, so young, so beautiful, so romantic, the saviour of a nation, the heir to a name unequalled in the world, was dead, slain by the hands of her own father. Her father was in a common prison awaiting his trial as a murderer; he had not taken life in the cause of freedom, but in the cause of retrogression and prejudice. But in the cause of freedom, as he saw it, he had started a conflagration which could only be quenched in the blood of thousands, if the whole land of Egypt were not ravaged with fire and sword by the invad-

ing army, because a people within a people, the whole white population of Egypt, was to be massacred or banished for ever from the land whose prosperity it had created. Was any Parliament worth all this bloodshed and banishment and destruction? She doubted it now. But when it was a question of a Parliament of Oriental amateurs and adventurers replacing the firm British rule, which had made Asia and America and Australia flower with peaceful and prosperous nations, she had come to think that it was wicked to cause so much suffering, to create so much danger to try the experiment.

She would be no party to driving the English out of anything. The more she saw of them the more she admired them. And their generosity was beyond comprehension. Here was she, the daughter of their arch-enemy, the daughter of a criminal, given a refuge in the home of their General, and treated by him and his wife as if she had been their own daughter. And they trusted her so! They observed no secrecy on the situation before her. She was as free to go into the General's office, as Lady Vere herself.

Lucrece had no desire to betray them. So convinced was she that her father was wrong that she prayed night and morning for the success of the British arms, quite apart from gratitude to the only intimate friends she had on this side of the world, except Mrs. Krafft, if she could be called a friend.

She saw her father daily. He was in the military prison in the Citadel. The American Consul had avoided international friction by handing him over to Sir Francis as a person whose safe custody, during the crisis, was necessary to the security of the community. He knew that the English would not stand in the way of his trial in the American Consular Court, when the invasion was over.

The General's power was absolute under martial law, and he allowed Lucrece to see him for so long each day. He even offered to waive the presence of a third party; he had complete confidence in Lucrece's honour. It was at Lucrece's own request that Lady Vere always accompanied her. For Lucrece knew her father's Jesuitical casuistry about keeping faith with the British; and she feared that, if she saw him alone, he would try and use her for the conveyance of communications to Dwyer and Jeffery, whose influence over him she detested.

Whatever his wishes were in this direction, he made no attempt to pass any note to her. He seemed content to be touching her, or touched by her, all the time she was with him. He seemed to derive pleasure from the presence of Lady Vere, though it was enforced. He asked his questions about the state of the country from her. Perhaps he felt that she would only tell him what it was legitimate for him to know; that it was unfair to run the risk of making his darling Lucrece, for love of whom he had committed that awful deed, indiscreet.

What his fate would be did not seem to trouble him; his cheerfulness and serenity on that score were amazing. The most amazing thing of all was that in his will, made in prison, he named Major-General Sir Francis Vere, K.C.B., commanding the British Army of Occupation in Egypt, his sole local executor. Sir Francis did not demur after Mr. Considine had pointed out that it was to secure Lucrece's future.

Mr. Considine was much interested to hear of the British preparations to defeat his Senoussi allies (of the fortifications of the Pyramids, and the reinforcements, which were on their way from Malta and Gibraltar). He asked and heard about them as he might about history past a hundred years ago. One day he even prophesied the defeat of the Senoussi. "My plans have miscarried," he said; "I had forgotten Malta; and my having to execute Hoseyn Hassan has dislocated the machinery here. Mulazim is only a *corner-boy*."

For two or three hours after she left him Lucrece was always in despair and misery. The shadow of the gallows was ever before her eyes. His cheerfulness seemed to her like laughter at a funeral.

For though she forced herself to reciprocate the kindness which was lavished on her, now that the Veres themselves had set the example of taking off the ban, and won hearts all round with her sad gentleness, she thought of her father all day, and far into the watches of the night.

Stephen Considine had been so much more than most fathers to his daughter. He had filled her whole horizon. He had lavished care and liberality and companionship on her. He had asked nothing but that she should love him, and make him proud of her. He had never been her master. He had been more like a lover giving all without taking.

And the two, though they enjoyed the entertainments of Society, had been very self-contained in their home life. Lucrece, in the enjoyment of their companionship, had hardly noticed the boycott.

And now the magician who had created all this for her, lay in prison on a charge for which death was the only just sentence.

It was awful ! it was terrible ! it paralysed her mind whenever she thought of it. She spent hours and hours in her own room almost numbed, though she exerted herself to please, when she was with the friends who had been so good to her.

The day Sir Francis had finished directing the fortifications at Ghizeh, and came back early to await telegrams from Malta, which were delayed for hours by a hitch in the cable, she took advantage of his being unoccupied : she always stayed with him as much as she could ; his presence had a mesmeric effect upon her in her awful depression. She suddenly asked him :

"Will you have to . . . ?" The words stuck in her throat. But the General knew what she meant.

"I ? Thank God ! I shall have nothing to do with it. The crime was committed before martial law was proclaimed."

"But will it have to be done ?" she persisted.

"I think that there is no chance of it."

"Oh, why ?" she asked, with a dazed smile, which proclaimed that the news was beyond her hope, too good to be true.

"You will forgive me for saying that I do not admire American Courts of Justice. In a case like this, I think they would be almost certain not to do their duty, if their duty involved their condemning an American citizen for murdering an alien, in carrying out what you call the Unwritten Law, but which we call by a harder name. They have never got beyond the Backwoods stage, where morality can only be enforced by assassination."

"It cannot seem so dreadful to you as it does to me, who am responsible for it," she said, in a voice so low as almost to be inaudible.

"But there is the further element of Arab custom to be considered here. And, according to Arab custom, the murder would be justifiable. An Arab would have done the same thing in the same case, and the relatives

of the murdered man would not have felt aggrieved. They would have considered that he had brought it on himself by a deliberate transgression. No doubt your father's lawyer will introduce this into his plea."

When the telegram did come, it announced that the Malta regiments were starting, and would be with them in two days, and the Gibraltar regiments a few days later.

The moral effect of the arrival of the Malta reinforcements upon the Cairenes was very great. Arabs are no better than other Orientals at calculating the numbers of an army or a crowd. Already, as it seemed to them, sailors innumerable—it might be twenty thousand for all they knew—had crowded in, and were surrounding the Pyramids with endless fortifications. And here were more soldiers than there were in the whole Cairo garrison arriving, shipload after shipload of them, and pouring steadily across the country into Cairo. The railway between Cairo and the ports was thoroughly safe now.

And the numbers were multiplied in the minds of the population, because, as the new regiments marched into the Citadel with bands playing and colours flying and their baggage trains, the old regiments marched out to Ghizeh with similar pomp and circumstance. The Khedive was present on each occasion.

Yet, when all had arrived, there were only fourteen thousand British soldiers and sailors to hold Cairo in the face of a hostile half-million, and to defeat and break up a Senoussi army, which could not be put down at less than a hundred thousand men.

CHAPTER XXXII

HOW KENNEDY ESCAPED FROM THE SENOUSSI

KENNEDY was a child of the wilds, and had the accomplishments of his kind. One of these was a practical knowledge of astronomy, which enabled him to find his way by the stars with the ease of a Desert man.

When it became known that the Senoussi were actually on the march, the General had inquired among his officers for any one possessed of this knowledge; it was uncertain what Arabs could be trusted in the case of a holy war. He was equally astonished and pleased when he found that he had one on his staff.

In consequence of this, Kennedy found himself with a Cavalry patrol at a Coptic monastery, a few hours from Ghizeh, which was on high ground over a dried-up bed of the Nile, and commanded for miles a view of the Darb-el-Hadj, the old pilgrims' road from the Oasis of Siwa to Mecca.

This was the road from Jarabub along which the Senoussi were bound to come.

The monks had been churlish, and denied the British soldiers admittance. They refused to believe that there would be any invasion at all; even if there was they had no doubt of their ability to defy it. Their thick lofty stone walls had stood many sieges from Arabs; and as they had magnificent wells and plentiful supplies of grain, they could hold out. There was nothing for it but to send a party of R.E.'s to blow the gate in with dynamite. As the gate was only four feet high, and closed by rolling two huge millstones together, this was a task of some difficulty. But it was done and the stubborn monks were ejected. Inside the walls there might have been an earthly paradise, if the habits of Coptic recluses were less filthy, for besides the church and monastery and a citadel, or block-house, where the siege

provisions were stored, to which the monks could retire as a last resort, there was a fertile old garden, there being abundance of fresh water drawn up from very deep wells with *sakkiyehs* worked by oxen.

When the monks were turned out, they mounted their asses, and rode off to warn the other monasteries farther out in the desert, not against the Senoussi, as might have been imagined, but against the English. The Sappers repaired the gate roughly to guard against surprises by the emissaries of the Senoussi, taking care to make it high enough to be used by horses.

It was here that Kennedy, and the scouting party to which he had been attached, found themselves on the fateful morning.

They had rolled themselves up in their blankets on the roof of the block-house. It was impossible to sleep anywhere inside for vermin.

It was Kennedy's custom to make the sentry wake him just before dawn, so that he could be ready to sweep the horizon with his glasses as soon as there was enough light.

As the gold, which heralds the Egyptian dawn, welled up from behind the distant Pyramids of Ghizeh, it reflected its glare on the dried-up *wady*. Kennedy remembered Lord Clapham explaining how the Nile itself had flowed along that *wady* in the Tertiary period (and how he had wondered what the Tertiary period was), when he and Sam Page had been discussing a camel excursion to the Oasis of Jupiter Ammon. Now he saw the *wady* under a new aspect. For he was face to face with a spectacle, which told him that he was to see history being made. He could not have conceived anything so glorious. He felt as if he were a Crusader with the armies of Saladin before him. Far as eye could see, the *wady*, and the brown hummocks of the desert on either side of it, were filled with hosts of men, broken by so many banners, that it might have been a Bairam of all the Mohammedans in Africa. At first, men and banners were dark and blurred, but as the light grew stronger, he could see that all these thousands of warriors were in white, and that their banners were white, though stained, as it seemed, by the sunrise.

Instantly he aroused the rest of the patrol, and while they were saddling up, he used the first rays of sunrise

to heliograph to the signalling officer on the Pyramid that the enemy were in great force, and so close that he must retire. He had hardly time to ask them to keep an eye on him and send out supports, when he was called down. Saddling was only the work of a few minutes. The horses were led outside, and the patrol hastily mounted and rode off, leaving their blankets and other impedimenta to their fate.

Before they started, Kennedy and Dalgleish, the Scots Grey subaltern in charge of the patrol, surveyed the advancing host carefully through their glasses; then Kennedy saw that what he had taken for the stains of sunrise on the great white banners were inscriptions in the fantastic beauty of Arabic writing—green, red, black, violet, gold and blue,—doubtless mottoes from the Koran.

The head columns were by this time not more than a quarter of a mile away, and the whole of the vast host was marching at a pace that no large body of European Infantry could have kept up. They had scouts and patrols out in front of them in a way that suggested a European drill-master, and emirs in splendid *jebbas* were galloping round the commandoes. The two British officers judged, from the length of the front, and the distance of the horizon over which fresh troops were still pouring, that the Sirdar had not exaggerated their numbers when he put them down at a hundred thousand men. From the gleam of steel which flashed all through the Army, as the sun rose, there seemed to be a preponderance of spearmen, and there were an immense number of camel-men. The Senoussi are famous for their swift camels, with which they do marvellous forced marches across the desert. They did not appear to have any artillery or much baggage; it was indeed marvellous how light they were travelling, considering that they must have been nearly a month *en route*.

All of a sudden they saw the little knot of British Cavalry, and a roar went up from those thousands of savage throats more appalling than the prelude of an earthquake. It curdled the blood of the Englishmen, brave men as they were. Simultaneously a commando, two hundred strong, of Senoussi Camel Cavalry, which were thrown out in front, doubtless for chasing any enemy who might be sighted, started in pursuit of them. The Englishmen lost a good deal of ground in getting down

to the pilgrim's *darb*, which they expected to be safer than the desert in matching horses against camels. They knew that it had a hard surface, for its sand is full of fossil-wood and curious concretions, and largely consists of the gravel and grit of harder rocks, while on the desert, right or left, they might strike a soft patch where the camel, with his broad pads, would not be incommoded, but the horse would sink in six inches at every step.

Once on the *darb*, they drove in their spurs and dashed off at a furious gallop. There was more than their personal safety at stake; the information they could give the General might seriously affect preparations for the battle.

On came the camels. Even the *darb* was in places woefully against the horses. The Senoussi were obviously gaining, and they were armed with rifles from which they kept up a desultory fire. It was awful to contemplate what would happen if man or horse was severely wounded. But perhaps the rifles were bad; it was more than likely that the Senoussi were indifferent shots; and shooting from camel-back is, from the motion of the animal, very difficult. Providentially no one thought of giving the rifle a fair chance by dismounting half their number to shoot; and so they dashed on, hardly a hundred yards separating the pursuers from the pursued.

As the Dragoons galloped grimly on, they called it their ride before breakfast. For they had had no time for bite or sup before they left the *der*; and the time at which they should be reaching Ghizeh, if Providence spared them, would be in English breakfast hours. If Kennedy had not used influence to get transferred to the other battalion, he would have been doing his duty to chops and fish and bacon and eggs in Edinburgh Castle; he could almost smell them as he thought of them. He did think of them, and it was better that he should think of them than of the merciless savages who were so few yards behind them. He and Dalgleish discussed the ideal breakfast as they galloped along. The only thought they gave to the three vast triangles which towered in front of them, so black and mysterious against the morning sky, was that safety lay behind them.

And so they galloped over the brown splintery sand, till they were less than two miles from the Great Pyramid; then the pleasant home chat came to a sharp end, for one of the horses put his foot in a hole and broke his leg,

throwing the trooper heavily to the ground. Had there been time the man could have been picked up and remounted behind some other trooper, if he was not too dazed to hold on, or thrown across a saddle-bow if he was. But that would have meant a suicidal fight with the Senoussi only a few lengths behind. If the man was to be saved, there was only one way to save him, and Kennedy saw that in a flash. He sang out the orders to halt and dismount, and make their horses lie down for a breast-work, one of the tactics which are so beautifully executed at Olympia every year in the Military Tournament. The surprising thing was that they were able to execute it in war, with only a few minutes' grace. They succeeded, and dragging the dazed man in beside them, pulled out their rifles and lay down to fire.

An ordinary man's spirit might well have sunk at the prospect. The odds were heavy against their having half an hour to live. No one knew this so well as Kennedy. But his spirits rose; he liked fighting better than flying, and, when bullets were whistling round, to kill his enemy was his idea of escape.

His men caught the infection; his courage fired them; they believed in his star; they knew that he had seen the worst fighting in the Boer War.

The camel-men were not armed with spears, or it might have been all up with the Dragoons. Many Arab saddles were emptied by the magazine-rifle fire at that short range. The Senoussi were staggered for the minute, nor are camels trained to charge.

The camel-men saw their disadvantage, and flinging themselves off their camels as quick as rabbits, crouched behind rocks and rises, using their own rifles against the Englishmen, who lay under cover of their horses.

Then a horse was hit, and the poor brute endangered all their lives with his kicking, and prevented them from protecting themselves with their rifle fire. Aiming was impossible. The Arabs took the cue, and directed their fire at the horses. They were too successful; they killed them outright; the rifle fire grew steady again, but two or three of the soldiers were hit as well.

The end could not be far off; Kennedy took the pistol from his holster, and determined to use his last shot on himself rather than fall into the hands of the Senoussi alive.

But they heard the clatter of hoofs in the distance,

and they knew that the General had seen their need, and launched a squadron of cavalry, though they did not see how it could do anything except avenge them, if the Senoussi knew their business.

But the God of Battles was on their side. The Senoussi camel-men, to whom fear was unknown, were ill-trained in the use of rifles, and had no other weapons but daggers and pistols. Given the spears, or the two-handed swords, which they had been bred to use, they would have rushed the little zariba of dead horses in a minute. But with rifles they had no idea except to keep cover, and go on firing till they fluked a hit. And, while they were doing this, across the desert thundered the grey horses.

The camel is not an easy beast to mount; few Senoussi saw their danger in time to get mounted and be in full flight. The Greys armed with the lance ran some of them through as they hid behind the rocks, and others as they were mounting. Even the men who succeeded in mounting were an easy prey, if they overtook them; an upward thrust in the thigh was as good as a run through the body.

But while the cavalry were cutting up the Senoussi camel-men, and aiding their fallen comrades, they did not see their own peril. A dense column of two thousand spearmen had run at full speed to cut them off, and were on them.

A shower of spears emptied several saddles. Extinction was staring them in the face, though not a man in the squadron acknowledged it, because their blood was up. The trumpeter sounded for them to form up. The stout major, who pirouetted in ball-rooms and gorged at gargantuan feasts at Cairo, was the worthy descendant of the officers who led the "Scotland for ever" charge at Waterloo. As soon as the men had formed up, he gave the order to charge. The little knot on the Pyramid saw a sight that is seldom seen in war, but is the finest of all sights in the gladiatorial combats of nations—the impact of unbroken horsemen confident of victory against unbroken infantry equally confident. By all the rules of war the cavalry should have been annihilated.

But the result showed what it is for even the bravest of infantry, masters of hand-to-hand fighting, to meet a resolute charge of cavalry without a machine formation. Hardly anybody was killed for a minute or two, except those who were struck on the head by the hoofs of the

horses ; scores of Arabs and quite a few of the Greys were flung on the ground by the tremendous shock of the charge. Everyone was dazed. For that minute or two men, especially those who had fallen, groped as if they were in the dark. Even then there was hardly any fighting where the spearmen had stood so stoutly to receive the charge, for it drove the centre of the column yards and yards backwards. It was as they recovered from the shock that the Arabs, pushed out by the horsemen, commenced a deadly hand-to-hand fight. Those who had rifles forgot them, except where they could thrust their muzzles against a Dragoon or his horse.

Some hurled their spears with deadly effect, some stabbed with them. More formidable, where they could get their sweep, were the great two-handed swords, which hamstringed horses or slashed their riders nearly in half ; but providentially there was little room. The Dragoons replied with short sharp lance-thrusts and revolver shots, but most of all with their horses. The beasts, maddened with their wounds, needed little spurring to make them plunge forward, through and clear of the spear-men.

It was all over in a minute or two ; the Dragoons had shaken themselves clear, and ridden the distance to reform for a second charge. The sight would have staggered men not so brave, not so infuriated ; already their comrades who had fallen were all hacked to death, and many of the men who had fought their way through were reeling in their saddles from gaping stabs and sword-cuts ; the slashes on the horses were even more appalling, for they showed in all their nakedness. The fat major was wonderful. His presence of mind was so swift, so steady. While the men, who had been unhorsed in the charge, and had fought their way through by some miracle, caught the horses whose riders were dead, and who had charged through by themselves, he fell out and dismounted the wounded men and horses, and ordered such of the dismounted men, as could, to draw their magazine rifles and pour a heavy fire into the spearmen, while he formed up the rest on the right for a charge. As soon as the rifle-fire, withering at that close range, had staggered the Arabs, the trumpeter rang out the charge, and the Dragoons were on them again, this time almost unhurt, riding over and spitting the shattered footmen. As the spearmen recovered and the hand-to-hand fighting was

renewed, the Dragoons were ordered to spur out of the *mêlée*, and re-form for a third charge.

Splendid as had been the result of the charge, the danger was only increasing, for fresh columns, as heavy or heavier, were running up to reinforce the Senoussi; and many Dragoons and horses were down; and the horses, which were uninjured, were spent with the two furious charges.

Still they re-formed for another charge against the column which was approaching. They had reined up on a little rise a few hundred yards to the right of the road. In the second charge the Arabs, quick to learn lessons in hand-to-hand fighting, had opened up lanes for the terrible horses to go through, slashing at their riders as they passed, but doing little damage and suffering principally from the hoofs of the horses.

It was for this reason that the Dragoons were carried further away from the road by their charge; it proved their salvation. As they were forming up for their third charge, there was a loud explosion over the spot where they had been a few minutes before, and a rain of shrapnel fell on the heavy column of spearmen. Explosion after explosion followed. The charge had taken the Dragoons out of the line of artillery fire for the advancing columns, and the officer commanding the artillery had detected this body in close formation. He had the range exactly; the range to all prominent objects had been taken.

Each shell as it burst made a long lane of dead, sometimes forty or fifty men going down at a time, so close was the formation. They seemed dazed for a short time by the terrible effect of the shell fire. Even in these few minutes they had half their strength killed and wounded.

When the shells began to fall the stout major drew out his glasses, and coolly swept the ground of the charge, and the column of spearmen under fire. Of the soldiers who had fallen nothing was left; that was certain; he could see the vengeful tribesmen hacking them to pieces with their great two-handed swords, while the shrapnel was tearing up their column; and he could have done nothing to save them, had they been alive, while the artillery fire was going on. But, sad as this made him, he knew enough of savage warfare to be certain that not one of his wounded would have survived the charge.

by a minute. The tribesmen, fighting individually, finished off every man, who went down, even during the *mêlée* of the charge.

But the men they had come to save were safe, and as soon as the artillery fire began, left their zariba of dead horses, and bearing their wounded comrades, made their way to the squadron. Enough riderless horses had answered the trumpet-call to re-form for all who could ride to have mounts, and the wounded men were mounted behind them, strapped to them by buckling two belts together.

Then the major, having accomplished the purpose for which he was sent, gave the order to retire.

His men were bitterly disappointed; they had hoped that the artillery would suspend fire for them to cut up the disordered spearmen. But the major, though he knew how disappointed they would be, remembered his duty. The General needed every man of his Cavalry. They were only six hundred when they left Cairo; and here they were in the way of the Artillery; so the retreat was sounded and the Dragoons, less by a score or two, retired on Ghizeh.

A volley of spears followed them, but fell short; the broken spearmen had too great a respect for them to attempt a chase.

