



# THE HOUR GLASS.

BY ROBERT BARR.

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"She bent forward as if to do this when the leaden windows shuddered, and the house itself trembled with the sharp crash of our light cannon, followed almost immediately by the deeper detonation of the heavier guns from the citadel. The red sand in the glass began to fall again and its liberation seemed to unfetter my paralyzed limbs. Battered as I was, I rushed like one frantic along the passage and down the stairs. The air was resonant with the quick following reports of the cannon, and the long, narrow street was fitfully lit up as if by quick flashes of summer lightning. My men were still standing where I had placed them, giving a quick word of command. I marched them down the street and out into the square, where I met General Trelawny coming back from his futile assault. Like myself, he was bare-headed, and his white hair bristled with rage. His military countenance was begrimed with powder smoke, but he spoke to me with no trace of anger.

"Lieutenant Sontore," he said, "disperse your men.

"I gave the word to disband my men, and then stood at attention before him.

"Lieutenant Sontore," he said, in the same level voice, "return to your quarters and consider yourself under arrest. Await my coming there." I turned and obeyed his orders. It seemed incredible that the sand should still be running in the hourglass, for ages had passed over my head since last I was in that room. I paced up and down awaiting the coming of my chief, feeling neither fear nor regret, but rather dumb despair. In a few minutes his heavy tread was on the stair, followed by the measured tramp of a file of men. He came into the room and with him were a sergeant and four soldiers, fully armed. The general was trembling with rage, but held strong control over himself, as was his habit on serious occasions. "Lieutenant Sontore," he said, "why were you not at your post?"

"The running sand in the hourglass" (I hardly recognized my own voice on hearing it) "stopped when but half exhausted. I did not notice its interruption until it was too late."

"The general glanced grimly at the hourglass. The last sands were falling through to the lower bulb. I saw that he did not believe my explanation.

"It seems now to be in perfect working order," he said at last.

"He strode up to it and reversed it, watching the sand pour for a few moments; then he spoke abruptly.

"Lieutenant Sontore, your sword."

"I handed my weapon to him without a word. Turning to the sergeant, he said:

"Lieutenant Sontore is sentenced to death. He has an hour for whatever preparations he chooses to make. Allow him to dispose of that hour as he chooses, so long as he remains within this room and holds converse with no one whatever. When the last sands of this hourglass are run, Lieutenant Sontore will stand in the other end of the room and meet the death merited by traitors, laggards or cowards. Do you understand your duty, sergeant?"

"Yes, general."

"General Trelawny abruptly left the room, and we heard his heavy steps echoing throughout the silent house and later more faintly on the cobblestones of the street. When they had died away, a deep stillness set in, I standing alone at one end of the room, my eyes fixed on the hourglass, and the sergeant, with his four men like statues at the other, also gazing at the same sinister object. The sergeant was the first to break the silence.

"Lieutenant," he said, "do you wish to write anything?"

"He stopped short, being an unready man, rarely venturing far beyond yes and no.

"I should like to communicate with one in this household," I said, "but the general has forbidden it, so all I ask of you shall have my body conveyed from this room as speedily as possible after the execution."

"Very good, lieutenant," answered the sergeant.

"After that for a long time no word was spoken. I watched my life run redly through the wisp waist of the transparent glass; then suddenly the sand ceased to flow, half in the upper bulb, half in the lower.

"It has stopped," said the sergeant. "I must shake the glass."

"Stand where you are, I commanded sharply. "Your orders do not run to that."

"The habit of obedience rooted the sergeant to the spot.

"Send one of your men to General Trelawny," I said as if I had still the right to be obeyed. "Tell him what has happened and ask for instructions. Let your man tread lightly as he leaves the room."

"The sergeant did not hesitate a moment, but gave the order I required of him. The soldier nearest the door tipped out of the house. Probably more than half an hour had passed, during which no man moved, the sergeant and his three remaining soldiers seemed afraid to breathe; then we heard the step of the general himself on the stair. I feared that this would give the needed impetus to the sand in the glass, but when Trelawny entered the status quo remained. The general stood looking at the suspended sand without speaking.

