

CLEOPATRA.

Being an Account of the Fall and Vengeance of Harmachis, the Royal Egyptian,

AS SET FORTH BY HIS OWN HAND.

By H. RIDER HAGGARD,
Author of "King Solomon's Mines,"
"She," "Allan Quatermain,"
Etc., Etc., Etc.

Cleopatra seized it and gazed thereon in silence. Then once more we went on our dread business. And ever as we unwound, other ornaments of gold, such as are buried with Pharaohs, fell from the wrappings—collars and bracelets, models of Osiris, and unguent jars, and an image of the holy Isis and of the holy Khem. At length all the bandages were unwound, and beneath we found a covering of coarsest linen; for in those days the craftsmen were not so skilled in matters pertaining to the embalming of the body as now they are. And on the linen was written in an oval, "Menkara, Royal Son of the Sun." This linen we could in no wise loosen, so firm it held to the body. Therefore, faint with the great heat, choked with mummy dust and the odor of spices, and trembling with fear of our unholy task, wrought in that most loathsome and holy place, we laid the body down, and with knife ripped away the last covering. First we cleared its head, and now the face that no man had gazed on for three thousand years was open to our view. It was a great face, with a bold brow yet crowned with the Royal uras, beneath



THE HEED IT TO THE LIGHT

which the white locks, stained yellow by the spices, fell in long, straight wisps. Not a stamp of death, and not the slow flight of three thousand years, had found power to mar the dignity of those sunken features. We gazed thereon, and then, made bold with fear, stripped the covering from the body. There at last lay before us, stiff, yellow and dread to see; and on the left side, above the thigh, was the cut through which the embalmers had done their work, but it was sewn up so deftly that scarce could we find the mark.

"The gems are within," I whispered, for I felt that the body was very heavy. "Now, my heart fall free, not must thou make an entry to this poor house of clay that once was Pharaoh's, and I gave her the dagger—the same dagger which had drunk the life of Paulus."

"It is too late to ponder," she answered, lifting her white and beautiful face and fixing her blue eyes, all big with terror, upon mine own. She took the dagger, and with set teeth the Queen of this day plunged it into the dead breast of the Pharaoh of three thousand years ago. And even as she did so, from the opening of the shaft where we had left the enuch there came a groaning sound. We leaped to our feet, but heard no more, and through the opening the lamp-light still streamed down.

"It is naught," I said. "Let us make an end." Then with much toil we hacked and rent the hard flesh open, and even as we did so I heard the knife-point grate upon the gems within.

Cleopatra plunged her hand into the dead breast and drew forth something. She held it to the light, and gave a little cry, for from the darkness of Pharaoh's heart there flashed into light and life the most beautiful emerald that ever man beheld. Perfect it was in color, very large, without a flaw, and fashioned to a scarabæus form, and on the under side was the oval, inscribed with the divine name of Menkara, Son of the Sun.

Again, again, and yet again she plunged in her hand and drew from Pharaoh's breast great emeralds bedded there in spices. Some were fashioned and some were not; but all were perfect in color, without a flaw, and in value priceless. Again and again she plunged her white hand into that dread breast, till at length all were found, and there were one hundred and forty and eight of such gems as are not known in the world. And the last time that she searched she brought forth not emeralds, indeed, but two great pearls, wrapped in linen, such as never have been seen. And of these pearls more hereafter.

So it was done, and all the mighty treasure lay glittering in a heap before us. There it lay, and there, too, lay the regalia of gold, the spiced and sickly-scented wrappings, and the torn body of white-haired Pharaoh Menkara, the Osirian, the ever-living in Ament.

We rose, and a great awe fell upon us, now that the deed was done and our hearts were no more oppressed by the rage of eager search—so great an awe, indeed, that we could not speak. I made a sign to Cleopatra. She grasped the head of Pharaoh and I grasped his feet, and together we lifted him, climbed the sphinx, and placed him once more within his coffin. On him I piled the torn mummy cloths, and on them laid the lid of the coffin.

leaving the lamp, hath fled," said Cleopatra. "Oh, ye Gods! who is that seated there?"

I peered into the darkness, thrusting out the lamps, and this was what their light fell upon, at the very dream wherof my soul sickens! There, facing us, his back resting against the rock, and on either side his hands splayed upon the floor, sat the enuch—dead! His eyes and mouth were open, his fat cheeks dropped down, his hair yet seemed to bristle, and on his countenance was frozen such a stamp of hideous terror as well might turn the beholders' brain. And lo! fixed by his hinder claws, even to his chin, hung that mighty bat which, flying forth when we entered the pyramid, vanished in the sky, but which, returning, had followed us to its depths. There it hung upon the dead man's chin, slowly rocking itself to and fro, and we could see the fiery eyes shining in its evil head.

