

The Man Who Knows.

CHAPTER VII.—Continued.

I did so, and clutched the edge. Now, if anybody thinks it is an easy thing to pull oneself to the top of the wall in that fashion, let him try it, and I fancy he'll discover his mistake. I only know I found it a harder business than I had anticipated, so much harder that when I reached the top I was so completely exhausted as to be unable to do anything for more than a minute. Then I whispered to another man to climb upon the first man's back, and stretch his hands up to mine. He did so, I pulled him up beside me. The guide came next, then the other tourist, then Lord Beckenham. After which I took off and lowered my coat to the man who had stood for us all, and having done so, took a firm grip of the wall with my legs, and dragged him up as I had done the others.

It had been a longer business than I liked, and every moment, while we were about it, I expected to hear the cries of the mob inside the mosque, and to find them pouring into the yard to prevent our escape. The bolts on the door, however, must have possessed greater strength than we gave them credit for. At any rate, they did not give way.

When we were all safely on the wall, I asked the guide in which direction we should now proceed; he pointed to the adjoining roofs, and in Indian file, and with the stealthiness of cats, we accordingly crept across them.

Three houses surmounted we found ourselves overlooking a narrow alley, into which we first peered carefully, and, having discovered that no one was about, eventually dropped.

"Now," said the guide, "as soon as we were down, we must run along here, and turn to the left."

We did so, to find ourselves in a broader street, which eventually brought us out into the thoroughfare through which we had passed to reach the mosque.

Having got our bearings now, we headed for the harbour, or at least for that part of the town with which I was best acquainted, as fast as our legs would carry us. But, startling as they had been, we had not yet done with adventures for the night.

Once in the security of the gas-lit streets, we said good-bye to the men who had got us into all the trouble, and having come to terms with our guide, picked him off and proceeded upon our way alone.

Five minutes later the streaming lights of an open doorway brought us to a standstill, and one glance told us we were looking into the Casino. The noise of the roulette tables greeted our ears, and as we had still plenty of time, and my companion was not fired, I thought it a good opportunity to show him another phase of the seamy side of life.

But, before I say anything about that, I must chronicle a curious circumstance. As we were entering the building, something met me in the round. To my intense astonishment, I saw, or believed I saw, Dr. Nikola standing in the street, regarding me with a look of contempt. Bidding my companion remain where he was for a moment, I dashed out again and ran towards the place where I had seen the figure. But I was too late. It is well, Dr. Nikola, he had vanished as suddenly as he had emerged. I hunted him, and, at last, I found him, in doorways, under verandas, and down lanes, but it was no use, not a trace of him could I discover. So abandoning my search, I returned to the Casino. Beckenham was waiting for me, and together we entered the building.

The room was packed, and consequently all the tables were crowded, but as we did not intend playing, this was a matter of small concern to us. We were more interested in the players than the game. And, indeed, the expressions on the faces around us were extraordinary. On some hope still was in the ascendant, on others a despairing despair seemed to have laid its grisly hand; on every one was imprinted the lust of gain. The effect on the young man by my side was peculiar. He looked from face to face, as if he were observing the peculiarities of some strange animals. I watched him, and then I saw his expression suddenly change.

Following the direction of his eyes, I observed a young man putting down his stake upon the board. His face was hidden from me, but by taking a step to the right I could command it. It was none other than the young cripple who had represented his parents to be in such poverty-stricken circumstances. The same young man whom Beckenham had assisted so generously only two hours before. As we looked, he snatched his last coin, and that being lost, turned to leave the building. To do this, it was necessary that he should pass by where we stood. Then his eyes met those of his benefactor, and with a look of what might almost have been shame upon his face, he slunk down the steps and from the building.

"Come, let us get out of this place," cried my companion impatiently. "I believe I should go mad if I stayed here long."

Thereupon we passed out into the street, and without further ado proceeded in the direction in which I imagined the Saratoga to lie. A youth of about eighteen, enquired summers requested in broken English, to be permitted the honour of piloting us, but, failing a sufficient amount of time, he found my way. I declined his services.

moment later I heard the faint sound of some one coming along the street. The pedestrian whoever he might be, was approaching from the right hand, and, what was still more important, my trained ear informed me that he was lame of one leg, and walked with crutches. Closer and closer he came. But to my surprise he did not pass the window; indeed, I noticed that when he came level with it the sound was completely lost to me. This told me two things: one, that the window, which, as I have already said, was boarded up, did not look into the main thoroughfare; the other, that the street itself ran along on the far side of the very wall to which my chain was attached.

As I arrived at the knowledge of this fact, Beckenham opened his eyes; he sat up as well as his chain would permit, and gazed about him in a dazed fashion. Then his right hand went up to the iron collar enclosing his neck, and when he had realised what it meant he appeared even more mystified than before. He seemed to doze again for a minute or so, then his eyes opened, and as they did so they fell upon me, and his perplexity found relief in words.

"Mr. Hatteras," he said, in a voice like that of a man talking in his sleep, "where are we and what on earth does this chain mean?"

"You ask me something that I want to know myself," I answered.

"I cannot tell you where we are, except that we are in Port Said. But if you want to know what I think it means, well, I think it means treachery. How do you feel now?"

"Very sick indeed, and my head aches horribly. But I can't understand it at all. What do you mean by saying that it is treachery?"

This was the one question of all others I had been dreading, for I could not help feeling that when all was said and done I was blithely to blame. However, unpleasant or not the explanation had to be got through and without delay.