"That is what happened before, general, and that is why I was not at my place. I have committed the crime of neglect and have thus deservedly earned my death, but I shall die the han-

expecting an enemy within, had been rushing up the stone steps at each side to the outer wall to man the cannon; they had so recently quitted, and it was some minutes before a knowledge of the real state of things came to them. These few minutes were all we needed, but I saw there was no chance for a slow match, while if we fired the mine we probably would die under the tottering tower. By the time we reached the archway and found the powder barrels the besieged, finding everything silent outside, came to a realization of the true condition of affairs. We faced them with bayonets fixed, while Sept, the man who had captured the sentinel, took the hatchet he had brought with him at his girdle, hung over one of the barrels on its side, knocked in the head of it, allowing the dull black powder to pour on the cobblestones; then, filling his hat with the explosive, he came out toward us, leaving a thick trail behind him. By this time we were sorely beset, and one of our men had gone down under the fire of the enemy who shot wildly, being baffled by the darkness; otherwise all of us had been slaughtered. I seized a musket from a comrade and shouted to the rest:

"Save yourselves!" And to the garrison, in French, I gave the same warning. Then I fired the musket into the train of powder and next instant found myself, half stunned and bleeding, at the farther end of the courtyard. The roar of the explosion and the crash of the falling tower were deafening. All Elsegore was aroused by the earth-quake shock. I called to my men when I could find my voice, and Sept answered from one side and two more from another. Together we tottered across the debris strewn courtyard. Some woodwork inside the citadel had taken fire and was burning fiercely, and this lit up the ruins and made visible the great gap in the wall at the fallen gate. Into the square below we saw the whole town pouring, soldiers and civilians alike, coming from the narrow streets into the open quad-



I sank down at the general's feet.

ral. I made my way, leaning on Sept, over the broken gate and down the causeway into the square, and there, foremost of all, met my general, with a cloak thrown round him, to make up for his want of coat.

"There, general," I gasped, "there is your citadel, and through this gap we can march to meet Marlborough."

"Pray, sir, who the devil are you?" cried the general, for my face was like that of a blackmoor.

"I am the lieutenant who has once more disobeyed your orders, general, in the hope of retrieving a former mistake."

"Sontore!" he cried, rapping out an oath. "I shall have you court-martialed, sir."

"I think, general," I said, "that I am court-martialed already; for I am court-martialed already; for I thought then that the hand of death was upon me, which shows the effect of imagination, yet I sank down at the general's feet. He raised me in his arms as if I had been his own son, and thus carried me to my rooms. Seven years later, when the war ended, I got leave of absence and came back, to Elsegore, for Gretel Scheldt and the housewife."

As the lieutenant ceased speaking Eastford thought he heard again the explosion at the tower, and started to his feet in nervous alarm, then looked at the lieutenant and laughed, while he said:

"Lieutenant, I was startled by that noise just now, and thought for the moment that I was in Brabant. You have made good your claim to the hourglass, and you are welcome to it."

But as he spoke he turned his eyes toward the chair in which the lieutenant had been seated, and found it vacant. Gazing round the room, in half somnolent dizziness, he saw that he was indeed alone. At his feet was the shattered hourglass, which had fallen from his knees, its blood red sand mingling with the colors on the carpet. He regarded the sand with an air of surprise:

"By Jove!" he said.

**A French Novel.**

Ion—I adore her!  
Narcisse—I idolize her!  
"Ha, then we are rivals!"  
"Yes, but still friends!"  
"Aye, friends till death!"  
"Let us tell her!"  
They tell her.  
She says:  
"Let us die!"  
They buy 6 centimes' worth of charcoal.

**Pardonable Curiosity.**

"I have met," remarked the old man, "but two sensible women in my life."  
The innocent maid gazed into his face and asked, "Who was the other woman?"—Chicago News.

