

UNDER AN AFRIC SUN.

BY GEORGE MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER VI.

Tom Digby's right hand clenched, and as Helen clung to his left, she felt his nerves and muscles quiver with rage. A curious sensation of faintness came over her, and she struggled to be firm, as she told herself that she might prevent some terrible encounter. But there was nothing of the kind, for Ramon came forward eagerly. "Ah, there you are!" he exclaimed. "Had a pleasant day? Why, where are the others?"

"Did you not hear them?" said Digby roughly. "If No. Oh yes; I heard Senor Redgrave call. I missed them as I came through the trees.—What a delightful evening! I passed three years in London, Mr. Digby; but I never saw such an evening as this." He chattered away, as he stepped to the other side of the mule, keeping on without waiting for the other's reply. "You have had a splendid day, but very hot down by the town. You have felt it cold up the mountain, Mr. Digby?"

"Yes, very," said Digby shortly; and he felt Helen press his hand gently, as if she were imploring him not to be angry.

"But you could not have had a clearer day for the view. Did you feel the cold much, Miss Helen?"

"No—no," she said quietly. "I don't think it was very cold."

"Generally is. I beg pardon, Mr. Digby! Have a cigar?"

"If I refuse it, he'll take it for a declaration of war, and I don't want to fight. Why should I? poor wretch!"

"There you are," said Ramon, coming round by the back of the mule with his case open. "The smaller are the best."

"Thanks," said Digby, taking one. "Let me give you a light."

A match was struck, and by its light Digby caught a glimpse of the Spaniard's face, which was as calm and unruffled as could be.

Then they went on, and retook their places on either side of the mule.

"I've been very busy, too," continued Ramon. "Tired; but was curious to hear how you had got on; and yet half afraid that the crater had given way and swallowed you all up."

Digby felt tongue-tied; but Ramon chattered away.

"I wonder whether Senor Redgrave will let me throw myself upon his hospitality this evening? I called on my way up, and found that you had not returned. I left some fruit; and there was a fragrance from the kitchen window that was maddening to a hungry man. Ah! here we are." For they had come up to Redgrave and Fraser, who were standing beside the track.

"You, Ramon?" said Redgrave, rather sternly.

"Yes, my dear sir, I thought I would go and meet them; but I missed you. My dear Redgrave, I want you to give me a bit of dinner to-night."

"Certainly," replied Redgrave—and he told a polite lie: "I shall be very happy."

For the rest of the way Ramon did nearly all the talking; and during the evening his conversation was fluent and highly interesting as he engaged Fraser in conversation about the antiquities of the place; smoking cigars and sipping his chocolate in the most unruffled way.

"You are making quite a collection of our minerals, I hear," he said in the course of the conversation.

"Yes; I have a good many."

"Of course you examined the head of the barranco on the west side of the mountain?"

"No; we have not been there yet."

"Not been! Why, my dear sir, that is the most interesting place of the whole. You should go there.—By the way, Redgrave, I suppose the nearest way would be right across my plantation?"

"Decidedly," said Redgrave, who seemed puzzled by his visitor's urbanity.

"Yes," said Ramon thoughtfully; "that is certainly the best way. There is an interesting mummy cave there, too, about half-way along; but you will certainly be delighted with the head of the barranco. There; I must say good-night. Going now, gentlemen?"

"Yes," said Fraser, rising. "It is time we were back."

Digby rose reluctantly; but it was time they left; so the customary adieux were said, Ramon making a point of going first, so that Digby had an opportunity to raise Helen's trembling hand to his lips. "Good-night—my darling," he whispered. "I shall tell Mr. Redgrave all."

"Heaven protect him!" muttered the girl devoutly; and she stood there at the door listening till her father returned; and then they lingered, each slightly uneasy, but ashamed to give their fears words, and being content to listen to the voices of the guests, as they came clearly up through the still night-air.

Redgrave felt disposed to speak to his child before retiring for the night, but she remained silent.

slowly down the track toward the little town, with Ramon chatting pleasantly about the island.

"I daresay you Englishmen are disappointed at the absence of sport," he said. "Very different from Norfolk, where I went on a visit when I was in England. Here we have partridges and rabbits—that is all."

"We find plenty to amuse us," said Fraser quietly.