As soon as he was remounted, Kennedy turned his glasses on the punishment the artillery had dealt the spearmen, who were now rapidly scattering. It reminded him of the awful day when he fought in the Highland brigade at Magersfontein.

As they neared the straight dark lines in the sand, which meant the cannon-lined earthworks of our Army, the major cried out, in the same cheery, zestful voice with which he called for a long drink after a polo-match: "Now for breakfast." There was not a shade in his voice or his demeanour to show that he had just gone through as terrible a peril as war can offer. "Will you join me?" he said to Kennedy.

"I'm afraid there's no breakfast for me, sir, till I've been up the Pyramid, and made my report."

The major shook his head and laughed. "There isn't, really. But don't lose heart; they can give you a drink of water up there, they've got several barrels; and the General—yes, I think the General will have a flask."

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE GREAT BATTLE OF THE PYRAMIDS

As Kennedy mounted the alfresco stairs, which the sailors had made up the great Pyramid, two at a time with ease, and thought of the day, but a few weeks ago, when he had been so hard put to it to mount at all without the assistance of two Arabs, it seemed to him typical of the crooked being made straight and the rough ways smooth.

As he neared the top he caught sight of the majestic figure of the General, standing stark and straight, with his glasses behind his back and a cool smile on his face, looking as if he had caught the rock-like qualities of the Pyramid on which he stood. He had made his dispositions, and was waiting for the battle to begin, like a great batsman waiting for the first ball to be bowled.

Then Kennedy's spurs clinked against the masonry, and he turned round.

His expression changed to one of deep seriousness as he came forward with outstretched hand. "Thank God, you pulled through, my boy! There's not an officer in Egypt I could less afford to lose than you. It would be like losing my own son. You did have a narrow squeak. News? Have you got news for me?"

"Nothing more than I heliographed, sir; except that I am convinced that there are a hundred thousand of them."

"In full motion?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good," said the General. "Hawkins!"—a corporal sprang to attention with clicked heels and a crisp salute—

"Yes, sir."

"My sandwiches and my flask for Captain Kennedy."

Then he turned to the Colonel commanding the Artillery, which was now silent—the thinned column which had

fought the Greys had disappeared in the hummocks. "It won't be for long, this forced inaction, Creagh; Kennedy, here—my assistant-intelligence officer says that there are a hundred thousand of them in full motion."

"It's a bit better than Malta, General," was the Colonel's grim reply, given without relaxing his gaze through his Zeiss's at the white blurs on the distant brown.

Then he lowered his glasses, and, looking the General hard in the face, after he had given a warm greeting to Kennedy, he asked, "Mayn't I let go now, sir? I could get them with the howitzers, as well as the 4.7's."

"Better wait; they may have some renegade white with them; and, if we give it to them too hot, before we've got them on toast, they may make a big circle for the bridges and give us a lot of trouble. We must chance their rushing this platform; I think my Infantry and the Sailors can give a good account of them."

The element of risk had not occurred to the Artilleryman; he was thinking how ideal the conditions were at last for testing in war the soundness of our fire-control.

But he saw the point of the General's reasoning. The English positions were carefully chosen and fortified, and it was important that the myriads of Senoussi should dash themselves against the chosen positions, instead of detouring right and left: the inundation lands were too dry to present any difficulties. So the English held their fire; and the Senoussi came on till they reached the white-washed rock which marked the three-thousand-yard zone.

Kennedy, munching his sandwiches and taking an occasional pull at the whisky and water in the cup of the General's flask, was more than ever amazed at the grandeur of the sight. Perhaps it was that the sun was higher and the great elevation gave a sweeping view of the whole desert for ten miles round, so that more of the great host, advancing with so many banners and such speed, over the sand-hills was visible; perhaps it was that the Senoussi were now moving forward with the proud consciousness of victory.

Without doubt it would seem a victory to them. That they failed to annihilate the patrol they despatched their camel-men to destroy; that those camel-men had been destroyed as a unit; that the great columns of spear-men sent up to support them had been cut up with shrapnel

counted for nothing. The point for them was that the proud British Cavalry, which had charged out against them, had fled back to shelter behind the guns.

The Desert men came on magnificently, but presently they mystified the General, and showed that they had cool heads among them, for when they reached the point where they had encountered the artillery-fire, their columns broke up into long lines, taking advantage of every undulation in the desert.

It was as if a miracle had happened, as if the Earth, their ancient mother, had opened and swallowed them up to save them from the storm of bullet and shell which the armies of the alien were waiting to rain on them. The desert was restored to the silent and solitary reign of the three great Pyramids, and the mysterious monster which had been their neighbour for fifty centuries; to ruined temples and tombs, which were there before Jacob came down into Egypt visiting his son, the Vizir Joseph; to the little hills, the blanched rocks, the drifting sea of sand, and the one modern intrusion, a cemetery for Arabs.

But the resources of British artillery were not exhausted. Its commandant was only waiting for the word of the General.

It was given, and instantly the officer in charge was hard at work with his *director* and *field plotter*, and signalling to the officers at the guns. For he had three different lines of fire to control. The smaller guns came into action first, searching the rises with their shrapnel three thousand yards away, where the nearest commandoes were advancing in long lines of skirmishers. These were mounted at intervals along the front of the main position and the Pyramid platform. The long lines of wicked yellow flashes looked deadly, and the fire was well controlled, but the open formation of the Senoussi was so effective that every man who fell cost at least one shell. The General was an Artilleryman, but he had been so many years in Egypt that the latest methods in controlling the fire of guns from a distant height were rather a surprise to him. The officer at the *director* took his observations, and signalled to the officers with the guns, who, from the angles and ranges sent them, were able to drop their shells with almost mathematical accuracy, though the gunners were behind rises, which shut the places they were aiming at entirely out of view.

The next line of fire staggered for a moment even the fanatical Senoussi. For the eight great howitzers tossed their shells into the air as far again as the line of guns whose yellow flashes they saw, and there was not one fresh flame to show where they came from, for they were hidden behind the fortifications of the main position. The precision with which they were worked was beautiful. The principal line of march was the Pilgrim's Way itself, which the officers had measured and mapped. Here heavy columns of spearmen were coming along one after another with the regularity of a review day. This gave the Artilleryman his chance of using time-shrapnel from the eight howitzers with great effect, some shells bursting close up and making great gaps, while others mowed down long lines of men. At that distance the most powerful glasses could see no more than the falling of camels or a dark gap when one of the big shells laid low a hundred men.

The Senoussi showed their judgment once more by breaking up their columns into skirmishing lines. And then the Artillery gave their last counter with the two long guns on the left, which opened fire on the Senoussi centre, nearly six miles away. But there were only two of them, and the Senoussi would not budge for their fire.

The howitzers, and the smaller guns in line, did not diminish their fire when they no longer had the solid targets of men to mow down. They changed to the searching fire, for scattered skirmishers and sharpshooters in trenches, which is their normal work. The Senoussi still moved on as steadily as if they were to be irresistible, but the artillery-fire, though it killed so few for the number of its costly projectiles, was not without great effect. For to savages there is all the difference in the world between creeping along under cover and rushing in leviathan masses. The having to acknowledge danger diminishes their *élan*. However, the Senoussi were not ordinary savages; they were barbarians in their fanaticism and blood-thirstiness and hatred of everything European or Christian; but they were passing from the savage stage, as warriors, when they could advance in open order without losing their self-respect as braves.

And so the tide of battle rolled onwards to the Pyramids. The General took his cue from their intelligence. They were within a mile now, but the sputter of the machine-

guns had not yet begun, though a continuous roar of rifle-fire was added to the thunder of the artillery, for still the Senoussi kept their skirmishing order. Then it seemed that they had discovered a weak point in the General's calculations. The second and third Pyramids had not been included in the British lines on the Pyramid platform. The second Pyramid was so large that it meant much sapper-work and many men to include it, but their being undefended gave the Senoussi the chance of reforming their heavy columns; for the Pyramid of Mycerinus and the Pyramid of Chephren came earlier on the slope than the Great Pyramid; the gentle incline of the Pyramid slope on that side was perfect for rushing tactics.

The General, it was true, had not thought of the second and third Pyramids being used as a position for reforming, but he had the excuse that he had never expected to compel the Senoussi to break up into open formation.

The omission at first seemed formidable, for the open lines that converged on the Pyramid of Chephren came round its angle in tremendous columns, which flung themselves on the irregular fortifications of the Pyramid platform, choosing the weak spots with unerring military instinct. They came round with a wild rush, and delivered their attack before they had been much weakened by the fire, which made the sands of the desert splash up like hail.

But they were met with fine coolness and resolution. As the vast mass, dark-faced, white-gowned, with its array of broad banners blazoned with texts from the Koran, streamed round the corner, the order was given to fix bayonets; and soldiers and sailors climbed on the banquette, which had been thrown up along the inner face of the breastwork for the purpose, to pour in their rifle-fire and receive the charge. At such a range the magazine rifle-fire was murderous, and now the machine-guns of the line were brought into action for the first time, and mowed the Senoussi. But there were so many of them, and the distance was so short, that bayonet and spear met on the top of the breastwork. However, the spears were not sufficiently numerous, and the attack died away, the survivors darting behind ruins, meaning to creep back behind the other Pyramids, and reform under cover of the attacks which followed. Yet the advantage was in a way with them, for the British had not a few casualties

in killed and wounded in those minutes of hand-to-hand fighting. When the attack was at its worst the machine-guns on the Pyramid could not be used in repelling it; their own men were in the line of fire.

Then the advantage swung round. Divining that the Senoussi would repeat these tactics, the General prepared to smother their attack. A word to the artillery commander, and orders were given for half the howitzers to drop their shells just over the second and third Pyramids, where the Senoussi were reforming into columns. It was a magnificent sight to see the bursting shells dropping over the mountain of stone, four hundred feet high, which had been built by a Pharaoh five thousand years ago, with the precision of the place-kicks in an international football match. One could guess what a shambles they must fall into, for fresh columns of Senoussi, though not with the numbers and dash of the first, continued to pour round the sides of Chephren's Pyramid, those on the right directing their attack on the main position, which had been revealed to them by the rifle and machine-gun fire poured on the flank of their first attack. Then the two machine-guns mounted on the Great Pyramid began to be effective. They played on the Senoussi columns just where they emerged from cover with deadly effect.

Sir Francis saw that the Senoussi understood the effect of modern weapons, and war tactics, far better than the Khalifa had done at Omdurman. For when they observed the combined artillery, machine-gun and rifle fire, with which their first attack on the main position was met, they attacked no further in that direction, fanatically brave and contemptuous of life as they undoubtedly were. Nor did they press any further attacks home on the Pyramid platform for the present, but flung all their columns, as they came into action, on the little force which held the hill above the Sphinx.

The scene now became indescribably grand and awful. Kennedy could see the appalling results of the shell-fire from the big howitzers, whose powers he had boasted to Mr. Considine on that first day that Lucrece came to the Citadel. A brief signalling made the gunners swing round their fire and direct their shells over and past the Great Pyramid on to the attacking Arabs.

The attack was conducted with a skill worthy of a European commander; though it seemed impossible for

the Senoussi, in the face of that artillery-fire, to have a commander-in-chief stationed sufficiently near to direct the rapid changes in their attack.

For they found a line of advance for their heavy columns which was not exposed to the musketry, machine-guns and small quick-firers of the main position, and not very open to any of the machine-guns on the Pyramid platform, except those on the Pyramid top.

When their full attack was flung on it, the little isolated force to the left kept its head; its rifle and machine-gun fire was excellent. But neither it nor the artillery-fire could prevent frequent hand-to-hand encounters on the breastwork, in which the numbers of the defenders were woefully thinned.

The General saw that their being overwhelmed was merely a question of time, and prepared for a bold stroke to withdraw them. He could fortunately make his dispositions, behind his fortifications, unobserved by the Senoussi.

"This is too hot to last," said a Naval Lieutenant named Cumberlege, as a fresh and heavier column of Senoussi dashed out from behind the Chephren Pyramid, and, leaving its swathes of dead, where the machine-guns on the top of Cheops's Pyramid played on them, flew up the slopes of the 4.7 hill.

"Old Frank'll sec us through," said Aylmer cheerily.

"He'd better make haste," growled the sailor, though he was noted for his courage.

"Eyes front!" said Aylmer—and on came the Senoussi, greater numbers than ever getting through the ring of rifle and machine-gun fire to the hand-to-hand fighting on the breastwork.

Aylmer and Cumberlege were like men inspired, cheering on the little garrison in the *mêlée*, though they felt that every moment the thread might break. For it was only one-deep now, and there were many gaps of a yard; and, if once the Senoussi could push in between them, they would double up the line and everyone would be massacred. Aylmer knew that it could not last; that the fate of the disciplined few is sealed when the wedges of the barbarians drive in between. But the gentle Aylmer's Irish blood was hot with the joy of battle, and the men, Royal Irish or Jack Tars, were too full of the lust of fighting to see their impending fate like the officers who were directing them.

At that moment Aylmer's little Soudanese servant, who had crept into the *zariba* with him, touched him on the shoulder.

"What is it, Abdou?" he said impatiently. "I must fight."

"See here, *Khawaga*."

Aylmer looked, and saw the most blessed sight he had ever seen in his life. From the gully at the back of the Great Pyramid fifteen hundred bayonet—Grenadiers, and the rest of his own regiment—were forming into line; then the bugles sounded the charge, and round between the Sphinx and the hill swept the men in khaki, with their streak of steel so straight and bright.

"It's the Regiment, boys!" cried Aylmer to the Rifles on the hill; and those Irishmen fought like demons. Each man felt that his prayer was heard, though few had prayed. And the stern Senoussi wondered why no fresh spears were coming on.

They never would come! The column of fresh spearmen were learning the old lesson that Cæsar's legions had taught the heroic Gauls, the might of a mechanical formation. And before they felt its weight they were shattered by the volleys poured into them by the Infantry as they halted to close their ranks for the charge. The great two-handed swords bit deep; one full stab from those broad spears and all was over. But the bayonets shot out, drew back, and shot out again, swift and sure, and the bayoneters were in a serried line, each guarding and supporting his mate.

Once more the superiority of the strong Western man over the strong Eastern man in the play of cold steel was shown. The Oriental, content to die, faces certain death from rifle and gun fire with a composure whose magnificence the West has never rivalled. But the Westerner, eager to live, bayonets with a desperation, before which the Oriental, careless whether he lives or dies, goes down.

In a few minutes the Senoussi were utterly broken and flying across the desert. But the vengeful bayonets had only pursued them a few yards, when the bugles sounded the "Halt!"

The men stopped the pursuit with the precision of a machine, and reforming into line, poured deadly volleys into the flying Senoussi, while the sailors on the hill, as ordered by signal, removed the sights and locks and spare

parts from the two big guns, and harnessed themselves to the machine-guns. Then the Rifles slung the small-arms ammunition boxes on staves between two men; and all doubled down the hill, behind the Infantry drawn up on the plain by the Arab cemetery, and on to the Pyramid platform, where hundreds of willing hands helped them to haul the machine-guns over the breastwork.

When the Senoussi, routed by the bayonet charge, found that they were no longer pursued, for a moment they tried to reform; but it was hopeless under the fire of the machine-guns from the Pyramid top.

While they were advancing to the charge, Mr. Considine's opinion of Grenadier officers would have been modified considerably if he could have seen them. His *bête noire*, Captain Wemyss, was a transformed person; among all those gallant soldiers and sailors there was hardly a more typical fighting man; he looked so big, so strong—a Scottish bull. Foppish little Frenchy de Grammont and the boy Polkinghorne were showing their breeding by their state of exaltation. And the fastidious Lavender was cool, collected, and looking after his men.

As soon as the relieved garrison were safe, the bugles sounded for the Infantry to retire, but an extra strong column of spearmen had dashed out in the hope of overwhelming them, and retreat was impossible till these were defeated.

The machine-guns rained on them, but on they came.

To save casualties, as they were to receive instead of deliver the attack, both regiments formed squares—the Grenadiers, having double the numbers, were a hundred yards in front of the Rifles, in echelon, so that the two squares were corner to corner, and the Senoussi, if they attacked the weaker square, would be in an angle of rifle-fire.

The choice of the formation was providential. If they had been in line, both regiments would have been overwhelmed in the great Senoussi trap.

Down below the Pyramids, on the east or Cairo side, there is an Arab village. Its inhabitants all sympathised with the Senoussi; led by the guides, the Senoussi had, in the night before the battle, sent round twenty thousand spearmen to ambuscade in the tall crops of *dhurra* and maize, higher than a man's head, which were growing on the lands lately inundated by the Nile. It was a

masterly stroke, for the whole plain was covered with crops and they could dash out from any point they chose.

Their idea probably was that the little British army would be driven out of its positions, and have to retreat on Cairo, when the spearmen, catching them on the march, could annihilate them. Or if the British resistance proved too stubborn for this, they could certainly cut their communications with Cairo, and perhaps gain possession of the bridges. What savage would imagine that the guns on the Mokattams could sweep the approaches to the Nile?

When the Senoussi saw that they had driven the English out of the hill above the Sphinx, the signal went round, in some mysterious Oriental fashion, that the army in ambush was to be launched from the rear on the two regiments which were out in the open.

The order reached them when the regiments were still in line, and the Emir in command was about to give orders to fall upon the unsuspecting Infantry, when the English suddenly changed their formation into squares. He was bitterly disappointed, but the advisers who were with him pointed out how to turn it to advantage.

Now, when the English were wound up to the highest pitch of excitement over saving the two regiments, was the time to surprise the Pyramid platform. The advisers had glasses, and could see that the battle was being directed from there. It was the key of the English position; when that was taken, even if the General escaped by flight, the English order and discipline would be gone, and they would fall an easy prey to the overwhelming numbers of the Senoussi. A small column had already seized the abandoned Sphinx Hill, and was turning its guns on the Pyramid. The English seemed to have left in such disorder that they had forgotten to take away or destroy the ammunition.

It cut the sailors to the quick to abandon the ammunition, till the grim Cumberlege suggested that it was worth its weight in gold, to keep the Senoussi within the range of the machine-guns, while they dragged the huge 4.7's, which were quite useless without their locks, round and turned them on the English, and hunted about for the missing parts.

All eyes were on the captured hill and the defiant squares, when suddenly the General's telephone ceased

working. Kennedy, who had the trumpet at his ear, instinctively rushed to look at the place where the wire went down to the ground. He saw a vast multitude of Senoussi swarming over the breastwork at the back, and some of them at the foot of the stair which the sailors had constructed up the Pyramid.

His cry brought the General. Without waiting for orders, the sailors ran out the two spare machine-guns from the shelter to bear on the rear.

They swept the Senoussi off the breastwork, but a weakness which must prove fatal was revealed. As the approach was so steep and on the side away from the Senoussi march, no serious attack had been anticipated. It had not been noticed that the breastwork which had been erected prevented the machine-guns playing on a rush from this side, until the attackers were actually on it.

The cutting of the telephone wire, when the first man reached the foot of the steps, showed what intelligent savages the English were called upon to meet. The artillery commander blessed the General's forethought in providing the aerial wire from the Pyramid to the main position, for he had to swing round half his howitzers to play on the crops, from which the Senoussi ambuscade was issuing.

The fire was not, however, very effective, and the risk was imminent. For the moment there was nothing to stem this rear attack on the Pyramid but the rifle-fire of the soldiers and sailors brought off from the hill above the Sphinx, who were still on the Pyramid platform, and were despatched across it at top speed to meet the Senoussi. Men could not well be spared from the front, where rifle-fire was needed to crush the columns advancing from the other Pyramids to attack the Infantry out on the plain.

It was true that the Highlanders were doubling up from the main position, but the Senoussi had to be held off till they came, or the whole garrison of the Pyramid platform, except the handful on the Pyramid top, would be rushed.

Almost half of the little band of Rifles and Sailors were down, killed and wounded, when the reinforcements arrived. Then it was the turn of the Senoussi. Kennedy, in attendance on the General, and unable to stir from his side, was burning with envy as he watched his brother officers leading the rush of Highlanders, the whole half-

battalion, nearly five hundred strong, who tossed the Arabs back with their bayonets and then poured a withering fire into them; while the squares, when the attack on them had died away, in obedience to signals, reoccupied the hill above the Sphinx and enfiladed the rear attack.

At the same time the machine-guns in the main position were shifted to the extreme left and enfiladed them from the other side. Misfortune pursued the Senoussi, for the General, noticing that the shells set the crops on fire, and that a strong east wind was blowing, used his howitzers to fire the crops three miles to the east, starting a terrible conflagration, which drove the Senoussi out like vermin to the westward, where they were caught between three fires now, and threatened with annihilation.

Then a most extraordinary thing happened. They hoisted a flag of truce in the orthodox European fashion. As it enabled the General to make his dispositions more secure for surrounding their force, he had no objections to parleying even if it was a ruse. But it was no ruse. The Emir in command and his two advisers came up over the breastwork, and were conducted up the improvised stairs to parley with the General at the top of the Pyramid. The Emir and the General saluted each other with grave politeness. Sir Francis had been long in Egypt and knew both the forms and the language of Arabs well.

"What have you come for?" he asked.

"To surrender."

The terms were soon arranged: the remnants of this army of twenty thousand of the *élite* of the Senoussi were required to stack their arms in one place, and then to go and seat themselves on the desert, as close as they could pack, under the muzzles of the machine-guns, which could sweep them off the face of the earth if any treachery were attempted.

The advisers proved to be Germans, who spoke excellent English. They were not in any way ashamed of the position of being the organisers of a Mohammedan invasion to extirpate the Christians in Egypt. Military organisation was their profession. They evidently thought that if their own consciences permitted it, there was no reason why they should not enter the service of the Senoussi. They were prepared to risk their lives, as the events of the day had shown.

The General had strong opinions about renegades, but

recognised the justice of their standpoint. He made it, however, a condition that they should remain prisoners in the English lines ; they were so evidently the brains of the attack. The dash for the General's position, the cutting of the telephone wires, must have been dictated by them.

