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ocks rose to great heights and the

mountains stood majestically about

"No wonder these people cannot be

subdued," said Harvey. "Nature has

built for them a fortress that no guns

"The trouble is," said Orskoff, "that

nature does this only where a fortress

is not necessary. When it comes to

guarding a city, placing a battlement

upon a passage between two seas, na-

ture may be gracious enough to bestow

a rock or two, but they must be fash-

ioned by the hand of man to suit the

"The reason is not that nature is

Hello! There is a big town."

American town. Followip

street stretched a half

out that called forth exclamations

both. Amid green and luxuriousur

roundings, on the banks of sinte

Harvey was interrupted by the im-

petuous welcome given to the return-

"Hall, Palpak, chief of the Zan-

nucks!" cried the people, men, women

and children rushing to surround the

well. These are my friends, to whom

"There is much to be said. The treas-

He led them to the finest house in

tains. There were ten of these, includ-

"No; it is not war against the Mus-

"What, then, O chief? Inform us

that we may fight as becomes the Zan-

"A caravan conveying much treas-

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vites again threatened us?"

you must show hospitality."

are our friends, O Palpak!"

can batter down."

A SOLDIER OF COMMERCE

BY JOHN ROE GORDON

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dome of these will be fh the caravan. My people will follow me to the Siloon

"By the Kharaboghaz do you mean the Scythian gulf?" asked Harvey.

"Yes. It is what we call the gulf." "Then our plan is clear. Orskoff, you and I will go with Palpak in his boat to this village of his people and accompany his warriors to the pass. Send Nevisky to Siloon with all speed. If he finds the caravan there, let him attack and rescue the girls. If the caravan has gone, let him wait there ifor our return. We must go back to Schoon if we rescue the girls or there will be no way of leaving the coast." "I will explain the plan to Nevisky,"

said Orskoff.

Nevisky listened with many misgiv
river that found its devious w into the Scythian gulf, this city of the Scythian gulf, the Scythian gu said Orskoff. ings. A Russian officer to release pris- nucks was laid out with a oners in this manner and to set foot Bis superior soil! But Oreland on noth-

The treasure was placed in Palpak's were the principal baz rectly into the places, with drainage to this were sailing vessel, and the four robbers, with Harvey and Orskoff, the latter river. At right an fully armed from the stores of the gunboat, went on board. The gunboat steamed away for Siloon, and the other boat, with all sail set, started for Palpak's little village.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE RIDE TO SILOON PASS. ed to look at the strangers, yet their chief, Palpak, treated these men as friends. Palpak was a chief who gave no explanations of his acts, and when he demanded horses for himself. his brothers and his friends they were at once forthcoming.

Domitan, the brother who had been so eager to kill Palpak, was morose and showed but little favor to th guests. The latter, confident that the plans would be successful, treated lan considerately. They thought no of the risk they ran in going, withrobbers for escort, into a country from which few travelers had ever sturned. The moving power was loe, and Jove laughs at danger.

From the village a windingpath led from the low shore land toa distant range of hills. Along this heir progress was rapid; but, arriling at the hills, they found a rugge, rocky road over which traveling wis slow. The small horses of the annucks were sturdy animals and wat unshed over the jagged stones that covered the nar-.row path.

The natives stared at them in amazement. A Russiar officer in uniform, accompanying their chief on terms of friendship, was a scene they had never contemplated. Some thought Orskoff was a prisoner, though he did not act like one. Harvey seemed actually to be

Hidden among great knolls and sequestered in fertile valleys were little villages seemingly devoted to peaceful pursuits. Flocks of the world famous sheep, the skins of whose lambs are sent to Persia, where they are made into garments or cured and sent to Europe and America, were browsing

All the herdsmen bore arms. One would have a rifle; another wore a belt in which two or three pistols were thrust; some carried the old time spear. Their garb was most picturesque. The turbaned Turk, the jaunty Circassian, the jacketed Greek, none of these could match the gay dress of these hill-

The road grew rougher and more difficult. They climbed laboriously, stopping often to give their horses a breathug spell. On either side the jagged

