

Graydon William Murray

**Guy in the Jungle: or, A Boy's
Adventure in the Wilds of Africa**



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Содержание

PROLOGUE	4
CHAPTER I.	8
CHAPTER II.	15
CHAPTER III.	22
CHAPTER IV.	29
CHAPTER V.	37
CHAPTER VI.	43
CHAPTER VII.	49
CHAPTER VIII.	55
CHAPTER IX.	60
CHAPTER X.	66
CHAPTER XI.	73
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	77

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PROLOGUE

It was November in London. The great city was buried under a dank, yellow fog. Traffic was temporarily checked; foot passengers groped their way by the light of the street lamps, and the hoarse shouts of the link boys running before cabs and carriages with blazing torches rang at intervals above the muffled rumble of countless wheels.

In the coffee-room of a quiet hotel on the Strand a young man stands by the window, looking pensively out on the misty street. He is quite young, with light hair that falls half over his forehead, and a drooping, golden mustache, and in rather startling contrast to these a deep-bronzed complexion that tells of foreign lands and tropical suns.

"Captain Chutney, sir?"

It is a hotel servant, with a big blue envelope in his hand, and, as the young man wheels round, he reveals the uniform and bright

facings of a captain of hussars.

"Yes, I am Captain Chutney," he replies to the servant. "Thank you," and, taking the blue document, he stands for a moment in deep thoughtfulness.

Well may he hesitate to break that official seal which glares up at him so broadly. Were the gift of futurity his, and could he see mirrored before him the dread panorama of events that are inevitably linked with that innocent-looking missive, he would fling it with horror-stricken hands into the coal-fire that burns on the grate beside him.

But no disturbing thought enters his mind. The future looks bright and cheerful enough just at present, and ripping open the end of the envelope without breaking the seal, he pulls out a folded paper and reads:

Colonial Office, Downing Street, S. W.

To Captain Guy Chutney:

Your immediate presence is requested on urgent affairs.

(Signed) —

Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs.

Chutney looks with some surprise at the famous signature attached with a bold hand. He places the letter in his pocket, pushes open a swinging door at the left, and vanishes up a broad stairway.

In five minutes he reappears, clad in a big mackintosh, and, calling a cab, he rattles off westward through the fog.

He is not in the best of humors. He had made other plans for the day, for his furlough is up, and tomorrow he leaves for India to rejoin his regiment. He had come up yesterday from the country, where he had put in a week at grouse hunting with his brother, Sir Lucas Chutney, and today he intended bidding good-bye to old friends, and to attend to the making of a few purchases.

Downing Street is not far away, and presently the cab rolls into Whitehall and draws up before the big granite building.

Guy makes his way through the spacious corridors thronged with clerks, civilians, foreigners from every part of the globe, and at last reaches the private apartments of the chief.

The Right Honorable Lord is deeply engaged, but his private secretary receives Chutney cordially, and, leading him back into a still more secluded and stately apartment, motions him to a soft chair and sits down opposite him.

"Captain Chutney," he begins abruptly, "you leave for India tomorrow?"

"India Mail, eight o'clock in the morning," Guy replies briefly.

"Very well. We are going to intrust you with a very important commission. You will stop off at Aden, cross the Gulf of Aden in the semi-weekly steamer, and present these documents to Sir Arthur Ashby, the Political Resident of Zaila, the fortified town of the Somali Coast Protectorate."

The secretary hands Guy two bulky envelopes, stamped and sealed with the government seal.

"They relate to affairs of importance," he continues. "Your

gallant record justifies us in intrusting the papers to your care. You can return in time to take the next steamer. Perhaps I had better tell you this much in confidence," the secretary adds:

"We have received from certain sources information to the effect that the Emir of Harar, on the southern harbor of Abyssinia, contemplates at no distant date an attack on Zaila. Our garrison there is weak, and, as you probably know, the Somali country is treacherous and unreliable. These papers contain necessary instructions for the Political Resident."

The secretary rises, and Guy gladly follows his example.

"I will see that the papers are delivered," he says earnestly.

"Thank you," the secretary responded. "I am sure that you will. I wish you a safe voyage, Captain Chutney, and fresh Burmese laurels, for you will no doubt take part in the Chittagong expedition."

They shake hands warmly, and in five minutes Guy is rattling cityward again through the increasing fog. Long afterward he looks back on that morning as the most memorable day of his life. At present his commission sits lightly on his mind. He attends to all his duties in London, catches the India Mail, and two days later is steaming across the Mediterranean on board the P. and O. steamship Cleopatra.

CHAPTER I.

THE STOLEN DESPACHES

Steadily the Cleopatra had traversed the Mediterranean, passed through the Suez Canal, plowed the burning waters of the Red Sea, and now, on this bright, sultry day, Aden was left behind, and with smoking funnels she was heading swiftly and boldly for the Indian Ocean.

A smaller steamer, a mere pigmy beside this gigantic Indian liner, had left the harbor of Aden at the same time, and was beating in a southwesterly direction across the gulf with a speed that was rapidly increasing the distance between the two vessels.

On the upper deck stood Guy Chutney, straining his eyes through a pair of field-glasses to catch a last glimpse of the Cleopatra, and to distinguish, if possible, the figures grouped under the white awnings. He had only arrived at Aden last night, and now he was bound for the dreary African coast, while all the gay friends he had made on board the Cleopatra were steaming merrily off for Calcutta without him.

It was by no means a comforting state of affairs, and Guy's spirits were at their lowest ebb as the steamer finally faded into the horizon. He put up the glasses and strode forward. From the lower deck came a confused babel of sounds, a harsh jabbering of foreign languages that grated roughly on his ear.

"This is a remarkably fine day, sir."

It was the captain who spoke, a bluff, hearty man, who looked oddly out of place in white linen and a solar topee.

"It is a grand day," said Guy. "May I ask when we are due at Zaila?"

"At Zaila?" repeated the captain, with a look of sudden surprise. "Ah, yes. Possibly tomorrow, probably not until the following day."

It was now Guy's turn to be surprised.

"Do you mean to tell me," he said, "that it takes two or three days to cross the Gulf of Aden?"

"No," replied the captain briskly. "You are surely aware, my dear sir, that we proceed first to Berbera, and thence up the coast to Zaila."

"Then you have deceived me, sir," cried Guy hotly. "You told me this morning that this steamer went to Zaila."

"Certainly I did," replied the captain. "You didn't ask for any more information, or I should have told you that we went to Berbera first. The great annual fair has just opened at Berbera, and I have on board large stores of merchandise and trading properties. On other occasions I go to Zaila first, but during the progress of the fair I always go direct to Berbera and unload. I supposed that fact to be generally understood," and, turning on his heel, the captain walked off to give some orders to his men.

Guy was half inclined to be angry at first, but on reflection he concluded he was just as well satisfied. Besides, it would give

him a chance to see that wonderful African fair, which he now remembered to have heard about on different occasions.

But one other person was visible on the deck, a short, chunky man, with a dark complexion, and crafty, forbidding features.

A Portuguese or a Spaniard Guy put him down for at once, and he instantly conceived a deep mistrust of him. The fellow, however, was inclined to be sociable.

"Ah, an Englishman," he said, coming up to Guy and holding out his hand, an action which Guy professed not to see.

"You are going to Berbera, perhaps," he went on, nowise discomfited by the rebuff.

"No," said Guy shortly. "To Zaila."

"Ah, yes, Zaila! You have friends there, perhaps? I, too, am acquainted. I know very well Sir Arthur Ashby, the governor at Zaila."

His keen eyes scanned Guy's face closely, and noted the faint gleam of surprise at this information.

But Guy was too clever to be thrown off his guard.

"Yes," he said. "I know some people here. I have not the pleasure of Sir Arthur's acquaintance."

He would have turned away at this point, but the man pulled a card from his pocket and presented it to him. Guy glanced it over with interest:

C. Manuel Torres,

Trader at Aden and Berbera

"A vile Portuguese slave-hunter," he thought to himself.

"Well, Mr. Torres," he said. "I am sorry that I have no cards about me, but my name is Chutney."

The Portuguese softly whispered the name once or twice. Then, without further questioning, he offered Guy a cigar, and lit one himself.

Manuel Torres proved to be quite an interesting companion, and gave Guy a vivid account of the wonders of the fair.

As they went below at dinner time he pointed out on the corner of the dock a great stack of wooden boxes.

"Those are mine," he said. "They contain iron and steel implements for the natives and Arabs."

"They look like rifle cases," Guy remarked carelessly; and, looking at the Portuguese as he spoke, he fancied that the dark face actually turned gray for an instant. In a moment they were seated at the table, and the brief occurrence was forgotten.

All that afternoon they steamed on across the gulf, overhead the blue and cloudless sky, beneath them waters of even deeper blue, and at sunset the yellow coast line of the African continent

loomed up from the purple distance.

Guy had been dozing under an awning most of the afternoon, but now he came forward eagerly to get his first glimpse of eastern Africa.

To his great disappointment, the captain refused to land.

It was risky, he said, to make a landing at night, and it would be dark when they entered the harbor. They must lie at anchor till morning.

Most of the night Guy paced up and down the deck sleeping at brief intervals, and listening with eager curiosity to the strange sounds that floated out on the air from the shore, where the flickering glare of many torches could be seen.

Stretched on a mattress, the Portuguese slept like a log, without once awakening.

Before dawn the anchors were lifted, and at the captain's suggestion Guy hastened down to his cabin to gather up his scanty luggage, for most of his traps had gone on to Calcutta in the Cleopatra.