For the Emir, on the other hand, the General conceived a profound respect. He was an Arab gentleman, and a magnificent specimen of the Desert warrior. It might have been a captive Saladin talking to Richard Cœur de Lion, so frank was the chivalry with which the two warriors treated. And it showed how far the Senoussi, who had given ample evidence of their willingness to die with the finest fatalism of Africans, had travelled along the road of civilisation.

"I am weeping for my children who die in vain," said the Emir, not referring to any offspring of his loins, but to the thousands of intrepid Senoussi who were strewing the plain.

"I also weep," said the General ; "they are too brave to die like ants trodden under the foot."

"Like ants trodden under the foot!" repeated the Emir in a low voice, bowing his head ; "like locusts blown into the sea."

Then he was silent for several minutes, and the General, knowing the Desert men, was silent too, waiting for him to speak. Under the Great Pyramid at the back, all the Emir's host was silently standing to arms. And the Englishmen, facing them from the Pyramid platform and the main position, talked in low tones as they covered the beaten warriors with rifle and machine-gun. Not a shot was fired.

But the two regiments standing on the hill of the Sphinx and occupying the entire ridge, as they were too numerous all to go into the breastwork, had changed their front, they were pouring a careful rifle-fire into a fresh horde advancing from the west, for their ammunition was nearly spent and they were reserving it to fire as the rush came up to them, when every bullet must tell its tale. The guns which could bear on that side, were raining on the advancing spearmen, who held on with torn ranks till they reached the sheltering depression below the hill. There they closed up again into their fighting column and charged at the British entrenchments.

The General turned to the battle, and the Emir took up his position beside him to watch the fortunes of the day.

His eyes dilated with surprise, for he saw nearly the whole British force on the Sphinx hill move clear of the entrenchments, and form in two lines at the top of the slope as the Senoussi reached the bottom.

The redoubled yells of the warriors, as they saw their prey delivered into their hands, were heard even above the roar of the rifle-fire, and the crackle of the machine-guns on the Pyramid top, and the mingled roar of small arms and artillery below.

The eager spearmen dashed up the hill, and were within fifty yards of the British when the soldiers fired ten devastating volleys, and then, as the magazines of their rifles were empty, and the spearmen were broken and reeling, charged and cut them to pieces.

The General knew the effectiveness of such tactics, but had given the original holders of the hill orders against it. With so few soldiers in his command, and all hostile Egypt to hold, it was his business to avoid casualties. In this charge providentially there were few, so completely disorganised and taken aback were the Senoussi.

Then the bayoneters went back to their position, signalled to the General that they had only twenty rounds of ammunition per man left, and prepared to use them up to complete his victory over the Senoussi behind the Pyramid, whenever the order to commence firing again came. But to their surprise a train of light desert-ammunition-sand-carts, harnessed to sailors, dashed down from the Pyramid platform, though there were several thousand Senoussi within so short a distance of them at the rear of the Pyramid. The Senoussi made no sign, and, in answer to their query, they learned by signal that these Senoussi had surrendered. Before another attack could come from the front, the sailors had emptied the ammunition-carts and retired with them.

When the attack drew away, the General turned to the Emir, and said to him in Arabic, "Excuse me—I was obliged—to attend to these affairs."

"A man's work is his life," said the Emir.

Then he took his leave with grave dignity and prepared to descend to carry the terms of surrender to his men.

They gave a further proof of their civilisation, com-

pared to that of the Khalifa at Omdurman. If they would have shown any quarter to a British force in a similar position who can say? At any rate they knew the rules of civilised warfare, and knew that they were beaten; for they obeyed.

The banners and the arms were stacked where they surrendered. The prisoners were then required to march round the Pyramid fortifications and seat themselves under the machine-guns of the main position, which were comparatively little engaged, as the Senoussi had, early in the battle, abandoned their attack in that direction.

As soon as he had settled his men, as stipulated, the Emir-in-Chief entered the Pyramid fortifications at the nearest point, and was conducted back to the General with every mark of respect by Kennedy, who had been sent down to meet him.

When he had reached the top of the Pyramid, and he and the General had exchanged a long salutation, he said, "My brother, can you trust me?"

The General replied, "I trust you; speak on."

"Am I free to go and confer with the Senoussi Prophet?"

A smaller man than the General would have reflected that the Emir had seen the key of the British defences, and would have suspected treachery. The General did not suspect it; he disarmed it. He led the Emir round the little observation post at the top of the Pyramid, and pointed out the extent and strength of the British lines; the numerousness and powerfulness of the guns.

"Tell es-Senoussi what you have seen," he said. "When will you return?"

"An hour before the darkness, and perhaps earlier."

Sir Francis waited till the next attack had died away; then signalled the "General cease-firing," and gave orders that the Emir was to have a safe conduct. He despatched him on a horse, so that he might be behind Chephren's Pyramid before a fresh attack forced the firing to recommence.

"Come without spearmen when you return," he said, "and show a flag of truce."

The attack was long in coming this time. So long that the commander of the artillery suspected treachery, and suggested sending scouts north and south to see if

the Senoussi were attempting to outflank them, and reach the river higher or lower.

The General was loath to believe it ; he had a high opinion of Arab honour, in men of the type of the Emir. He was willing to stake his reputation that Sir Desmond Creagh was wrong ; it was the Colonel's first experience of Arab warfare. But Sir Francis could not afford to neglect any precautions ; and in a few minutes Mounted Infantry scouts were galloping north and south—the Senoussi attack had been from the west, and Cairo lay behind them, to the east.

“ I think they've had enough of it, Creagh.”

“ Too good to be true, sir.”

“ Or they may be waiting for darkness.”

“ That's more like it, sir.”

“ How much can you do by searchlight ? ”

“ A very limited zone, as a rule, sir—not more than about two thousand yards. Perhaps a little more here, because I've made a note of the distances where the fire tells most. But we couldn't hold that Sphinx hill by night. The searchlight wouldn't play on the clever approach these chaps have found out.”

“ Well, I'm sure I hope they won't try. I think we can account for them ; but it is so difficult to keep down the casualty list, when these Desert people press home an attack by night.”

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SENOUSSI

Two hours passed and now it was early afternoon, the hottest part of the day. The men had had a good meal, and were thanking their stars that they had no marching to do under that sun; all hands were talking of the most inconsequent things to pass the time, when the Mounted Infantry, who had been scouting to the north, galloped in to say that a large Senoussi force were making for the river through the palm groves. Shortly afterwards the General, now doubly on the alert, saw masses of dirty white streaks moving towards the Nile by the south, near the Pyramids of Abusir.

"Shall we let them have it, sir?" asked Sir Desmond; "they're not out of range and they deserve it."

"No. We couldn't smash them at that distance, and we might head them off. Carmichael!"

"Yes, sir," said the signalling officer at his elbow.

"Just helio to the O.C. at Mokattam to be on the look-out for these people, but not to open fire without asking me if I'm ready."

"Yes, sir."

"Then I think we shall see something," he remarked, looking into his cigarette-case against hope, to see if he had one left.

Kennedy handed him his case; it was quite full.

"I forgot about it, sir."

"Bless the boy," said the General. He had smoked three or four to eke out his patience, when he said suddenly: "Do you see that, Creagh? I'm glad I hadn't any money on it. And yet I'd have sworn."

The dirty white streaks had solidified into two huge dirty white discs now, one marching straight on the Roda Bridge, and the other on the Ghezireh Bridge.

The General tossed his cigarette away. "The numbers are up," he cried. "Send that helio to the Mokattams, Carmichael. The moment we get their reply, let 'em have it, Creagh."

All the General's coolness was gone now; he was as excited as a boy.

So was Colonel Creagh. He saw the General's idea. This day was to be the apotheosis of the Royal Artillery.

The whole remaining force of the Senoussi was caught between two fires. The artillery at Mena and the Mokattams flung tons of shells into their solid masses. The General would have given a King's ransom for four regiments of Cavalry; he had but one and was bound to husband that. But leaving the sailors to act as a reserve and guard the positions—they were the flower of the Navy, not to be replaced without years of training—he launched his Infantry, with machine-guns, in two equal forces right and left, to ambuscade the routes which the Senoussi had just traversed, and by which he expected to see them retreat. Then he sent the longed-for commands to Bigge, now Major of the Horse Artillery.

The Senoussi long disregarded the merciless artillery-fire with African fatalism. They had been defying it since dawn; the bridges, still intact and apparently unguarded, invited them to fling themselves into Cairo, where the population were waiting for their support to rise and overwhelm the British. In spite of the way they were being cut up by the terrific artillery-fire, they pressed on to rush the Roda Bridge. But no sooner was the bridge packed with them, than masked machine-guns swept it as clean as if they had been in the muzzle of a gun. Even the Senoussi, reckless in their religious exaltation, saw the impossibility of essaying the passage of that bridge again.

The Artillery were gradually annihilating them; there was but one thing left for them, and that was to fly back to the depths of the desert, where white troops could not follow them. And now that they were once in flight, the voice of prudence spoke louder. Instead of marching in the solid bodies which made such a mark for the artillery, they opened out into skirmishing order, till the heads of the columns seemed to be getting out of the zone of the gun-fire, which almost died away. They were

nearing the ambushade, and the General had a purpose in slackening his artillery-fire. The Senoussi fell in with his desires, and tightened up into their favourite phalanxes like those used by the great Alexander, who visited their oasis twenty-two fiery centuries ago.

Those who marched north were the first to suffer the rude awakening. For the palm groves, in which the ambushade was posted on that side, were nearer the river than the Abusir ruins in which the ambushade was posted on the south. The rifle-fire with which their heavy columns were assailed at close quarters was more deadly than anything they had faced, except the sweeping of the machine-guns on the bridge of Roda.

It was impossible to proceed against it, and to go back was to become food for the Artillery.

But there was a road to safety of a kind, and they took it. A remnant of them broke away north under a terrific fire from the Infantry. They fell by scores at a time; but even if they had not been men born without fear, they had been running the gauntlet of a murderous gun and rifle fire all day. What did it matter if there was a little more or a little less, when safety lay at the end of it?

On the south, too, a few thousands dashed through the rifle-fire from Abusir and reached their camp by *détour*, the Senoussi Mahdi among them.

But the southern force suffered terribly, for they had to move through the open desert, and Bigge was there with his guns, running such risks with his neck, as he had never taken in all his dashing days on the polo field, as he galloped over the heavy and uneven surface from point to point, to try and head off the flying Arabs.

He did not succeed, for they meant to get past if they lost half their men. But he took such wild risks that two of his six guns were *hors de combat* before he had finished; one had gone through the roof of a gloriously-painted Fourth Dynasty tomb, whose existence had never been suspected, and the other had slipped into a little pit and turned turtle. Most of the horses of both guns were so frightfully injured that they had to be shot; he himself had two terrible falls and broke half his ribs while he was galloping with one eye on his guns and the other on the Senoussi. The polo champion was picked up to go on with the chase; the guns were left for the sailors

to haul out next day. Four were quite enough—even they were hardly wanted.

The great army of the Sahara, which had marched in at dawn a hundred thousand strong, was *in being* no longer.

It had melted like snow at Rome, which, fair and white at dawn, has disappeared into the brown before the hot sun sinks, leaving *débris* indescribable behind it.

But the *débris* of the Senoussi was human. More thousands than had ever fallen together in Africa were lying piled about the Pyramid field of Ghizeh, and on the banks of the Nile between the two bridges. There were little mounds of their dead in such places as round the hill by the Sphinx. The ground was strewn with mutilated bodies, like the broken rocks on a Sicilian mountain side. There seemed to be one at every yard. The only direction in which the eye could rest without falling on those heaps of white dyed red, was the British main position, where there had been no direct attack. The ghastliness was increased tenfold by the white in which the whole Senoussi army was attired. The ensanguined white was more terrible than a lake of blood.

When the remnant of the Senoussi broke through north and south, the General signalled that the regiments were only to harry the fugitives with rifle-fire. They were not to pursue. The Senoussi who had escaped still outnumbered them vastly, and were capable of being very formidable, if the soldiers lost their formation in the excitement and difficulties of a desert pursuit. So many hundred more Senoussi casualties made little difference on such a day; but to keep his army intact was all important.

An hour after the Senoussi main force had reached their camp, the envoy Emir arrived back on the horse that had been lent him. A glance told the General his story. He was in chains, and seated with his face to the horse's tail.

A smile of honest pleasure spread over the General's face, mingled with anger at the indignities which had been offered to a brave man.

The Senoussi had kept him a prisoner until their manœuvre was executed, lest he should inadvertently betray their plans. When the Senoussi Emirs first heard of his surrendering his army, they clamoured for his head to be struck off. But the Senoussi Mahdi decreed that as he came on a borrowed horse and had given his word

to return at a certain hour, Arab honour demanded that he should be back at the appointed time.

The Senoussi who had escaped, he declared, were already making a forced march for their homes. They had recognised the strength of the British arms, and were disgusted; because, when they marched to the very gates of Cairo, not one shot was fired by the Egyptians to help them; no diversion was attempted in their favour. The Nationalist leaders had told them that the whole country would rise to help them, if they made an invasion in force. If their battered army had been received into the city, it could have recovered itself, and the insurrection of Egypt might have succeeded. But the cowardly Egyptians had never struck a blow when the time came, and the Senoussi washed their hands of them.

An armourer was sent-for to strike the Emir's chains off. While they were waiting for this there was much to be arranged. Only two hours of daylight remained. In the first place, there were thousands of prisoners, and many thousands of wounded, on the hands of the British, far more than the entire number of the British force.

The wounded were the principal difficulty. Defeated Dervish forces have always fraternised readily with their British conquerors, when they have found that neither death, nor bonds, nor torture, nor starvation were to be their lot. They have done more than submit cheerfully; they have enlisted in the conqueror's armies. The piled arms of the surrendered Senoussi had already been taken into the British lines. The Emirs commanding the various units in the army of prisoners had been brought into the British lines also, at the time of the surrender, as a matter of courtesy, which incidentally was a precaution.

Then the General, for a very good reason, decided to send under escort to the Citadel of Cairo. The unwounded rank and file he offered to take into his service for transport and camp duties during the campaign.

When their commander made known to them the magnanimous terms of the conqueror, that they were to receive no punishments; that food and shelter would be found for them; that they would not be asked to fight against the co-religionists for whom they had begun the Holy War; that they would receive pay; and that, when the campaign was over, any who chose would be free to return to their homes, all thought of treachery fled from

them. They were the faithful and sincere servants of the British.

They were soon, under their minor sheikhs and headmen, busily engaged in the work of chief importance—the carrying of the wounded into the Bedouin village, and the removing of the corpses from the neighbourhood of the British positions. For food and shelter they were to be quartered on the treacherous Bedouins, who had led them to the British rear. It was a punishment for treachery and the easiest means to hand. A great number of prisoners were quartered in the native town of Ghizeh, on the banks of the Nile, to bring in and attend to the wounded, who had fallen in the march on the bridges.

On the next day, with spades commandeered from the villagers, they were to commence burying the dead, which might take a week. They were to choose their own site for a cemetery, not less than two miles from the Pyramids and the Mena House; they were given permission to have any funeral processions they desired. British officers with strong escorts were sent to the various villages to arrange the quartering of the prisoners and the preparations for the wounded; and every species of surgical aid which Cairo could supply was heliographed for. "Twenty thousand Senoussi wounded to be cared for," was the General's laconic message.

Except the English doctors at the head of the hospitals, the staffs were rotten to the core with the Nationalist conspiracy. But there was no fear of difficulties being made. The Egyptians would be burning with curiosity to hear the details of such an Armageddon.

The officer in command of the Citadel received a helio as laconic.

It ran: "Senoussi Army, about a hundred thousand men, destroyed; inform Khedive and Clapham; arrange for a hundred prisoners; send six furniture vans."

The first helio to the General in the fortified camp on the Mokattams was not so long:

"Senoussi Army destroyed—small remnant in full retreat."

CHAPTER XXXV

KENNEDY'S NIGHT RIDE TO THE CITADEL—THE PROPOSAL OF LUCRECE

THE next twenty-four hours were without parallel in the history of Cairo.

As soon as the darkness fell, numerous Pyramid Arabs made their way into the city, crossing the Nile in rowing boats. Arab-like, it was their first idea to make money out of the news. With a fine impartiality, they carried it to the British Commanders in the Citadel and the Mokattam camp; the Nationalist newspapers; and Dimitri's *café*.

No one had been more eager for the success of the Nationalists and the Senoussi than these graceful persons, with charming manners, who speak English so admirably, and are so tender to European ladies. They had done their best to accomplish the downfall of the British by guiding the captured army to form the ambushade in the rear, from which they had so nearly succeeded in rushing the Pyramid position.

Now they recognised that the game had become very complicated, and that fresh treacheries were required.

As for the battle, there was nothing for it but to tell the truth. That could not be concealed many hours, and would only be saleable immediately. They reported that there were about fifteen thousand prisoners; that the proportions of killed and wounded and missing were not known; but that, out of a hundred thousand Senoussi, not more than twenty thousand had got away in any semblance of an army. And that those were in full retreat for the distant Senoussi capital.

The English, they said, had had a long list of casualties in the hand-to-hand fighting, but the British force was practically intact. No post had been overwhelmed.

They did not reap quite the expected harvest, for the great foreign hotels, like the "Savoy" and "Shepherd's," were closed, and their staffs were attending to the catering of the Citadel as the employees of the British Government; Reuter's agent and the correspondents of the chief London newspapers were in the camp out at Mena, and had seen the battle for themselves. Indeed, Reuter's, and the three papers which always had correspondents at Cairo, were allowed a representative each on the Pyramid-top. No restriction was placed on the other white correspondents going anywhere else they pleased; one, a fearless Irishman, had gone with the Royal Irish Rifles to the Sphinx Hill.

Into the Citadel the Bedouins could hardly hope to make their way; it was closed from sunset to sunrise, and at all times strictly guarded. But a fortunate few were taken, blindfolded and under escort, to the Khedive and his Ministers and the British Agent. They were lucky in finding an officer at the gate with sufficient intelligence, and courage in taking responsibility, to admit them.

The net results of that stupendous victory in the General's terse words had already appeared on the proclamation board outside the palace; and in the stop-press column of the London evening papers. The excitement of the refugees in the Citadel was raised to fever heat by the arrival of the blindfolded Bedouins, who were conducted into the presence of the Khedive. When they came out again, though it was late at night, a couple of thousand people besieged the British Agency for the news which was so briefly to be told.

The barrack clock was striking ten as they came out; Sam Page ran up into the Muezzin gallery of the disused Royal Mosque and shouted out the news to the crowd. It was received with volleys of cheering like the great news of the afternoon. Now people could sleep in their beds; they might almost have slept in their own houses.

It was the completeness of the victory that astonished them. They had not anticipated defeat at Ghizeh; but there were other things to be dreaded, such as half the Senoussi effecting a juncture with the Egyptians in the city and thus raising an immense army, while the other half attacked and occupied the British force. Now it seemed

as if there was no evil left to be known beyond the extent of the British losses.

Except the chief conspirators assembled at Dimitri's, the Cairenes received the news philosophically. It might be a deathblow to their hopes as an independent nation. But it also relieved them of a terrible responsibility, for which they had very little stomach, the forming themselves into an army in alliance with the Senoussi to fight the British. It was not that they wished to spare the British; if they could shoot them down unobserved with the rifles distributed by the American Hardware Trust to scores of thousands of Arabs in the city, they would do it cheerfully this very night. But the opportunity for a St. Bartholomew's Day massacre had passed; and now, if the English had to be killed, it would be on the battle-field, where they were proverbial for selling their lives dearly. It would be better to live under the domination of Christians, than to be mown down in thousands like the Senoussi, whatever the Koran might have to say to the contrary. That is what the Nationalist loafers of Cairo thought, and they thanked Allah that they had not been seen with rifles in their hands, which might carry consequences.

There were no disturbances in the streets. Some Arabs sat on late at their *cafés* talking about it as calmly as if the events had been taking place in Persia, and not just out at Ghizeh. Others went home to convey the rifles out of their houses under cover of the friendly darkness, in anticipation of domiciliary visits from the military. Weapons were lying about the streets next morning like stones to mend the road with. The quarters where there were no Arab *cafés* were as still as death.

It was just about 10 p.m. when Kennedy and a little escort of Dragoons rode out of the Mena camp, and clattered along the causeway into Cairo, carrying the despatches of the victory.

They met many Arabs jingling along on asses, or swaying slowly on camels, in the dark avenue; but no one ventured to molest them; when they came to the place where the road turns sharply into the European suburb of Ghizeh, there were quantities of natives sitting down in the road, quite peaceable, hardly making a sound, just waiting as only an Arab can wait.

The Dragoons took no notice of them, but trotted

grimly on. As they crossed the first bridge on to the Ghezireh, the Soudanese in the Kasr-el-Nil Barracks, who were holding the Nile Bridge, caught the sound of cavalry, and sprang to arms. It came nearer; the thunder of hoofs was on the great bridge itself. The sailors took up their positions by the machine-guns, playing on the bridge from the Ottoman Commissioner's garden. But they had no expectation of having to use them, for they knew, by the signals flashed to them from the Citadel, that the hoof sounds must belong to the Dragoons, and they did not think that any Nationalists would show up to oppose them. A halt had to be made on the bridge, for it was kept disconnected, as a precaution, till the password was given. Then the turn-bridge swung into its place, and the Dragoons in another minute were halted in front of the belvedere on the wall, on which the machine-guns were erected, for Kennedy to give the news to the officer in charge. He told it in his dry, unexaggerated way, and the sailor's comment, "By Jove! old fellow, I congratulate you!" was in just the same tones, as if he had been congratulating Kennedy on being engaged to be married.

A more romantic person's heart would have swelled within him, as he carried such news to Cairo from the Pyramids, and was halted with his escort of Dragoons at the head of the Nile Bridge. Kennedy had no more than an honest glow of duty, when he left the officer at the bridge-head, and put his horse to the trot up the Sharia Kasr-el-Nil.