**The slot machine has been adapted in England to the directory. This useful volume is held fast in a closed position by the arms of the machine until you drop a penny into the slot; then the arms relax and you can consult the directory. The book is kept open as long as required by holding one cover, but as soon as this resistance is withdrawn the directory closes automatically.**

**Parrots.**

Some parrots are very quick in acquiring words and generally fond of displaying these new acquisitions, but occasionally a bird will be profoundly silent until the teacher despairs of her mastering a certain phrase or word; then all at once and unexpectedly the "scholar" will repeat her lesson.

**An Acquired Taste.**

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"What about her?"

"Why, her first name is Olive, and I didn't like her at all at first."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

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**Denmark has a tax for commercial travelers. His rate is \$42.88 for the first firm and \$21.44 for every additional one where a man represents more than one good for one year.**

## A BIT OF DIPLOMACY.

CLEVER TRICK OF AN ENGLISH GOVERNOR OF THE PORT OF ADEN.

The Curious Story Connected With the White House of Bab-el-Mandeb, A Monument of the Undoing of a French Admiral.

On the foreshore of the Arabian coast in the strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, at the southern entrance to the Red sea, stands a large white house concerning which the travelers to the far east may hear a curious story. In the middle of the nineteenth century, when M. de Lesseps, after many difficulties, had successfully floated the Suez Canal company, the governor of the British port of Aden, about 100 miles distant, was surprised one morning by the visit of a French squadron of very unusual size for that part of the orient which, having encountered a terrific storm off Sokatra, had put in for repairs.

In the mind of the governor curiosity was at once aroused as to the destination of so large a command, a curiosity which increased as he found it impossible to extract any further information from the French admiral or his officers beyond the statement that they were upon an ordinary cruise, an explanation which the former was not the least inclined to believe.

Firm in the belief, therefore, that some political move of great importance was afoot if not for the governor, in order first of all to gain time, he gave orders to get very tortoise-like on the repairs and then set to work to take the Frenchmen off their guard by giving a succession of such entertainments as both his slender means and the awful barrenness of the place would afford.

But though at the end of two weeks the French and British officers had got upon the best of terms the immediate captivities of the French admiral remained as much of a mystery to the governor of Aden as before, and in spite of all possible delay the repairs were nearly completed.

Now, it happened that the wife of the governor possessed an Irish maid, who had been receiving attentions from one of the French petty officers—attentions which the girl did not regard seriously. It occurred to the governor that by such means something might be learned of his unexpected visitor's plans, and a private conversation between the governor's wife and her maid resulted in another between the latter and her French admirer, by which it was discovered that Perim Island was the objective point.

At this information the governor opened his eyes wide indeed, for, if the Suez canal were cut through, Perim, as commanding the southern entrance to the Red sea, in the middle of the strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, would be a place of great strategic importance, over which, without doubt, was the intention of the French admiral to hoist the tricolor.

Secretly giving orders, therefore, for a gunboat to immediately embark a detachment of soldiers and steal away in the night for Perim Island, the governor then announced a farewell banquet and ball for the day but one following, a final act of courtesy with which the French admiral would willingly have dispensed, for he was anxious to sail, but which he could not well refuse on account of the use he had made of the British supplies and machinery at Aden.

So the dinner and party in due course came off, the governor being in high spirits, because in the meantime he had received the news of the occupation of Perim, which under the circumstances would surely be followed by the longed for promotion, and the French admiral was equally happy, for he hoped on the morrow to add the same important lit tle speck of land to the dominion of his own country, thereby covering his breast with the stars and himself with maritime glory.

Next day, after an interchange of cordial farewells, the French squadron sailed away to an apparently unknown destination, until, when clear of the land, the course was laid full speed direct for Perim Island.

Then what was the dismay and disappointment of the French admiral and his officers when, on coming in sight of their destination, they beheld the British flag flying and a company of soldiers drawn up to give them a proper salute. It is said the French admiral was so mortified at being thus outwitted that he first flung his cocked hat overboard and then followed it himself into the sea.