He buckled on his sword, put his revolvers in his pocket, clapped his big solar topee on his head, and then reached down for the morocco traveling case which he had stored away for better security under his berth.

A cry of horror burst from his lips as he dragged it out. The lock was broken, and the sides were flapping apart. For one brief second he stared at it like a madman, and then, with frantic haste, he fell on his knees, and, plunging his hands inside, began to

toss the contents recklessly out upon the floor. Toilet articles, linen, cigars, writing-paper, jewelry, and various other things piled up until his finger nails scraped the bottom. He turned the case bottom up and shook it savagely, shook it until the silver clasps rattled against the sides, and then he sank back with a groan, while the drops of perspiration chased each other down his haggard cheeks.

The precious despatches were gone.

For the time being Guy was fairly driven out of his senses by the horror of the calamity. Ruin stared him in the face. What madness it was to leave those papers in his cabin! He had foolishly hesitated to carry them on his person for fear the perspiration would soak them through and through, and now they were hopelessly lost. The cabin door had been locked, too. The thief must have had a key.

The first shock over, his manliness asserted itself, and he took a critical view of the situation. He hardly suspected any person as yet. The despatches must be recovered. That was the first step.

He flew up the stairs, three at a time, and rushed panting and breathless upon deck.

All about him was the hurry and bustle of preparation. The shore was close at hand, and the steamer was moving toward the rude wharf. Manuel Torres was leaning over the rail, coolly smoking a cigar. The captain stood near by, gazing intently at the shore. He looked up with wonder as Guy appeared, crying out in hoarse tones:

"I have been robbed, captain, treacherously robbed. Documents of the greatest importance have been stolen from my cabin, and not a soul shall leave this steamer till every inch of it has been searched. I demand your assistance, sir!"

CHAPTER II.

A STRANGE MEETING

Torres looked up in apparent surprise from his cigar, and the captain's ruddy face flashed a shade deeper.

"Are you sure, sir?" he cried. "This is a strange place for a robbery."

Guy turned on him hotly.

"A robbery has been committed, nevertheless, and the articles stolen are despatches for the governor of Zaila. They were intrusted to me for delivery, and I look to you to recover them."

"Ah! Government despatches, were they?" said the captain. "Just step below and we'll look into the matter."

They turned toward the cabin, leaving the Portuguese still gazing over the rail.

At the foot of the steps the captain stopped.

"Why, what's this?" he said, stooping down and pulling from under the lowest step a bunch of papers.

"The stolen despatches!" cried Guy wildly. "But look! The seals have been broken."

Together they inspected the documents. Each envelope had been opened, but the contents appeared to be all right. The thief had plainly been satisfied with their perusal.

"Whoever stole them," said the captain, "was afraid to retain

them lest a search should be made, and as he had no way to destroy them he tossed them down here where they could easily be found."

"Who else had a key to my cabin?" Guy asked sternly.

"The key to Torres' cabin will open yours," replied the captain, "and several of the crew also have keys."

"Then Torres is the man," said Guy. "The scoundrel looks capable of anything."

"I wouldn't advise you to accuse him," said the captain gravely. "He may cause trouble for you on shore. You must remember that British influence is little felt at Berbera. Your best plan is to say nothing, but relate the whole affair to the governor at Zaila. And now, as we may lie in the harbor here all day, you had better go on shore. You will see a strange sight."

Guy put the recovered documents away in an inner pocket, and followed the captain on deck, in a very angry frame of mind. Torres had disappeared, but Guy felt that he had not seen the last of him.

He half forgot his anger in the strange sight that now met his eyes, for the steamer was just approaching the wharf, and in a moment the gang-plank was dropped over the side.

He waited until the eager, jostling crowd of Arabs had passed over, and then he made his way to shore. The spectacle before him was marvelous and entrancing.

Extending apparently for miles up and down the yellow stretch of sand that fringed the coast was one great sea of canvas that

fluttered under the African breeze.

There were tents of every description, some old and dingy, some spotlessly white and shining, and others brilliant in many colors, barred with red and green and yellow, while here and there, from their midst, rose the sun-baked walls and towers of the original Berbera, for all this floating canvas belonged to the nomadic population who flock hither from the interior during the fair, and add twenty thousand to the perennial population of the town.

Dazed as though in a dream, Guy moved forward, noting with wonder the strange people who thronged about him and regarded him with evident mistrust. Borne on by the crowd, he found himself presently in the main avenue of the fair, and his first amazed impression was that he had been transported to a scene in the "Arabian Nights."

On either side of the narrow street stretched the sea of tents, and before them, on rude stalls, were ranged everything that the imagination could devise: sacks of coffee and grain, great heaps of glittering ivory, packets of gold-dust, aromatic spices, and fragrant gums of all sorts, great bunches of waving ostrich plumes, bales of cotton and tobacco, tanned hides of domestic animals, tawny skins of lions, leopards, and panthers, oddly-woven grass mats, quaint arms, and bits of carving, fetish ornaments, and even live cattle and sheep tied to the poles of the tents.

Standing guard over their wares were natives from all parts

of Africa, Arabs from the Zambesi, savage-looking Abyssinians, crafty Somalis with greasy, dangling locks, and brawny, half-naked fellows from the interior, the like of whom Guy had never seen or heard.

And up and down the narrow street moved in a ceaseless throng the traders who had come to purchase: Arabs from Aden and Suakim, Egyptians from Cairo, traders from Zanzibar, and a sprinkling of Portuguese and Spaniards.

Some of them bore their goods on camels, others had hired native carriers, who staggered under the heavy bales and cases, and the uproar was deafening and incessant as they wrangled over their bartering and dazzled the eyes of their customers with rolls of English and French silks, pigs of iron, copper, and brass, sacks of rice and sugar, glittering Manchester cutlery, American beads, and cans of gunpowder.

The builders of the tower of Babel itself could not have produced such a jargon or variety of tongues, Guy thought, as he picked his way onward, now stopping to gaze at some odd-looking group, and now attracted by the harsh music and beating drums of a band of native musicians.

He noted with secret satisfaction the occasional presence in the crowd of a dark-skinned soldier in British uniform, and he observed with some surprise the vast number of Abyssinian Arabs, whom he recognized by their peculiar dress.

Finally a stranger sight than all arrested his steps. In a small inclosure, cordoned off by a rope, lay a dozen poor slaves

shackled to stakes driven deep in the ground and exposed to the burning sun.

Their owner, a brawny negro with a head-dress of feathers, a native of the Galla country, was disputing over their purchase with a gigantic Arab, whose powerful frame irresistibly fascinated Guy's attention.

He wore a loosely-flapping cotton gown, confined at the waist by a belt that fairly bristled with knives and pistols, while a scarlet burnous was drawn over his head, affording a brilliant set-off to the glittering eyes, the tawny, shining skin, and the short chin-beard and mustache.

Behind the group of slaves, chained to the pole of a spacious tent, lay a sleek and glossy leopard, sleeping in the sun as unconcernedly as though he were in the midst of his native desert. The Arab, unaware probably of the beast's presence, walked slowly round the circle inspecting his prospective purchase.

The leopard perhaps was dreaming of the days when he was wont to chase the deer through the jungle, for suddenly his spotted body quivered and his long tail shot out like a stiffened serpent. The Arab's sandaled foot came down on the tapering end, and with a scream of rage the beast sprang up.

Overcome by a sudden fright, the Arab staggered backward a pace, and like a flash the leopard shot to the end of his chain, and fastening teeth and claws on the unfortunate man's neck, bore him to the ground. Panic-stricken, those who stood near made no move. The big negro danced wildly up and down, keeping well

out of reach of his savage pet, and the slaves howled with fright.

An instant's delay and the man was lost. Suddenly Guy drew his revolver and sprang forward.

The negro uttered a howl and tried to push him back, but Guy forced his way past him, and pressing the revolver close to the brute's head pulled the trigger.

It was a good shot. The leopard rolled over lifeless, and the Arab, with Guy's assistance, rose to his feet very dazed, while the blood dripped down from his lacerated back.

Instantly the scene changed. The negro, angered at the death of his leopard, advanced menacingly on Guy with a drawn knife, and in response to his summons other negroes rallied to his aid.

But the Arab, too, had friends in the crowd, and they, pressing forward in turn, made it seem as though a bloody conflict were inevitable.

Just as the issue was trembling in the balance, a shout arose from the crowded street.

"The white man! Make room for the white man!" and through the parted ranks Guy saw advancing a bronzed Englishman in white flannels and helmet.

The stranger pushed right in through the sullen group of negroes until he reached the open space before the tent, and stood face to face with Guy.

Their eyes met in one amazed glance that startled the wondering spectators, and then from Guy's lips burst a glad, hoarse cry:

"Melton Forbes, or I am dreaming!"

"Chutney, by Jove! My dear fellow, can it be possible?"

All else forgotten in their deep joy of meeting, the two bronzed Englishmen fell into each other's arms, and the Arabs and negroes, dimly comprehending what it all meant, shouted in sympathy and lowered their arms.

CHAPTER III.

THE ARAB'S WARNING

For a little while the British officer and the British newspaper correspondent could do nothing but stand off to look at each other, and then embrace again as though it were hard to believe that it was not all a dream.

The Arabs and negroes had drawn to one side, and the big savage was wrathfully inspecting the body of the leopard.

"Come," said Melton, plucking Guy's arm, "we will find a quiet place where we can talk in peace."