But as he passed the deserted "Savoy Hotel" a wave of romance caught him, and when he looked up at the balcony opposite, he could half picture Lucrece starting up with her "England for ever!" as his regiment swept up the street with its proud "Blue Bonnets over the Border." Many rivers had run into the sea, and blood had flowed like water on the desert sand since then.

The stern troopers of his escort, belonging to the famous Scottish regiment of Dragoons, could they have read his thoughts, would have been more astonished than by anything which this astonishing officer of Highlanders had yet done to mystify them. But he made no sign, and the little group of horsemen swung on vervily, and soon were passing between the Ezbekiyeh Gardens and the Post Office. The big *cafés* there were crowded with Arabs discussing in a dispassionate way, if at all, the prodi-

gious and portentous events of the day. But they all turned and half rose, as the little troop of khaki-clad horsemen trotted sharply past, and, crossing the Atabal-Khadra, shot down the Sharia Mohammed Ali and disappeared. It was several days since the escort had passed up to the Citadel, and it was so late, and the General was not with them.

But the Pyramid Arabs had told them that all was well with the English ; and these soldiers did not ride like men in stress, but steadily as men whose work was over.

From here to the Citadel Kennedy saw hardly a living being ; there was nothing to note but the mosques sleeping in the moonlight, Sitt' Sophia, Kesun, and the lordly masses of Sultan Hassan, and Al Rifaiy'a ; and the moon shining white on the gate of the Mamelukes and the Citadel Mosque, when they came out on the vast Rumeleh Square.

The great mosque soared up gloriously with its majestic dome and sky-piercing minarets ; the gate stood out defiantly.

The horsemen did not enter there, but swinging round to the left, spurred up the hill, broken by the fantastic outlines of the Mahmoudiyeh and Emir Akbar Mosques, to the gate of the main-guard, the only gate which was ever unbarred at night during the war.

There Kennedy shot out from his escort.

"Who goes there ?" challenged the sentry.

Kennedy gave the pass-word, "Victory," and the creaking gate was opened.

The little band of horsemen rode through it, and on to the palace gate, where Kennedy dismounted, and was about to ring when the door opened, and the tall figure of Lord Clapham himself came out to lead him into the presence of the Khedive to open the despatches.

Kennedy was shocked by the change in his appearance. His hair had gone snow-white. He looked an aged man. He was bowed with grief for the loss of that son who had seemed to be so little his. He was too agitated to speak, but his grasp of the hand was warm and full of emotion. He led the way in silence to the study of the Khedive.

The monarch's greeting was warm. He sat down at a table with Lord Clapham beside him. But first he drew a chair towards the opposite side, where there was none, for Kennedy, an action typical of his exquisite courtesy.

Then they opened the despatches. Lord Clapham read them aloud. They were brief, chiefly facts and figures. The Senoussi strength was computed : the three separate attacks—the front attack, the attack on the rear from the village, and the double flanking movement to get into Cairo behind the Army, were concisely detailed. The probable losses were computed. The fate of the vast Senoussi host was announced. For the rest he wrote : “ I am going to march in with my army to-morrow and report in person.” He added a note to say that Captain Kennedy, who carried the despatches, had been by his side all through the battle, and was in a position to give any information, that was needed, verbally.

The Khedive put so many questions to him, he was so enthusiastic and interested, that it was after midnight before Kennedy could ask leave to retire.

The escort had dismounted, but they kept their horses by them, picketed, in case they were needed again, to the railings of the little trees planted by the English. Although they were on duty, and technically should not have been spoken to, Kennedy found them surrounded by a huge crowd of refugees and soldiers, cheering and singing, and besieging them with questions. Kennedy's appearance at the door was a signal for a renewed burst of cheering.

Scores of people, to whom he had never spoken, rushed forward to shake hands with him, as, having dismissed the escort, he walked across to the General's house to see Lady Vere. He had a love letter from Sir Francis to Lady Vere buttoned up in the breast of his coat.

He felt for it as he stood in her drawing-room, waiting for her, a splendid soldierly figure, all brown to his long lean riding-boots, with the sand of the desert still thick upon him.

“ Is Frank safe ? ” cried Lady Vere as she came into the room with both hands outstretched, beautiful, and almost youthful with enthusiasm.

“ Safe and sound. No shots came near the Pyramid.”

The unsentimental lady had tears in her eyes and laughter on her lips. “ I've never had news of him on the day of battle before,” she said, “ though he's been in so many. I've never had him come to me fresh from the mercies of a great battle.”

Kennedy had to take a big gulp. That was how she felt about it, the wife of the iron soldier, whose orders

that very day had sent thousands and thousands of men to the final judgment. She thought of the special goodness of Providence in allowing the beloved to escape with life and limb.

When he told her the great features of the battle, she interrupted with: "Did you have any fighting to do yourself, Ailsa?"

He said yes, so simply that she felt a little disappointed. Had he only seen a staff-officer's view of it—far off—in comparative safety?

How was she to ask him tactfully? She remembered what her husband had once said about a battle, in which he had to use his revolver.

"Did you fire your pistol?" she demanded.

"Every cartridge in it, several times," he replied, wondering what she was driving at.

"Then you have seen death standing over you!" she cried, looking at him as if she had been his mother. "Tell me about it, Ailsa, boy?"

She hung on his words, as he told her about seeing the Senoussi right on his heels, and the chase, and the fighting behind the little zariba of lying-down horses; and how at the last gasp they were saved by the charge of the Scots Greys; and how the Greys had only been saved from being annihilated by the artillery fire; and how he and his men had been remounted on dead men's horses and brought safely in.

Lady Vere was deeply affected. "I hope Frank chose you for scouting because you were an orphan," she said. "Commanders don't always think of this, though I suppose every boy who holds the King's Commission is more precious than anything in the world to some woman. Yet, where a commander knows that the boy is a ewe lamb, I think he might exercise discretion." Perhaps poor Tom Cobbe had come into her mind.

"It was a post of honour," said Kennedy, in his plain fashion.

"Posts of honour only mean extra danger generally," she replied with a sad little smile.

"Oh, but this was a real post of honour, and no danger beyond what comes into the day's work of every soldier in war-time."

She smiled indulgently; he indulged in a smile too. The wife of the Commander-in-Chief in her excitement was

just a woman babbling like a suburban mother ; her ideas were as impossible of realisation.

She had not noticed that they were not alone. Lucrece was there, beautiful beyond words, in the black of the widow's crêpe, which she had worn ever since Hoseyn Hassan had fallen by her father's hand, and her father lay in prison on that capital charge.

Lucrece had come in close on Lady Vere's heels, and had witnessed the whole of the interview with eyes resting now on Kennedy's face as he told his tale, now on the straight young figure in the dusty uniform in which it had fought, with its sword stark in its sheath on one side, and the long case of its Mauser pistol on the other.

Kennedy had not yet handed Sir Francis's letter to his wife. How was he to know that it was a love-letter ? He blessed himself for his forgetfulness ; handing it to her freed him for Lucrece.

There was no question of estrangement between them now. Lucrece, too, came forward with both hands outstretched.

" Oh, Ailsa, I'm so glad ! "

" Glad for me ? "

" Yes, and glad for England too ; I've been praying for this. "

" Praying for the success of the British arms ? "

" Yes, " she said simply. " I never desired anything so much in my life. You English are so just and so generous. "

He knew that she meant English to include the Scotch. In Egypt one gets accustomed to hear *English* used instead of *British*. The Egyptian hardly ever says *British*.

She made him tell her all his own personal fighting again ; that seemed to be the part that interested her, and hope flamed up in his breast, only to die down again as Lady Vere rejoined them, and Lucrece said : " Now tell me how Sir Francis looked in the battle. I wonder Lady Vere isn't jealous of me. I admire him so openly. And I am afraid it isn't only respect. I've fallen in love with him. "

" Lucrece, you must get a lover of your own, or I shall be jealous of you, " said Lady Vere, with a little glance towards Kennedy.

Lucrece at once grew constrained. But Kennedy was so filled with the image of Sir Francis, as he had looked in the battle, that he did not notice her embarrassment. "

"Well, I'll tell you what he did remind me of, Miss Considine, as he stood on the top of the Pyramid, directing the battle. When I was a little kiddy, my mother always spent Sunday afternoons in teaching me the kind of stories from the Bible which made the day less dull to me, because we were only allowed to read books like the Bible in my Ayrshire home. My favourite of all was the story of Moses on the summit of Mount Pisgah, showing the Israelites the Promised Land after their forty years' wandering in the wilderness. That's how Sir Francis looked to me, like Moses on the top of Pisgah. The wilderness was just the desert, you know."

"Oh, what an evil omen, Ailsa," cried Lady Vere. "I hope to goodness that our Moses will be allowed to come into the Promised Land."

"He's coming in to-morrow," said Kennedy in his simple way. When he was a child the Promised Land never interested him half so much as the wilderness; and now, though he was glad and thankful that safety had come for everyone, it seemed to him that the next few days would be rather bathos after that glorious fight in the desert.

The Bible reminiscences, the picturesque scriptural phraseology, which touched such an emotional note in the Scottish Presbyterian soldier and the daughter of the English Dean, were lost on Lucrece, who being a Roman Catholic, had not been brought up on them.

"If I can't do any more for you, I did say my prayers for you in the battle, for you and Sir Francis by name, and for every Englishman, and Irishman, and Scotchman, who stood in peril of his life against the heathen."*

Lady Vere slipped out of the room to read her love-letter. She knew it would be a love-letter. And the two found themselves alone in the romantic hours.

Lucrece looked at him fondly. He was her oldest friend in Egypt; he was her lover, though she was not his; and he was a soldier fresh from battle, as typical a soldier as all Egypt held.

"Ailsa," she said softly.

He could not trust his luck, so he waited.

In a voice that was almost pleading, she proceeded: "You won't want to marry me now?"

* To Lucrece all Desert men were *heathen*.

Was she saying this to prove him ? Was she relenting ? She could not be so cruel as to be coquetting with the desire of his life. Besides, Lucrece was too direct, too royally simple for that.

So he answered : " I will marry you to-morrow, if the General will give us the licence."

" The General," she repeated mechanically ; she seemed almost stunned. " The General ? "

" Yes ; it's martial law now. I suppose he can do anything."

" But, Ailsa, I can never marry you."

" But you asked me a moment ago."

It seemed that in this, the crisis of their lives, Lucrece was not proceeding directly.

" Oh, Ailsa, I didn't. I said ' You won't want to marry me now.' "

" And what else could that mean ? "

" It means, naturally, what I said."

He looked as if he had been stabbed.

She laid a deprecating hand on his arm.

" Ailsa, be patient with me, while I explain," she pleaded, keeping the hand on his arm.

He stood irresolute. At length she found words :

" My heart is buried, as thousands of others will be ere the next sun goes down, in the black shadows of those evil Pyramids."

He had a glimmering of what she meant now.

" I could never marry any man but him whom my father murdered—the man who was true till death."

" Oh, why did you speak to me about marriage ! "

It sounded strange coming from the stern Kennedy ; it was almost a moan.

" I wanted to see if you could understand."

" Understand what, dear ? " He was looking at her with eyes so unlike his own serene, unstraying eyes.

" That if you only wouldn't want to marry me, I could give you my whole heart of friendship."

He said nothing.

" Yes, Ailsa, do promise ? " she entreated.

" Promise that ? What have I got left ? "

" Me."

" But, how ? "

" If you promise that, you shall have the ordering of my whole life. I cannot be your wife, for I am his.

But I can give you all my thoughts, except my memories. If my father has to pay the penalty with his life, or for so long as he is in prison," she said, speaking with a submissiveness to Fate which was almost Oriental, "I will do what you tell me as absolutely, as if I was your wife. I will live in any town in the world where you tell me; you shall always have access to me. You shall be the judge of the restrictions you have to place on our intercourse for the maintenance of my good name. You shall direct me in the use of my income. You shall say whom I may know and whom I may not know. We will nurse each other in sickness; we will live our lives together in every sense but one. Can you promise me that, Ailsa?"

"Yes," he said, with his eyes steady and like themselves again, "I can. That is enough for me. One must speak plainly on these occasions. I must tell you that I have never thought of you in that way. It has always been your exquisite companionship that I hungered for. It was that which I put before me in the dream of my life. If you are to have your home near me in the place that I choose, and I may see you in all my leisure moments for every waking day, I will ask nothing more of life. I promise, Lucrece."

He made no attempt to kiss her, but simply held out his hand.

She took it gratefully.

"You have made me very happy," she said. "You don't know how I need your strength to heal my wounds. All these awful days I have been leaning on the Veres, leaning on the strength of the enemy who has stamped my father's life-work into the dust, but has guarded his home for him by taking care of me as if I had been his own daughter. I could go on living with them all my life. They have told me so many times. But——"

"But what?"

"They have their gods and I have mine. Sir Francis has many duties; he has the affairs of a nation to look after—and I want someone to——"

"Someone to do what?" he said, with a glimmer of hope.

"Someone to take the place of the father, who gave me all his leisure thoughts," said the marble goddess.

CHAPTER XXXVI

WHAT MRS. KRAFFT TOLD AILSA KENNEDY : THE ARREST OF MULAZIM BEY

IN the General's dressing-room there was a camp bed, erected on the plausible theory that he could steal into this room or leave it at any hour which the state of siege imposed, without disturbing Lady Vere.

Lady Vere looked at it from another point of view. She had no wish for rest, when her man was moving, in the brief hours that were spared him at his home. She looked upon it as a sanctuary, where he could enjoy undisturbed his much-needed snatches of sleep.

For the rest of this short night she gave the General's room to Kennedy, who had been riding and fighting since the dawn; there he slept the deep sleep of a warrior who has taken off his harness, till long after the Triumph had started from Mena Camp.

The Sailors, except a deputation of them, the survivors of the men who had helped to hold the Sphinx hill and beat off the Senoussi ambuscade from the Pyramid, were to stay out at Mena till the arrival of the Army Corps from England allowed them to return to their ships. The Malta Artillery and the regiments from Gibraltar were also left there to hold the position, in the unlikely event of the return of the Senoussi. The regiments of the Garrison were to march back into Cairo for several reasons. It was expedient that their barracks should be reoccupied, and that the revolting city should thus be garrisoned with British at various points; while the Mena Camp was too crowded to be healthy for long. „Above all, there was the object lesson for Cairo.

The procession started at dawn. Kennedy had taken word to the Khedive that, as it started, a naval ensign,

which the Sailors had brought off one of the ships to mark their lines in the camp, would be run up on the top of the Great Pyramid on the spare flagstaff of the Mena House, which the Sailors and masons had erected on the Pyramid. The ensign was flying before it was light enough for the officers of the Citadel to make it out with their glasses.

To escape the heat of the day—it was early summer now—the regiments had arranged to pack their baggage trains during the night. And the General without delay gave the order to move out. The cortège was headed, after the advance guard, by the band of the Scots Greys. All the regiments had their band instruments with them; the bandsmen had not been taken out as mere stretcher-bearers; they had been needed to impress the natives; it was essential that the regiments should march out to the battle-ground, which the General had chosen, with all the pomp and serenity of war. When the procession was ready to start, every band played “God Save the King” while the ensign was being hoisted; then the General gave the order to march. After the band of the Scots Greys came a squadron of the regiment. They were followed by the six furniture vans containing the captive Emirs, which, by the simple expedient of fixing banner racks on each side of them, to hold the captured sacred banners as close as they would go, were converted into superb trophies. They only needed air-holes cut in their tops—the Emirs would have seated themselves on the floor from choice. On each side of the vans rode the Mounted Infantry.

The detachment of Sailors came third.

Then came the Royal Irish Rifles, headed by the companies who divided the honours with the Sailors.

They were followed by their baggage, and then came the Highlanders, followed by their baggage; the Grenadiers and their baggage; the Welsh Fusiliers and their baggage; and the baggage of the Artillery, Engineers and Cavalry; with the Royal Horse Artillery and another squadron of the Greys to close in the procession. The rest of the Greys were retained at the Mena Camp for scouting and escort duties, in which they were assisted by “Pres-tage’s Horse.”

Everywhere along the route, when they had once passed the causeway, the Arabs crowded to see the little army winding up to the Citadel like a Roman Triumph. In

Cairo there was a double reason for crowds filling the streets, for, as the General rode off the Nile Bridge on to Cairo soil, a message from the Khedive to the officer in command made the guns of the Citadel thunder a welcome.

It had been suggested to the General that he ran a risk of being assassinated by a shot from a window. But he dismissed the suggestion with a smile. He did not think it likely from what he knew of the Egyptians—and few Englishmen ever knew them so well. Besides, if the improbable did happen and he was fired at, it was all in the day's work, and the crisis was finished now.

He was right in his premonitions, not a shot was fired. The populace made not the slightest demonstration of good or ill feeling. It was absolutely peaceful, and, if it had not taken the trouble to line the route in such enormous numbers, the papers would have said that it was altogether uninterested. But it was noticing none the less, and it was persuaded that the Englishman was the top-dog, and that it had done well in not using the rifles with which it had been provided, free of charge, by the American Hardware Trust. Mr. Considine was not exceeding the truth when he told Mrs. Page that his firm had not sold any firearms to the Egyptians; he did not say that he had not supplied them.

At two places only was there any furore—at the Nile Bridge and at the Citadel. At the Nile Bridge the Sailors in charge of the machine-guns roared themselves hoarse, and the Soudanese were frantic. They, it appeared, had a score to settle with the Senoussi, who in many towns of the Soudan had levied tribute for their war-chest, which the Soudanese were unwilling to pay but afraid not to pay. There need have been no doubt about their attitude.

At the Citadel the ovation was tremendous. The ramps were lined with soldiers, not yet fallen in, and spectators. As the army debouched round the corner of Sultan Hassan's mighty Mosque, a roar went up to heaven from English throats, while the Greeks added to the din by firing *feux de joie* from their revolvers. The populace had been unaware that the six trophy cars adorned with Senoussi banners contained prisoners. But the English in the Citadel knew it; it doubled the interest and significance of the huge white banners, whose heavy folds were blazoned with texts from the Koran in a dozen colours.

As soon as the General's escort began to climb the Hill of the Mosques, the bugles sounded for the soldiers to fall in on parade, to receive the General. A tribune had been erected just inside the gate for the Khedive and the Consuls-General, among whom the French, the American and the German were almost as conspicuous as the British in their anxiety to congratulate the General. With them were Lady Vere, and, by the irony of the gods, since she was under Lady Vere's protection, Lucrece Considine, the daughter of the man who had caused the war, more personally gratified than any of them except Kate Vere herself.

When the parade was over and the prisoners were safely housed in the mighty empty shell, which had been the Royal Mosque of the Caliphs, human weakness had its hour. Everyone from the General to the youngest recruit went off to breakfast, the General to his quarters, the officers to the Infantry mess, and the men to the Infantry barrack square.

When the General went into his dressing-room to wash his hands, he was astonished to see a man lying on the little camp bed which he used. He went up quietly to see who it could be, and saw that it was Kennedy, sleeping the sleep of the just. He heard a light footstep behind him. It was his wife.

"Oh, Frank!" she whispered. "You mustn't let him get into any trouble."

"What for?"

"For being late for parade. I promised him faithfully that he should be waked, and I forgot all about him in my excitement about seeing you."

"Bless him!" said the General. "I must wash in your room, Kate; I might disturb him. He must have had twenty hours of it on end."

When a man is nearing the sixties sleep is of less account to him. The General had been up as early as Kennedy the day before, and had been up all night giving orders, for the men who were going back to Cairo, and the men who were staying in the lines. But as soon as he had done his breakfast, he mounted his horse, to dismiss the victorious regiments to their barracks, and ride up to the fort on the Mokattams to congratulate the Artillery on their fire, when he had made his verbal report of the battle to Lord Clapham in the presence of the Khedive

When he came back to lunch he found Kennedy, valeted by the faithful Mustapha, coming downstairs fresh and spruce. He began to make excuses for absence from parade, and the liberty he had taken in accepting the permission for him to go to sleep in his Chief's dressing-room.

"I think we can pass over these breaches of discipline pretty easily, Jock," said the General. "Now come in to lunch."

One of the peculiarities of warfare with savages is its liability to sudden collapses. The General's household had, it is true, been transferred to the Citadel higgledy-piggledy, with the households of all the other northern Europeans and Americans; and an immense deal remained to be done in the way of clearing up the mess of the campaign, even before the arrival of the Army Corps.

But now there was no enemy. The Senoussi as an army were annihilated; the poor remnant of them was flying back to Jarabub; and the Egyptians, who had not risen when the army of deliverance was at their gates, never would rise now. So here he was on the very day after the battle, quietly sitting down to lunch with his wife in what was for the moment their home. It is true that the complete domesticity of it was broken by the arrival, between the chicken and the General's favourite pudding, of a telegram from the King:

"Congratulate you on your glorious victory. The nation thanks you. EDWARD R. ET I."

To be followed later in the afternoon, when they were sitting, by votes of thanks from both Houses of Parliament.

But for the time he belonged to his wife, and was receiving apologies for the nakedness of the kitchen, which prevented the slaughter of anything larger than a fatted chicken.

One thing he was thankful to notice in his domestic circle was that, under the sympathetic influences of war, Lucrece, whose pleasure at seeing himself was obvious, had smiles for Kennedy also.

After lunch Kennedy had to go to the Citadel Headquarters, and put into cypher and despatch a long tele-

gram from the General, saying that he no longer required the Army Corps, as the blow had been struck; that the temporary addition of so many Infantry and Cavalry to the Army of Occupation, with some Field Artillery, was what he required.

Pending the answer to the telegram, the General should have had an hour or two's sleep, but Tom was on his mind. "What about Tom?" was the first question he had asked his wife.

"Nothing, poor boy," was all she could say. So now the General went off to cheer the bereaved father, and see how he could use his victory for Tom.

