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**DISCONTENT.**

Fair are the fields in the spring with the sweet perfumed breath of the meadows,  
Fresh as the green mossy dells where the gurgling brook its torches of gold;  
Winter has gone from the earth and returned to the kingdom of shadows;  
Feelings rush out from the heart, like to frozen streams losing their hold.

Yet as I stand in the light of the sun and in gladness rejoice  
Deep in my heart there arises a restless, dissatisfied voice—  
"Life's hopes are never fulfilled; there is at ways left something to long for!"

—Lillian Eleanor Barlow in Madras.

**A MAN'S LIFE.**

"It is a question," Professor Kirkhoffer said, quietly, "between this and that."

Saying thus, he looked down at the two objects between which choice had to be made. "This" was a man, a brown skinned man of the upper Asian steppes. He lay prone upon the desert sand, his eyes unseeing eyes, wide open, motionless save for an occasional twitching of the limbs as the fever shiver shook him; silent, except when his parched lips moved in the inarticulate mutter of delirium. The professor's gaze did not linger upon this piteous figure. It traveled to "that"—two loads of clay tablets, evidently of extreme antiquity and closely covered with a strange cuneiform character, which had just been carefully strapped by his companion to the backs of two kneeling camels.

"Seeing we are now reduced to two beasts only," he went on, his eye shifting for an instant to the body of a third camel, which lay dead some 20 yards off, "seeing also that we are in a waterless desert, probably 24 hours' ride from the nearest well and that this man is a dead weight on our hands"—

"You don't dream of abandoning the poor chap?" Dick Harding broke in.

The professor glanced uneasily over his smoked spectacles. Harding was a puzzle to him, a man of distinguished scientific attainments, capable of strong scientific enthusiasm, yet occasionally betraying a vein of sentimentality altogether out of place in connection with scientific exploration. Kirkhoffer had had inconvenient experience of this peculiarity more than once during the year spent with Harding in the remote fastnesses of Tibet.

"You wouldn't leave him here to die?" the Englishman persisted.

The professor rubbed his forehead thoughtfully. "He's bound to die soon in any case."

"I don't see that at all. If we can keep him alive till we get out of this—"

"Impossible, my friend. He cannot walk, and these two camels cannot carry him in addition to you and me and the tablets."

"Then leave some of the tablets behind."

The professor fairly gasped for breath. "Leave—leave behind some of the tablets?" he stammered. "Leave the records of a civilization to which the Arcadian is a thing of yesterday—to be swallowed up by the next sandstorm? Give my great discovery, the greatest of the century, maimed and imperfect, to the world? Harding, you must be mad. What's the life of a Khirgiz Tartar beside these priceless things?"

Kirkhoffer's shortsighted eyes gleamed angrily behind his glasses; his voice was thick with passion.

"What's a Khirgiz Tartar?" he growled like a wild animal.

"He's a man, anyway," Harding retorted. "Suppose I refuse to leave this fellow?"

"Then"—the professor became all at once ominously cool—"I shall be forced to remind you that I am the head of this expedition and you my salaried assistant; also that these animals are my property. I go, and they go with me. You can join the party or not, as you please."

Harding grew pale. "That is the choice you offer me? Then I say you are a blackguard."

"And I say," indifferently, "that you are a fool. Come, will you mount?"

"No!" furiously.

The German shrugged his shoulders. "Have it your own way," he said. And, gathering up the long leading rein which he had fastened to the head of one camel, he prepared to seat himself on the other.

But here Harding sprang upon him suddenly. "No, you don't," he cried. "You shall leave me one, you brute, though it were a hundred times your property!"

"Stand off!" the professor cried.

Harding's answer was to close with him silently, and there ensued a trial of strength whereof the issue seemed for several minutes doubtful. The men were not ill matched. Kirkhoffer was the taller and heavier, but then he was also the elder by 20 years, and Harding's naturally lithe habit of body had known an English public school and university training. The result of the conflict was still uncertain when the professor suddenly loosed his hold and fell back, leaving the prize of contention, the led camel, almost in the other's clutch. Harding stooped to seize the creature's halter and rose again, to find himself covered by his antagonist's revolver.

"Now, perhaps," the man of science observed, "you will consent to hear reason. No, my good friend," as Harding's hand went briskly to his breast pocket. "I drew the charge while you were asleep this morning in view of possible difficulties. You see, I know something of your strange English character. There is nothing like being ready for difficulties as they arise."

Dick Harding, under the covering revolver, stood erect and—dumb. To argue further with a man prepared to commit murder on behalf of his tablets of baked clay were simple waste of breath.