The crowd made way for them, but before they had taken half a dozen steps the big Arab staggered forward and seized Guy by the hand.

"You brave man," he cried. "Makar never forget."

He kept on with many protestations of gratitude until Guy tried to withdraw in embarrassment.

"Wait," said the Arab. "Come along. Me tell you something."

He fairly dragged Guy back to the entrance of the tent where none could hear, and bending low he whispered in his ear:

"Berbera no place for Inglis man this day. Better go away, quick. Heed what Makar tell you. Now go."

He fairly pushed Guy from him, and the latter, joining Melton, who had witnessed the scene with the greatest curiosity, led the

way out into the street.

A curious crowd followed them closely for some distance, and not a word was spoken until they had turned off into a side avenue lined with low mud buildings.

"Now," said Melton quickly, "I need not tell you, my dear fellow, what a pleasant surprise this meeting has been, but all explanation must be deferred to a more suitable time. You have made a friend and an enemy today, for Makar Makalo is the most powerful Arab in the whole Somali country, while that big negro is Oko Sain, the head chief of all the Gallas who dwell two hundred miles back from the coast. What did Makar tell you?"

Guy repeated the Arab's warning, and Melton stood for a moment in deep thought.

"I suspected as much," he said finally. "Never before have there been so many Arabs and Somalis from the interior at Berbera. Only yesterday a caravan of two thousand camels arrived from Harar in the Galla country. Something is wrong, I have felt certain, and now Makar confirms my fears."

A glimmering suspicion of the truth flashed over Guy's mind at this juncture, but he hesitated to speak.

"Now then," continued Melton, "this can mean nothing but a massacre. The only soldiers in the place are about sixty of the Bombay infantry, who were sent down here from Zaila, and as for the fortifications, they are nothing but a few mud walls. There they lie yonder," and he pointed to an English flag floating over the house-tops some distance away.

"We are only wasting time here," he added. "We'll look about a little and then I'll decide what to do. I don't want to raise any false alarm."

They turned back to the main avenue. The crowds still surged up and down, and the tumult seemed as harsh and discordant as ever, but the place had nevertheless undergone a change since they had left it a short time before. Little bartering was going on, and but few Arabs and Somalis were to be seen. Those on the street were mostly harmless traders from Aden and Cairo.

"What has become of all the Arabs?" asked Guy.

"That is just what I want to know," said Melton; "I'll soon find out, though. Walk as fast as you can now, Chutney, and look as unconcerned as possible."

Melton led the way down the street for a little distance, and, turning into a side passage, soon stopped before a low, one-story building.

A dark-skinned fellow clad in ordinary Egyptian costume stood in the doorway, and with a cry of surprise Guy recognized Mombagolo, Forbes' trusty savage servant, who did much good service for them when they were in Burma together.

Their greeting was brief and hasty.

"I have work for you, Momba," said Melton. "Something is going on in the town, I don't know just what. You can go anywhere without being suspected. Find out what you can, and then come down to the wharf. Don't return here."

The man hastened away at once, and then Guy and Melton

started for the shore.

"I won't give any alarm at the garrison," said Forbes, as they hurried along. "I'll wait till Momba reports. I don't suppose anything is contemplated before nightfall at the earliest, and, as the troops are scattered, it would only precipitate matters if I should have them called in."

The last bale of goods was being unloaded from the steamer when they reached the wharf. The captain and officers were smoking cigars against the rail, and catching sight of Guy, the former called out:

"Don't forget now. Six o'clock sharp."

Guy nodded, and followed Melton to one side, where the two sat down on a bale of cotton. Melton briefly explained how he came to be at Berbera. After his return from Burma, he had been dispatched as war correspondent of the *London Post* to Suakim, which town was at that time threatened by the Mahdi.

Mombagolo, or Momba as Melton now called him, had become his faithful servant, and a week ago, the war-scare at Suakim having subsided, Melton had come to Berbera to write up the great fair for his paper.

Then Guy, in his turn, simply stated that he had stopped off on his way to India to execute a commission at Zaila. He made no reference to the dispatches, feeling doubtful whether it would be proper or not, for a government secret is a thing of weighty importance.

The conversation drifted to their perilous adventures in

Burma, and the time passed on unheeded.

At last Melton glanced up.

"Do you observe how quiet it is?" he exclaimed. "And look! There are but few people in sight."

It was indeed quiet. A dead, oppressive calm had settled on the sea; not a breeze rustled, not a ripple broke the glassy surface of the water, and from the town, instead of the loud babel of cries, came only a low murmur like a distant waterfall. A strange calm indeed, the calm that serves as precursor to the unseen storm.

Suddenly, with startling abruptness, a rifle-shot broke the silence with its shuddering echoes. Guy and Melton sprang to their feet. The officers on the steamer crowded to the rail, up in the town dark figures ran to and fro, a soldier in bright uniform was seen speeding toward the garrison, and now plunging madly toward the wharf came a white clad figure, pursued by a howling group of Somali warriors, who brandished long spears and daggers. A shot from Melton's pistol brought them to a sudden halt, and Momba, for it was indeed he, ran a few paces and fell breathless at his master's feet.

"What fiendishness is this?" shouted the captain furiously, from the deck of the steamer.

Momba staggered to his knees.

"The Arabs!" he cried. "They are coming – they have rifles – the Portuguese – he broke open long boxes – and handed out guns – Makar's men all have them – the Somalis have them – they have plenty shells – "

Guy ground his teeth.

"The infernal scoundrel!" he cried. "So that's what those long boxes of his contained!"

"You mean Torres?" exclaimed Melton. "I know the villain. He is a partner of Makar Makalo's. But come. We must fight our way to the garrison."

Alas! too late! Bang – bang, bang – bang, a fusillade of rifle-fire rang out from the town, hideous yells of triumph mingled with cries of despair and agony, and over the garrison walls floated a constantly increasing cloud of white smoke. The firing deepened, and a hoarse yell arose as the English flag, shot from its staff, fluttered down into the curling smoke.

"They are murdering the garrison!" cried Melton.

He grasped a revolver in each hand, and would have gone madly forward, but at that moment a louder tumult burst forth close at hand, and swarming down the crooked street, curving in and out through the tents and heaped-up stalls, came a fierce and frantic horde of Arabs and Somalis, waving rifles and spears, and yelling like ten thousand fiends.

"On board for your lives!" shouted the captain, and as Guy and Melton dashed over the gang-plank, followed by Momba, a kick from the captain sent it whirling down into the water.

Providentially steam was up, slowly the engines started, the screw revolved, and just as the steamer moved lazily out into the harbor, the enraged mob swept to the very edge of the wharf. In futile rage they let fly showers of spears and a scattering rifle-

fire that pierced and shattered the woodwork of the vessel, but fortunately without effect, for every man had got safely below.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ALARM

They rushed upon deck again as soon as the steamer was beyond rifle-shot. A distant roar, like the blended shouts of thousands of people, floated across the water from the town, and at intervals a shot was fired.

Smoke no longer hovered over the garrison. The last man had succumbed, and with the fall of the garrison the massacre seemed to have come to an end. The uprising had been directed against the British troops alone.

"This is a terrible thing," said Melton, "and there is something back of it all. I can't understand it. Can it be possible the wretches have designs on Zaila, I wonder? It's a pity you interfered with that leopard, Chutney. If Makar Makalo had perished, this revolt might never have broken out. Makar is at the head of it, I know, and possibly he has influence behind him. He is an ally of that fanatical despot, Rao Khan, the Emir of Harar, who hates the English worse than poison, and – "

Guy started at the mention of this name.

"I want to see you a minute, Forbes," he cried excitedly; and, leading Melton to one side, he pulled out the despatches from his pocket, and said, "You have come closer to the truth than you imagine. I am going to confide a secret to you, and you can

tell what had best be done. These papers were intrusted to me for delivery into the hands of Sir Arthur Ashby, at Zaila, and they contain instructions bearing on the very matter you have just mentioned. The authorities at the colonial office in London told me in secret that the Emir of Harar was supposed to be plotting the capture of Zaila, and these despatches contain Sir Arthur's orders in case of that emergency."

"By Jove, that explains it!" cried Melton. "The emergency has come. I see it all. Makar had collected his Arabs and Somalis at Berbera by the Emir's orders, and they were only waiting the arrival of that villainous Portuguese with the rifles. They have put the garrison at Berbera out of the way, and now they will march on to Zaila."

"Then what can be done?" demanded Guy. "Shall we proceed to Zaila, or get the captain to steam direct for Aden and collect all the available troops?"

"No, no," groaned Forbes. "That would be useless. Zaila is sixty miles up the coast. We can beat the Arabs, and get there in time to prepare the town for defense. The garrison is wretchedly small, but they will have to hold out until assistance can come from Aden."

Melton was still more astounded when Guy told him of the stealing of the despatches.

"Then Torres knows their contents," he said, "and he will act accordingly. This is certainly a bad business, Chutney. Those papers must be delivered to Sir Arthur as soon as possible,

though, to tell the truth, I fear Zaila is doomed. But we are losing precious time. Something must be done at once."

They called the captain aside, and told him just enough to impress him with the danger threatening Zaila, and he readily fell in with their plans.

Twilight was now falling, and by the time darkness had settled over the blue waters of the gulf the steamer was plowing her way steadily northward, Berbera but faintly visible in the rear by the glow of the burning torches.