Chiquita was admitted to the consultation he held with her uncle and husband. She, too, was deeply changed. All her *diablerie* was gone; she was a gentle and dignified woman, with the damask blanched from her cheeks by tears and vigils. But she had not lost her courage or her resourcefulness; and if Tom was alive, the adoption of her suggestion would have secured his release.

After the General had heard from Sam the various measures that had been taken to find Tom, and secure his release, and had listened to Lord Clapham's despondent acceptance of Fate, Chiquita suggested a night raid on Dimitri's café. There was little doubt that the plot had been hatched there; there was little doubt that everyone taken there would be a conspirator against the British, even if he had had no hand in the abduction.

"Well, what are we to do with them if we catch them?" asked the General; "we can't put them to the torture."

"You can," replied Chiquita, "in another way."

"What way, Mrs. Page?" he asked gravely.

"Threaten to deport them to the Soudan unless Tom is released. To them and their wives the Soudan is the hell that it was in the days of the Mahdi, when raw Egyptian levies went up, to be massacred or become captives and slaves.

"I believe it would do it," said the General. "Do you think we could put a good enough face on it, Sam, by bringing them before a court-martial and sentencing those who were found guilty to penal servitude in the Soudan; and then offering them a sort of royal pardon if Tom was given up?"

"Let me see," said Sam. "If——"

Lord Clapham interposed—a weary, hopeless figure, but unshaken in his principles and his philosophy.

“I beg you, Vere, to do nothing of the kind. Technically, I cannot prevent you, as Egypt is under martial law. But as I am the person concerned, as you are doing it all for me, perhaps you will listen to my protest. The whole thing is wrong in principle. These men are to be arrested for crimes, which they have committed in common with thousands of others who will not be molested; they are to be seized and submitted to a species of torture.”

“Only those who are found guilty, sir,” said Sam; “and they will only be receiving the statutory punishment.”

“The principle is the same,” said Lord Clapham obstinately. “It is eliciting information by torture.”

“That’s nonsense, Clapham. It would merely be a military measure to secure the release of one of my officers, treacherously kidnapped.”

“Well, if you persist in doing it, I shall record my disapproval of the procedure in my annual report to the British Government.”

Sir Francis was willing to run the risk of censure from the British Government for Tom’s sake; but he did not see how he could proceed in the matter in the face of the protest of one, who was at once the representative of Great Britain in Egypt, and the boy’s father. So he sorrowfully acquiesced.

Lord Clapham’s sore burden was increased because Chiquita refused even to speak to him; she was so furious at his Quixotism. The one ray of hope before him was from Egyptian treachery. If Tom were still alive, some one would try and release him for *bakshish*.

Other things were going better. The officer in command at Mena had helio’d that the Senoussi prisoners, who had taken service with the British, were performing their task of clearing away and burying the thousands of dead, obediently, peacefully, and without a hitch.

When Kennedy had sent the telegram, he went off to see if anyone had taken possession of his quarters, while he was at the front; such things do happen, when a citadel suddenly has to receive many thousands of refugees.

But no one had taken them; the light kit, which he had sent in from Mena, had been duly delivered, and his servant, who was overjoyed at seeing him, had just finished unpacking it. Also, there was a pretty recent

English newspaper, and the General did not require him till five o'clock. So he ordered a cup of coffee, and threw himself into a folding chair with a deep sigh of relief.

But he had not been reading above an hour, when his servant came in to announce a lady, who refused to give her name.

It was Mrs. Krafft, looking delightfully pretty and chic. She did not actually throw herself into his arms or embrace him, but her whole manner was a caress.

"Oh, Ailsa Kennedy," she cried, "I'm so thankful to see you again, alive and unhurt!"

His reply, so direct, so characteristic of him, brought down the avalanche.

"Why should you care?"

"Why should I care? Because I love you, because I'm willing to go to the devil with you. I am yours body and soul, to take when you want."

"You mustn't talk to me like this, Mrs. Krafft; think of your husband."

"Think of my husband? I do think of him as part of the furniture of my home. I think of him as the table at which I dine, an excellent table, always laden with good fare, a solid table of the best mahogany, with its plainness covered by a fair white table-cloth."

"I shouldn't call him plain," said the literal Kennedy, imagining that this would be the best line of argument to stop the avalanche.

"I wasn't refering to his appearance. I was refering to our life," rapped out Mrs. Krafft.

"Oh!" said Kennedy, not knowing what else to say, but thinking that it was fortunate that this pretty creature had come to him, and not to a man like Wemyss.

"Julius is very good and kind to me."

This sounded a little irrelevant; but it was a step in the right direction, so Kennedy let her proceed uninterrupted.

"But he's so negative, so invertebrate; he hasn't even the spirit to turn me out of the house."

"Turn you out of the house?" asked the bewildered Kennedy. "What for?"

"He knows I'm not faithful to him, and he doesn't care. But I could be faithful to you, Ailsa; I would be faithful to you."

"Mrs. Krafft, you must leave me. I can't listen to

this. And I shall forget that you have ever said it," protested Kennedy, thinking what an upside-down world it was. Here was Mr. Krafft, an active, audacious politician, with the courage of his opinions, so unpopular in the society in which he now moved; a resolute man, who did not leave a stone unturned in his politics—here was the same man, married to a pretty and affectionate woman, letting her stray and go to the devil, for want of attention and want of conquest. Why did he not devote himself to trying to save her from ruin, instead of trying to ruin his country?

She saw that Kennedy was going over things in his mind; she thought—she hoped—that he was weighing her proposal.

"Can't you love me?" she asked, with a hand laid timidly on his arm, and looking more attractive than he had ever seen her look before. She was so affectionate, so shy in spite of her passion.

"Oh, please, Mrs. Krafft," was all he said.

"Please! What a mockery to use that word! There's only one way you can please me. Why won't you take me, Ailsa? I ask nothing in return."

Was there any reason why he should tell her the cause? He considered well, for he did not wish to tell her. Was it not better to endure until she acknowledged her defeat? Or did he owe her something for her affection, her affection apart from her passion?

Perhaps he did. Yes, he would take her into his confidence. And if it stung her to fury, if it stung her into being his enemy, she would at any rate understand. He was the last man to fear the effects of telling the truth.

"Because I belong to another," he declared.

"Lucrece?"

He nodded.

"Is she engaged to you? Has she relented? She has told me a dozen times that she could never marry anyone with Hoseyn's memory in her heart, and that awful murder hanging over her head."

"We are not engaged to be married."

"Not the other thing?" Her voice was agonised.

"What other thing? . . . Oh, that—my God, no!"

"Well, what is this bond between you, Ailsa?"

He told her. He could see by her face the fierceness of the struggle that was going on inside her.

"It isn't fair to you," she cried.

"Oh, I'm satisfied. I shall have her dear society to look forward to every day."

"You will find that a cold comfort."

"How can it be cold? I am to have her friendship, and her society without stint."

"You'll have to get engaged."

"She will never do that."

"Why not? It is quite easy to have a secret agreement that the engagement is not to come to anything."

"What is the use of it, then?"

"Why, you silly boy, because people won't stand it, unless you are engaged. They'll say dreadful things, and they won't ask her anywhere."

"I shall tell the plain truth about it," he said proudly.

"The plain truth? Will you tell people that she is so infatuated with Hoseyn Hassan; or that you refuse to marry her for two obvious reasons?"

"I shall say that we have both sworn not to marry, and that we intend to show that a man and a woman can live for each other's society in perfect purity."

"Oh, Ailsa, you know what they'll say."

"I shan't care what they say."

"You will care what they say about her."

There was a knock at the door, and his servant came in.

"The General's compliments, sir, and could you step round to him presently."

"All right, Clark. I'll be with him in less than ten minutes."

The man went out, and Kennedy rose and buckled on his sword.

"Kiss me good-bye, Ailsa—good-bye to my dream."

"It's better not. I like you far too well. You were such a friend to me, when I lost Lucrece."

"I was not a friend; I was a lover who knew the only way."

"You were balm to a wounded soul."

"Oh, Ailsa, you are getting poetical. It's dangerous. Good-bye, dear." She gave him two fingers and fled.

Kennedy was mystified. He puzzled what she meant by her behaviour as he walked across to the General's; and was still mystified when he entered his chief's office.

"It's a lucky thing we sent that telegram, Jock; there

are almost as many Infantry, as I asked for, at Alexandria already."

"How did they get there, sir?"

"By the good will of the French. They not only let them come across France, but used their own mobilisation scheme of trains to transport them. The *Cairo* and the *Heliopolis* did the rest. One would naturally have been at Marseilles, and the owners kept the other back there. They did the trip in less than three days."

"Well, sir, what are my orders?"

"Briefly these. Finding accommodation for five regiments is a pretty large order. But the Khedive and his family have placed all their palaces in Cairo at our disposal. Take an escort, and go round them with Holbech. He knows what it takes to accommodate four thousand five hundred men; it's his job. Your job is to do it with as little inconvenience to the Khedivial family as possible. Take Gomez, the estate agent, with you. He'll know which they are not using, and are trying to sell for building land.

Kennedy never let the grass grow under his feet. He left at once to find Mr. Gomez, while the General gave orders for Major Holbech and the escort to be ready. Inside of half an hour the two officers on horseback with the escort, and the estate agent on a fine white Cairo donkey, clattered out of the Citadel Gate.

Mr. Gomez took them straight to an old palace in the Abdin quarter, not far from the Khedive's. It was very out of repair; the lofty garden walls which shut out all view from the street were so much out of the perpendicular that they were almost falling. The stucco had dropped from the façade in great patches, and the *débris* was still lying on the ground.

Being backed up by the Khedive's order as well as martial law, Kennedy's men lifted the gate off its hinges, when the gate-keeper was not forthcoming. They were surprised to see an Arab boy at the door of the palace, obviously "keeping *cave*," as boys say, who darted into the house directly he saw them.

Kennedy, whose presence of mind never left him, called to his sergeant: "Take half the escort and gallop round to any other gates there are, and if anybody tries to bolt, arrest them." Then he and Holbech, and the estate agent, and a couple of troopers, entered the palace to see

how it would do for a barrack. It was obviously in use, though the Khedive had said himself that it had not been used for years. And what was more, as they entered the door, two Irishmen, a big fat priest and a little man, whom Kennedy remembered having seen at various parties, came flying down the stairs.

"After them," cried Kennedy to the two troopers, at the same time blowing the whistle for half a dozen men to come in, as he had ordered if they heard the signal. Then, leaving the Irishmen to rush on their fate, he at once commenced a search of the palace, and, in one of the private rooms of the harem, found an Arab *effendi* hurriedly burning papers. It was Mulazim Bey, the Nationalist leader, who had presented the petition to the Khedive demanding the release of the jester. Kennedy could not be mistaken, for the Khedive had heard both their versions of the episode at the same audience. He drew a revolver and fired two or three shots at Kennedy point-blank. It was a poor weapon, and he was inexpert, so he missed; but it was a close shave. Before he could do more, the Dragoons had thrown him down with his face to the floor, and bound his hands behind him with his turban. A few minutes afterwards the two Irishmen, who had been stopped by the soldiers at the back gate, were brought in. As they did not struggle, they were not pinioned. Recognising the impossibility of escape, they gave their parole, meaning to break it if they had the chance. Kennedy meanwhile had been examining the papers, which Mulazim had not found time to destroy. They proved that this was the new Nationalist headquarters; but seemed of little value. They were mostly extravagant, and one would have thought incredible lies, prepared, of course, by Jeffery and Dwyer, for the consumption of the Nationalist native.

All that could be found were tied up in curtains, torn down for the purpose, for the soldiers to carry in front of them on their horses. Then, leaving the sergeant and half a dozen men to search the premises more thoroughly, and remain in charge of them till they were relieved, Kennedy rode back to the Citadel, with his prisoners and his booty, and the remainder of his escort.

They could only walk their horses, because the prisoners were on foot, but in half an hour's time they were in the presence of the General, who at once despatched a larger

party to occupy the palace, and sent the prisoners to the military cells.

"I am sorry to see you here, Mr. Jeffery," he said, for Jeffery had often been Lady Vere's guest. His connection with the Nationalists had been quite unsuspected.

When Kennedy had delivered his prisoners, he and his escort and Mr. Gomez galloped off again, for the time was short, to examine the palaces of the Khedivial princes in the Abdin, Kasr-el-Doubara and Choubra quarters; there were sufficient of them abandoned to the land-boomer to accommodate all the reinforcements.

He came back just in time to dress, and go on to the General's. As an A.D.C. he was expected to take his meals at the Veres', unless he was engaged elsewhere.

The General was late, he had so much to attend to, but Lady Vere was there. Kennedy's disappointment gave way to satisfaction when Lucrece seized the opportunity to demonstrate their change of footing. She did not say much—Lucrece had not the gift of saying much; but she let him feel his proprietary rights, and she called him Ailsa or Jock like the Veres.

After dinner, while the General and Kennedy were still sitting over their wine, Lady Vere congratulated Lucrece.

"You have nothing to congratulate me upon, not in your sense of the word," said Lucrece, "but you have everything to congratulate us upon in ours. For we have ended the estrangement, and pledged ourselves to be life-long friends, the greatest friends that anyone could be without being lovers or married. So long as my father is in prison, Ailsa will take his place, and direct my life."

"I never heard of such a thing," said practical Lady Vere. "Are you going to live in the same house?"

"No. Ailsa will be with his regiment, and I shall live where he tells me, properly chaperoned, so that he may be able to spend any of his leisure time, that he can spare, with me."

"But what will people say, Lucrece?"

"What can they say? Our arrangement will be open to the inspection of everybody."

Lady Vere used almost the identical arguments with her that Mrs. Krafft had used with Kennedy already.

"It would have been better if you could have been engaged. So much latitude is allowed to engaged people.

But I suppose that what you have told me—the debt that you feel you owe to the memory of Hoseyn Hassan, would prevent that.”

“It is that.”

“Well, it’s a censorious world, Lucrece. But Jock Kennedy is a man of unusual self-restraint; he is so looked up to, his character is so well known, that people may not talk of him as they would talk of most young soldiers, who were playing this new game of platonic friendship.”

“Why should I care, Lady Vere? My life is wrecked already, as far as slander would wreck it; my only chance of permanent happiness is this friendship with Ailsa.”

“My dear, at your age, and with your beauty, things are sure to come right.”

“Well; promise me not to speak to Ailsa about it.”

“I promise. The subject is too difficult.”

CHAPTER XXXVII

WHAT MRS. KRAFFT TOLD LUCRECE CONSIDINE

WHEN the five regiments marched in from Alexandria the abortive Revolution was at an end. If further force had been necessary, it could have been forthcoming; for while the peril of the Senoussi was still in the air, the French had, it appeared, in addition to transporting the British troops, offered the loan of the five or six thousand troops at Bizerta.

Most of the foreign refugees in the Citadel went back to their own homes, which, thanks to the Volunteer legions, had only suffered from small depredations.

But the Veres remained in the Citadel for the present. It was more convenient for the General, as a large number of troops were stationed in the Citadel and Fort Mokattam; and it was an easy place to signal from.

Most foreigners were too glad to be out of the Citadel to be in a hurry to visit it again. The first caller on the Veres was Mrs. Krafft.

Lady Vere was glad to see her. She had not cared for her in the old days; but while the city had been in a state of siege Sophia Krafft had exhibited her true metal—and fine metal it was. She had shown herself courageous, light of heart, full of resource, and generous. She spoke all the principal languages and understood the foibles of foreign women in a way that made Lady Vere envious. When they were beside themselves with panic, or unmanageable with vulgar selfishness, it was Mrs. Krafft who had to bring them round. The men were more easily managed, she was so very pretty, so very elegant, so *chic*, so brilliant. The Tommies swore by her as *Sophy*, which was taking a great liberty, but not to her discredit. They knew that their officers thought her the most sporting woman in Cairo after the General's wife, and it was an

article of faith with every British soldier in Egypt that the General's wife was one of the best officers in the Army.

People who have campaigned together generally know each other's faults, but they forget them in homage to grit.

So it happened that Lady Vere had a bright smile for Sophia Krafft when she came up to the Citadel that afternoon, Sophia, who had come to give a fresh instance of her grit. At tea she chattered about the humours of the Egyptian servants and tradesmen and cabbies in the town, who all welcomed the Europeans back exactly as they would have, if these patrons had been away for a week-end at Helouan, and had come back to dispense milk and honey, or buy loaves and fishes, as the case might be.

Nothing was said about the Revolution—they all ran out to see the regiments, who had streamed across the sea to put an end to their national aspirations, with as much gusto, as if each regiment had been the Emir of the Hadj, coming back from Mecca.

Lucrece had not come down to tea. She had a desire for her own company. Something had put her in mind of the visit, she paid with her father, to the Moulid-en-Nebbi, the celebration of the Birthday of the Prophet.

They had been the guests of Hoseyn Hassan, so they had seen at its best the most splendid celebration of this festival which had ever taken place in Cairo.

The Sheikh's was the largest of all the splendid pavilions which surrounded a vast stadium laid out on the plain, near the Abbassiyeh Barracks. It was conspicuous also because the canvas was of the sacred green. All these pavilions of the Mohammedan Notables were lined inside with richly embroidered awnings and adorned outside with lanterns and banners innumerable, to make them gleam by night and day.

In front of the Sheikh's pavilion were seated in a crescent on chairs of state, the Khedive and Hoseyn Hassan, side by side, surrounded by the Prime Minister and his colleagues, the Grand Kadi, the Grand Mufti, the Sheikh and the Ulemas of El Azhar, and other Mohammedan dignitaries. The whole of the vast stadium was filled with an excited and gaily dressed crowd of chattering Arabs. From all sides came a tumult of wild Oriental music, the tum-tum of drums and tambourines, the clash of cymbals, the indescribable sounds of hoarse flutes and

native bag-pipes : its volume went on increasing till the whole air throbbed with it.

Then voices were distinguishable singing a barbaric religious chant ; and there swept in front of the pavilion of the Prophet's Descendant the first of a hundred deputations from the Religious Orders of Africa. It consisted of a venerable Sheikh, surrounded by musicians and dancers and standard-bearers and incense-bearers. All except the Sheikh were clad in white robes with green turbans and green sashes, and those who went in front danced a dance as old as the days of David, with lifted legs and arms and smitten tambourines, while round the Sheikh were the sacred white standards with their glowing blazonry of texts. Every eye was filled with an ecstatic light, as he halted before the Descendant of the Prophet and advanced with profound obeisances.

Hoseyn Hassan came forward to receive his homage ; the Khedive remained seated.

Another and another deputation advanced, all fired by the profoundest religious exaltation as they stood or knelt before that gracious god-like figure in its flowing vesture of the sacred green.

The sun sank, the sun set, the lamps shone out ere the last of the deputations had come before him. To the very end he received them unhurried, with admirable Arab patience ; each deputation as it left him marched round the stadium with its wild music and dancing, and its glory of banners flying in the wind of Egypt, till the vast enclosure looked as if the armies of the old Caliphs had come back from the dead to do battle with the modern crusaders, the khaki-clad English.

It was not mere religious homage—the Khedive knew that full well. He was perhaps intended to perceive how all the eagles of Mohammedan Africa were gathering for the fray. What a proud moment that was for Hoseyn Hassan ! what a proud moment for the woman who loved him !

Lucrece was picturing it all again when there was a knock at her door. It was as if there had been a sudden blast of chill air.

" May I come in ? " asked Mrs. Krafft.

" Yes, come in," answered Lucrece, not very graciously.

Her forebodings were realised, for Mrs. Krafft began :
" I have something serious to say to you."

"About father?" asked Lucrece at once, turning hot and cold in her anxiety.

"Oh, no—only something to do with you and your Ailsa."

"Why do you say my Ailsa?" asked Lucrece hotly.

"Because he is your Ailsa, and you aren't treating him fairly."

"That is my concern," cried Lucrece, as cold now as she had been hot a minute before.

"It's just as much mine," retorted Mrs. Krafft.

"Well, I suppose you really have something important to say to me, as you are so rude about it," said Lucrece, nettled.

"If you want to kiss me ever again, you'd better do it now, because I'm sure you never will when you've heard what I've got to say," said Mrs. Krafft lightly, to relieve the tension.

"I'll hear what you've got to say first," said Lucrece. She was now thoroughly incensed.

"So much the better. What I've got to say is very serious indeed. It may alter the whole current of our lives. It will help us, if we speak right out, not sparing each other's feelings; and it will help very much indeed if you answer my questions plainly."

"I'll try," said Lucrece without any sympathy in her voice. She was not a woman of intuition; but it was plain that Mrs. Krafft was in earnest.

"Why aren't you properly engaged to Ailsa Kennedy?" Lucrece coloured angrily.

"You know how much he is in love with you."

Lucrece was still silent.

"If you won't speak, Lucrece, I shan't be able to get out what I've come to say."

"I don't see what it has to do with you."

"It has to do with me very much indeed, I told you."

"Does something really depend on my answering this question?" asked Lucrece. She was agitated now.

"Everything depends on it."

"Because Hoseyn Hassan was killed for the love of me, killed by my own father, and I have to consecrate myself to his memory."

"Answer me another question truly: Do you love Ailsa Kennedy?"

"He is my dearest friend."

"Would you marry him if there had been no Hoseyn Hassan?"

"Ye-es, I would."

"Why do you speak with that doubtful ring in your voice?"

"There is not the same romance about it as there was over the thought of marrying Hoseyn. But I suppose that the romance in me is killed, now; and I have grown to lean on him."

"Well, Lucrece, I'm going to make a confession. Hoseyn was not faithful to you."

"I don't call that a confession; I call it a wicked slander."

"It is true."

"I know that he had had other wives; but he divorced them all before he offered his hand to me."

"Oh, it wasn't that. What should you say, if you knew that, on the very night of the day he spent that hour with you in the Arab museum, and took you over the mosques, he made me his mistress."

"I don't believe you!" cried Lucrece furiously.