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"Listen, Q my people! Refore we start I have something to submit my captains. It was at the cave where we hid the treasure. I had divided it according to my customa portion to each of my brothers, a portion to myself, and the greater bulk to be brought here and divided among my people and to pay the tax demanded of us by the ameer. My brothers rebelled against my decision and, led by Domitan, attacked me to take my life. I was assisted by the American, as I have said, and then the Russian soldiers came and captured us all. But the crime of Domitan remains. It is

"Kill him! Fasten him on a sear and place him high!" These cries came from all sides. Domitan turned pale. He loked an-pealingly at Palpak, but the face of

the custom for the captains to settle

upon a punishment."

"O chief!" said a cortain, rising. "It is well that the Zinnucks know their chief to be always safe. If he in danger from his ofn brothers, then What may we expet from others? If these brothers ave attempted to kill thee, they should be punished. It is the will of the cople that he whom they love shall b protected and these who seek to kij'him shall themselves

"It is so," said another captain, "but this too place far away. Let us give Domita and the other brothers of our chi an opportunity to explain

"It is well spoken," said Palpak. "Let m brother Domitan, next in the line ochiefs, who will be your chief if I sould die, explain his action." Areyes were turned toward Domigrudging," said Harvey. "It is that

man is so stubborn that he establishes chief, my brother," he cried, "and his cities in places where they can be tains of the Zannucks, hear me and established. Nature's fortifications are slieve me! When we started in our oat to the island cave to obtain the "Except ourselves at the present time. Treasure and bring it here, there was no thought against our brother, the They had reached a high point in the greatest chief the Zannucks ever had. road and looked down a sloping stret We love him well, but we drank much



"Listen, O my people!" wine, and in our wine madness thought to overcome him and obtain the treasure. In our right minds we would not think of this. Humbly do we seek pardon of our chief. We promise faith-"What hast thou brought to ful allegiance. We will fight by his

pay the terrible tax the ameer has put side evermore." There was a murmur, and all eyes turned to Palpak. "Much treasure, my children! It is "It will be well if this is true," said. "I trust my brothers again. I wish no confusion now. We will has-"We will! We will! Thy friends

ten to meet the soldiers of the ameer." There was little delay. Horses were being led in from nearby fields, and men ure will be guarded until the tax of with arms were gathering. On the road the ameer is paid. But there is someto the southward they formed, and it thing to be done now. Let my capseemed a formidable array. First rode Palpak, with Harvey and Orskoff, rest. We must hasten away to obtain mounted on fresh horses. After them more treasure and perform a service rode a hundred men, divided in bands of twenty-five, each under a captain. Then came another hundred under the place, where women waited upon Domitan, these being divided the same

them. Wine and food were brought When they had finished, Harvey and | way. Harvey had never experienced so dif-Orskoff smoked and listened to the ficult a ride. At times they seemed on parley between Palpak and his capthe verge of going over a cliff and hurling themselves a hundred feet or ing the brothers of Palpak. Domitan was second in command by reason of more to certain death, but the rugged little horses seemed to know every inch his relationship as next eldest brother of the way and found stepping places where a man could not as they wound "Is war declared?" asked one of the around the perpendicular scarps of warriors. "Have the hated Musco-

"I wouldn't like to do this for a living," said Harvey. "I prefer to sell

"This is real mountaineering," answered Orskoff. But their eyes did not meet as they spoke, for Harvey, who ure and that which is greater than was ahead, did not dare to turn his

treasure, of more value than gold or head. In crossing table lands they traveled gems, will pass on the way to Bokhara. It will be composed of the serv- in sections, and Domitan often came ants and soldiers of the ameer, who up and spoke to Palpak. He had lost has so frequently sent soldiers to mur- none of his surliness. Harvey could not der us and steal our children and com- understand why Palpak so easily forpelled us to pay tribute. These sol- gave the man who wanted to kill him. the ameer have stolen two Orskoff explained that he had talked

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with the captains and learned that Domitan was much admired for his many exhibitions of bravery. "It is a good thing for us that Domitan is not chief," said Orskoff. "He

hates us sorely." They camped at night in a ravine, and the cooks of the companies prepared a meal consisting mainly of a sort of cake and coffee. After partaking of a goodly quastity Orskoff and Harvey lay down near Palpak horse suddenly to a halt, tried to

and went to sleep. In the morning, refreshed, the cavalin even more difficult traveling. Another night they camped on an open hurled were lowered, and the men stood field, and on the third day they came to rest on a cliff overlooking the Siloon pass.