"Lord Beckenham," I began, sitting upright and clasping my hands round my knees, "this is a pretty bad business for me. I haven't the reputation of being a coward, but

I own I feel pretty jumpy, and mean when I see you sitting there on the floor with that iron collar round your neck and that chain holding you to the wall, and know that it's, in a measure, all my stupid, blundering folly that has brought it about."

"STILL FAR BEHIND.

At first glance it will be seen that in the number of volumes at the disposal of the public, Ontario is still far behind either of the others. Fer libraries containing only two volumes to every five of her population, while those of New York contain two to every three; Massachusetts three to every two persons.

This is due, of course, largely to the comparative youth of this Province, and to the fact that the milieus of Ontario, either have not the ability, or the inclination to stimulate those on the other side of the line in giving large donations for educational purposes. The amount given for libraries and library buildings in Massachusetts is in the shape of gifts and bequests reaches in money alone to nearly \$8,000,000.

Commercially the value of the dam to Egypt in the future can hardly be estimated. Its immediate effect according to the Egyptian Government's engineer, will be to bring under cultivation 63,000 additional acres of land. This is in addition to putting certain districts at levels beyond the ordinary risks of flood and drought. As far as 500,000 acres now in fair cultivation will be converted into land fit for the first efficiency in crop-producing qualities. Over the whole area of Ontario distinctly falls behind Ontario, but both are easily outstripped by Massachusetts, whose libraries have circulation of three volumes per head of the population to Ontario's one.

ONTARIO LEADS.

Another consideration, however, has to be taken into account in the connection, and that is the rate of circulation in proportion to the number of volumes obtainable from the libraries. When this is calculated it will be seen that for every volume contained in the public libraries of Ontario very nearly three are taken out every year, while in Massachusetts the proportion is only a little over two, and in New York barely one.

When this point is considered and also the fact that owing to the greater extent of the country, although Ontario has 418 libraries to Massachusetts' 330, the libraries of Ontario are much less accessible than those of Massachusetts, it is only fair to conclude that the taste for reading is quite as strong in Ontario as in Massachusetts, the banner State of the Union, whose capital, Boston, contains the finest public library in the world, and when opportunities are taken into account, the odds would seem to favor Ontario.

In concluding, one fact is worth noticing, that of the seven towns in Massachusetts without any free library privileges, there is only one which does not show a loss of population in the past ten years.

A FAIR DIVISION.

The Bride—Deary, don't you think it would be all right if I would, and get one of those new-fashioned hats that they call a modcap?

The Husband—Guess that would be all right, dear, if you won't raise a row if I go down to the corner and get an old-fashioned nightcap.

GOOD ROADS AT EATON HALL.

English Estate Affords Model in Highway Construction.

The roads of Eaton Hall are the finest in England and probably the best in the world of their kind, says a London correspondent. They were laid out by noted engineers, and macadam, gravel and clay were used in their construction. They range from 50 to 100 feet in width and are so well drained that water cannot stand upon the surface, as the top is composed of macadam, rolled into a compact mass by the pressure of 20-ton machines operated by steam power. One can go for miles without seeing a loose stone the size of a horse chestnut.

Even in parts of the estate given up to the game preserves the highways are as good as those directly around the hall itself.

After the system of roads was completed invitations were sent to public officials in all parts of the kingdom to visit the estate with a view of educating them in road building. The visitors came by the hundreds and were entertained at the owner's expense. Annually people interested in road making visit Eaton Hall from various portions of Europe.

AS TO SOME HANDWRITING.

Fred—Do you think a man's character is shown in his handwriting? Rate—if it is, some of them must be perfectly dreadful.

ARMY SWIMMING SCHOOL.

The German army has a swimming school for troops, where every one must learn to swim. The best swimmers are able to cross a stream of several hundred yards width even when carrying their clothing, rifle and ammunition.

THE READERS OF ONTARIO

OUR LIBRARIES COMPARED WITH MASSACHUSETTS AND NEW YORK.

The Circulation of Libraries in New York Much Smaller Than in Ontario—Massachusetts is the Banner State—The Measure of Intelligence.

Premier Ross' recent remarks on "the measure of intelligence" found among the people of Ontario as indicated by the number of free libraries in the Province and the extent of their patronage, naturally suggests a comparison with the measure of intelligence in other lands, particularly the leading States of the Union. Three factors come into consideration in making such a comparison, viz., the population, the total number of volumes in the libraries, and the number taken out during the year.

Contrasting Ontario with the State of New York, which may be taken as an example of the average American State, and with Massachusetts, where the free public library movement found its birth, and where it now stands very near completion, so far as universal extension is concerned, the following statistics are obtainable.

In 1896 the libraries of New York, with a population of nearly 7,000,000, contained 4,617,661 volumes which had a circulation during that year of 5,008,402. In 1898 the libraries of Massachusetts, with a population of 2,500,000, held 3,750,000 volumes, with an annual circulation of 2,500,000, while Ontario, with a population of 2,500,000, has 918,022 books in the libraries, which during the year 1899 circulated to the extent of 2,347,131.

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From the engineering point of view the stupendous nature of the undertaking will be realized from the effect it will have of creating practically lake 144 in its long impounding margin. 1,000,000,000 tons of water, a million tons of which will be added to the reservoir thus formed and will be distributed by channels over the agricultural land on each side. When the water is most wanted, August and April for the crops, corn, sugar, cotton and ice supply in the lower river will be increased from the reservoir, and thus a fair

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THE GREAT NILE DAM.

The Work That Has Just Been Finished at Assouan.