"Read that," said Mrs. Krafft, taking out a dirty letter in a curious foreign handwriting. It was from Dan Climo, and it began: "Dear Krafft,—I am writing this partly for your good and partly for my pleasure," and proceeded to disclose Mrs. Krafft's relations with Hoseyn Hassan, derived partly from his own observation, partly from a revengeful eunuch of the discarded harem.

Lucrece still looked doubtful.

"Climo is here in the Citadel, in prison. I'm sure that the General will let you see him to hear it from his own lips, if you doubt the evidence of your eyes," said Mrs. Krafft calmly.

"Do you mean to tell me that—this really happened that night?"

"Not only that night, but other times, till I grew tired of him," said the ruthless and still truthful Sophia.

Lucrece was silent for a while; Mrs. Krafft kept silence, too, to let the weight of her words sink into Lucrece's mind.

"Why have you told me this?" burst out Lucrece passionately. "What object have you in this cruelty?"

"I love Ailsa Kennedy," said Mrs. Krafft quietly.

"So you want to marry him to me. I think you're mad."

She stopped, because Mrs. Krafft was sobbing; but her own face was marble.

"I'm not mad, Lucrece," sobbed Mrs. Krafft. "I'm doing the one good action of my life. I love him so, that I want him to be happy."

Lucrece began: "How am I to know that he" but she stopped. It was not possible to think this of Ailsa Kennedy.

Mrs. Krafft divined her thoughts. "Yes, I tempted him. He would have none of me. But he did not spurn me as you have done."

"And what do you propose?" asked Lucrece wearily.

"I propose nothing. I only tell you that Hoseyn was unworthy of your sacrifice."

And with this, having lied about the dead to make the man she loved happy with the other woman's love, Sophia Krafft went out of the room very quickly.

Climo had failed in his attempt to blackmail Hoseyn Hassan, because the Arab had committed too many indiscretions of this sort for him to admit the thin edge of the wedge of blackmailing. And he had failed in his attempts to blackmail Mrs. Krafft, because her Jewish sagacity taught her that it was better to have the matter out at once.

Nor had he been more successful with Mr. Krafft, when he sent him the letter Sophia was showing Lucrece, because that German-Jewish philosopher liked his wife's society, and had no time for her affections.

Mr. Krafft saw no reason why he should deprive himself of what he really enjoyed, to satisfy the conventional prejudices of others. But as the little Houndsditch usurer was a comparatively poor man, with the prudence of their race he bought him over by recouping him the five pounds he was out of pocket.

Having done this, he put the precious letter into an envelope addressed to his wife, with a note from himself, telling her that, if Climo attempted to blackmail her, she was to apply to him, but that otherwise he did not wish her to make any allusion to it. Which goes to show that a man can be magnanimous without being high-minded.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

WHAT HAPPENED TO KENNEDY ON THE BATTLEFIELD AND HOW HE WON LUCRECE

KENNEDY that afternoon had ridden out for the General to the Pyramids, to see how the burying of the thousands killed in the battle was being executed. The great Pyramid of Cheops was still frowning at its brothers of Chephren and Mycerinus from a grim modern fortification, on which Sailor sentries were pacing up and down. The white naval ensign of England still flew from its lofty head. But Kennedy's business was not with them. He returned the sentries' salute, and rode past for another two miles along the pilgrims' route, where the desert was mole-hilled with thousands of Arab graves, mere heaps of sand, except where a couple of white flags and a little offering marked the tomb of some Emir or holy man, whose shrapnel-gashed corpse had been recognised by the staunch Senoussi tribesmen, who were no longer prisoners, but faithful workers in the Army Service Corps of the enemy, against whom they had fought on the day of battle.

Thoughts came crowding into Kennedy's mind as he rode over the very scene of his miraculous escape, first from the camel-men, and then from the spearmen, in the battle. Hundreds of Senoussi were round him now, and he was accompanied only by a single orderly. But they saluted him like so many Soudanese soldiers, instead of hurling spears at him; already, in this short space of time, they had learned to recognise and salute every officer who passed.

Kennedy noted that the burying was being done properly, spoke here and there to a British sergeant in charge, and then returned to the spot where he had made his little *zariba* of horses. They had been left unburied—they were not human, poor beasts! who laid down their

lives so obediently, to save those of him and his comrades. So they had had no homage of interment, no shots fired over them, to scare the unclean beasts and birds, the jackals and vultures. And, therefore, their bones were picked clean and sweet, and he could linger by them. He recognised, by the position in which it lay, the stout beast which had saved his life by galloping under him from the Coptic convent to where its bones were now. He dismounted, and, leaving his horse to his orderly, stood in the *zariba* once more, stroking the ribs of his dead charger.

While he was there a Senoussi came up to him and pointed to his cheeks. There were two freshly-healed wounds, where a revolver bullet had gone through them. "You did that," he said, "just as I was about to cut you down."

"How do you know?" asked Kennedy; he could muster enough Arabic for such a conversation.

"Because you were the only soldier in this uniform," said the Desert man; "the others were in another uniform."

"That is true," said Kennedy; "they were of another regiment." And, pulling out the Ingersoll watch he was wearing because it did not let the sand in, like the chronometer watch he had inherited from his father, and always wore on ordinary occasions, he said, "Keep this in memory of me, friend. We tried to kill each other and have both lived to be friends."

The orderly drew the back of his hand across his eyes.

The Senoussi, with the chivalry of the men of the desert, drew from his middle finger a silver ring with blunt spikes all round it—the ring on which he repeated his prayers instead of beads; and with a beautiful Arab salutation of forehead and heart, handed it to the officer as his memorial of Death passing them over. Kennedy slipped it over his own finger. It had to be the little one on the brawnier Western hand.

The Arab smiled.

Kennedy then called the sergeant, and took down the man's name and number very carefully.

The Arab waited expectantly. He knew that it was not for nothing that the splendid young officer was asking about him.

"Tell him that he is to be my private servant to look after my horse," said Kennedy to the sergeant, who was selected for this job on account of his fluency in Arabic. "If he doesn't know about horses, he can soon learn."

The sergeant spoke to him.

"He says he knows very well about them, sir; he has handled them all his life."

Kennedy took out his card and wrote something on it. "Tell him to come with this to-night to the General's house in the Citadel, and ask for me."

"Yes, sir."

"That's all, sergeant."

The sergeant saluted. "Oh, stay a minute; perhaps you'd like to know why I'm doing this."

"I own that I should, sir. I expect I should have got as much out of him as I could, sir, when you had gone."

"God bless my soul!" said the sergeant when Kennedy had told him; and he added in a more confidential voice—it was not for the orderly to hear—"You do quite right in having him, Captain Kennedy. He will bring you good luck; a man who tried to kill you in battle—and friends afterwards. We all know that in the ranks, sir."

"Well, good-day, sergeant. I hope it's true; but I think I've had my luck."

Kennedy did not see Lucrece before dinner. She was keeping her room, trying to digest the overwhelming horror of what she had heard in the afternoon from Mrs. Krafft. She could never forgive her, she was sure of that; and she felt a reflex of resentment even against Kennedy, the innocent cause of these appalling disclosures.

It was terrible enough that Hoseyn Hassan lay still and silent beneath the very spot, that he and she had looked at, in the lonely mosque among the tombs of the Caliphs—slain for her sake. Why need Sophia Krafft murder his memory too? It was awful! it was more than awful, it was loathsome and disgusting!

Later she thought of Kennedy more kindly. He, too, had been exposed to the wiles of this Delilah. She had confessed that she had tempted him. But he had been adamant. Had he? She had only Mrs. Krafft's word for it. Was that all? No. There was the unspoken evidence of his character. Then she started. There was the spoken evidence, too, for from his own lips she had heard

that he was strong enough to remain the friend of her, Lucrece Considine, and to spend the leisure hours of every day with her, when he knew that he could be no more.

Yes, she could believe that he had been true to her. Their friendship would not be spoiled.

But even at dinner she felt a little constrained.

Nothing was said during the meal about his experiences of the afternoon. He had already made his report to the General with the information desired. The episode of the Senoussi had not been mentioned. He was naturally a reserved man, and it did not occur to him to trouble the General with his private ebullitions of feeling. The General was very full of the Cavalry and Field Artillery which were on their way to him. The efficiency of his command in Egypt had been hampered by want of them.

After dinner Lucrece had recovered her equilibrium so far that she was regarding Kennedy as her very dear friend again, partly, perhaps, because that other friend had been found so woefully wanting.

They were alone: Lady Vere saw to that, for she had her hopes, though she knew that any good fortune for Kennedy must be left to mature.

They were on such friendly terms again, as to be discussing her father's fate. "The General says that he won't be found guilty of murder, for our Consular Court here would never bring in such a verdict against an American who had killed a native for such a reason. He says that he will not have it tried by Court-Martial, because the act was committed before martial law was proclaimed."

"We must be thankful for that," said Kennedy. "There is no doubt of the verdict a Court-Martial would bring in."

Lucrece thanked him in her heart for the "we," though his outspokenness chafed her.

"Why?" she asked. "Are the British courts juster?"

"Juster to natives."

"And father was inciting the natives against them. It's an ungrateful world."

"Ingratitude grows like the plant which makes you blind in Egypt."*

* A species of gigantic spurge used by the Egyptians, who wish to escape military service, to blind themselves. It grows into a regular tree, with a hollow fruit, in the desert, where hardly anything else will grow.

"Well, the General says that it must be a long time before he will be free, and he and Lady Vere have asked me to live with them till father comes out. What do you wish me to do, Ailsa?"

"I wish you to accept, of course. The Veres are my greatest friends; no one could make such a good chaperon for you as Lady Vere. And as I am his A.D.C., I should be about the house naturally. How good they are!"

The door opened, and Mustapha came in, bearing on a fine brass tray a card. "An Arab has called to see you, sir."

"I'll come out," said Kennedy.

"Be careful, sir. He's a Desert man, and you can't see what they have under their robes. Remember what happened to the General at the Helouan races, sir. I'd better come with you."

"He won't try to kill me again," said Kennedy laughing. "He's had his shot at that—but you may come with me, Mustapha. I shall need an interpreter."

"Promise me to be careful, Ailsa," pleaded Lucrece anxiously.

"Oh, I promise," he replied. It rejoiced him that she should care. "But there is no need. I know that this man would lay down his life for me."

She was not satisfied. Hoseyn's death had unnerved her. So she went to the window. A tall figure, in the *jebba* and hooded head-dress of the Desert, was saluting Kennedy with the feeling and elegance which these Desert people, unspoiled by constant repetition, exhibit.

Kennedy told him what his duties would be, and the causes of offence to avoid in dealing with soldiers and natives. Then he turned to Mustapha. "Is Suleiman here?" Suleiman, a big, good-natured buffalo, was a groom of the General's, who had been attending to Kennedy's horse while he was looking out for a servant. It was only since the war had broken out that Kennedy had used a horse on duty. He had told Mustapha that he should require Suleiman after dinner. Suleiman came forward. He spoke English, so it was easy to explain to him that Kennedy had chosen the Senoussi for his groom.

Kennedy had quieted Mustapha's fears by telling him the man's story in the hall before they went out. When Mustapha heard about the exchange of presents, he was certain that the man was to be trusted.

Suleiman was not so sure; he had the common Egyptian's instinctive dread of the Desert Arab. But he would never have dreamt of doubting Kennedy's judgment; he took the man off to the stables quite cheerfully, when Kennedy dismissed them.

It was with intense relief that Lucrece saw Kennedy leave them and come in.

"Who was that man?" she asked.

He told her the story in his dry, unvarnished fashion.

"And you have made him your servant. Oh, Ailsa!"

"It's quite safe," he said, mistaking the drift of her meaning.

"I didn't mean that. You told me it was safe before."

"What did you mean?"

"Can't you guess?"

"Guess what?"

"How much I care."

"Yes, I know that you would be very, very sorry; we're such good friends now."

"More than that."

"Really more?" he asked with gratitude shining from his eyes. She smiled her assent. She was longing to find words to express herself. At last she said:

"More than for Hoseyn."

"What do you mean by that, Lucrece?" he asked, looking at her steadily, but with a nervousness that was strange to his nature.

"I mean that I love you more than I loved Hoseyn."

"You love me, Lucrece?"

"Yes, Ailsa, I love you. I can be your wife now as soon as God has joined us; there is no longer any barrier of love against it."

He was dazed until the lovely, merry smile which changed the whole type of her beauty spread over her face as she said: "You can *ask* me for a kiss now. You could have taken one before."

He bent over her, and gave her a kiss so reserved and revering that she loved him for it, but almost scolded him.

"Do you really mean. . . .?"

"Yes, dear, I mean that I'm ready to marry you now. I had to ask you, because, you see, I'd forbidden you to mention the subject, and you're not good at taking hints."

He was not satisfied yet, though he kept her a captive, and ventured with shy caresses, and called her new things.

"Why have you changed so suddenly since last night, dearest?"

"Because I have learned much since this morning's sun rose."

"What have you learned?" he asked, pressing his lips to hers.

"No, I don't mean that, I mean the greatest thing in life to me."

He looked into her eyes.

She thought for a while, then she said: "I have learnt that you are better than Hoseyn Hassan, and equal to him. Don't smile at my grammar. It has a meaning. It's a long explanation, so you'd better sit down and let me sit on the arm of your chair."

She began:

"Ailsa, you are a dear, you know."

He was far too modest to think so, but he did not interrupt; he wanted her to get on with her explanation.

"Mrs. Krafft's been here this afternoon."

Now he began to see daylight. Then Mrs. Krafft's affection was genuine; it was not mere passion. She must have been to Lucrece interceding for his happiness. He was at a loss to guess how, and it is little wonder that he was at a loss.

"When she left I wrestled with myself for two hours; then I knew that I did not love Hoseyn Hassan any longer, and that I ought never to have loved him."

"Why?"

She told him. It was a cruel injustice to the dead man. But Lucrece did not know, and never would know, how long he had resisted the temptation of Mrs. Krafft; how deliberately she encompassed his fall that night; how eagerly he had striven to give his betrothed a love with the high ideals of the West. Mrs. Krafft had lied to her; lied to her because she liked her and loved Kennedy; lied to her to save her from fretting her life away, and to save Kennedy's life from bearing Dead Sea fruit.

"So Hoseyn is no longer anything to me. He deceived me; he was a wanton. She told me about you, too, Ailsa, how she had tempted you, and failed. I love you

for that. There is nothing I could love a man for so much as that ; and I'm human enough to be pleased that it was *she* who failed. But how wicked she is, Ailsa ! I did not know that women could be so wicked—in our class of life."

"But that isn't all," she said, when he let her speak again. "I wasn't ready to marry you when we began to talk after dinner. I was only going to let you begin a long course of probation, leading up to it, if I got to love you well enough. You were so unromantic after Hoseyn. There was no one in the world I wanted so much for a friend ; you are so faithful, so noble. But I wanted something more in the man I was to marry."

"What ?" asked Kennedy simply.

"I wanted the colour of love. I have always thought of marriage as the realisation of Romance, and you seemed so desperately unromantic. That Arab did bring you luck, as the sergeant said, for I thought your meeting him like that, and feeling that you must have the savage, who had tried to kill you in battle, always with you to be your friend—I'm sure that he is to be your friend as well as your servant—well, I thought all that the most romantic thing I had ever heard of. Ailsa, you are deliciously romantic. But I forgot," she said, to hide the strength of her feelings in playfulness ; "have you proposed yet ?"

"I'm not sure. I think it must be leap year. But I'll make certain. When will you marry me, Lucrece ?"

She grew serious again.

"We can't fix that till father's trial is over. But it can only be waiting for so long or so long, Ailsa. I am yours, yours, yours."

CHAPTER XXXIX

OF THE TRIAL OF MR. CONSIDINE IN THE AMERICAN CONSULAR COURT

MR. CONSIDINE had been confined for six weeks in the military gaol at the Citadel, when, as laid down in the Capitulations, he was brought before the American Consular Court, and the verdict of the court was that he was only guilty of justifiable homicide, and that his sentence should be for six weeks from the day of his arrest, which meant that he walked out of court a free man. So strong is American sentiment on the subject of "colour" and of clandestine love! Nor had Mr. Considine told one word beyond the absolute truth, or attempted to put any gloss on his action, which it would not honestly bear. In his cross-examination he stated his case uncompromisingly, and took his stand on the Unwritten Law; and his countrymen once more proved to the civilised world that in this elemental question they are barbarians.

The English community were glad for two reasons. They were glad for Lucrece, who since she had been with the Veres had won a solid popularity, which rivalled her butterfly popularity when she first dazzled Cairo ball-rooms. And they were glad of the blow struck at the silly romances which white women permitted Arabs to inspire. As jurors in a court they would have found Stephen Considine guilty; as fathers and brothers, they were glad of the terrible lesson that had been administered to Arab tamperers with white women.

Kennedy had not been to see Mr. Considine in prison. Lady Vere thought it better for his chance of being settled with Lucrece that he should not; she got her husband to refuse him permission, but let Stephen Considine know that he had applied.

Throughout Mr. Considine's trial Lucrece was in the court. She sat alone. It was clearly impossible for the General's wife or A.D.C. to be present, and Mrs. Krafft was the principal witness. The estrangement was a relief to Mrs. Krafft, for she had quite made up her mind as to the attitude she would take in the trial, and carried it through with grit. She declared that Mr. Considine had trapped her into personating Lucrece, without giving her the slightest inkling of his murderous intentions. Otherwise nothing would have induced her to go. And in describing the actual deed, she said it was the most brutal, cold-blooded, deliberate murder that she could have conceived. She described the way in which Mr. Considine placed the pistol against his victim's heart, in the cowardliest way, so as to give him absolutely no chance of his life. There was not a single mitigating circumstance, she declared. Nor could she see the slightest reason for the murder. She was acquainted with the whole history of the late Sheikh's relations with Miss Considine; there was nothing in them from beginning to end which was not perfectly pure and honourable. The Sheikh had desired to make her his wife, and had divorced his other wives for this purpose; he had hardly ever seen her without witnesses; he was most particular about his behaviour with her. The whole difficulty arose out of the fact that Mr. Considine had a prejudice, shared, she admitted, by most Americans and English people, against the marriage of his daughter with an Arab.

When Mr. Considine was examined, he admitted to the full all that Mrs. Krafft had said about the events of the fatal night. He had no wish to palliate the force of her evidence. He seemed to wish to emphasise it. The whole affair of his daughter's connection with Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan was so revolting to him, that if he could have contrived a worse death for him he would have done it. He would willingly have burnt him alive, he declared, in a white heat of passion. The rest of her evidence he traversed with great skill. He commenced by describing how the Sheikh had come to him and demanded his daughter's hand, and, when he refused it, had compelled him to give a provisional consent by threatening to withdraw from the great National movement for Egyptian independence. With the greatest nonchalance he showed why the Sheikh's continued participation was

absolutely necessary, if the whole Mohammedan population of Egypt was to be made to rise against the English in support of the Senoussi invasion. He was not disclosing any secrets ; the whole history of the conspiracy had, thanks to Mr. Chody, been laid bare before the Court-Martial which had tried and sentenced the other leaders of the conspirators. He seemed to enjoy making the exposition as cynically frank as possible, using it to prove that he was in the Sheikh's power. He had, therefore, to accede to his demand, and give his consent to his daughter's marriage with the Sheikh, if he should be killed in the Revolution and the Sheikh should survive. But he made it a condition that the Sheikh should not see his daughter again, after a good-bye meeting on the following day.

The Sheikh promised ; but Mr. Considine found that instead of keeping his promise he soon drifted again into seeing her every day. The climax was on the night before the outbreak of the Revolution, when he intercepted a letter from the Sheikh, asking his daughter to meet him below the Sphinx for several hours in the darkness. He was, he said, unable to place any construction but one on this assignation, and that was the worst. So he asked Mrs. Krafft to impersonate his daughter, with the results which she had so truthfully described.

It was fortunate for him that his clamour for the abolition of the Capitulations had not yet been successful. He had fulfilled his own definition ; there could not have been a more glaring case of a foreigner, who had come to a country, where he was not wanted, and sheltered himself behind his Consular Court from the consequences of a crime.

He was willing, without saying any more about it, to leave the case to the judgment of his fellow-countrymen. He had killed Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan in vindication of the Unwritten Law, which was above all other laws with free-born Americans, who valued the inviolability of their homes.

A quarter of an hour sufficed to find the verdict, which left Stephen Considine free to walk out of the court.

He still had the Court-Martial to face, and its results could only be serious, as the recent trial of the three Nationalists arrested in the Khedivial palace—Mulazim Bey, Father Dwyer and Jeffery—proved. Except Mulazim,

who had deliberately tried to kill the officer commanding the arresting party, they had gone into court with little fear of the result. For Mr. Chody had got away with all the most incriminating papers. But Mr. Chody had no desire to flog a dead horse, and Egyptian Nationalism was in his opinion a dead horse. He therefore, through a safe and devious channel, opened up negotiations with the Government for the purchase of these papers, and of his evidence against the conspirators. He placed a very high price on the transaction, but the Government were glad to give it, and have all the ramifications of the plot, and the names of the conspirators, in their hands. When the three chief conspirators were tried, and saw the unabashed Mr. Chody in the witness-box against them, they knew that their chances were *nil*; for Mr. Chody was the confidential secretary of the whole movement, and as clever as a Jew lawyer.

Jeffery and Father Dwyer and Mulazim Bey were sentenced to various periods of penal servitude—the last for life, as he had attempted to shoot Kennedy down point-blank. All their sentences, like those of the other prisoners of the Revolution, were to be served in the Soudan, where there was no chance of their warders being corrupted. But Jeffery and Dwyer were also banished from Egypt, and, in the first instance, were deported to Malta, in one of the returning troopships which sailed the day after they were sentenced. Their imprisonment was only to take effect, if they ventured to return to Egypt.