Hour after hour they steamed on. Neither Guy nor Melton could sleep, but sitting aft on camp stools they talked in whispers of the dread events they had witnessed, and of what might be before them.

At midnight the steamer came to a sudden stop. The machinery, exerted to the highest pressure, had broken in some part. A delay was inevitable, the captain assured them, but in a couple of hours the repairs could be made.

Morning came, revealing the distant yellow line of the African coast, but still the steamer lay at anchor, rocking gently in the early morning breeze. It may be imagined with what a fever of impatience Guy and Melton lived through those weary hours.

It was nearly midday when the repairs were completed, and the vessel forged ahead again. For fear of fresh accidents, the captain refused to crowd on steam, and when at last the turrets and brown walls of Zaila came in view, it was late in the afternoon.

At a distance, all seemed peaceful; the English flag was floating from half a dozen different buildings of the town. In the harbor lay three or four Arab dhows and a neat little steamer, which the captain said belonged to the governor, and was used for transporting troops or despatches.

Captain Waller anchored close by the town, and accompanied Guy, Melton, and Momba on shore in a small boat. So far, at least, all was well.

A few Arabs and Somalis were sitting around lazily on the sand, and troops of the Bombay Infantry were seen moving about the streets.

"Appear as unconscious as possible," whispered Melton. "Let nothing be suspected."

A close observer might have detected traces of suppressed curiosity on the faces of the Arabs and Somalis, but they were evidently deceived by the careless manner of the new arrivals, for after a keen scrutiny they settled back into lazy attitudes.

"I don't like the looks of those fellows," said Melton, "and another thing I don't like is the presence of those Arab dhows in the harbor. But look, Chutney, there is the residency ahead of us."

They were approaching a low building of sun-baked brick, with Venetian awnings at the entrance and windows. Half a dozen sentries were on guard, and an officer came forward to meet the little party.

Guy saluted.

"I am the bearer of important despatches for the governor of Zaila," he said, "and must see him at once."

The officer disappeared for a moment, and presently came back and announced that the governor would see them. They were ushered in through a wide hall, and, passing half along its length, they turned to the right, and found themselves in the presence of Sir Arthur Ashby. He was a very pompous looking man of middle age, with reddish mustache, and long side whiskers. He was seated on an easy chair beside an ebony table. Opposite him sat an English officer.

They were smoking cigars, and on the table were glasses and champagne bottles packed in ice. Lamps were lit, for already twilight was falling.

He half arose as his visitors entered, and then dropped back. Guy briefly introduced himself and party, and handed Sir Arthur the despatches, explaining how the seals came to be broken, but making no mention of Torres.

The governor knit his brow as he read them over, and then, to his companion, he remarked lightly, "All nonsense, all nonsense. Another government scare, Carrington."

"I beg your pardon, Sir Arthur," said Guy, "but I was informed in London of the tenor of those despatches. Yesterday afternoon the Arabs at Berbera massacred the garrison to a man, and are doubtless now marching on Zaila. We barely escaped with our lives. Captain Waller and Mr. Forbes and his servant will confirm my statement."

Sir Arthur sprang to his feet with a sharp cry.

"What is this you tell me?" he gasped. "Can it be true?"

Guy repeated his account, with all the particulars, but the governor actually seemed incredulous.

"Colonel Carrington," he cried, "how many troops have we?"

"Five companies of the Bombay Infantry," replied the colonel in a hollow tone. "We had six yesterday, but if this account be true – "

"Don't delay a moment," shouted Sir Arthur; "prepare for the defense, colonel, and see that the steamer is ready in case it comes to the worst."

The governor's condition was now truly pitiable. He was trembling with fright.

"There is indeed but little time," said Guy. "There is danger at your very door. I see many Arabs and Somalis in the town."

"True, true," groaned Sir Arthur, and, turning over the despatches with trembling hands, he added, "I am instructed to order troops from Cairo and Suakim. What madness! What madness!"

Sir Arthur continued to talk in a rambling, excited way until Colonel Carrington assumed control of affairs.

"Your steamer is here now?" he said to the captain. "Then you must make haste to Aden, and bring us what troops you can. I doubt, though, if we can resist a heavy attack for twenty-four hours. And you, gentlemen, you will return on the steamer?"

"No, we will remain," Guy and Melton replied almost in one

voice.

The colonel glanced at them approvingly.

"You are brave men," he said. "Stop!" he added suddenly. "You say you left Berbera at sunset last night, and were delayed by an accident. Were there any camels there?"

"A caravan of two thousand arrived two days ago," replied Melton.

The colonel's face paled.

"Then the enemy are due here now," he said huskily. "On camels they could traverse the sixty miles in from fifteen to twenty hours. It is already dark," and he pointed out through the window.

At this Sir Arthur groaned aloud, and tossed down three or four glasses of champagne in rapid succession.

"To your steamer, quick!" cried the colonel, addressing Captain Waller; "and you, gentlemen, since you decide to throw your fate in with ours, come with me, and we will inspect the fortifications, and do what little we can."

They had risen to their feet, and were giving a hasty look to their arms, when a bright flash lit up the gloom from without, followed by a sharp report, and at the same moment, from all quarters of the town, rose a continuous rifle-firing, a violent uproar and shouting, and a deep beating of drums.

Sir Arthur sprang to his feet, crying frantically, "To the steamer, to the steamer – it is our only hope;" but before he could take a step the outer doors were burst open, shouts were

heard in the hall, and then, through the curtained entrance, staggered blindly an officer of infantry, his uniform torn and disheveled, and blood pouring from half a dozen wounds. He plunged forward, and rolled in a lifeless heap at the very feet of Colonel Carrington.

CHAPTER V.

THE NIGHT ON THE ROOF

The tragic scene described at the close of the preceding chapter, following on the very heels of the outbreak, was a fearful shock to all who saw it, and for an instant they could only stare at one another with mute, frightened faces.

Colonel Carrington broke the spell. With drawn sword he made a dash for the door, closely followed by the rest, but before they could cross the apartment a louder burst of firing came from the very courtyard, bullets whistled through the windows, and then a scuffle began in the hall, and angry voices were heard. It was over in a moment; a cry of pain, a low groan, followed by the sound of bars dropped in their sockets, and then into the room burst three Hindoo soldiers, grimy with blood and powder.

"Sahib colonel," cried the foremost, "we are lost. The Arabs and Somalis have revolted. Hundreds of them surround the residency. Yonder in the hall lies a dead Somali. We have barred the doors, but they will soon be in."

Even as he spoke the portals shook under a succession of thunderous blows.

"The rear door," cried the colonel. "We may escape that way."

"No, no; the building is surrounded," rejoined the Hindoo. "There is no escape."

He was right. Shouts were heard on all sides, the blows on the doors redoubled, and stray shots came in at the windows, both front and rear.

Sir Arthur lay prostrate in his chair.

"The roof! the roof!" he groaned. "We must take to the roof."

"By Jove, he's right," cried the colonel. "It's our last hope. Blow out the lights and come on, quick!"

The lamps were out in a second, but a dim glare still shone into the room from the torches outside. With an effort, Sir Arthur staggered to his feet. Two of the soldiers assisted him, and then in great haste they hurried through the hall to a rear room.

The building was of one story, and from this apartment a ladder led to an open trap overhead.

Sir Arthur was pushed up first, followed closely by the rest, and just as Momba brought up the rear and dragged the ladder after him, the great residency doors gave way with a crash, and a wild yell of triumph told only too plainly that the enemy had effected an entrance.

Guy's quick eye observed a big flat stone lying near, a precautionary measure provided by some former governor, no doubt, and, calling on Momba to assist him, he dragged it over the trap.

From below came a rush of footsteps and the sound of smashing furniture as the Arabs hurried to and fro in search of their prey.

"We are safe for the present," said the colonel; "they can't

possibly reach us, and they may not even discover where we are."

The roof comprised the whole extent of the building, and was probably thirty feet square. It was surrounded by a stone parapet three feet in height, and from this parapet the little band of fugitives witnessed a scene that none forgot to his dying day.

North and west of the residency the town seemed to be in comparative quiet and darkness, for only stray lights were to be seen at intervals. But off to the south lay the fortifications, and here a sharp conflict was waging.

Through the darkness of the night the flash of every shot was seen, and all along the line blazed out three continuous sheets of flame as the beleaguered garrison poured their fire into the attacking parties that advanced from both sides.

"They can't hold out an hour," said Melton. "The foe are too strong for them."

A sharp cry from Captain Waller turned all eyes on the harbor, where the water was illumined by twinkling lights and the flash of rifles. The meaning of this was plain. The steamer had been attacked. No doubt those innocent looking dhows had been filled with armed Arabs, waiting for the signal, and now every escape was cut off. The firing was sharp and severe for a while, and then it gave way to loud cheers.

The steamers had fallen into the hands of the enemy.

"There goes the last hope," said the colonel; "and look, even the garrison has succumbed."

It was true. The firing had almost entirely ceased, and the few

stray shots that still rang out were drowned in the vast roar that rose from all parts of the town.

The residency was cordoned by a surging mass of wretches, intoxicated with triumph, and fresh hordes came pouring in, riotous from the slaughter of the garrison.

"Some cunning fiend has planned all this," muttered Colonel Carrington, "and planned it infernally well, too."

"The Arab, Makar Makalo, is the ringleader, sir," said Melton, "but he is only acting for Rao Khan, the Emir of Harar, who has long desired the port of Zaila."

"A swift retribution will come," replied the colonel, "but it will come too late to aid us."

