

**THE SIEGE OF SUNDA GUNGE.**

BY A. CONAN DOYLE.

IV.

Lenora, with a half-hysterical laugh, turned to the window and went out. Mary Sulland was left alone. Suddenly she sank upon a chair and burst into such a passion of tears as shook her very frame.

It is not in the nature of any woman, however nobly made, however jealous of the honor of the man whom she regards, not to feel, at such a moment, a cruel agony of mind. She was alone. The excitement which had sustained her was already over, and now the hard, plain fact, without disguise, pressed itself remorselessly upon her soul. Her hero had gone forth to almost certain death.

Her hero—Yes—he was her hero. She made no secret of it now, in her own heart. She loved him well. Gladly would she have given her own life for his. But, alas! what could she do?

All at once a wild thought struck her. Her cheeks flushed; the old light kindled in her eyes. She started to her feet, pale, eager-eyed, and trembling—trembling now with new excitement. She seemed like one possessed by a spirit stronger than her own—by an impulse overmastering and resistless. For a moment or two she stood motionless, her eyes gleaming. Then turning, not to the window, but to the door, she hurried from the room.

She went straight to her own chamber. In a few minutes she came out again. She was now draped in a long, close, gray dressing-gown, which completely covered her own dress. Her tall, slight figure, thus garmented, looked like nothing so much as a gray ghost—and like a ghost, in the falling light of evening, she glided out of her chamber, and passed along the passages and down a flight of stairs.

All at once she stopped. Some noise alarmed her. And now she was afraid—afraid, not of what she was about to do, but of being seen and thwarted in the execution of her plan. Presently, all being still, she again stole forward. The part of the station through which she had to pass was almost deserted. Fortune favored her, besides; no eye observed her as she stole upon her way.

At last, to her infinite relief, she reached her destination. She stood in the archway which led out into the square. It was still empty. Vane's volunteers had gone in search of the articles required for the adventure, and had not yet arrived. The open court was before her, and there, in the middle of it, was the well.

She knew the archway well—its image had been clear to her mind's eye all along. It was a kind of tunnel, or covered passage, of brickwork, some half a dozen yards in length. Near the outer end of the archway there was a buttress, and beyond it a recess or deep niche in the masonry. The niche was close beside the buttress on the side toward the square.

The gray figure reached the buttress—glided into the recess—and disappeared.

V.

Five minutes passed—ten minutes. Then the sound of steps was heard, and men entered the recess; immediately afterward Vane appeared, together with another officer—the surgeon.

By this time the sun had sunk, and but for the rising moon it would have been quite dark. As it was, the interior of the archway was in gloom, but the open square outside was bathed in light—a light uncertain, shadowy, spectral, yet permitting any object moving in it to be distinctly seen. The woodwork which had supported the windlass of the well had been shattered by the shot, and now stood in ruins; but the chain remained intact, its end twisted round a broken stump, and the bucket hung in safety inside the opening of the well.

No time was lost. Vane spoke a word or two by way of last directions to the men; then taking a bucket in his hand, so that if by any chance he escaped the shot he might do his share in bringing the water, he turned toward the square. That his chance was very slight, he knew. And as he turned to go forth into the range of the cannon his face, though resolute, was grave.

He had already taken a step or two in advance when he suddenly stopped short. What was that? A soft, gray, ghostly figure started out of the wall in front of him, and flitted forth into the open air. Before he had recovered from his amazement it had already reached the well. For the space of an instant it stood there motionless, then, as if desiring rather to attract attention than to shun it, it raised both arms above its head and waved them in the moonlight. In a moment—just as Vane, recovering a little, started out of the archway—the cannon thundered; a storm of shot whistled in the air, plowed up the ground, and rattled among the ruined woodwork of the well.

Vane was still outside its range, and no shot struck him. But the phantom figure—what of it? He looked, and thrilled. What dark thing was that which now lay motionless beside the mouth of the well? He had not seen the figure fall—but it was down upon the ground!

VI.

When the night was past, when the next day shone, when the dial-needle marked the hour a little after noon, the garrison of Sunda Gunge was shaken suddenly by strange excitement. First, there became audible a noise of wild confusion in the encampment of the Sepoys round the walls. It grew—it gathered volume; it swelled into a tumult. Guns fired, voices yelled, a sound was heard as of the stamped or innumerable feet. Then, drums began to

other sound, arose the loud hurraing of English voices; and this, taken up by those inside the garrison, became in a few minutes a perfect tempest of wild cheering, ringing far and near.

Suddenly—unexpectedly—relief had come. The rebels were flying in all directions; their camp was in the hands of English soldiers. The siege of Sunda Gunge was over.

It is not our purpose to dwell upon the scene that followed. From that tumult of wild joy, of almost fierce excitement, we must turn away and follow St. George Vane.

As soon as the fact of the relief was certain, he stepped out of the crowd and made his way, alone and unperceived, along the deserted passages to a certain room which lay in the rear of the walled buildings. It was the very room from which the night before a slender, gray-draped figure had stolen softly out.

