



**THE HURRYING FEET OF WOMEN**

the new-born infant's cry, tells the story of woman's sympathy for her sister-woman. If women would only spread the medical gospel, that a woman is unfitted for wifehood and motherhood as long as she suffers from weakness or disease of the distinctly womanly organism, there would be less necessity for the sisterly sympathy that a woman receives when she is in the throes of child-bearing.

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Arthur G. Peake.  
Nov. 4



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ABOU KURAM protested he was but as the dust under the hoof of Amood's charger, and Amood Sinn swore a solemn oath he was not fit to bind the spur upon Abou Kuram's heel. Abou said that Amood was a second Sikander el Rumi, and Amood that Abou was in strength and courage as was Gabriel himself. So the soft blandishments and subtle self-deprecations went on as fervently as if each man were convinced he spoke gospel truth. But in the end Abou Kuram was not to be moved out of his humility, so Amood Sinn swore a useless expenditure of breath and time, had to make the best of his unwelcome hours. Having regained possession of himself by this time, he accepted the behests of fate without a ruffle in his sick hypocrisy, though I thought there was something of a wry twist in his feigning mouth as he turned to ride to the post of danger. No sooner was he gone than the manner and look of Abou Kuram changed. His eyes glowed, his brows lowered and his lips were compressed to an ominous thinness.

"Our brother leth with a rare persuasion to-day," he remarked, dryly, to Koor Ali, as they watched the retreating figure, adding, with a sudden truculence:—"By my blade point, I will drive him into it. I tell thee he shall fight, or if he fly he shall find a worse foe in front than behind. Should the eagle prove a barn fowl, by faith, instead of saving we will help to pluck it." He paused, looking over the assembled army. "Doth it not seem to thee there is victory in the looks of these armed men?" he asked.

And such indeed was the martial and imposing array that it might well have made a poltroon into a hero, for the spirit of battle was once more animating the plumed and bannered host that covered the plain like a sea, its colours aflame and its arms flashing like thickets of steel in the early sun. The allies had fled to the mountains like sheep before the wolves. They had been found broken, dejected, utterly demoralized, because they were without a leader, and it was with difficulty they had been brought back. But now, side by side, with an army that was fresh and sworn to conquer, they were renewed in heart and savage for revenge and plunder. So they danced about on caroling horses or straddling camels, tossing spears and whirling swords and matchlocks to the maddening incentive of pipe and drum and cymbal, and a tumult of whoops and howls.

"That is the thirst for blood," said Abou Kuram. "Ride forward, Koor Ali, and help our brother to make haste in getting into battle array. Tell him we must possess that height," pointing upward. "It will be worth a thousand men."

Eager for action, Koor Ali galloped to the front with the message, to find Amood Sinn giving instructions about lighting fires to roast some sheep and goats that had been taken in the mountains. Koor Ali instantly wheeled his horse and rode back to Abou Kuram to report. Amood following distracted at his heels.

"My brother is impatient," cried Amood, when he came up. "The men need strength for the toil and heat that are before them. Wherefore not light fires and cook our booty?"

Abou Kuram replied that the men had dates and water ready to their hand, and would be all the simpler for not dining too well before the engagement. "When the battle is won my brother will perceive they could eat with more leisure and satisfaction," he added, with a grim politeness that admitted of no dispute.

He pleased, for he had resolved to hearten himself with some handfuls of good mutton. Amood Sinn once more returned to his place, and the men without dismounting hurriedly washed down a bunch of dry dates apiece with a draught of lukewarm water. The meagre meal was hardly swallowed when Koor Ali was careering to the front again with instructions to Amood to form and make for the height without further delay.

The swelling in the plain behind which lay the forces of Yumen Yusel had the appearance of an enormous billow thrown up in some upheaval or convulsion of nature, and solidified and fixed as it rose. It was the only elevation in the plain, and, as above indicated, we were to possess it. Once upon the crest or ridge, we could make our own arrangements for annihilating the enemy. We would make our preparations at our ease, and at the first opportunity spring upon him, crush him, mangle him, sweep him off the face of the earth, and leave him neither name nor inheritance among the sons of men. The plan was excellent; all that remained was the execution. Scouts were thrown out in front to prevent surprise, while the whole force was pushed vigorously on to be ready for any advantage that might fall in the way of brave men. Abou Kuram hurried up the rear and tried to bridle his impatience.

and in another minute would be on the top. As they neared the ridge we held our breath, the whole army seeming to pause for a signal. The scouts lay flatter and flatter on their horse's necks, and the dust rose in a denser line behind them. Presently they halted, as it appeared, very abruptly. Had they discovered the lurking foe? The solid mass below gave a great united gasp, that was as the sough of the wind in a forest, and waited, with palpitating hearts.

The stoppage, however, was a mere precaution, for two or three of the scouts, slipping from their saddles and flinging their reins to their comrades, hurried forward on foot, bending low as they ran. The army below looked up, panting like hounds on the leash. A deep murmur rumbled on the air, swelled into a hoarse growl, sank, and died away—the cry of vengeful men for blood. The commanders, nervously gripping their hilts, moistened their dry mouths to give the order for a rush, the trumpeters hung with trembling trump to lip ready to blow the deadly blast, the men listened, and looked in bodiful silence. It was the thrilling stillness that preludes the storm. Next minute the thunders and lightnings of a curbed vengeance would be set loose, and Heaven help the vanquished!

(To be Continued.)

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