No person seemed inclined to talk. Sir Arthur sat up against the parapet in a sort of stupor, the three Hindoos were grouped on one side, and Momba mutely followed his master from point to point, as with Guy and the colonel he made the circuit of the housetop.

And now for the first time it became evident that the presence of the fugitives on the roof was known. Thousands of Arabs and Somalis surrounded the building, their dark faces plainly seen in the glare of the torches, but no hostile demonstration was made. They appeared to be waiting on something or someone. It was very evident that the whole population of the town was in revolt. It was equally plain, too, that they had been prepared for this uprising, for it had apparently broken out in all quarters of the town at once, and the expected signal had no doubt been the

approach of the Arabs from Berbera, for the vast number of rifles used in the fight proved conclusively their arrival.

Wonderful success had crowned their plans. Yesterday the garrison at Berbera had fallen to a man; and now Zaila was in their hands, and all that remained of the British possessors was the miserable band of fugitives on the residency roof.

With bitter feelings Guy looked down on the sea of faces. He was wondering if he would ever see Calcutta or England again. But he had been in bad predicaments before, and, hopeless as it now seemed, something might turn up to save them yet.

Melton was inclined to think that the Arabs were only waiting for daylight to make their attack, and yet they seemed to have no idea of abandoning their position, but encircled the building with a sea of torches, talking loudly and excitedly all the while.

Once Guy ventured to peer down over the parapet, and to his surprise he saw Arab guards at the residency door, sternly keeping back the crowd. Then he pulled aside the stone from the trap. All was dark and quiet beneath. The solution to this mystery was close at hand.

Of a sudden a great hush fell on the vast crowd, the tumult died away to a low murmur, and from the outskirts came a strange sound, at first low and indistinct, and then louder and more vivid, like the tinkling of bells mingled with the trampling of hoofs.

The Arabs and Somalis fell silently apart, leaving open a wide passage like a swath cut through a field of standing corn that led straight to the residency doors. Up this triumphal avenue trotted a

dozen stalwart Arabs bearing lighted torches, and directly behind came a gigantic camel, decorated with gorgeous trappings and hung with strings of silver bells. And on the camel's back, gazing haughtily around him, sat the Arab, Makar Makalo.

"Behold Makar Makalo, the new ruler of Zaila!" cried the heralds, and from the vast crowd burst one universal shout of satisfaction.

CHAPTER VI.

A FATE WORSE THAN DEATH

At the sight of the daring Arab chief Guy could scarcely restrain himself. He would have drawn his revolver and shot him down then and there, but Colonel Carrington interfered.

"Don't excite them," he said cautiously; "their punishment is sure in the end. How can they defend Zaila against the British gunboats that will be sent here? We have possibly a chance for our lives yet. Don't destroy that last chance."

The colonel plainly had strong hopes. It is well enough in some cases to fight to the very last, and have your names printed in the army list as heroes who died at their post, but in this case the safety of Sir Arthur was plainly the important point, and any concession must be made to secure this. So all idea of making a fight of it was given up. Short and brief would have been the struggle for Guy and Melton, as the three Hindoos were the only ones armed, and they had but a scant supply of ammunition.

Makar held a short conversation with three or four Arabs, and then, slipping down from his camel, he walked off a little from the residency and shouted loudly, "Inglis men, come down. You no be killed. You prisoners of war."

The idea of Makar's investing this bloody outbreak with all the dignity of legitimate warfare was ridiculous, and the colonel

laughed.

"What's that about prisoners?" cried Sir Arthur, coming eagerly forward. "Will they spare our lives, I wonder? Let me talk to the fellow. I'll try to conciliate him."

He walked pompously to the parapet and bent over. Perhaps the champagne he had drunk had affected his head. At all events he leaned a little too far, and, suddenly losing balance, he toppled over and fell with a thud plump on the heads of two Arab sentries at the door. All three came to the ground in a heap, and it was a great relief to the anxious watchers above to see Sir Arthur stagger to his feet apparently unhurt.

The effect on the Arabs was electric. The remaining guards glanced up apprehensively, and very speedily changed their location.

As for Makar, he evidently believed that Sir Arthur had come down expressly in response to his summons, for he waited for the rest to follow his example.

"Bless my heart!" muttered Sir Arthur. "What a narrow escape!"

He started toward Makar, but two Arabs laid hold of him and pulled him roughly to one side.

"We'd better go down," said the colonel, and raising his voice he shouted,

"Do you swear to preserve our lives if we come down?"

"By the shades of Mohammed, I swear it. Come down," replied Makar.

"We'll have to trust to his word," said the colonel. "Put the ladder in position."

The ladder, with one end on the ground, failed to reach the top of the parapet by four or five feet. It was a ticklish business to drop down on the upper round, but one by one they accomplished it, and, descending to the ground, were speedily seized and relieved of everything on their persons.

Perhaps Makar doubted his ability to keep his word, for he hurried his prisoners into the residency, away from the turbulent crowd, and left them in the hall in custody of a dozen armed Arabs.

They had not been here five minutes when a commotion was heard outside, and the shattered doors were pulled apart to admit half a dozen weary, blood stained soldiers of the garrison. They were the last survivors, and they told a fearful story.

The fortifications had been attacked, they said, at the same time by the population of the town on one side, and on the south by a vast horde of Arabs and Somalis, who suddenly appeared over the sand-hills mounted on camels. They alone had been made prisoners. All others had been shot, including the officers, the port surgeon, and the native assistant resident.

This sad story brought tears to the eyes of all, and even Sir Arthur waxed terribly indignant and prophesied speedy retribution.

But now the guards sternly forbade conversation. An hour or more passed on, during which time many persons

indistinguishable in the gloom, passed in and out of the residency.

Then came a summons to appear before the chief.

"Don't be alarmed," said Sir Arthur reassuringly. "We shall be sent across the gulf of Aden. This wretch will not dare do injury to her majesty's representatives."

Sir Arthur's sudden change of spirits was not shared by the rest.

"Nerve yourself," Melton whispered to Guy. "I have an idea of what is coming," and before Guy could reply they were ushered into the very apartment which they had left so hastily a few hours before.

It had undergone no change. The lamps had been relit, the wine bottles and glasses still stood on the table, and in Sir Arthur's chair of state sat Makar Makalo, very stern and dignified, while around him, squatted on the rugs, were four Arabs of superior caste and intelligence, comprising, no doubt, the freshly formed cabinet of the great governor of Zaila.

Makar waited until his captives had ranged themselves along the wall, and then, with great *sang froid*, he helped himself to a cigar from Sir Arthur's choice box of Partagas, lit it, and poured off a glass of champagne which he despatched at a gulp.

Having thus proved beyond a doubt that he possessed all the chief qualifications of a British political resident, he settled back in his chair and surveyed his prisoners with lowering brow.

"Bless my heart!" ejaculated Sir Arthur. "What most amazing

impu – " a sudden rap on the head from one of the guards cut short his speech, and he relapsed into indignant silence.

Makar was plainly a man of iron nerve, for he met calmly and even boldly the indignant, defiant glances that were turned upon him as he scanned the row of prisoners ranged before him.

Glancing toward the windows he dispersed with a wave of his hand the dark swarm of faces peering eagerly within, and then at last he deigned to break the silence which had become so ominous.

"I have promised ye your lives," he said. "Makar never breaks his word. Allah is great, and it is the will of Allah that Zaila should belong to the true followers of the prophet. Already has his will been fulfilled. The hated Inglis soldiers are dead. Rao Khan is the ruler of Zaila, and Makar is his servant."

He paused and helped himself to another glass of champagne. It was evident that Makar was not at heart a true follower of the prophet, for the Koran strictly forbids all intoxicants.

Another impressive pause followed. Guy glanced at Melton and was alarmed to see the dead white pallor on his face. Melton alone perhaps knew what was coming. On the rest the blow fell with crushing severity.

"Have I not said that Makar's word is inviolate?" the Arab resumed, leaning forward and uttering each syllable sharply and distinctly.

"Can Makar break his pledge?" and he turned to his solemn visaged ministers.

"No, no, no," they muttered in guttural accents, and solemnly shaking their heads.

"Then hark ye all," Makar went on. "I have sworn on the Koran that whatsoever prisoners fell to my lot should be delivered over as slaves to the Somalis of the Galla country. I have spoken. It is Kismet. At daybreak ye start for the interior."

Sir Arthur staggered back against the wall with a dismal groan, the Hindoos fell on their knees begging piteously for mercy, Colonel Carrington seemed dazed, stupefied, Guy clinched his hands and made a desperate effort to bear up bravely, while Melton's face wore the same pale, hopeless expression.

No one spoke. Supplications and prayers would alike be useless. The Arab's stern, pitiless countenance spoke plainer than words. Mercy was an unknown word in his vocabulary.

"Spare us, spare us!" moaned Sir Arthur, coming forward a pace or two and making as though he would fall on his knees.

"I have spoken," cried Makar harshly. "Words will avail ye nothing."

He made a signal to the guards, who at once closed in on the wretched captives and led them away.

CHAPTER VII.

SOLD INTO SLAVERY

The party were taken to a rear apartment of the residency and placed under strong guard. During the remainder of that night no one slept, of course, nor did they hold much conversation, for all instinctively avoided a subject which could only add to their wretchedness.

Slavery among the Somalis was a fate worse than death. It was a living death indeed, for hope of escape there was none. Far better if Makar had ordered them to be shot at daybreak.