"Oh, yes; I have seen that. Why, you will have a boat-load of specimens.—But don't forget the head of the barranco beyond my place. It will repay a visit; and if I can assist you with guides or men, pray command me.—Good night."

"Well, Tom," said Fraser, in a sad voice as soon as they were alone, "what next?"

"I don't know, old fellow, and don't want to know," replied Digby in a tone of voice which contrasted strangely with the mournful speech of his friend.

"You do not know?"

"I only know that I am surprisingly happy."

"Happy?"

"Yes. You must have been. Horace, old fellow, I can speak to you as I would to a brother. I love, Helen Redgrave with all my heart."

They walked on in silence for some time, and then Fraser said sadly: "A boyish fancy.—Come, be a man. This must go no further, Tom. Let us pack up and go away."

Digby shook his head.

"I am sure it would be better for all."

Digby drew a long breath, full of exultation, for the pressure of Helen's little fingers seemed to cling to his hand.

"Do you not see," continued Fraser, "that you are intervening between two people whom Fate has evidently marked out for husband and wife?"

"Fate be hanged! What has Fate got to do with it?"

"Do you not see that you are making a powerful enemy of Ramon, who has the father at his mercy?"

"I'll pitch Ramon down one of the barrancos, if he doesn't mind what he is about," cried Digby warmly.

"Mind he does not! Stech you down, Tom. But—about Helen Redgrave?"

"Well, what about her? I know what my dear old moralist is about to say: Marriage is a serious thing—I have my friends to study—I ought not to be rash—I ought to wait—I ought to write home."

"Yes; I should have said something of the kind, and also warned you to flee from danger—and temptation."

"Then here we are at the roost, and I am going to get on my perch at once, my dear old model of wisdom; but before I do so, here are my answers to your warnings: I am well off; I am my own master; and I have neither father nor mother to consult. Greatest and most cogent answer of all—Helen."

Half an hour after, setting at defiance the insect plagues of the island, Tom Digby was sleeping peacefully, while Fraser was seated in his own room, with his arms folded, gazing out through the open window, with the darkness visible and mental ahead.

"He loves her, and—Yes," he added, after a painful sigh, "what wonder, poor boy—she loves him in return. Oh! I must have been mad—I must be mad.—And that man Ramon? Yes; he smiled and showed his white teeth. I would not trust him for a moment. The calm was too false and treacherous. If I could only get the poor boy away!"

CHAPTER VII.

A week of unalloyed happiness passed, during which time every evening was spent at the villa. Digby grew more joyous; the saddened look was rapidly passing away from Helen's face, and that of her father grew puzzled, while Fraser's seemed more sombre and sad.

Ramon had fetched them to his place again and again, and had also begged leave to accompany them in two of their expeditions, finding horses and mules and proving himself a polished and agreeable guide, taking them to various points, whose marvels made Fraser forget his own trouble in the excitement of discoveries dear to a naturalist's heart; while, after these journeys, Ramon always insisted upon the travellers accepting his hospitality.

They had just finished dinner, and Ramon had left them for a time, one of his servants having called him away, a summons which, after many apologies, he had obeyed, leaving the friends together, when pushing the jug of excellent French claret towards his companion, Digby, who was slightly flushed, exclaimed: "Taste that, my boy, and confess that our host is a charming fellow and a polished gentleman."

"Yes, I confess to these," said Fraser gravely; and just then Ramon reappeared at the door, bearing a fresh box of cigars, which he handed to his guests and resumed his seat.

"One of the evils of possessing plantations," he said. "Your men are always coming with the news of some disaster."

"Nothing serious, I hope?" said Digby.

"No, no—a mere nothing—kind of blight appearing.—But, by the way, you two have never visited the head of that barranco yet. Don't forget it. When will you go?"

"When Fraser is ready.—What do you say to to-morrow?"

I, Mr. Fraser, are getting old enough to put these things behind."

"Yes," said Fraser gravely; and he sat talking to his host till quite late. (To Be Continued.)

ENGLAND'S NAVAL PROGRAMME.

Views of What It Should Be—What France and Russia Are Doing.

Before long the naval programme for the coming year will be considered in the British House of Commons, and in view of that fact the Pall Mall Gazette discusses what is needed.