He this as he may, as Perim was clearly already occupied by the British, the only course which the French could make was to take possession of a strip of the foreshore on the opposite Arabian coast, where they built the fortified white house in question, but as the place was entirely at the mercy of the guns on Perim Island it was shortly abandoned, to remain to this day as a monument of a French admiral's undoing.—Exchange.

**Metaphor.**

The Minneapolis (Kan.) Messenger says: "We once heard Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt eulogize Mrs. Susan B. Anthony as follows: 'These are the women who laid themselves down in the dust, as it were, to form a bridge over which you and I might go dry shod.'"

**Cheating the Cat.**

The meanest man is around town in many guises and in considerable numbers, but the meanest woman is a recent discovery. She lives in Philadelphia, and for the sake of saving a cent a day she cheats the cat by giving her each morning a saucerful of milk, and after about two teaspoonsful of it has been lapped up she dilutes the milk with water and continues to do so till evening. When remonstrated with by her husband recently she said: "Well, the cat doesn't know the difference. It looks like milk, anyhow, and if I didn't thin it out for her we'd have to have 2 cents' worth for breakfast each day."—Philadelphia Record.

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## RUBBER HISTORY.

Man That Came With Columbus Saw Haitians Playing Ball.

"The world was a long time learning the uses and value of rubber," says H. E. Armstrong in *Almslee's*. "For two centuries after the Spaniards saw the world in the hands of natives of the new world it was little more than a curiosity. Old Herrera, who went with Columbus on his second voyage, made a note of an elastic ball which was molded from the gum of a tree. At their games the native Haitians made it bound high in the air. The Aztecs were familiar with the gum and called it ulu, and from them the Spaniards learned to smear it on their coats to keep out the wet. They had crossed the seas for gold and never dreamed of a time when the sticky milk the uncouth Indian drew from strange trees would be worth more than the treasure of the hills.

Jose, king of Portugal, in 1555, comes down to us as the wearer of a pair of boots sent out to Para to be covered with a waterproof gum. Yet 300 years were to elapse before a Connecticut Yankee should make a pair of boots of rubber which would not decompose. Dr. Priestly, author of a work on 'Perceptive,' now forgotten, recorded that couthone (pronounced kachook) was useful in small cubes for rubbing out pencil marks; hence the name rubber. The India linked with it refers to the success which attended it in the Amazon wilderness. Dr. Priestly's cubes were half an inch long and sold for 3 shillings, or 75 cents, apiece—a stiff price, for the finest rubber today is \$1 a pound. Its price for ten years has ranged from 62 cents to \$1.00.

"The conversion of the gum to useful purposes made but slow headway. The first waterproof cloth in 1797 was the work of an Englishman. It was tentative, and, of course, it would not stand the test of time. In 1823 Charles Mackintosh of Glasgow discovered naphtha and, dissolving rubber in it, produced a varnish which, when spread on cloth, made it really impervious to water. Most of the rubber used in the world still comes from equatorial South America, and the forests where the Indians gathered it are as dense today and almost as little known to white men as in the time of Cortes."

**Why They Were Selected.**

It has been recorded that General Henry Knox, in 1783, was the "greatest" of 11 distinguished officers of the army, weighing 280 pounds. Noah Brooks, in his book entitled "Henry Knox," gives the following incident relating to the general's full habit:

With a Captain Sargent, he was selected to present the hard case of the starving and naked men at Valley Forge to the committee on the army. One of the congressmen, wishing to show his wit and sarcasm, said that he had never seen a fatter man than General Knox nor a better dressed man than his associate.

Knox managed to keep his temper and remained silent, but his subordinate retorted, "The corps, out of respect to congress and themselves, have sent as their representatives the only man who had an ounce of superfluous flesh on his body and the only other man who possessed a complete suit of clothes."