Guy spoke hopefully to Melton of the situation, counting somewhat on the claim he had on Makar; but Melton seemed to think that the Arab had ignored the affair, and would not interfere with Guy's fate.

All too soon gray dawn came stealing into the residency, revealing the haggard faces of the captives, and with it came a summons from Makar to prepare for the journey. Food was brought and partaken of with some relish, for, under even the most distressing circumstances, men seem able to eat. Closely watched, they were led into the open air, and halted for a brief space in the court.

The sun was not up yet, and the blue waters of the gulf stretched afar until lost in the pale mist. In the harbor lay the two

steamers, but the British flag no longer floated over their decks.

Finally they were led through a curious rabble of Arabs and Somalis to the outskirts of the town, where the caravan was in process of formation. It was no ordinary caravan. There were no bales of goods lying about, no camels laden down with burdens, but surrounded by many of the population drawn hither by curiosity were about fifty camels with simple trappings, and a group of Somalis and Arabs all heavily armed, the Arabs with rifles, the natives with long spears.

Simultaneously with the arrival of the captives, Makar made his appearance with an armed escort and proceeded to hold a close conversation with the two Arabs who seemed to be the leaders of the caravan. He spoke earnestly for quite a while, making many gestures, and pointing from time to time at the prisoners. Then he turned away, and instantly all was excitement.

The Arabs and Somalis quickly pulled themselves upon their camels, and with the aid of the guards the Englishmen were mounted in the same way, each man being hoisted up beside an Arab or a Somali.

No resistance was made. The Hindoo soldiers were in a state of deep dejection, and poor Sir Arthur seemed hardly to realize his position.

The caravan was now ready to start. At the last minute Makar Makalo passed carelessly by Guy and whispered, "Keep good heart. Makar no forget." Then he vanished in the crowd, and, with a loud cheer to speed them on their way, the line of camels

filed at a slow trot over the sandy plain in a southerly direction.

Guy turned his head for a last look at Zaila and the harbor, now beginning to glimmer in the first rays of the sun, and then a stretch of sand-hills hid the town from view.

Little did he realize that which he must pass through before he saw the coast again.

From the ruined fortifications of the town an unseen observer watched the departure of the caravan. It was Manuel Torres. The crafty Portuguese was well pleased to see the hated Englishmen speeding away to their doom.

He was a cunning knave, and had laid his plans well. Perhaps he feared the stability of the new government. If the English came into possession of Zaila again, he could invent some clever tale to disprove his connection with the Arab revolt; and who could bear witness against him? None, indeed, for the lips of those who alone knew his guilt would be hopelessly sealed. Africa never gives up her slaves.

To the wretched captives that day's journey over the scorching desert was a fearful experience. Nothing is more painful to the novice than riding camel-back, and when at last a halt was made at sunset every man was aching from head to foot.

The heat, too, had been fearful, though the Arabs had provided them with big sun helmets before starting. No intercourse was permitted. The captives were kept rigorously apart. But little sleep was allowed. The caravan started again before dawn, and, as before, traveled rapidly and steadily until

sundown.

At the end of the second day they had become in a measure accustomed to the motion of the camels, and no longer suffered so much. Yet in all this time no words had been exchanged. Each man was kept apart. The Arab with whom Guy rode could speak some English, and from him he learned that the chief object of the caravan was to carry to Rao Khan the news of the capture of Zaila. Further information the Arab refused to give.

The caravan comprised a dozen Arabs and thirty or forty Somalis of the Galla country. It was to these crafty savages that the captives belonged. The Somalis had assisted Makar in the revolt, and these slaves were their reward. Their chief, who accompanied the caravan, was none other than Guy's vindictive enemy, Oko Sam.

Late in the afternoon of the fifth day the caravan came to a sudden halt. In the distance were visible green hills and rolling plains covered with verdure. The desert seemed to have ended. It was evident that something of importance was about to happen.

All dismounted, and while the Arabs and Somalis entered into an excited conversation, the captives were for the first time allowed to converse.

Their hopeless situation was too well understood for discussion. Strange to say, Sir Arthur was the only one who had not abandoned hope.

"The government will save us," he repeated gloomily. "They will send an army into the interior."

No one ventured to dispute this assertion. They talked in low tones of their probable destination, and regarded with some uneasiness the conference going on among the Arabs, which had now assumed a more excitable phase.

"They are quarreling over something," said Guy. "Why do you suppose they have stopped here?"

"I don't know," replied Melton, "unless they intend to separate, the Arabs going on to Harar, the Somalis to their own country, which lies to the south of Harar."

Melton's theory was very plausible, but before anyone could reply the conference terminated suddenly, and the Arabs, drawing apart, came quickly up to the captives, and, laying hold of Sir Arthur and the colonel, led them over to the Somalis.

This was repeated with Momba, Captain Waller, and the Hindoo soldiers, but, to their surprise, Guy and Melton were ordered to remain where they were.

Foremost among the Somalis stood Oko Sam, his leopard skin dangling about his loins, and a fiendish expression on his face.

He advanced a step or two, talking fiercely, and pointing with his spear to Guy and Melton. The Arab leader strode out toward him, and cried in a loud voice, "Makar has ordered it. The two white men must go to Harar."

Scarce had the words left his lips when the Somali chief poised his spear and hurled it forward with such force and accuracy of aim that it passed through the Arab's body and the point came out at the back. With a cry he dropped on the sand.

A second of terrible suspense followed, and then snatching another spear from one of his followers, the maddened Somali leaped furiously at Guy, who unfortunately was standing directly in his path.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SEPARATION

But help was at hand. Before Oko Sam could reach his victim, an Arab directly behind Guy fired, and the fellow stumbled blindly on the sand.

A shout of rage burst from the Somalis, and, hastily pushing their captives to the rear, they advanced in a very ugly manner, shaking their long spears.

Leaving the dead Arab and the wounded Somali where they had fallen, the Arabs moved back a short distance, taking Guy and Melton with them, and shouted to the Somalis to remain where they were.

The Arabs were reluctant to fire, and would have avoided further bloodshed, but the enraged savages continued to press forward, and finally let fly a shower of spears that wounded one of the Arabs, and unfortunately killed a camel. The Arabs at once retaliated with a rifle-volley, and to such good effect that three or four of the Somalis were killed.

This brought them to their senses. Their spears could not compete with the firearms of the Arabs. They moved back to their animals, and, with a few farewell shouts of vengeance, rode away to the south, while the Arabs hastily bestrode their camels, and, taking the two Englishmen with them, calmly resumed their

journey to the southwest.

For a time the two caravans, moving on the sides of an acute angle, as it were, remained close together; but, gradually diverging, the sharp outlines of the Somalis began to fade into the twilight, and at last, as Guy and Melton strained their tear-dimmed eyes into the distance, the shadows obliterated the last traces of their captive friends. To Momba Melton had been deeply attached, and their separation was a hard blow.

And now a terrible feeling of desolation came over them, and they were half inclined to wish that they, too, had been led away to share the fate of Sir Arthur and the colonel.

Though it was now fast growing dark, the Arabs evinced no intention of stopping. With long, sweeping strides the unwearied camels swept over the sandy plain, and their riders from time to time spurred them to greater speed.

Melton was back in the rear, but Guy rode in front, with the Arab who had assumed the leadership since the death of his companion.

Guy ventured to address him, and was surprised to find him grown somewhat communicative. He explained to Guy in broken English that by Makar's orders he and Melton were to be delivered up to Rao Khan instead of being sent into slavery among the Somalis. Harar, he said, was a day's journey away, and by traveling all night they would arrive at sunrise. His account of Rao Khan, the Emir, was by no means reassuring, but Guy did not allow this to trouble him much. Makar's last words were still

ringing in his ears, and he felt certain that their deliverance from the Somalis was the first step toward the fulfillment of Makar's promise.

The little caravan moved on in silence. The Arabs were probably uneasy. They may have feared an attack from the Somalis or some other foe, for they kept a close watch, and held their rifles in constant readiness. But presently the moon came up in the east, casting a pale glamour over the desert, and tracing on the sand in weird, fantastic designs the shadows of the camels and their riders.

As the night wore on the Arabs relaxed their caution, and, dropping their rifles to their sides, began to refresh themselves with crackers brought along from Zaila, together with dates and figs, which they washed down with water.

The Arab with whom Melton was mounted now rode up beside the leader, and, to their great joy, Guy and Melton were permitted to converse. Though they had had no rest or sleep since the previous night, excitement had driven away all fatigue, and they looked forward with deep interest to their arrival at Harar.

To Guy's surprise, Melton did not believe that he had been singled out to accompany Guy.

"No, no, Chutney," he said, "depend upon it, Makar has some other object in view. I believe now that he will effect your escape in some way, but don't be surprised to find yourself sent back to Zaila alone. Makar's clemency will be extended to no one but yourself."

"Nonsense," returned Guy. "I tell you he means to save you, too. However, we shall not be parted, Melton. I assure you of that. I will accept no deliverance that does not include you, too."

Forbes made no reply, and for a time they rode on in silence. Absorbed in conversation, they had failed to observe that the aspect of the country had begun to change. They were now ascending a slight ridge, and from its crest could be seen the vague outline of mountains on both the right and the left, while all around them, in place of the dreary sand, were low bushes and vegetation. The camel's thorn and tamarisk shrub of the desert had disappeared. Once some huge animal glided across their path, and one of the Arabs half raised his rifle, but lowered it again.