The steady increase in England's new construction is shown by the fact that while three years ago \$23,840,000 was considered sufficient for the annual contribution, two years ago that amount was made \$31,155,000 and last year \$35,825,000. Thus it had increased more than one-half in two years. Of course, the full naval expenditures include also the enormous sums for the maintenance of existing ships.

Of the ships now in hand and not completed there are eighty-three in all, nearly half, however, being torpedo destroyers, which can easily be finished before long. In addition, five battle ships of the Majestic class are nearly ready, and should be in commission this year, while six of the second-class are virtually finished. Several other ships are nearly ready. As a whole naval construction in England is

EXTRAORDINARILY RAPID.

and in that respect she is ahead of all the rest in the world.

The five newest battle ships, however, are little advanced. The Canopus and the Goliath were only laid down on Jan. 4, the Ocean is not yet begun, and the Albion and Glory have been put out to contract.

England's naval work is largely regulated by what France and Russia are doing, her principle being always to have as large a force available as these two countries combined. Now, in the three years just spoken of, the dual alliance had laid down only nine first-class battle-ships to England's ten, two small battle ships, the same number of first-class cruisers as England, four small cruisers, and fewer torpedo boats. So far, therefore, England is satisfied; but the authority quoted thinks that to make assurance doubly sure, it would be well to provide for laying down five more battle ships this year. As to cruisers, England has a splendid fleet of them, but may need more.

France has on the stocks three 23-knot cruisers, and is laying down as many more; Russia has three of 21 knots building, and Germany has five. We want then, from four to eight of 23 knots. Elswick has built ships much smaller than our 6,000-ton. Highflyers steaming at that rate; and of the new French 23-knot vessels two are of only 5,000 tons, so we ask nothing impossible. We cannot afford to fail in the least behind in the matter of speed. If we decide to construct enormous ships of the Powerful type, we should further give some protection by armor on the water line, as in the two new French Jeanne d'Arcs. It may be taken as practically certain that France will considerably supplement the number of cruisers given above as about to be laid down this year.

Of destroyers we have now ninety built or completing, but

WE WANT MORE.

The French and Russian torpedo flotillas are very large, and though greatly inferior in quality to our own, will need to be sharply watched. Moreover, we know by experience that our destroyers are very fragile and liable to continual breakdowns. Used as they will be in war, we shall have to count on something like 30 or 40 per cent., as always undergoing repair. They are vessels, however, which can be rapidly constructed, and it would probably suffice if we laid down ten. If any type of vessel has to go, to give more money for our battle ships, it should be the destroyer.

More ships demand more men, and hence, large as have been England's additions to her naval personnel, she will need to make others. There is at present a total, we believe, of 93,000 long-service and 23,000 reserve men, and the former will probably be increased by degrees until it reaches 100,000. The latter may reach 25,000 and is evident that while nations like Russia, Germany, and France maintain great land forces, Great Britain has an enormous army deficit.

NEW PERIL FOR FIREMEN.

An entirely new danger from electricity was discovered in a fire the other day in the electrical powerhouse in Chicago. The fire was confined to the basement, and it was found necessary to chop holes in the floor of the dynamo room in order to play a stream on some burning waste. Without waiting for the dynamos to be shut off the firemen crept through the hole thus formed and turned a stream on the flames. In an instant the men holding the hose were thrown to the ground with great violence and the hose sent flying into the air. The stream of water had acted as an electrical conductor, and a powerful current of electricity had passed along the stream and shocked them. The men were unconscious, but were soon resuscitated.

DUST A MILLION YEARS OLD.

A curious theory has recently been advanced by the eminent but somewhat eccentric scientist, Gustave Blattner, of Vienna. He believes in the existence of a cosmical powder of dust which he claims is continually falling from space, and which is the dust or remains of worlds which have been destroyed. Some of these worlds, he says, may have been so far away that the dust or remains of them which is now raining down on the world in the shape of fine powder has been a million years in traversing the space between us and what was once that destroyed world's orbit.

HEALTH.

PHYSICAL BEAUTY.