**Our System of Notation.**

Some system of notation has been used since time out of memory. The first record we have of it is of figures written with a stick on a flat surface covered with sand. Before that all calculations were made with pebbles, beans and the like. Even now the Chinese do their calculating with little stones or beads strung on wires, in a frame. The Romans first used vertical lines—1, II, III, etc.—to express numbers. The Arabic figures, which we commonly use at the present time, are of much earlier date.

The Arabic system is chiefly valuable on account of the great convenience it affords by giving a figure a value according to the place it occupies in the line. By this system the most enormous sums can be expressed by the ten little characters which form the numerical alphabet.

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**No Pegs.**

Beechum Tree had a conical experience on his first appearance as the corpulent Falstaff. In the last act he had arranged that Falstaff, disconcerted by gibes and buffets of the fairies in Windsor forest, should make one herculean effort to climb the oak tree. The pegs that were to serve as supports for that tree were always conspicuous by their absence. On the morning before the performance Mr. Tree was told they should positively be fixed on the tree. The morning came, but with it no pegs. Eloquence was stilled; even invective faltered. He pointed to the tree and with the calm of despair blurted out to the defaulter:

"No pegs!"

Such an ejaculation, spoken more in sorrow than in anger, would, he hoped, appeal to that last remnant of conscience which even the papist uncle bosom of a property man might be supposed to retain. In the evening there was a dress rehearsal, but still no pegs could be seen. Mr. Tree's form quivered beneath the padding—with pent up emotions, and in a torrent of passion and a voice shaken by righteous wrath he exclaimed:

"Where are those pegs?"

"Pegs—pegs!" exclaimed the property master, with exasperating affability. "Why, gov'nor, what was your words to me this morning? 'No pegs.' And there ain't none!"—London Tri-Bits.

**Howells' Advice to Writers.**

One day at Lakewood while sitting at a little table in the big rotunda hall drinking afternoon tea I met Mr. W. D. Howells and had a delightful conversation with him. After knowing the personality of this famous author one enjoys his writing ten times more—he is so magnetic and his conversation so interesting and breezy. "Yes," he said, "I always advise any one who has an inclination for it to try to write. One shouldn't expect to have the first things one does published, but one must keep on trying. It is an excellent plan to set down something one has seen in everyday life and try to get a story out of it. Indeed, it's the best way to practice.

"Writing is mostly drudgery," he continued. "I have to force myself to go into my library to work, and I find myself putting off the hour as long as possible."

"But when you once sit down?" I ventured.

"Even then it's hard work for awhile until I get into the swing. Let no one imagine the muse comes without a summons and without a good deal of urging! At least she never does to me!"—Anna Wentworth in *Woman's Home Companion*.

**Set For the Wrong Time.**

He works in a down town office for a gruff old chap who has no love for laggards. He is due at 8 sharp, but as he likes to be out of nights he never wakes up a moment too soon. He has an alarm clock, which he sets at 7, and this gives him barely time to dress, breakfast and reach the office.

One day last week, the man having forgotten to wind his clock the night before, it didn't go off. So there were explanations to be made about 8:30 a. m. This was the excuse:

"Well, you see, Mr. Gruff, I know how punctual you like all of your men to be, so I have set my alarm clock, which I set for 7 in the morning. But, by mistake, I set it for 7 in the evening last night, and of course it didn't go off at 7 in the morning today, as usual. And I overslept myself."

"Ah, you did? Well, I'll excuse you this time. But set it properly after this."

**A Happy Foot.**

The custom of wishing a friend "a happy foot" is to be found in all parts of Europe, and it goes to show how much superstition is connected with our feet. It is to be seen in the fact that the well fitting boot or shoe, which enables a person to walk in comfort, is a symbol of happiness.

The accidental placing of the right shoe on the left foot, putting a shoe on awry or the breaking of a lace is a bad sign from the popular point of view. To tie the shoe of another individual is indicative of humility and lowly position, yet the Chinese worship the shoes of an upright judge.

There is a curious superstition in some parts of England which advises that when the youngest daughter marries before her sisters the latter should dance at her wedding without shoes in order to insure husbands for themselves. On St. Valentine's eve, according to a similar custom, girls should hang their shoes outside the window if they wish to secure lovers.