With feelings which they would have found it hard to express, Guy and Melton saw the dawn come creeping over the sky, and just as it became fully light, they rode over the crest of a hill and perceived in the distance a mass of walls and turrets stamped against the pale-gray sky.

A pleasant breeze blew from the mountains which rose steep and rocky on all sides, while the valleys were richly wooded, and a silver thread, curving to and fro, marked the presence of a hillside stream.

The little caravan now descended into a narrow gorge and traveled rapidly along the course of a brawling torrent for nearly an hour. Then, crossing the stream, they rounded a sharp spur of rocks, and the dreaded city of Harar was before them.

Thirty years before the intrepid Burton had penetrated to that hotbed of fanaticism, and had by a miracle come back alive. From that day to this none had dared to emulate him.

Well might the two young Englishmen shrink from meeting that detestable despot, Rao Khan, who ruled his people by the sword, and hated all Christians with hatred that fanaticism alone can breed.

The caravan ascended the hill, and across the brow of the ridge stretched the massive, irregular wall of the town. The great brazen gates were closed, and in the oval turrets that rose sentinel-like above the wall appeared no sign of life or motion.

Then with startling suddenness came a trumpet blast and the quick, sharp roll of drums; and from the town burst a tumult and volume of sound, and then over the walls, and peering curiously from the turrets, appeared a swarm of dark, repulsive faces.

The tumult deepened and changed to one vast murmur as the caravan moved in dignified state up to the very gates of the ancient city of Harar.

CHAPTER IX.

A CLOSE SHAVE

A brief pause, then the gates swung on creaking hinges, and the caravan filed in between the dingy walls that had reared themselves for centuries from the summit of that hill.

For an instant a hush of curiosity fell on the multitude within, as the caravan appeared; but as the Arab leader suddenly trailed in the dust the English flag that had once floated from the fortifications of Zaila a great shout arose, so that the very air seemed to tremble, and the people pressed tumultuously on the caravan from all sides.

"Zaila has fallen! Zaila has fallen!" they cried, and with wild joy they beat their arms in the air, while those in the rear sought the house-tops, so as better to see the new arrivals.

In the first excitement Guy and Melton had escaped notice, but now they were suddenly espied, and the sight of the two hated Englishmen roused the passions to the highest pitch of ferocity. The foreigners' presence in the town was a sacrilege, an insult, and with threats and angry cries the mob surged round the group. At last, so great was the crush, the camels were forced to halt.

"Kill the infidels! Kill the dogs of unbelievers!" howled the multitude, and waxing more furious with every shout, they drew daggers and knives and raised their spears.

The Arabs had quietly closed round Guy and Melton, forming with their camels a protective circle, and this alone saved the Englishmen from death. But every instant the situation was becoming more critical. The mob grew bolder, and even tried to force the group apart in spite of the protestations of the Arabs, who had begun to point their rifles threateningly. Hundreds of savage faces glared unutterable hatred at the two strangers, hundreds of wretches were thirsting for their blood, and, finally roused to uncontrollable fury, the crowd swept impetuously against the caravan from all sides.

The frightened camels pranced and reared, and the cordon of defense suddenly broken, a dozen savages rushed on Guy and Melton. A long spear pierced Forbes under the arm and down he went beneath the camels.

A burly wretch dashed at Guy with a dagger, but the Arab brought down the butt of his rifle on the fellow's head just in time, as he dropped like a log.

A man behind hurled his spear, but his aim was poor, and, instead of striking Guy, it entered the poor camel's neck; the beast, plunging madly forward, hurled Guy and the Arab to the ground.

This alone saved their lives. As Guy staggered to his feet, cries of quite a different nature burst from the mob, and in fright and panic they began to scatter in all directions. The rattle of musketry broke out some distance ahead, and the Arabs, joining in eagerly, began to empty their rifles into the fleeing mass.

The Englishmen were saved. A compact body of men in linen tunics and leopard skin caps came sweeping forward. They were armed with rifles, and as they ran they kept shooting into the struggling crowd which was shrieking and groaning with agony.

In five minutes the place was deserted, and the stony ground was literally covered with bodies. It was a terrible example of Rao Khan's despotic rule.

Melton was lifted up, and to Guy's deep sorrow it was seen that he had received an ugly thrust along the side, not of a serious nature, but ragged and painful.

Two of the Emir's troopers, for such they proved to be, carried him, for he was unable to walk or ride.

Guy and the Arab mounted a fresh camel, first putting the wounded animal out of his misery, and then, preceded by the Emir's guard, the caravan resumed its march up the street.

The first sight of Harar was novel and interesting. Before them was a long avenue, fully a mile in length, at the extreme end of which could be dimly seen the northern wall of the town. This avenue was like a barren mountain road, strewn with rubbish and heaps of rocks, and the dwellings, which rose on all sides to the height of two stories, were, many of them, constructed of sandstone and granite, cemented with a reddish clay. They were impressively gloomy and dingy.

The terrible scene just enacted had terrorized the people. Many Arabs came flocking across the streets and exchanged greetings with the newcomers, but very few Somalis or Gallas

were to be seen. The sight of the Emir's guard seemed to have stricken the town like a palsy. The shops and booths were closed and deserted. The curtains of the houses were closely drawn; here and there at the doors lay goods that had been dropped in the sudden panic, and at one place a man lay dead across the threshold, still clutching in his stiffened fingers a bunch of brightly colored rugs.

But now the scene became animated and lively; people flocked out from their houses, among them many women, whom Guy regarded curiously, for they seemed to be of quite a different type from the men, and passably good-looking. They made no demonstration, however, but very quietly followed the caravan.

The center of the town was now close at hand, and a short distance ahead, on the left-hand side, rose a more imposing abode than those around it. It was built of granite, and above the flat roof rose a square tower with circular windows. It boasted a spacious courtyard, inclosed by a low stone parapet, and within this space were a dozen armed guards, clad in leopard skin caps, and bearing brightly polished rifles.

It was the palace of the Emir. As the caravan drew up to the gates the escort sounded a blast of trumpets, and almost immediately the doors were opened and a grave and dignified Arab came slowly out.

He spoke a few words to the leader of the caravan, who dismounted at once, and bidding Guy follow him, entered the courtyard. Close behind him came Melton, borne by the soldiers.

Passing between the guard, they entered a narrow vestibule hung with rich curtains, and in a moment more were ushered into the dreaded presence of Rao Kahn.

The Emir was seated on a low dais at the further side of a spacious apartment. The first glance struck terror to Guy's heart. Rao Khan was a short, thick-set man, with a round, smooth face. His eyes were sunken deeply under the forehead, and the expression of his face was a strange blending of brutality, avarice, and treachery. He was simply clad in white linen, with a great sword at his side, and on his head was a leopard skin cap, so constructed that the tail of the leopard hung down his back.

Before him squatted four solemn-faced Arabs. The floor was spread with rugs and the skins of various animals, and on the heavily curtained walls hung a dazzling array of every description, bronze and copper shields, and strips of oddly-woven tapestry. At sight of the English flag which the Arab now produced, the Emir's eyes sparkled, his face lit up with fiendish joy, and he began to talk wildly in a strange tongue.

The Arab replied, giving him no doubt an account of the insurrection, for the names Berbera, Zaila, and Makar Makalo were frequently mentioned.

Guy, from his position at Melton's side, who had been placed on a soft lion skin, watched the strange scene with wonder. He was more worried at present about Melton than anything else. The spear wound had not yet been dressed, and the poor fellow was in too much pain even to talk.

At last the Arab turned round, and, pointing to the Englishmen, spoke in a low tone to the Emir, who half rose from his seat and looked sharply at the captives.

Guy met his gaze calmly and steadily. In a moment the suspense would be over, and their fate would be decided one way or the other.

CHAPTER X.

THE SLAVE PRISON

The Emir's reply was brief and apparently forcible. He clapped his hands, and half a dozen soldiers appeared instantly. He addressed them with a word or two, but before they could execute his orders, Guy hastened forward and said to the Arab, "I pray you have my friend's wound dressed. He is suffering much pain."

The Arab addressed the Emir, pointing to the wounded man, and then, turning to Guy, he said, "It is well. Rao Khan will see to the Inglis man."

Guy would have sought more information, but the soldiers now came forward and picking Melton up motioned Guy to follow them. They passed out of the apartment by a rear door, and traversing a long hall, entered a big courtyard.

On the right and left were high stone walls, and directly opposite was a low, gloomy sandstone structure, with one narrow door opening on the court.

Here were standing more armed guards, who obsequiously opened the door for the approaching captives.

As they passed through the gloomy portal Guy's heart sank. His eyes at first could see nothing but darkness, and he blindly followed his conductors until they came to a stop. A heavy door

was closed and bolted behind him, and then all was silent.

In a few seconds he was able to see his surroundings. He was in a square dungeon, lighted by a narrow aperture high up in the wall. The floor was of stone, strewn with straw. Melton sat up and leaned against the wall.

"Where are we, Chutney?" he asked.

"I don't know," answered Guy; "in some sort of prison, I suppose. Why – hello, Melton, here are iron rings sunk in the floor all along the side."

"That settles it, then," rejoined Melton. "This is Rao Khan's slave prison. I don't suppose there are many inmates now while the fair is going on."

Approaching footsteps put an end to the conversation, and in a moment the door opened to admit a tall Arab, followed by a native with bandages and a basin of water.