Keeping the muzzle of his weapon pointed full at Harding's breast, Professor Kirkhoffer mounted his camel.

made both the great beasts get up and began to move on. As long as Harding remained within running up distance he continued to hold the revolver raised and leveled, sitting sideways on his animal to insure an accurate aim. But after a minute the camels broke into a long, awkward trot. In two minutes they were beyond pursuit. Then the professor pocketed his firearm and threw his leg across the saddle. "Your own fault, remember!" was his final greeting before he disappeared over the top of the nearest sand dune.

When he had disappeared, Harding looked about him, reviewing the situation. It was no cheering prospect that met his eye—a dead waste of sand hills to north, south, east and west, white hot in the glare of the tropical sun. Two dark blotches alone broke the pale surface of the wilderness, the stiffening bulk of the dead camel and the limp figure of the fever stricken camel driver—truly no pleasant place to die in, more especially if you happen to be young and strong and the death to which you stand condemned is death by hunger and thirst. A few hours would exhaust the scanty remains of food and water left in the skin and saddlebag lying hard by the dead camel, and then—

Harding shook off anticipations of coming torture to take stock of his wretched commissariat and, rummaging in the bag, found a priceless treasure, nothing less than an untouched bottle of quinine! Why, with this he might hope to revive the Khirgiz whose case, but for the supposed exhaustion of the expedition's medicine chest, had never been a serious one. Escape was yet possible.

Escape! From a trackless wilderness in which they could only wander aimlessly to and fro, having no single instrument by which to determine their position or point the way? Saving his assistant's pack, the professor had carried off everything.

No, not everything. Even as this thought sank like a stone into Harding's heart his eye fell upon something glittering at his foot. With a shaking hand he grasped it, lifted it—and broke into a cry of mingled triumph and thanksgiving which startled the Khirgiz from his lethargy. Pushing back his long hair, the man made an effort to sit up.

"The master? Where is the master?" he asked, looking about him in surprise.

Harding laughed grimly. "Heaven alone knows, since he has left his compass here."

And heaven alone knows to this hour the course of the wretched Kirkhoffer's wandering. When Harding and the Khirgiz, guided by the instrument which he had dropped in his scuffle with the Englishman, reached, after manifold toils and sufferings, the confines of human habitation, they could obtain no tidings of their vanished chief. And, although Harding insisted on organizing a new expedition to search for him, its labors were fruitless.

His fate remains as unknown to the world as the history of that ancient empire whose records lie buried with him in the sands of central Asia.—Chicago News.

**Misplaced Sympathy.**

There was once a paterfamilias who was eloquently indignant about the way his daughters imposed upon the laundress in the matter of white petticoats in winter. "It was a shame at all seasons," he said, "but in cold weather, with no excuse for wash skirts, it was cruel to ask that poor, hardworking girl to slave and toil over their washing as she was obliged to do."

One day the paterfamilias, happening to pass through the laundry, tore up stairs, white with rage, to where his daughters were. "Well, girls," he cried, "this is too much. White petticoats in winter are bad enough, but when it comes to such white petticoats as I saw Delia breaking her back over just now down stairs—ruffles from top to hem and tucks and lace and embroidery—why, it's a day's work to look at one of them. If you must have such extravagant fripperies, for heaven's sake have them plain."

The daughters investigated. Since the last paternal outburst they had given up white petticoats, either ruffled or plain, and in either spring, summer, autumn or winter. It was as they feared; the "extravagant fripperies," ruffled from top to hem, over which poor Delia was breaking her back, were the property of poor Delia herself.

**His Plan Was Simple.**

Frederick the Great once requested his generals to submit to him plans of campaign for a supposititious case. Hans Joachim von Zieten, the famous cavalry general, produced a queer diagram in black ink. It represented a big blot in the center, intersected by two black lines, whose four terminals ended each in a smaller blot. The king was furious and upbraided his old comrade in arms bitterly for what he considered disrespect.

In explanation Von Zieten said: "Why, your majesty, I am the large blot in the center—the enemy is any one of the four smaller blots. He can march upon me from the right or left, from the front or rear. If he does, I simply advance upon any of the four lines and lick him where I find him."

Frederick was satisfied.

**They Ought to Unite.**

Here is a story of a Milwaukee couple who agreed to separate after 15 years of married life: They continued to reside within a block of each other and to pass the time of day impersonally when they met. When the silver anniversary of the wedding came on, both celebrated it, although separately. Two church ceremonies were performed in the church where they were wedded 25 years before, the husband's ceremony being at 8 o'clock in the morning and the wife's at 9. That evening each gave a reception at the residence at the same hour, and the same friends called to pay their respects, successively going from one house to the other.—Milwaukee Sentinel.

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