The case of Dan Climo presented greater difficulties. As a Socialist Member of the British Parliament he would probably rejoice in a prosecution, which conferred notoriety, while it might be stopped from inflicting punishment on him. If he escaped, he would lose prestige, though he would probably be unable to resist the temptation. The General had him sent to Alexandria to be deported immediately, but issued secret orders that he should not be shipped, and gave Mr. Chody, who was now an agent in Government employ, a free hand to arrange his escape.

Mr. Chody excelled himself on this occasion. Dan Climo's rudeness to him had been invariable, and he had no intention of allowing the debt to remain unpaid; so, when he had lulled Climo to a sense of security, by promising to arrange for a small vessel to convey him to Syria,

he went to call upon the head of the police of the Russian Consulate, and repeated to him the interesting facts in Dan Climo's early life, to which Mr. Prestage had alluded. M. Rackmaninoff had no difficulty in identifying him, and was only too glad to conclude a villainous deal whereby he provided the vessel at a price, which Mr. Chody was to receive from the Egyptian Government and keep in his own pocket.

The further history of Dan Climo is obscure. The Russian man-of-war, which had been lying at Alexandria, watching the interests of Russian subjects during the Revolution, and had put to sea in the nick of time, stopped the vessel which contained Dan Climo and his fortunes, and seized its passenger; that was the last that was heard of him.

The General had nursed strong hopes of eliciting some news of Tom in the course of the cross-examination, and, indeed, had made the abduction of Tom one of the charges against Mulazim in the hope that, whether guilty or not guilty, he would, in shifting the blame on to other shoulders, in the Egyptian fashion, drop some clue as to Tom's fate. But Mulazim was morose and defiant. He declared that the Nationalist Committee (of which neither Jeffery nor Dwyer, nor, indeed, any white man except Mr. Considine, who was in prison, and the café-keeper, Dimitri, were members) had issued commands for Tom's abduction in order to secure the liberation of the jester; that Lord Clapham had been given fair warning that he would never see the boy again, unless the liberation took place. He swore that when the negotiations fell through, Tom had been sold as a slave to some emissaries of the Senoussi, who had come to confer with the Egyptian leaders about the Revolution: and been carried by them into the Sahara, with the object of taking him to the Kufra Oasis, to be the slave of the Senoussi Mahdi; but that he had never reached Kufra, because he had died of hardships by the way.

The General was inclined to believe him, because if Tom had been held in captivity in the city, some traitor would have been sure to try and make bakshîsh out of betraying his whereabouts.

Otherwise the fact of the infuriated Mulazim telling this story would have been a reason for knowing that it was a lie. After the trial was over he examined the witness for

the Crown, Mr. Chody, about Tom. He had cherished a faint hope that he might know of some clue.

But Mr. Chody was completely in the dark about this ; the triple system of organisation instituted by Mr. Considine was still in action at the time of the abduction, and in the absence of Mr. Considine, his services as interpreter on the Committee of Independence had not been required. Nor had the secret transpired at any of the mixed meetings of the remnants of the three Committees skulking in the palace. Its saleable value was too great.

Therefore Mr. Chody had no secrets to sell about the transaction. Nor had he any advice or suggestions to offer, though he recognised that it was not necessary to bargain with the British, when you served them well.

At the British Agency, though hope was not dead, and though they did not go into mourning, lest the unbeliever should scoff, the depression was profound. The one who gave least sign was Lord Clapham, who felt it most. He only ceased to write the "History of Philosophy," and relapsed into thinking of might-have-beens; but he still had his books before him. His optimism had at last failed him, when the people, whose aspirations he had come to gratify at the expense of his own country, chose him, of all his countrymen, as the victim of their spite, because an impossible request had to be refused. He was a broken man, though he strove to perform the regular functions of his office, as far as they had not been superseded by martial law.

The house would have had the atmosphere of waiting for a funeral, if the depressed and lifeless Chiquita had not taken into her head that the same thing might happen to Sam, and lavished quiet and unobtrusive tenderness on him, so that she might have nothing to reproach herself with.

Sam had no fears for himself ; there was no reason for them—Cairo had returned to its normal orderliness ; but he was absorbed in trying to find Tom, and prostrated by his want of success. He had been vigilant from the very first. On the day that the outrage happened, he had in the hour between the two telephones sent an exceptionally clever R. E. officer to the telephone exchange, and had Cavalry ready to act on his orders, if he could locate the office from which the threat came to Lord Clapham. But the Nationalists were too clever to be caught in this way. They used the telephone in an empty house, in the

labyrinth occupied by the Levantine shopkeepers behind the Mousky. It had not been disconnected; every approach to the house had a chain of sympathisers ready to pass the word if the emissaries of the British Government were seen approaching.

He did not even forget the orange-seller who had come to the General from the Citadel; but the orange-seller either knew, or would know, nothing.

Ali, the porter in the Bazars, whom he used to engage when he was bargain-hunting, sat nightly at Dimitri's Café, with five piastres of Sam's money to spend, in case any hint should be dropped in that resort of unhung villany. Respectable Nationalists like Ahmed Mahdy exerted themselves.

The Khedive was untiring in his sympathies and his efforts.

But nothing came of it all. The secrecy was so impenetrable that Sam came to the General's opinion, that Mulazim had been speaking the truth, and that Tom had been carried off by the Senoussi envoys.

The only thing that remained to find out was if he had really perished. That might have been an embellishment of the malignant Mulazim.

The Emir who commanded the Senoussi army which had surrendered in the battle was still confined in the Citadel with the other Emirs, till accommodation could be selected for them at Malta. He pointed out one who was both trustworthy and influential, to be despatched to the Senoussi Mahdi at Kufra, offering to exchange any captive Emir the Mahdi might select for Tom.

The emissary was to have his own liberty if he succeeded.

CHAPTER XL

HOW LADY VERE VISITED STEPHEN CONSIDINE IN PRISON

HE who sows the wind must reap the whirlwind. When Stephen Considine looked for his daughter, she had gone. He took an *arabeah* and drove to his flat; she was not there. In desperation he rang up the Kraffts on the telephone. Surely she could not be there after what she had heard in the court. They had seen nothing of her, and, having nothing but loathing for him, did not make the suggestion to help him, which they might have made.

The flat itself was desolate. Every room in it had been ransacked for evidences of the conspiracy, and nothing had been put back; there were no servants in it except the Arab porter at the door—the General had granted the faithful Probyn and the two footmen free passages to England: it was in the occupation of a guard of British soldiers. The sergeant in charge of them informed him that the whole building was in military occupation.

He drove to his bankers, and asked for his pass-book and a cheque-book. They were given to him, and the cheque he wrote out for a good sum of money was at once cashed. But when he asked to see the manager, he was told that he was engaged, and that they could not say when he would be disengaged—this to the owner of millions.

Then he drove to Giddy and Lumley, who received his Cairo rents for him, and managed his business with his tenants. There he was received with cold civility. The manager could not decline to see him; but it was sufficiently obvious that he did not want to see him. Both he and the bank manager had been in court, and both had been disgusted by Mr. Considine's reckless blackening of his daughter's honour. One was an

American and one was an Englishman ; either might have condoned his murder of Hoseyn Hassan—the feeling in Egypt about white women falling in love with Arabs is strong. But Lucrece had won the respect of all the foreigners while they were taking refuge in the Citadel ; none of them believed that she had done more than go sightseeing with Hoseyn Hassan.

The estate agent naturally imagined that Mr. Considine had come to ask him about his property. He had had meetings, which lasted for hours, with the General's representatives, on the subject of the expulsion of Mr. Considine's tenants from the Independence Building, the principal effect of which was to identify Mr. Considine more closely with all the ramifications of the conspiracy.

Mr. Considine did not want to hear about his property. Something told him that he had lost Lucrece, his ewe-lamb, in more than her mere disappearance. He must see her, and extort the denial of it from her own lips.

Giddy and Lumley thought they knew where she would be, for she had been staying with the General and Lady Vere ever since his arrest. Did Mr. Considine not know this ?

Yes, he knew it ; but it seemed impossible that she should go to the General's from the court in which he, her father, had been tried for murder.

But Giddy and Lumley telephoned, and it appeared that Lucrece was at the Veres ; and that Lady Vere hoped that he would not go there, as the General had been compelled to issue a warrant for his arrest on the charge of conspiring against the Khedive's Government, directly he learned that the Consular Court had acquitted him.

Mr. Considine was not the man to be frightened by a threat like this, which he believed to be a ruse to keep him from seeing Lucrece. He at once drove there.

He was arrested at the door by the guard. They were in ignorance that a warrant had been issued for his arrest, but imagined that he had come to create a disturbance. He demanded to see the General, and, when he learned that he was not at home, Lady Vere. He expected fresh excuses, but presently Lady Vere came in. He asked if he might see her alone. His captors strenuously objected, for he was not secured in any way ; and he had given too good a proof of his murderous outbreaks.

But Lady Vere said, " It will be sufficient if you guard

the doors and windows to prevent his escape. I am not afraid for myself."

She was right. Mr. Considine would sooner have died than injure her; his heart was bursting with gratitude to her. The worst blow he had yet received was her frozen attitude to him since he had killed Hoseyn Hassan.

If he had killed him in fair fight she would have applauded him; if he had killed him with a sudden blow at the end of a bitter altercation, in which Hoseyn Hassan had defied him, she might have condoned it; but that cowardly American-Unwritten-Law assassination was anathema to her sporting soul. She would hardly have killed a snake asleep. It seemed to her meanness putrefied.

And he had added to it by fouling Lucrece's reputation in the court; Lucrece had come home to her burning with shame and indignation. Mr. Considine felt that he would sooner have been hanged, than see the look which was on Lady Vere's face when she came into the room.

"Where is Lucrece?" he asked.

"She is in this house."

"Can I see her?"

"She refuses to see you."

"But I am her father."

"She disowns you."

Lady Vere was prepared for him to say, "Indeed, how will she live?" She meant to give Lucrece a home, and an allowance out of her private income. She was not prepared for Stephen's handing her over his pocket-book full of bank-notes.

"Will you give her these?" he said. "She will need them. And, if you will be so good as to let me have the loan of a piece of paper and a pen and ink, I will write an order on my bankers to honour her drafts."

Lady Vere accepted the notes. She considered them Lucrece's right, and pointed to a table with writing materials. She could not help feeling mollified; Stephen had met her in the right way.

When he had written the order and rose to hand it to her he asked, "She will not see me, that is final?" Lady Vere nodded. "Then I am ready. Will you summon my guards?"

The handsome, soldier-bred woman, who had come in with her blue eyes flashing, was touched. Now he was a sports-

man accepting the inevitable with courage; as a minute before he had scorned to use the only power a prisoner had. She could not let him go without hope concerning that, which he had loved not wisely but too well.

"I will let you know when Lucrece consents to see you, though it may not be for a long time. Oh, why were you such a coward, Mr. Considine?"

"I don't allow that I was a coward then. It is you who make me a coward, Lady Vere."

"I make you a coward?"

"Yes. It's when I knock up against that British code of honour that I feel a coward. Now I'm ashamed of having done what then was a sacred duty. If I had had the clearer vision of you and that boy Kennedy, neither Lucrece nor I might have been here."

It was the clearer vision which kept Lady Vere from pleading "that boy Kennedy's" case at a moment so ripe.

Afraid of herself, she went and called his guards. She could not give him her hand, but her voice was friendlier as she said good-bye. She knew that it was useless to ask Lucrece to see him yet. The girl had too much of Stephen's puritanical obstinacy.

The *arabeah* was still waiting at the door. A corporal sat on the box, a soldier took his place beside him, and one on the little seat opposite. There was no necessity for even so much escort; the city was reduced to its normal orderliness. The corporal in charge had orders to convey Mr. Considine to the military prison in the Citadel.

On the next morning he was brought up before the Court-Martial, and remanded for a week, to allow the multitude of documents bearing on the case to be examined.

It was a week of torture. Not that he cared about the result. All his interests in life, except one, were finished now, and that one was lost, though for it he had risked his own life and sacrificed the life of another. And now his pearl beyond price had been taken away from him. Lucrece was as dead to him as if she had been in a convent or a tomb.

He had hardly slept the whole week; he had thought of her night and day; and not a word, not a sign had come from her. He was indeed reaping the whirlwind. If he had had a weapon, he would have put an end to his own life. Why had he not used those few hours of liberty

to buy some minute deadly crystals of poison? Any Greek chemist would have sold it to him without asking questions. Such depths of despair had been unimaginable to him.

The blue crescents below his eyes were half-way down his cheeks with sleeplessness and anxiety when, on the afternoon before his trial commenced, the door of his cell opened, and Lady Vere came in.

"I bring you good news in a way," she said. "I have a message from Lucrece. She will come, but only on one condition—that you swear, before the witness she chooses, that you do not believe that anything sinful or unbecoming ever happened between her and Hoseyn Hassan."

"But it would not be true. I did believe it, or I should not have killed him."

"You did believe it then, I know. But you need not believe it now, when your daughter has said that it is not true."

"Will she swear that it is not true?"

"No. She is too proud. She wished you to take her word."

"Why should I swear, if she will not?"

"Because you are the transgressor."

"I?"

"I will not ask if you have ever known her impure in deed or thought; I could not think such a thing of Lucrece. I only ask if you have ever known anything but absolute innocence in her whole atmosphere?"

"No," he said, in a voice strangely broken for such a strong nature. "But why did she deceive me?"

"When did she deceive you?"

"By meeting Hoseyn Hassan after I had made it a condition, that she should only see him the once to say good-bye."

"Did she promise not to see him?"

"No."

"Did you ask her to promise you?"

"No. But I told her that he had sworn that they should not meet again."

"Then Lucrece is not the crystal saint that I thought her. But, Mr. Considine, I am convinced that nothing unbecoming ever passed between them; she is so nobly indignant in denying it."

"I hope to God you are right, Lady Vere."

"I know I am."

"Lady Vere, do you think that I could see my Confessor?"

"Who is your Confessor?"

"Father Dwyer."

"That would be impossible; he has been deported from the country."

The expression on her face made him ask almost fiercely: "You don't believe in Confession to him!"

"How could I?" she said; "a man I would not trust to feed a horse."

He looked at her in amazement.

"May I say something to you, Mr. Considine?"

"How can I prevent you, Lady Vere?"

"Well, I think that if you had approached your Creator through a worthier channel you might have been spared this deadly sin."

The idea was so opposed to Mr. Considine's whole bringing up that he could not entertain it. He had been taught that the sacredness of the office remains untainted, whatever the personal character of its holder may be. But he saw now how the English must view it, and said almost humbly: "Will you be my Confessor, Lady Vere?"

"I am not worthy, Mr. Considine," said she, whose mind was a clear glass for any sinner to mirror himself in.

"Hear what I've got to say and advise me, I beg you."

She looked consent.

"Shall I be justified in saying, for her sake, that I believe what I do not quite believe?"

"Yes," said Lady Vere decisively. "That is the pure white lie."

"Then I will do it."

"To-night?"

"To-night, if the General will give his leave."

The sergeant in charge of the military prison in the Citadel imagined that affairs of high state must be about to proceed in his prisoner's cell, when he ushered into it that night, not only Lady Vere and the prisoner's daughter in evening dress, but the General and his A.D.C., brilliant in the scarlet of their mess uniforms.

It might have seemed stranger to him, if he had stayed

in the cell and seen the daughter, sheltering, as it were, from the father behind his enemies.

The honest Wagnalls told himself that terms were being offered to the prisoner by the General, and that his daughter had been brought by the General's wife to persuade him. But he had limited opportunities of judging, because he did not enter the cell with them.

None of them, not even his daughter, shook hands with Mr. Considine, though all greeted him as a personal acquaintance and without stiffening barriers. There was nothing marble now about Lucrece's face. It was the prey of conflicting emotions. When the greetings were over, it was she who broke the silence.

"Father, do you believe that I am a pure woman?"

"Lucrece, do you give me your word that I was mistaken?"

"I give you my word."

"Then I believe you."

"And you withdraw everything that you have insinuated against my honour?"

"Everything. Are these your witnesses?"

"The General is my witness," said Lucrece with dignity.

"And Captain Kennedy?"

"Ailsa Kennedy is my lover." Lucrece was in her father's arms so suddenly, that no one saw her go. Perhaps it was that every eye in the room was misty.

"Have you betrothed yourself to him, Lucrece?" asked her father, tenderly smoothing the shining, golden hair.

A scarcely audible "Yes," came from the bowed head.

"Then I did not denounce myself in vain."

"It took some moral courage," said the General. It was impossible not to unbend in that atmosphere.

Stephen held out his hand to Kennedy hesitatingly. Kennedy took it heartily.

"I am glad that you did not reject my hand, when I offered it, as you rejected Lucrece's when I offered it. I wish it could have been cleaner, for your sake, my boy. But I should do it over again, if I had to live my life again. There's only one thing I would not do."

"What is that, sir?" asked Kennedy.

The "sir" touched the prisoner's heart.

"I'll tell you later, when I'm sentenced; it would not become me to say it now."

Neither Kennedy nor Lucrece had asked Mr. Considine's consent to their marriage in so many words. It was never asked, because presently Mr. Considine said, "It takes a great load off my mind, Lucrece, that, whatever may happen to me, you have a husband like Ailsa Kennedy to protect and cherish you. He was the man of my choice from the very beginning. As it was in the beginning, it is now and ever shall be. God bless you, my children," he said as they bade him good-bye. "Now I can face my judges with a light heart."

CHAPTER XLI

OF STEPHEN CONSIDINE'S TRIAL BY COURT-MARTIAL

THE trial of Stephen Considine before the Court-Martial was, even considering its nature, eventful. The indictment was an astonishing one. It set forth :

(1) That Stephen Considine, a private American citizen of Irish parentage, had attempted to overthrow the Government of the country in which he was resident—to wit, Egypt—by inciting the whole of the Mohammedan population to rise in rebellion to expel the British Army of Occupation, and compel the Khedive to submit to the demands of the rebels ;

(2) That he had supplied them with fire-arms for the purposes of the revolt ;

(3) That he had caused the Senoussi Confederation to make the recent disastrous invasion of Egypt, whereby the deaths of many thousand persons, mostly Senoussi, had been caused.

The reading of the various documents proving that he was the originator of the whole revolt, that the Nationalist movement had been a simmering and amorphous ripple until he took it in hand, had already occupied several days when the accused offered to give a succinct, complete and faithful account of his operations, and to plead guilty. His offer was accepted, and in a speech in which he never hesitated for a word, he related the whole of a plot which was without parallel in history.

"It was the ordinary Irish-American's hatred of England which led me to begin this business. The Anti-English party in Egypt were Nationalist, therefore I became a Nationalist. I had at the time no idea of engineering the movement, but as there was a danger of its collapsing for want of funds, I gave them a big subscription. This

inspired them with the idea of making bakshîsh out of their own advantage; they came back and back for money.

"As I wished to give my money to the movement, and not to embezzlers, I soon declined to give any more unless I could direct its expenditure. My Hardware Trust business was already sufficiently important over here for me to have various employees, who spoke Arabic well, and were accustomed to Egyptian lying. Their reports showed me how widespread the Nationalist movement was among Egyptians who could read and write, but had no position and no character. It was about this time that I came to know Ahmed Mahdy, a respectable man, whom I believe you do not intend to prosecute."

"Ahmed Mahdy has not been arrested," said the President of the Court.

"Constitution-making and constitutional agitation were his aims. I found him truthful for an Egyptian."

The Court began to grow decidedly interested. Mr. Considine's confidences were unexpected.

"Mahdy was disturbed at the want of system in the Nationalist operations, and, learning that I had been an active member in the great Home Rule Association at Boston, U.S.A., for giving Ireland her independence, he suggested that I should become President of the Nationalist movement here. He could not answer for the more violent section of the party accepting me, but he was confident that there would be no difficulty, if I paid for the offices and the printing expenses. A meeting of all sections of the party was called, and I was elected President unanimously.

"We had a council of delegates of all shades, but after a few meetings I saw that it would not work. I perceived that the Egyptian Constitutional Nationalists, which included most Nationalists with any property, and the Egyptian Liberals, who had all the real education of the party, were not practical. They aimed only at the conversion of the British Government. They meant to wait for independence till the British chose to give it. They were opposed to anything revolutionary.

"But they had no hold on the people, no following among the Nationalists. I saw that if I was going to effect anything, it would be with the Revolutionary Party and their leader, Mulazim Bey; so I framed an oath for

the party which made the Constitutionalists and Liberals leave us in a body.

"The oath compelled us to prepare for a revolution. With this object I started *The Banner* newspaper, and built the Egyptian Independence Building, in order that I might have my committee, my newspaper, my flat, and my business offices under one roof, and be able to work them all together without attracting attention. From the very beginning I had foreseen that, for my intelligence department, I should have to rely on the agents of my business, the American Hardware Trust."

"Is the American Hardware Trust a genuine business concern?" asked the President.

"It is a company registered in Boston with a capital of ten million dollars, operating extensively in Canada, and the United Kingdom, as well as the Union.

"Well, I was not long in finding out that the Nationalist party, as it stood, comprising roughly what we should call the residuum of Cairo and Alexandria, had no guts for a revolution. There were no makings of an army in them, like the army which won the Americans their freedom in the War of Independence. Mulazim might make them massacre people and destroy property, where there was no risk to their own skins, easily enough; but he could never make them stand up against a single one of your regiments.

"Then I thought of the *fellahin*. They were sturdy country people, the only thing like the American farmers, who made the Army of Independence. The difficulty was that the *fellahin* had no desire to expel you English, who had given them liberty, and the secure possession of their wives and property, and the blessings of regular water. They did not want a Parliament; we could not make them understand what it meant; they thought they had independence; they only wanted to be left alone; they were hopeless.

"It was Father Dwyer, whom I had engaged as joint editor for my paper with Jeffery, who suggested the remedy. 'We must get at their priests,' he said. Well, Moslems have no priests in our sense of the word. But I found that the Sheikhs of the mosques in the country towns could, in many instances, be worked from El Azhar: and that the authorities of El Azhar were against the British Occupation, because of the passage of the Koran,

which is held to signify that it is wrong for Moslems to live in a country, that is dominated by Christians. And they held that this term covered the British Occupation of Egypt."