Just as he reached the door and was hesitating at the threshold, Mrs. Jessop, who had been called out by the noise of the cheering was seen returning in a state of much excitement. Vane accosted her eagerly, but in low tones. "Is she better? Can I see her yet?" he said.

"She is much better; she is dressed and sitting up. But the noise alarmed her. She does not know the cause of it. Will you come in and tell her?"

Vane followed her into the room. In a large chair, next the window, looking very white and weak, with a bandage round her temples, where the shot had grazed and stunned her, sat Mary Sulland. As Vane entered she looked round. He paused, and for some seconds the two regarded each other.

He had not seen her since, the night before, he had carried her, swooning, to her room. He had heard, with infinite relief, that the wound was not serious, and, inquiring hourly at her door throughout the night, he had learned that the swoon was passing off, and that with some hours of rest there would be little to be feared. Yet now, as he stood before her, even the great event which had just happened was less present to his mind than anxiety to satisfy himself, with his own eyes, that she was safe.

The shock which he had felt at the moment when he had raised her in his arms, and caught sight of her white face in the moonlight, was with him still. He had felt at that instant a certainty that she was killed.

And indeed she had had a wonderful escape.

Every sportsman who has tried his gun at a sheet of blank paper knows that it will sometime happen that, while the paper will be spotted thick with pellets, there will some times be a space left free of shot—large enough, perhaps, to have let the game escape, however true the aim. It had so happened here. Amid the storm of shot, only one had grazed her; the rest had whistled past without harm. But where her slender figure had so narrowly escaped, a man, being of larger bulk, would inevitably have been struck down. Mary Sulland had, in fact, been slightly wounded, where Vane would have been killed.

During the hours of night, while he had wandered up and down outside her door, too restless to seek for sleep, he had thought of all these things. He had thought of the girl who had risked her life for his; he had let his memory go back into the past, and call to mind all that he had owed to Mary Sulland through the years that he had known her; how all his noblest aspirations, dreams, ambitions, had come from her, or had been fostered or strengthened by her sympathy, and he had wondered how it was that he himself had never realized, till now, what she had been to him. And now, as he stood beside her, as he looked at her again, he wondered more and more.

The look of inquiry on her face recalled him to himself.

"I am forgetting," he said. "I am glad to be the first to bring you the good news. I see you guess it. Yes, relief has come. The siege is over."

She looked at him with eagerness. One thought filled her mind—it forced a passage to her lips.

"Then you will not have to go again for water?"

As the words escaped her she flushed red. Her action of the night before had hardly been her own—so overmastering had been the impulse which had hurried her away. And now, like a woman, she was troubled by a doubt—what would he think of her? Had she, in thrusting herself between him and danger, forfeited forever his esteem? How could she expect that he would understand?

He did understand, however—at least partly. He saw that she was troubled and he took the best course possible to set her at her ease. He meant to regard what she had done as a matter which, between themselves, required no explanation. As for others, they knew nothing. Except that she had been slightly hurt by a stray piece of shot, no one, not even the colonel or Lenora, knew—

truth. The men who had been at the archway had only the vaguest idea of what had passed. The secret was their own.

"No," he said, smiling. "I shall not have to go again. Not, what is of much greater consequence, will you Mary."

She answered with a smile. They understood each other. He was bending over her; she was looking up at him. Mrs. Jessop was not near them, and it was almost as if they were alone. From the distance came a noise of voices cheering, as if they never meant to stop, but in the room itself there was no sound but their own murmured talk.

"As soon as you are well again," he said, "I shall be very angry with you, Mary. I had a chance of getting the Victoria Cross, but now they will let you have it, I suppose."

She laughed softly, for his words were music to her. But it was not his words alone that thrilled her blood. She had won a richer prize than the Victoria Cross, and now she knew it. For in his eyes, as she looked up at them, she saw the flame of love.

THE END.

**The Automatic Clothes-line Reel.**

BY ROBERT J. BURDETTE.