Some actresses carefully preserve the boots they were when they scored their first success and wear them on all important occasions.

It is estimated that for the next Christmas market 300,000 Canadian turkeys will be shipped to England. In Russian schools pupils are allowed to choose between learning French and German, and 70 per cent choose German.

A year ago nearly 6,000 women voted at Cleveland's election of school directors. This year only 706 went to the polls.

**Montezuma's Well.**

One of the most pleasing natural curiosities in the territory of Arizona is the pool of water known as Montezuma's well. It is situated 15 miles northeast of the old abandoned military post known as Camp Verde. It is 250 feet in diameter, and the clear, pure water is about 60 feet below the surface of the surrounding country. Some years ago certain military officers sounded the pool and found that it had a uniform depth of 80 feet of water except in one place, apparently about six feet square, where the sounding line went down about 500 feet without touching bottom.

The well empties into Beaver creek only about 100 yards distant, the water gushing forth from the rocks as though it were under great pressure. The well is undoubtedly supplied from subterranean sources, possibly through the hole sounded by the army officers years ago. The sides of the well are honeycombed with caves and tunnels, permitting sightseers to descend to the water's edge.

Montezuma's well contains no fish. The flow of water from it is the same throughout the season. Popular opinion has attributed the origin of the well to volcanic action, but as the rock surrounding it is limestone it is more than probable that the action of the water is responsible for its creation.—Native American.

**Get More For the Money.**

A gentleman living in a rural part of England sent his coachman to a neighboring village for 5 shillings' worth of penny stamps.

After a time John returned from his tramp of two miles.

His face wore a self satisfied look when he came into his employer's presence.

"Got the stamps, John?"

"Yes, sir," the man replied, handing over a batch of halfpenny stamps.

"I said penny stamps, John, and you have got halfpenny ones."

"Yes, sir," and the smile widened. "I asked for 5 shillings' worth of stamps, and the postmaster says, 'Halfpenny or penny?' 'Do you sell halfpenny stamps?' I asked. 'Yes,' said he, 'Well, says I, 'if you can buy stamps for a halfpenny, what's the use of payin a penny?' An I bought the halfpenny stamps, sir."—London Telegraph.

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"Yes, sir," the man replied, handing over a batch of halfpenny stamps.

"I said penny stamps, John, and you have got halfpenny ones."

"Yes, sir," and the smile widened. "I asked for 5 shillings' worth of stamps, and the postmaster says, 'Halfpenny or penny?' 'Do you sell halfpenny stamps?' I asked. 'Yes,' said he, 'Well, says I, 'if you can buy stamps for a halfpenny, what's the use of payin a penny?' An I bought the halfpenny stamps, sir."—London Telegraph.

**Montezuma's Well.**

One of the most pleasing natural curiosities in the territory of Arizona is the pool of water known as Montezuma's well. It is situated 15 miles northeast of the old abandoned military post known as Camp Verde. It is 250 feet in diameter, and the clear, pure water is about 60 feet below the surface of the surrounding country. Some years ago certain military officers sounded the pool and found that it had a uniform depth of 80 feet of water except in one place, apparently about six feet square, where the sounding line went down about 500 feet without touching bottom.

The well empties into Beaver creek only about 100 yards distant, the water gushing forth from the rocks as though it were under great pressure. The well is undoubtedly supplied from subterranean sources, possibly through the hole sounded by the army officers years ago. The sides of the well are honeycombed with caves and tunnels, permitting sightseers to descend to the water's edge.

Montezuma's well contains no fish. The flow of water from it is the same throughout the season. Popular opinion has attributed the origin of the well to volcanic action, but as the rock surrounding it is limestone it is more than probable that the action of the water is responsible for its creation.—Native American.

**Get More For the Money.**

A gentleman living in a rural part of England sent his coachman to a neighboring village for 5 shillings' worth of penny stamps.

After a time John returned from his tramp of two miles.

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