"We have papers proving the complicity of El Azhar, I think," said the President to the expert, who had examined the documents in Arabic belonging to the Revolution, which had been seized at the time of the arrest of Mulazim, Dwyer and Jeffery.

"A large number."

"Well, go on, Mr. Considine."

"This idea worked well. A number of emissaries were sent out from El Azhar; we—that is, I—paid their expenses. They captured the mosques for us, and my Hardware Trust agents supplemented their work, and distributed fire-arms to everyone who joined the movement. But we were not out of the wood yet. Egyptians have no cohesion. No Moslem rising in Africa has ever been successful without a Mahdi. They cannot fight for an idea; they must have a prophet. Holiness is essential in a prophet. I applied to El Azhar for a prophet; there was no saint of sufficient influence, no man like the old Mahdi of the Soudan.

"But there was one who they thought would do even better, a man whose illustrious birth made him the holiest personage in North Africa, the Descendant of the Prophet, Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan; they undertook to get him to be the leader of the Mohammedan uprising. They, I think, as well as I, imagined that he would be a mere figure-head. But this proved to be erroneous, when we had secured him, and that was a task of no little difficulty, for he was one of the richest Arabs in Egypt, and very well contented with the position of influence and dignity which he already enjoyed; he was less of a Revolutionist than the most conservative of the Constitutional Nationalists. But we secured him eventually; perhaps he expected to be Caliph of the Liberated Egypt.

"To our surprise, when he had once accepted, he threw himself into the movement heart and soul, and under his prestige it increased amazingly.

"Thousands all over Egypt at once enlisted themselves in our National Army, and each received a repeating rifle and so many rounds of ammunition from my agent. But there was still the old difficulty, the impossibility of

getting Egyptians to make a move, till an invading force entered the country, to engage the attention of the English soldiers, and act as a nucleus for them to rally on. At first the idea was that a Turkish force should enter the Sinai district again. But the Young Turks, who had just secured a Parliament for Turkey, surprised and shocked the Young Egyptian party by openly declaring the British the benefactors of Egypt, and the British administration of Egypt to be their own model. Then Mulazim Bey, who had always been in communication with the Senoussi, suggested that we should accept their terms, which were that no Christian should be allowed to remain in Egypt, on pain of death, and that they should be free to establish their *Zawias*, and make converts all over Egypt. They in return were to march an army of a hundred thousand men into Egypt, to drive out the British, and enable our National Army to throw off the mask and join the invader.

"But as Hoseyn Hassan and many in our party objected to the Senoussi terms, thinking it wrong that the Copts, who are the descendants of the ancient Egyptians, should be expelled with the European and Levantine Christians, an attempt was made to effect the Revolution without their aid. This was frustrated by your disarming the Egyptian regiments, on the day that Mulazim Bey marched at the head of the citizens to the Khedive's palace; chiefly, I think, because my killing Sheikh Hoseyn Hassan had deprived the populace of their natural leader. From that moment I was a prisoner in your hands, and unable to follow the course of events. But Hoseyn Hassan was a gallant man, and I incline to the opinion that, if he had been living, he would have attempted a diversion in favour of the Senoussi; and perhaps have won over your Soudanese soldiers."

In conclusion he said: "I deserve and ask no mercy, but await my sentence."

After a brief consultation the Court passed a sentence of twenty years' penal servitude.

When it was pronounced, Mr. Considine applied for permission to address the Court.

"What I have to say," he began, "I could not say before for fear of its being taken as a cowardly attempt to decrease my sentence. Now my sentence is fixed, and I feel free to declare that I wash my hands of the Egyptians,

the miserable cowards, who forgot all the benefits I had heaped on them, and turned on my daughter, when there seemed to be no one to defend her; and who, throughout the revolt, struck not one honest blow for themselves.

"That my daughter is alive, unoutraged, uninjured, I owe to the courtesy of my enemies, the enemies of my race. I still wish the English out of Ireland, but I can wish the Egyptians no better luck than that the English should stay here for ever."

The prisoner was then removed. But later in the day he was informed that, by the clemency of the Khedive, his sentence had been commuted to one of banishment from Egypt, subject to the proviso that, if he ever set foot in Egypt again, he would be liable for the rest of his sentence. On entering into his recognisances for fifty thousand pounds, he was not to be deported at once, like Jeffery and Father Dwyer, but was granted to be at large in Egypt for one month to settle his affairs.

CHAPTER XLII

HOW ADVENTURES PURSUED KENNEDY TO HIS WEDDING-DAY

At last the day had come on which Lucrece Considine was to marry Ailsa John Kennedy.

It seemed a cruel paradox that the daughter of Stephen Considine should have a British military wedding, at which the arch-rebel, a mute, inglorious Washington, would be standing side by side with the British General, the other protagonist in the tragedy of Egypt. But it was only natural for Kennedy, the General's Aide-de-Camp, who had played one of the most distinguished parts in the war, to receive military honours, and Mr. Considine was not merely anxious that Lucrece's wedding should be thus distinguished, but glad of the opportunity to show how completely he had washed his hands of the Egyptian Nationalists.

The wedding was held in the Arab Hall of "Shepherd's Hotel." Mr. Considine had not occupied his flat since his release, and wished the marriage to take place in an hotel, since Kennedy was not of his religion, and various awkward questions would arise if the ceremony took place in a church. There was no public place in Cairo capable of being made so sumptuously Oriental, except the Casino of the Ghezireh Palace, which had the disadvantage of being across the Nile Bridge, and, therefore, cut off from Cairo for an important period of the day.

The whole ground floor of "Shepherd's Hotel" was converted into an exquisite Saracenic palace. A porch with stilted Moorish arches and panels of *plâtre ajouré*, all dazzlingly white, had been built out temporarily over the steps which were the scene of Kennedy's memorable exploit with the jester; under it were two long lines of the King's Highlanders for the bridal party to pass through.

On account of Lord Clapham's terrible loss the British Agency could only be represented by its Councillor of Embassy. But the General and his Staff were all present; and the officers who, most of them unwillingly, had taken part in the ban of Lucrece, turned up in force to make their *amende*. Mr. Prestage was there too—once more the immaculately-tailored M.P.—talking to the Kraffts.

The decorations and flowers were sumptuous, the display of uniforms presented a spectacle that would hardly have been finer at any but a royal wedding.

But where was Kennedy, the soldier bridegroom, with whose deeds of wild daring or unshakable coolness all Egypt rang; he who at this very "Shepherd's" had, singlehanded, prevented a massacre of Europeans; he who had swum the Nile to bring the Highlanders to the rescue of the City; he who had been chosen by the General to bring the news of victory to Cairo on that night of nights; he who, after showing himself the typical Scot who stalks through the annals of war, was to receive the guerdon from the Queen of Beauty?

The precise, formal Kennedy was the last man to put a slight upon his bride. He could not be merely late. What was the explanation?

They waited ten minutes; a quarter of an hour; half an hour; three quarters of an hour; but still no Kennedy was forthcoming.

Gradually a sickening feeling began to spread through the assemblage that something had happened to him. Had he been kidnapped like Tom Cobbe?

At last the General (to whom Lucrece had become almost a daughter) went into the vestry, improvised out of a card-room off the hall, where she was waiting with her father.

"My dear," he said, "I am afraid that the ceremony must be put off. He is not coming. Something has happened."

"Yes, something has happened. But Ailsa will come. I know Ailsa will come. He's not late; he's not so very late. He won't be long; I know he won't be long," said Lucrece, repeating every sentence in her agitation.

"I shall not leave!" she cried; "and father and the clergyman will not leave! Can't you stay? Can't you and Lady Vere stay, and be witnesses, even if the other people must go?"

"We'll stay," responded the General at once; and my Staff and the Guard of Honour must stay as long as we do."

No one set the example of going. It was not easy when the military did not move, and Mrs. Page was not there to take the lead.

So they sat on in their places, talking and talking of going, but not moving.

Kennedy had started in more than good time—his heart was beating high—and was driving down in his pony-cart from his quarters in the Citadel to the wedding, when he saw Mr. Chody standing at the corner of the Armourers' Bazar. Mr. Chody held up his hand, and Kennedy stopped.

"What is it?" he asked impatiently. "They're waiting for me."

The Levantine came up to the side of the cart and, making signs to Kennedy to lean over, whispered into his ear: "I have found Mr. Cobbe; if you give me a seat beside you I can take you to him."

"Found Tom Cobbe?" said Kennedy in a low voice; "do you mean it, man? They swore he had died in the Western Desert on his way to Kufra."

"But he hasn't, Captain Kennedy; I never believed he had; I have been searching for him all this time. Only this morning I found the clue. A woman came to me and said, 'I am Youssef the jester's mother. Since he has been in prison I have no one to support me; cannot you get me some money from the American *Khawaga*?' I knew whom she meant. I said, 'That is not possible. Mr. Considine has no more to do with the Nationalists. But if you say where the English Consul's son is, you will receive the reward offered for his discovery.'"

"How did you know that he was still in Cairo?" asked Kennedy, rather curtly; he was in breathless haste to get on to his wedding.

"I did not know; but with these people you always have to pretend to know. And I guessed that, if he was in Cairo, she would be the first to know of it."

"Well, go on," said Kennedy. He did not wish to be ungracious, but time was flying.

"She said, 'Would not the British Consul give thousands and thousands of piastres to find where his son is?' I saw then that she knew, and we talked a long time, and

in the end, she said that, if I could get her ten thousand piastres, when he was freed, she would indicate the house where Mr. Cobbe is kept. I am to meet her at a place close here. At first she declared I was to come alone, but at last she consented that I might bring one friend with me. Will you come, sir ? ”

What was Kennedy to do ? The bride for whom he had endured, as Jacob endured for Rachel, was waiting for him. This seemed like a new wife of the evil one, to cheat him of the prize he had earned. But who could say if Tom would be there, were he to put off going to rescue him till after his wedding. Was his love to count against Tom's life and liberty ?

No ; it could not. Whatever it cost, save Tom he must.

“ Jump in ! ” he cried, though the old proverb, “ There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip ” was dinning in his ears.

Mr. Chody directed him in a low voice, so as to attract as little notice as possible ; under his guidance, Kennedy drove rapidly up the Armourers' Souk to an open space, where an acre of mediæval houses had been half pulled down to provide a building site, which its purchasers had been too poor even to clear, when the land-boom suddenly died away.

“ Up that lane,” said Mr. Chody, and they drove on till they came to a place where there was room for the cart to turn.

“ We'll get out here,” he said. “ Tell your man to turn the cart round, and keep a very sharp look out ; our lives may depend on it.”

Kennedy gave his orderly the instructions ; and Mr. Chody led the way up a blind alley.

Presently they came to a disused bath-house, easily to be distinguished by its sunk, green-painted doorway.

“ Have you got a revolver ? ” asked Mr. Chody, producing his.

“ No.”

“ That's bad ; well, draw your sword.”

Kennedy first unbrooched his plaid from his shoulder, and wound it round and round his left arm. He knew its value as a shield in case of bludgeoning or brick-throwing, while hanging from his shoulder it might help assailants to drag him down.

Then he drew his sword and said, "I'm ready," and they plunged into the bath-house.

It had been a fine establishment; the reception hall in which they found themselves was a noble, octagonal apartment, with a fountain in the centre, and surrounded by a rich screen with couches behind it, on which the wealthy patrons reclined, while they were resting after their bath. Here they were met by a repulsive old woman, unveiled, the type of the Oriental Jewess who has led the gay life in her younger days, wearing prodigious anklets, and with her arms loaded with cheap gilt bracelets. She leered horribly at Kennedy. "This woman wants ten thousand piastres, when Mr. Cobbe is rescued," said Mr. Chody. "Will Lord Clapham give it?"

"I will, if he doesn't," said Kennedy. "Lead on."

Mr. Chody translated the promise into Arabic for her, and she told them to go straight on till they came to the cold water bathroom, which was open to the sky. There they would find a ladder to take them up to the roof; they were to climb this, and draw it up after them, and drop it through a similar opening in the next roof. Descending the ladder, they would find themselves by the trap-door leading down to the cellar, which contained the furnaces and the fuel for heating the baths. The ladder leading down into this cellar had been withdrawn, so as to convert it into a prison for the officer; but they could use the ladder they had brought with them, which would be long enough. They would have to go as quickly as possible, and be prepared to use their weapons, because the prisoner was guarded by the Nationalists concealed in the adjoining oil mill.

Mr. Chody explained that Tom had been taken in through the oil mill, which had belonged to the same proprietor as the baths in the old days, but that it would be impossible for them to gain admittance through the mill, because it was guarded by the Nationalists.

So they made their way through the various chambers of the bath, panelled with veined white marble, adorned with fountains and antique columns and graceful Moorish arches—massage rooms, warm rooms, hot rooms, cold rooms, with their fountains and plunging tanks still full of clear water.

Over the octagonal fountain in the cold room was an opening in the roof half a dozen feet across. There was a

ladder resting against it with its foot planted in the shallow water. Kennedy sheathed his sword and sprang up it, quickly followed by Mr. Chody. So far they had been unobserved.

The other roof-opening was just beside it; down this they dropped the ladder as quietly as they could, and descended.

The trap-door was only a few feet away. Kennedy opened it, and drawing his sword again, stood over it.

"Tom!" he called; "Tom!" and there came a faint reply.

Mr. Chody struck a match and lit the taper he had brought in his pocket. The ladder was long enough; the cellar was not more than eight feet deep. In it, stretched upon the floor, was the figure which had answered when Kennedy called, though it bore no sort of resemblance to a British soldier.

They put the ladder down, but Tom was too weak to climb it.

"Buck up, Tom, and come out of that, or we shall get caught," said Kennedy, in a loud whisper.

Tom—it was he—struggled to his feet and tried to climb the ladder. But he fell backwards; his legs refused to do their work; it was so long since he had tried to use them.

"I can't manage," he said slowly, and in a weak voice. "You must leave me. It won't be any loss. I'm no use to myself or anybody else, now."

It was pitiful to hear the voice; it was more pitiful to hear such sentiments from the dashing, light-hearted Tom. But he had lost his love, and lost his health, and forgotten what liberty was like.

"Oh, nonsense, man; we'll manage it somehow," said Kennedy cheerily. But how was he to do it? It was impossible to hear if anyone was coming on account of the groaning and squeaking of the *sakkiyeh* which turned the oil mill. Perhaps the cellar had been chosen as Tom's prison for this reason.

"Can you do anything?" asked Tom, feebly.

"Yes, I'm coming down to carry you up," said Kennedy. "Now, Chody, cover the door with your revolver; and if anyone attempts to get in, keep them back at all costs, or we shall never get out of this place alive."

But Mr. Chody's heart would carry him no further.

"No. You take the pistol, and I will go down for him. I could not keep them back." Kennedy took the pistol in his left hand—he always used a revolver with his left hand—he had his sword in his right, and took his stand two yards from the door of the oil mill.

The miller's little white dog betrayed them. Suddenly it began to bark furiously. The door opened, and an Egyptian looked in. He probably expected to find nothing, least of all a British officer in full uniform, sword in hand. He darted back and raised the alarm, and a dozen men responded. One of them hurled something sharp and heavy which Kennedy warded off with his plaided arm. Then they ran back—to find fresh weapons probably. Kennedy moved forward to the doorway and found himself in a long room with a similar doorway opposite from which came the droning of the *sakkiyeh*. He called to Chody to get Tom up as quickly as he could, and pull the ladder up and plant it against the roof.

At that moment his assailants came back to the other door. The moment the first appeared, Kennedy fired and brought him down; he wanted to make them afraid to show themselves.

There was a lull. During it, Mr. Chody painfully dragged Tom up from the cellar; and planted the ladder against the roof; and dragged him up it to the roof.

"I'm sorry to be such a lump," said Tom. He was pitifully feeble; he had been almost starved, and had hardly moved for weeks.

When he was safely on the roof, Kennedy called:

"Chody, come here and take the revolver." Mr. Chody crept down trembling, and took it. He almost dropped it.

"Up again as quick as you can, and cover this door; and don't get me in your line of fire."

When the little man was up, Kennedy made a dash for the ladder. But the Egyptians, as soon as they heard him leave his post, detected their chance and tried to rush him.

In spite of his instructions, Mr. Chody pointed the revolver just in the line that he must take as he dashed up the ladder.

But he had expected this, and with sublime coolness, shifted the ladder, just escaping half a dozen missiles.

Quickly Mr. Chody fired a shot into them and brought

another man down. He could not miss at that range with so many of them.

The Egyptians withdrew behind the door again, and, in a flash, Kennedy was up the ladder, and had drawn it after him.

As quickly as they could, Kennedy and Mr. Chody put it down into the bath and got Tom down—not an easy job, for Kennedy had to let him down by his hands into Mr. Chody's arms. Then they pulled the ladder away, and Kennedy carried him through the baths in his arms. He knew well how important haste was—the Egyptians would be sure to rush round to the entrance of the baths.

The three would have been lost, if it had not been for the cowardice of the Egyptians. But as they came round, a dozen of them, armed with various weapons—fortunately no firearms—they caught sight of Kennedy's orderly, and took it as a sign that the place was in the occupation of the military, and fled.

The old woman had disappeared also ; discovery would have meant death for her. She knew where to meet Mr. Chody for her ten thousand piastres.

In a few minutes' time the pony-cart was racing for "Shepherd's," where Mr. Chody was to remain till he could have a guard back to the Citadel.

Tall Aylmer—the Best Man—was standing at the Ezbekiyeh corner of Shepherd's terrace, anxiously watching for the arrival of the bridegroom, when he saw Kennedy's cart dashing up with an odd little Levantine beside the Highlander, and the orderly holding up a man, who seemed to have been in an accident.

The cart stopped, and, without waiting for the orderly to come round and hold the pony, Kennedy handed the reins to Mr. Chody and sprang down. He did not look much like a bridegroom. He was dusty, and dishevelled, and his plaid was wrapped round his arm instead of brooched to his shoulder. That he was not injured was clear from the way he sprang down, and ran to the back of the cart to help the orderly lift out a miserable-looking man with matted hair, and face and hands so grimy that it was difficult to tell if he was a European or an Arab, dressed in what looked like a ragged and obliterated uniform.

When the object of his compassion was safe upon the pavement, the orderly took the pony, and Mr. Chody got

down and joined Kennedy, and each gave the tramp an arm and helped him very gently and tenderly up the steps—those steps of “Shepherd’s,” where, for the second time, Kennedy seemed to be the chief actor in a tragedy.

Military discipline prevented the men of his regiment, who lined the porch, from noticing anything as they saluted Kennedy, though they were fired with pride at what they were obliged not to see.

The guests took it for a grim jest of Kennedy’s to give an object-lesson of a just cause and impediment to his marriage, as he helped the tramp up the room. He must mean to confront Stephen Considine with a victim of his villainy—like Kipling’s “Man Who Was.”

The tension was painful; everyone felt relieved when the General stepped forward, and asked rather formally, “Who is this, Kennedy?”

“He’s a wedding guest, sir,” said Kennedy, looking at the tramp with the fond eyes he would have turned on a long-lost brother.

“What do you mean?” asked the General. But Lady Vere had flown to the tramp. “It’s Tom,” she cried. “Don’t you see that it’s Tom Cobbe, come back from the dead!”

“Yes,” said Kennedy, “it’s Tom Cobbe,” and looked round for someone to help, for he was wild to get to Lucrece. What could she be thinking of him, an hour late for the wedding! He almost expected her to have vanished. She was nowhere to be seen. His eyes searched through and through the crowd. But his two faithful cronies in the Fusiliers were waiting to pat him on the back. He wrung their hands and sent Renshaw flying to telephone the great news to Lord Clapham, and Esslemont to the bar for brandy to bring Tom round—the rescued Grenadier was almost too weak to speak.

Then, for once, breathless and agitated, he turned to Lady Vere.

“Where is Lucrece?” he asked, in a strange voice; he dreaded that he had lost her.

“Lucrece is in the card-room waiting for you,” said Lady Vere.

“I’m not, I’m not! I’m here!” cried Lucrece, stepping that moment out of the improvised vestry, with her veil thrown back, and her blue eyes filled with tears, and smiles trembling round her mouth.

He folded her to him hungrily. To him, at that moment, the great hall contained only Lucrece, though the General and his Staff, and half the officers in the Garrison were there, with their eyes on him.

"Lucrece," he whispered, "Lucrece. I'm as right as you are; I didn't get a scratch. They never got near me. I shall never leave you again—never."

"Oh, Ailsa!" she murmured, regarding him with adoring eyes.

"But I must fly for a few minutes now to get washed and brushed; I can't be married like this;" and, he added ruefully, "My plaid'll have to be pinned. I've lost my shoulder-brooch."

But Lucrece clung to him hysterically.

"Ailsa, you shall not go! Ailsa, you shall not go! Something will happen again—and you will never be mine. I have waited so long. I cannot wait. Don't make me wait! It is cruel!"

Kennedy did not know what to say, but he glanced at Lady Vere, and the General, and the trim officers. It seemed so horribly disrespectful to them to be married in this state, even if Lucrece wished to condone it.

But Lucrece's nerves were broken; she would not leave him. The situation was tragical, until Andrew Black, the Chaplain of the Highlanders, who had been chosen by Mr. Considine to marry them, when his own Church raised a difficulty about the mixed marriage, and had the simpler Scottish traditions of matrimony in his heart, came forward and said, "Whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," and married Lucrece just as she was released from her bridegroom's arms, except that Mrs. Krafft, with a sad little smile to Kennedy, drew down her veil for her.

Thus it was that Ailsa John Kennedy, of Cambuskennedy, was married with his plaid round his arm, as he had rolled it in the ancient Highland fashion, before he dashed in to rescue Tom.

THE END

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