The Arab quietly loosened Melton's shirt and coat, and, washing the wound, wrapped bandages spread with some soft ointment round his body. He did the work speedily and dexterously, and then departed as silently as he had come. He had barely gone, however, when a soldier entered with a tray containing dates, figs, and a peculiar kind of cakes, which he placed before the prisoners. They ate with relish, and then, overcome by weariness, they lay down on the straw and fell asleep.

It was some hours later when Guy awoke. Night had come, for no light shone through the aperture. He lay for some time

listening to Melton's deep breathing and thinking of their terrible situation.

He was not without hope of deliverance, for he placed a great deal of faith in Makar's promise; yet even then the chances were against them. Perhaps at this very moment Zaila had been retaken, and Makar was killed or a prisoner. If this should happen they were lost. Guy shuddered to think of Rao Khan's vengeance under such circumstances.

Presently he became aware of vague noises somewhere in the distance. He fancied he heard shots fired and a loud tumult of voices.

He thought it might be imagination, but suddenly the sounds increased, and once or twice footsteps hurried past the dungeon. The noise now woke Melton, and together they listened, convinced that it was a presentiment of coming evil. The strange sounds rose and fell, at times nearly dying away and then bursting out with renewed violence.

"I can't understand it at all," said Guy. "It can't be a rejoicing over the capture of Zaila, for they are plainly cries of anger."

"We'll know pretty soon what it means," returned Melton; "it concerns us, you may be sure."

In his excitement he arose and began to pace the floor. His wound was giving him no pain, he said, adding that he really felt pretty well again.

At last the shouts seemed to come a little nearer, and before long the fierce, angry cries were heard close at hand.

"They are surrounding the prison," said Guy, huskily.

He was right. A howling mob was on all sides of them now, and it was quite clear that they were beginning to attack the walls of the courtyard, for suddenly half a dozen shots were fired as though the guards were resisting the invaders.

It was a period of terrible suspense. The shouts increased, the firing grew heavier, powder-smoke drifted into the prison; but just when they expected to see their dungeon door torn open by a mad swarm of fanatics the uproar suddenly ceased.

A full minute of silence followed, and then on the night air rose a howl of triumph, so savage, so vindictive, that Guy and Melton shivered from head to foot. For some reason the attack had been suddenly abandoned. What that reason was they could only surmise.

The silence continued. The invaders had dispersed. Sleep was impossible, and they passed the time in conversation until a streak of light, flickering through the opening, showed that morning had come.

Food and drink were brought in. The prisoners ate sparingly. The shadow of a great calamity was overhanging.

"I am just as sure," said Melton, "that something will shortly happen, as I am that you and I are in Rao Khan's slave prison at Harar."

"Listen," answered Guy.

Footsteps approached. The door creaked and opened, and a man entered. With a cry of wonder Guy and Melton sprang to

their feet. The new-comer was bronzed and burnt, he had light hair, a mustache and a soft blond beard, but he wore trousers and a tunic of white linen.

The surprise was mutual. The stranger scanned them closely from head to foot.

"Who are you?" cried Guy hoarsely. "Can it be possible that you are an Englishman – an Englishman in Harar?"

The man paused a moment, and then said quietly: "I am a Greek. My name is Canaris Mataplan. At present I am an interpreter to Rao Khan, the Emir."

"But your English?" cried Melton. "It is perfect."

"I was a cafe-keeper at Cairo for seven years," replied the Greek. "I learned English there."

An embarrassing pause now occurred. It was certain that the Greek was the bearer of tidings from the Emir. No one dared speak. At last the Greek said quietly: "You are truly unfortunate. Tell me how you came here. I know that Zaila has fallen into the possession of Rao Khan's emissaries. I know nothing else."

Guy briefly told the tale, and Canaris listened quietly.

"Fools!" he said. "The English will be in Zaila again in a month."

"And you?" rejoined Guy. "What brought you to Harar?"

"I left Cairo for Calcutta," said Canaris. "The steamer was lost off Cape Guardafui; ten of us reached shore in a boat; the Somalis slaughtered all but myself. I was sold to the Arabs and came ultimately to Harar. I was useful to Rao Khan in many

ways, and my life was spared. I have been here two years, two long years. I shall never see Greece again," he added gloomily. "I am a slave to the Emir for life."

"Is escape then impossible?" asked Guy.

"Absolutely. Between here and the coast is the desert. To the south are the bloodthirsty Gallas. No, no; one can never escape from Harar."

The tramp of the guard was heard in the corridor, and a sudden change passed over the Greek's face.

"I have come from Rao Khan," he said in a low voice. "He sends me with a message."

He paused.

"Go on," said Guy; "we are listening." He was breathing heavily.

"Two hours after you arrived here yesterday morning," resumed Canaris, "Rao Khan despatched the Arabs to Zaila again, in company with two hundred of his best soldiers, who will assist in holding the town. They had scarcely gone when an insurrection broke out. The people were angered at the slaughter done by the Emir's troops when they rescued you from the crowd. It is an ancient law in Harar that every Christian stranger who enters her gates must die. Englishmen are most detested of all. The populace became maddened and furious; from all quarters of the town they came, clamoring, demanding your lives. When Rao Khan called out his remaining troops they refused to fire. The people, they said, were right. A very few remained faithful to the

Emir. The mob surrounded the palace and the prison; they tried to scale the walls; the guards in the court fired on them. Then Rao Khan appeared and spoke to the angry crowd. He begged them to wait. He told them that you belonged not to him, but that Makar Makalo had sent you here for safe-keeping, that you were the slaves of Makar Makalo. The people only howled in derision. They became more angry and infuriated, and refused to listen any longer. "The Englishmen must die!" they cried. Rao Khan was fearful in his anger. But he was powerless. He feared the destruction of the palace, the loss of his own life." Here Canaris paused and looked with infinite pity at the Englishmen.

Guy tried to speak, but the words stuck in his throat. Melton laid his hand on the Greek's arm. "Go on, go on," he whispered hoarsely. "We are men, not cowards. Let us know the worst."

CHAPTER XI.

CANARIS UNFOLDS A TALE

"Well," said Canaris, "I will tell you. Rao Khan has promised your lives to the people. It was his only hope, and now, his word once given, he will not dare to break it."

Melton covered his face with his hands, and Guy staggered backward.

"When?" he cried huskily. "Today?"

"No," said Canaris, "not today. The Emir bids me tell you that you will have four days yet to live. On the fifth day you will die by the executioner, in the square of the town."

They shuddered as these dreadful words fell from the Greek's lips.

"Is there no hope, then, at all?" said Melton. "Let us know the worst at once and be done with it."

Canaris made no reply for a moment. His eyes were fixed on the floor, and he seemed to be thinking deeply. When he looked up the expression of his face was changed. A strange light shone in his eye, a mixture of triumph and fear.

"I can tell you nothing now," he said hastily. "Tonight you shall have an answer. But tell me, how is your wound?"

"Better," replied Melton. "I can scarcely feel it at all."

"Good," said Canaris. "Now do just as I tell you. Lie down on

the straw; pretend that you are much worse; moan loudly from time to time, and when I come tonight I shall have something to impart to you."

With this strange admonition, Canaris hastily left the dungeon and the guard rebolted the door.

"Is the fellow crazy?" said Melton. "What can he mean to do?"

"Crazy?" rejoined Guy. "No; I have a strange faith in that man, Melton. Do just as he tells you and see what turns up tonight."

With much grumbling Melton assumed the part of a very sick man. He rather overdid the thing, in fact, for twice the guard opened the door and looked in. About noon food was brought, and from that time no one came near them.

The minutes dragged along like hours. They tried to forget the awful fate that stared them in the face, but in spite of the Greek's encouraging words the future looked very black.

At last the feeble light in their dungeon began to fade away, and soon they were in darkness.

"The fellow will never come back," said Melton bitterly. "It's all up with us, Chutney, so don't try to raise any more false hopes."

But Guy refused to give up, and his faith was rewarded. Quick footsteps approached the dungeon, the bolts rattled, and Canaris entered with a rude lamp and a leather case, which he placed carefully on the floor.

Then he pulled a paper from his pocket and waved it gleefully.

"See," he cried, "a permit from Rao Khan, admitting me to the

prison at all times. I told him that your wound was very bad, that the Arab doctor had failed to help you, and that I knew enough of English surgery to cure you if he would allow it. Rao Khan reluctantly consented, and here I am."

He listened intently for a moment, glanced round the dungeon, and then went on in a low, excited tone:

"Get close together. I have something important to tell you."

They squatted down in a group on the straw, and with a strange, exultant sparkle in his eyes, Canaris began:

"When I came to Harar two years ago this very cell held a white slave, like yourselves an Englishman. He was an old man, with long white hair and beard, and had been so long in slavery that he had forgotten his own name and could scarcely speak the English tongue.

"My duties then were to carry food and drink to the slaves, and before long I was on intimate terms with the old Englishman. He was very ill, and the Arab doctors made him no better. Perhaps it was old age that was the trouble, but at all events he died two months after I came. At different times he had told me the story of his life, and that is what I am going to tell you now.

"He had been thirty years in slavery. How and where he had been captured he could no longer remember. His mind was a blank on that point. But one thing he told me that is important. For twenty years he had lived among the Gallas in a village fifty miles to the south of Harar, and it was a few years after he had been brought there that he nearly succeeded in making his

escape.

"He had often heard from the natives of an underground river that was said to exist, and which emptied either into the River Juba or into the sea. The tales concerning the river were many and strange, but the chief of the Gallas assured him that at one time a tribe of natives had lived in the mouth of a huge cavern which gave access to the river."

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