In a late number of a little magazine called New Ideas is an article on "Physical Beauty," which contains some good advice regarding the care of the skin. In the writer's opinion a sal-low or wrinkled skin is a most unpleasant thing to deal with, for daily habits, thoughts and occupations have much to do with it, and one must begin very deep down at the roots to have any good effects result from the treatment. A sal-low skin is often the result of improper eating; rich food, hot bread and fried victuals will all tend to increase the ugly hue, while fresh meats, well cooked, plenty of green vegetables and fruit will change the appearance in a very short time.

"Spinach and leek.
Lily cheeks in a week."

is an old doggerel that may rather exaggerate the results of that diet, but is on the whole good. A well-known doctor holds that onions eaten freely will beautify the complexion, and that in addition they are an excellent nerve tonic and will tone up a worn-out system. If a sprig of parsley is dipped in vinegar and eaten after the onion, no unpleasant odor can be detected on the breath.

It would be difficult to prescribe a regular diet, but broiled or roasted meats are the best and fried the worst. Beef and mutton contain the greatest amount of nourishment and pork the least. And, indeed, pork in any form should be eaten but sparingly. It, of course, follows that whatever benefits the complexion benefits the general health, and though no one really takes advice, yet it would be wise to think of these few hints.

For an unyielding sal-low complexion a small dose of Rochelle salts taken every day or every other day is extremely beneficial. The dose, however, should not be larger than half a teaspoonful.

Steaming the face, is also an excellent remedy, though very few can be applied from the surface.

Healthy outdoor exercise is also invaluable.

To remove wrinkles there is really no cure but massage or the knife of the dermatologist. Gently rubbing away from the nose with the tips of the fingers is an excellent thing for all complexions. The wrinkles should be smoothed apart and the skin rubbed until it is quite warm, and this treatment should be kept up and new life infused into the skin by the application of a good skin tonic, whether in cream or liquid form. Glycerine cold cream is excellent for some skins, almond cream for others and cucumber cream for most. If the prurings of eczema are left to stand in a little cold water until the milk has all been drawn out and then this cream, just as it is, applied to the face once or twice a day, the result is excellent.

Camphor ice is very heating and restorative, and should be made as follows: Melt one ounce white wax, one ounce spermaceti, two ounces camphor, one pound almond oil. Mix well, adding gradually one pound of rose water, finally one drachm of attar of rosemary for perfume.

Borax is healthy and cleansing, and an excellent borax lotion is composed of one-half ounce of powdered borax, one ounce each of glycerine and camphor, two ounces of alcohol and one pint of water. When partially dry, wash off with soft water.

To make almond paste, which enters into so many toilet recipes, pound blanched almonds in a mortar, reducing them to a very fine paste. Add, gradually, a little water and some perfume.

If for the weekly bath a daily bath be substituted, you will be surprised at the difference it will make both to the complexion and the general health.

English women are noted for their clear skins and they, with few exceptions, bathe every day, and in cold water too. This last is only suited to some skins; to many warm water is more restful, but an excellent treatment for the face is washing it first in very hot water and then quickly dashing cold water over it. The shock acts as a tonic and keeps the skin very healthy. In favor of the use of cold water it must be said that it keeps the skin firm, and rarely is a flabby skin seen in anyone who uses it, while warm water is very often apt to have this result. A good plan is to wash in cold water in the morning and hot water at night, and if powder be used every trace of it should be removed before going to bed, as it clogs up the pores and hinders the outpouring of refuse which takes place during the night when the body is at rest.

Sometimes the hands chap because they are not properly dried after washing. A good five minutes should be occupied in drying the hands, taking each finger separately. Five cents' worth of glycerine and five cents' worth of benzoin diluted with an equal quantity of water may be rubbed upon the hands until it has dried in, and it will have them smooth for the time being.

Powdering the face before going out in the cold is a wise precaution to prevent it from chapping, but on no account put cold cream on it. Always wear a veil when it is windy or very cold, and perfectly a good thick one.

FOR THE COMPLEXION.

The woman who wants to improve her complexion need not resort to expensive remedies any more, for such a cheap and simple thing as ordinary oatmeal will do all that can be done. It will improve a poor skin and complexion and lengthen the life of a beautiful one indefinitely. The remedy is so inexpensive that anyone can afford to try it, and if it works no good it will do no harm. If the veracity of those who re-

commend it is to be relied upon, it will be satisfactory.