No one who lived in Burlington that year, can ever forget the first practical test that was made of the famous "Domestic Automatic" clothes-line reel. It was a curious and powerful bit of mechanism, and was the invention of a man who lived on Barnes street. This man used to be gravely afflicted because the Scandinavian lady who superintended the weekly wash day ceremonies at his house always took great pains to leave a net work of clothes line spread all round his back yard. And when he made complaint to her about it she addressed him in the musical accents of Christine Nilsson's native language, and overwhelmed him with a torrent of eloquence that he could not understand. And when he remonstrated with his wife and daughter about it they laughed him to scorn, and his daughter, who was educated at Vassar, and can hustle her terrified parent out of the house with one hand, told him if he interfered any more in that department around the house he'd get drowned in the wash tub. So this man suffered. One bitter cold winter morning he ran out to the wood-shed after some kindling, and the first line caught him under the chin and pulled his neck out till it was a foot long, and he ran into the house and frightened his wife into fits by his terrible appearance, and she threatened to apply for a divorce if he ever made faces at her that way again. It was nearly three hours before his neck shrank back to its natural size. And a few nights after that he was all dressed to go to a party with his family, and he went bounding down the back yard to see that the alley gate was fastened, and a slack line caught him amidstships, let him run out the slack, and when it halted taut, just picked him up, tossed the breath out of him, turned him clear over, and chucked him down on his back, splitting his coat from the tail-buttons to the neck. And he couldn't move, and he couldn't speak, and he couldn't even breathe, only about thirty cents on the dollar, so he couldn't answer his wife and daughter when they screamed to him that they were ready, and they concluded that he had run away to avoid going with them, so they went off without him, and never came back till eleven o'clock, and the man lay out in the back yard all that time, trying to die. And one time after that, he was jogging across the back yard with his full of about three hundred pounds of hard wood, and he was laughing like a hyena at something he had read in The Hawkeye, when a clothes prop slipped just as he passed under the line and dropped on his head, raising a lump as big as an egg, and as he fell forward, another line caught right in his mouth and sawed it clear back to his ears, so that when he sniled the top of his head only hung on a hinge.

Well, these things naturally weighed on his mind and depressed him, but they set him to thinking, and he went to work and invented a patent clothes-line reel, which was inclosed in a heavy cast-iron box, and was worked by a powerful automatic arrangement. You only had to wind up the box and set it for a certain hour, just like an alarm clock, and at that hour the reel would go off, and pull on the line like a team of mules, the spring hook at the other end of the line would let go its hold and that line would be rolled up at the rate of a thousand miles a minute. He said nothing about his invention, but put up the box and told some lie about it to his family, which is a way men have, and he set it for 7 o'clock p.m., and wound it up strong. Then he watched Miss Nilsson's compatriot run out the line and adjust the hook, and he went away.

Somebody's at the clothes line!" screamed the man's daughter. "Good-heavens!" yelled the man, "hadn't you taken the clothes in?" "No!" chorused the women. The man thought he would save what was left. He sprang at the clothes line. He caught the flying hook at the end with both hands, and the next instant, before the terrified eyes of his shrieking wife and daughter, he was jerked through the hole in the iron box, a quivering mass of boneless flesh, while his glistening skeleton fell rattling upon the porch.

They gathered his frame work off the porch, and unlocked the box and drew out his covering. He was not dead, so deftly and quickly had he been removed from his framework. They sent for the doctors, but their skill could not avail to get the man together again, and now he sits, limp and boneless, in a high-backed easy chair, smiling sadly at his grinning skeleton, which sits in a chair on the opposite side of the fire-place, grinning sociably at its counterpart, and rattling horribly every time it crosses its bony legs, or scratches the top of its glistening head with its gaunt, fleshless fingers. And thus that poor man will have to drag out a dual existence until death comes to both of him. It is a painful, expensive life, for the skeleton eats



There is a star that points every woman to the pathway of happiness. It is the "Star of Health." It is the duty of every mother to point out this star and indicate this pathway to her daughters. There are too many unhappy—too many unhappy women in the world. At every gathering where women meet alone, the story is heard of sickness and nervousness and despondency.

The woman who suffers in this way makes a mistake to consult the average obscure physician. If she does so, the chances are that she is told that her trouble is nervousness or insomnia or indigestion or heart trouble. It does not happen very often that this diagnosis is correct. When by some fortunate chance she is told the truth, that she is suffering from weakness and disease of the distinctly feminine organism, she is told at the same time that she must submit to the obnoxious examinations and local treatment so embarrassing to a sensitive woman. All this is unnecessary. Advice of some specialist of world wide reputation. Dr. R. V. Pierce is such a man. For thirty years he has been chief consulting physician to the Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute, at Buffalo, N. Y. During that time, with the assistance of a staff of eminent physicians, he has treated thousands of ailing women. He is the inventor of that wonderful medicine for women known as Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. This medicine acts directly on the delicate and important organs that make maternity possible. It cures all weakness, disease, internal ulceration and inflammation and debilitating drains. It has transformed thousands of weak, suffering women into healthy, happy, robust wives. It is for sale by all good medicine dealers.

Never fail to cure constipation—Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets.

Antenatal and— "Do you think they are married?" "No, they're only engaged. She looked pleased when he burned her hand with his lighted cigar."—Detroit Free Press.

Woman's Reason. He—I do believe it is the truth that the more brutal a man is the more you women are attracted by him. She—Why not? There is lots more glory in bossing a man like that.—Indianapolis Journal.

Irish cambric, well covered with applied designs of yellow lace, is used for wide collars on thin cotton gowns and is combined with chiffon for vests and for waists with chiffon underneath.

In belts there are narrow ones of leather in green, brown, gray, tan, black and white. The very latest novelty has an exact imitation of a harness buckle in gold, silver, leather covered or plain enamel.

Jaunty little capes which reach just below the point of the shoulder are made of three overlapping frills of accordion plaited black chiffon with three satin stripes on the edge sewed on black net or taffeta.

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