CHAPTER XX.

THE ATTACK ON THE CARAVAN. N the morning, after waiting and watching all night, the caravan was discovered slowly making its way along the pass. Palpak called Harvey and Orskoff to him at the edge of the cliff.

"We will attack the caravan in this way," he said. "My men are now digood officer. His section will go up bolt and run beyond our reach. My own section will attack at this spot.

"I should say so," said Harvey. "We want to be in this business from start

"But it would be safer to remain hid

"It would be impossible. Orskoff is could not remain in hiding while you were fighting for the girl I love." Domitan came up.

brother," he said. "The caravan will

"We have already planned," said Palpak sternly. "You will take your men farther up the pass. Lie in wait there. If the camels bearing the young women escape, you can capture them. will remain here and attack."

"Heretofore I have been asked in councils," said Domitan surlily. "You will obey," said Palpak. "It is evident," said Harvey to Ors-

koff, "that, though he forgives, he does Domitan soon had his men under way. They took a winding path through the woods leading to the

"I trust there will be as little bloodshed as possible," said Harvey to Palpak. "We want to get the girls, but murder. These soldiers are simply obeying orders, as your own men are

"We will save your women, but the there is much treasure."

The carevan came on. Riding ahead was an officer of the ameer in brilliant garb. Following him were twenty horsemen, all well armed. Then came two camels, each led by a soldier. The tended for the bride of the prince. Alma was in the second one. She still



around his neck.

orsemen, a string of camels and

horses. A terrific outery followbrave and calm and soon railled them. They formed in a circle around the camels bearing the two girls, while the merchants and the camels bearing their goods scuttled for safety. Palpak ral-Hed his men and led them in a ferocious onslaught, but the direct and steady are from the mounted ridemen of the ameer sent a dozen of them to the

Palpak shouted out his commands the ameer's men were first, and the horses came dashing upon the Zannucks. For a time it looked like a victory for the Bokharans. Orskoff and Harvey were compelled to run aside when the ameer's horsemen came upon

The battle of the ameer's men was being waged chiefly by the officer in command, who seemed not to know the word fear and who seemed to be pervious to bullets. Mounted on a fine horse, he led every charge. Harvey saw that so long as the Bokharans were inspired by this officer they were well nigh invincible. He watched his chance to cope with the commander in per-

At last it came. The officer, in making a dash through the forces of the Zannucks, was beset by several of them with spears. He brought his swerve, and the horse came down alcade set out and passed another day | leap Harvey sprang upon the horse bein amazement. The officer tried to turn, to reach Harvey with his sword, around his neck, and he was soon choked into submission. With a shout of victory Harvey hurled him to the

"Now, Palpak! Now!" he cried, and with a rush the Zannucks attacked again. Their onslaught was so ferocious that the soldiers of the ameer fied along the pass, to be met by Domitan with the remaining hundred.

"Victory!" cried Harvey. "Victory!" He sped to the camels, as did Orskoff, and at the command of Koura, who could manage the beasts, the camels knelt. Alma and Koura were soon

"My darling! My darling! You are saved!" cried Harvey. "The Bokharans have been defeated?" "They would not have been," said

Orskoff, "but for the brains of your "How is it you are on Bokharan soil

captain?" asked Koura. "To save you, my sweet one; to save the girl I love. I learned my duty

So absorbed were they in their greetings that a cry from the Zannucks did not reach them. Happening to turn his head, Harvey saw the form of Palpak stretched upon the ground. "Good heaven! Palpak killed!" he

tTo be continued;



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