One way to use it is to put a handful of the meal into a basin of warm water in which the face is washed, and then wipe with a soft towel. The skin should then be rubbed softly into a glow with the fingers. Before going out into the wind or cold a little of the meal should be dusted onto the face and washed off after returning to the house. This will prevent chapping and soreness of a tender skin.

Another way to use it is to make a paste of oatmeal and milk boiled together, and, after washing the face carefully, rub on some of it. Then rub the skin softly as previously recommended. This is best done at night. As everyone knows, oatmeal is very softening, and it cannot but benefit any skin if persisted in. It is worthy of a trial at any rate.

DON'T DO IT.

Don't sleep in a damp bed at any time.

Don't forget that direct mischief may result from the contact of an imperfectly heated body with sheets which retain moisture.

Don't think the temperature of the body will be sufficient to raise the temperature of the linen to a safe point.

Don't forget that the result must be disastrous if, as is sure to happen, the skin is cooled by contact with a surface cooler than itself, which may keep steadily abstracting the heat all the night through.

Don't be careless in this respect when traveling; if it is impracticable to have the sheets thoroughly aired and dried and warmed by bed-room fire, simply pull out the sheets and sleep between the blankets.

Don't neglect this prudent expedient simply because the contact of the blanket may be disagreeable; this will be better than the risk of a severe cold.

WHAT UNCLE SAM IS AT.

ITEMS OF INTEREST ABOUT THE BUSY YANKEE.

Neighborly Interest in His Doings—Matters of Moment and Mirth Gathered from His Daily Record.

Owing to a coal war, people of Jasper, Ala., are enabled to get lump coal at \$1.25 per ton.

On his way home a Texas farmer stopped to water his horses, and was standing in front of them, adjusting the harness after they had drunk, when one of them bit off his under lip.

Bones of soldiers who were buried at Clarksville, Tenn., when the female academy at that place was used as a hospital during the war, were uncovered by a recent landslide back of the building.

Recreant men's cashiers of several Minneapolis establishments have been replaced by women, and the action has led to another discussion as to whether women are more trustworthy than men.

Oscar Randall of Chillicothe, who married Bertie De Vaul, there, is the son of his bride's stepmother by her first husband, so that his mother becomes his mother-in-law and his bride's father becomes her father-in-law.

The Rev. Dr. Walker, an advocate of foreign missions couldn't bring the congregation of the Christian Church at Eminence, Ky., to agree with him on the subject of missionary propaganda, and they stopped contributing to his salary. Then he resigned.

When a South Dakota rancher's family were sitting around a table in their sod-covered cabin, the centre support of the roof gave way and the turf fell in, burying them all and smothering to death the mother and one child. The rancher dug his way out, but could not reach his wife in time.

When Bettie Quick, who was receiving the attentions of Fred Bokamband Henry Perkins in Knott county, Ky., appeared to favor Perkins, Bokamband a polecat and threw it into her lap, and trouble began, Perkins was in it. "Reports are meagre" at Middleboro' but Bokamband was mortally wounded.

Finding a purse containing 33 cents on the sidewalk in front of a Calais, Me., store, a woman picked it up and took it to the storekeeper. He hung it in the window above a sign reading: "Found—this purse, containing a large sum of money." When he came down in the morning the purse was gone and there was a big hole in his plate glass window.

Alejandro Ruiz, a Mexican antiquarian and traveller, whose collection of antique curios, paintings, and carvings, fills a private museum at his home in Puebla, Mex., at the age of 70 years is learning the English language as a means of occupying his time. He has travelled in almost all parts of the world, collecting whatever of interest was old. He has been an intimate friend of President Diaz since long before the time of his elevation to the Chief Magistracy of Mexico, and the President visits his home whenever he travels through Puebla.

Barre, Vt., granite cutters have shipped to Daniel Moriarity, a millionaire of New Orleans, for a mortuary monument, the largest surface stone ever sent over a railroad. It is fourteen feet square, with a depth of three feet, and weighs 80,000 pounds. A special car had to be built to transport it, and as no weight above seventeen tons is permitted on roadways and bridges of New Orleans, a special track had to be run for about a mile there from the main line of the railroad to the cemetery. The slab is a part of a monument which will be seventy feet high.

HARD TIMES.

Where is your father?
He's down to the Corners talking about hard times.
And your mother, where is she?
She's having one out at the wood pile, guess.