



**A SEA OF FLAME.**  
On the evening of November, 28th, 1878, a fire broke out in the British ship Melanic, loaded with 500 barrels of petroleum. An awful mass of flames shot up from the main hatch and the vessel quivered from stem to stern with explosion of the barrels. Her seams opened and the blazing petroleum poured out into the river, spreading a belt of fire around her. The master and seamen jumped overboard. Captain Sharp, whose vessel was lying close-by, propelled a small boat through the blazing river and after a severe scorching and imminent peril, saved the seamen from a horrible death.

All over civilization there are thousands of men in more imminent danger than were those seamen. They are threatened with consumption or are already in the clutch of that deadly disease. If they only knew it, help is at hand. Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery cures 98 per cent. of all cases of consumption. It also cures bronchitis, asthma, throat and nasal troubles and all diseases of the air passages. It is the great blood-maker, flesh-builder, and nerve-tonic. It makes the appetite hearty, the digestion perfect and the liver active. The "Golden Medical Discovery" is the product of that eminent specialist, Dr. R. V. Pierce, who, during the thirty years that he has been chief consulting physician to the great Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute, at Buffalo, has treated more cases than fifty ordinary physicians treat in a lifetime. Thousands given up by doctors, have testified to complete recovery under this marvelous medicine.

Constipation causes and aggravates many serious diseases. It is speedily cured by Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets.



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When the meal was over, a characteristic ceremony was enacted. A calf only a few days old was led into the open space and killed with a sword, its blood being made to flow inward toward the castle. The animal's life extinct, every man who was to accompany the expedition stepped solemnly over the body, which was then burned, so that no dog or other unclean beast might eat any part of the flesh. This is supposed to bring good fortune, and an Arab army could not be induced to take the field without first observing the sacrificial rite. The calf safely cremated, the men immediately mounted their camels and horses and wheeled into line. Then Abu Kuram, going to the front, delivered a short oration on the glory of war and the bravery of his soldiers, which evoked uproarious applause from the flattered.

Ere it died away the kettledrums were rattling and the cymbals clashing the advance, and, amid vociferous cries of "God save Abu Kuram; God give the victory to Abu Kuram," the strangely-assorted troops swung slowly into line. The huge serpentine procession wound tediously through the narrow, tortuous streets, in which two camelmen found it hard to march abreast, but its tardy coilings were enlivened by the caperings and shoutings of the mob who ran in front of us and hung on our heels, and, to their own immediate peril, squeezed and pressed on both sides of us.

On the outskirts of the town the people stopped, finding the pace on the open ground beyond their capacity in

running, so they stood there and yed themselves hoarse with blessings and good wishes, which we acknowledged with resounding cheers. As we deployed into open order for greater ease in marching, I caught a last glimpse of Said Achmet, who stood apart, waving his hands as if to signify he had a double interest in the receding column. Both Tabal and myself waved our adieu in return, and from me there went with it a heartfelt benediction.

**CHAPTER XVII.  
THE MARCH.**

The details of the march need not be narrated at length. Our journey lay over scarred and blighted ground, and across sandy plains, and in and out among circular sandhills—loose, impermanent heaps, which the winds of the desert twist and curve and fling about in their wanton, lonely sport; desolate heaps that hide the bones of the perished traveller, and are forever moving their formless lips with a silent, stealthy motion, to suck in and overwhelm the living. No man knows the deep treachery of mother earth till he has wrestled with the noiseless forces of the desert.

The pace, however, was brisk, for man and beast were fresh and eager. Indeed, it was a perpetual surprise to me how the animals made such progress over the elusive path. The camels, swinging at a steady trot, had much the best of it, for when the hard hoof of the horse sinks and slips the elastic, spongy foot of the camel spreads like a web, and he passes as easily and safely over drifting sands as a snowshoer over smothering wreaths. It was then I first understood how truly the camel deserves its title of the ship of the desert, for as ships pass along their liquid way, so the camel trends his unstable course over the sandy wastes. Yet the horses, too, had uncommon lightness and skill in making way where every step forward was a half-step backward.

To the horseman the first sensation of a desert ride is as if he were poised on springs of ineffable delicacy, which swayed gently on the slightest pressure. Much of this luxurious ease is due to the yielding track, but something also to the springy motion of the Arab horse. To the saddle nothing whatever is due, since it is merely pieces of the hardest wood, roughly nailed, and bound with thongs of rawhide. On an English horse and a macadamized road it would reduce a trooper to helplessness in an hour; and, indeed, with all the suppleness and softness of the true Kohlan Arab saddlery is apt to pain the inexperienced. The Arabs themselves are aware of no discomfort because they are as hard as the wood they bestride.

On the first night we marched steadily till set of moon, then halted for food and rest. I could not half admire the quickness with which the fires were lighted with withered grasses and shrubs, and the good-humoured alacrity of the cooks in preparing the meal. To be sure it did not call for any elaborate exercise of art, for the rations consisted of nothing daintier than coarse flour, salt, and dried dates, with some packages of coffee. And the cooks took two or three handfuls of flour apiece, poured it into a dirty dough with dirty hands. It would be profane in an Arab cook to have clean hands, and so he keeps them religiously filthy, thus giving those who eat his preparations the benefit of many unsuspected ingredients.

The dough, which was wet perhaps half-way to the centre, was beaten out into thick cakes, which were laid on the glowing embers and covered with hot ashes. They were left thus till converted into a sodden, soapy paste, then taken out, and eaten as hot as they could be swallowed. I nibbled the edge of one, but, finding my teeth stick in it, I ate a handful of dates, took a drink of water, and then, wrapping my burnoose close about me, threw myself on the ground and slept the sweet sleep of the weary. It seemed I had not lain five minutes when the kettledrums were beating the reveille. The gray dawn was only beginning to glimmer, but already the camel-men were quarrelling

with their grunting beasts, and our bakers were busy with the glutinous compound they called bread. We hastily swallowed some mouthfuls of it straight off the burning coals, with a few dates and a drink of musty water apiece, and were off again. For awhile the air was deliciously cool and refreshing, and the glories of the opening day in the lone wilderness as the sun broke through his curtain of white mist were such as a man beholds with awe and remembers with reverence. But the blazing orb soon turned the dewy freshness to a sweltering, blistering heat that was trying to the nerves and temper of men toiling through shifting sands and conical tumuli of volcanic slag. Yet no man complained, only as we mopped our streaming faces the conversation lagged, and here and there a man gave a low involuntary moan. Save such intermittent noises and the dreary, monotonous, sift, sift, sift, of animals' feet in the sand, there was not a sound. When the sun mounts in his might, desert travellers are apt to fall silent.

Toward noon, when we had almost reached the point of utter dissolution, we gained the crest of a low ridge, whence, looking to the north-west, we saw what evoked a cry of gladness from nearly every throat in the company. It was an oasis, a tiny spot of green, with a clump of trees in the midst, shining like an emerald in a broad drab setting. We knew there was a well there, and Tabal, with the privilege of a guide, suggested we should halt and replenish our water skins. But Abu Kuram answered curtly that we were not yet in need of water; that the time for rest had not come, and that in forced marches men had to think more of speed than of comfort.

There was a general look of disappointment at this speech, which urged Tabal to appeal again and to advance reasons for stopping.

(To be Continued.)



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