Aghast, utterly aghast, we stood and stared at the hateful sight; till presently the bat spread his huge wings, and, losing his hold, sailed to us. Now he hovered before Cleopatra's face, fanning her with his wings. Then with a scream, like a woman's shriek of fury, seeking his violated tomb, the accursed thing flitted on and vanished down the well into the sepulchers. I fell against the wall. But Cleopatra sank in a heap upon the floor, and, covering her head with her arms, she shrieked till the hollow passages rang with the echoes of her cries, that seemed to grow and double and rush along in volumes of shrill sound.

"Rise!" I cried, "rise and let us hence ere the Spirit shall return to haunt us! If thou dost suffer thyself to be overwhelmed here in this place, lost art thou forever!"

She staggered to her feet, and never may I forget the look upon her ashy face or in her glowing eyes. Seizing lamps, with a rush we passed the dead enuch's horrid form, I holding her by the hand. We gained the great chamber, where was the sarcophagus of the Queen of Menkara, and traversed its length. We fled along the passages, for if the Thing had closed the three mighty doors, No, they were open, and we sped through them; the last only did I stay to close. I touched the stone, as I knew how, and the great door crashed down, shutting us off from the presence of the dead enuch and the Horror that had hung upon the enuch's chin. Now we were in the white chamber with the sculptured panels, and now we faced the last steep ascent. Oh, that last ascent! Twice Cleopatra slipped and fell upon the polished floor. The second time 'twas when she had been done—she let fall her lamp, and would, indeed, have rolled down the side had I not saved her. But, in doing this, I, too, let fall my lamp, that bounded away into shadow beneath us, and we were in utter darkness. And perchance about us, in the darkness, hovered that awful Thing!

"Be brave!" I cried. "O love, be brave, and struggle on, or both are lost! The way, though steep, is not far, and though it be dark, scarce can we come to harm in this straight shaft. If the gems weight thee, cast them away!"

"Nay," she gasped, "that will not! This shall not be endured to an end. I die with them!"

Then it was that I saw the greatness of this woman's heart; for in the dark, and notwithstanding the terrors we had passed and the awfulness of our state, she clung to me and clambered on up that dread passage. On we clambered, hand in hand, with bursting hearts, till there, by the mercy or the anger of the Gods, at length we saw the faint light of the moon creeping through the little opening in the pyramid. One struggle more, now the hole was gained, and, like a breath from Heaven, the sweet night air played upon our brows. I climbed through, and, standing on the pile of stones, lifted and dragged Cleopatra after me. She fell to the ground and then sank down upon it motionless.

With trembling hands I pressed upon the turning stone. It swung to and caught, leaving no mark of the secret place of entry. Then I came down, and having pushed away the pile of stones, turned to Cleopatra. She had swooned, and notwithstanding the dust and grime upon her face, so pale it was that at first I believed she must be dead. But, placing my hand upon her heart, I felt it stir beneath; and, being spent, I flung myself down beside her upon the sand to gather up my strength again.

CHAPTER XIX.

OF THE COMING BACK OF HARMACHIS; OF THE GREETING OF CHARMION; AND OF THE ANSWER OF CLEOPATRA TO QUINTUS DELLIUS, THE AMBASSADOR OF ANTONY THE TRIUMVIR.

PRESENTLY I lifted myself, and laying the head of Egypt's Queen upon my knee, strove to call her back to life. How fair she seemed, even in her disarray, her long hair streaming o'er her breast! How deadly fair she seemed in the faint light—this woman the story of whose beauty and whose sin shall outlive the solid mass of mighty pyramid that towered over us! The heaviness of her swoon had smothered away all the falsehood of her face, and naught was left but the stamp divine of woman's richest loveliness, softened by shadows of the night and dignified by the cast of deathlike sleep. I gazed upon her and all my heart went out to her; it seemed that I did but love her more because of the depth of the treasons wherein I had sunk to reach her, and because of the terrors we had outfaced together. Weary and spent with fears and the pangs of guilt, my heart sought hers for rest, for now she alone was left to me. She had sworn to wed me also, and with the treasure we had won we would make Egypt strong and free her from her foes, and all should yet be well. Ah! could I have seen the picture that was to be, how, and in what place and circumstances, once again this very woman's head should be laid upon my knee, pale with that cast of death! Ah! could I have seen!

I chafed her hand between my hands. I bent me and kissed her on the lips, and she woke. She awoke with a little sob of fear—a shiver ran down her delicate limbs; and with wide eyes she stared upon my face.

"Ah, it is thou!" she said. "I mind me—thou hast saved me from that horror-haunted place!" And she threw her arms about my neck and drew me to her and kissed me. "Come, love," she said, "let us be going! I am sore athirst, and—ah! so very weary! The gems, too, they chafe my breast! Never was wealth so hardy won! Come, let us be going from the shadow of this ghastly spot. See the faint lights glistening from the wing of Dawn! How beautiful they are, and how sweet to behold! Never, in those Halls of Eternal Night, did I think to look upon the blush of dawn again! Ah! I can see the face of that dead slave yet, with the Horror hanging to his beardless chin! Betwixt thee!—there he'll sit forever—there—with the horror! Come; where may we find water? I would give an emerald for a cup of water!"

"At the canal at the borders of the tiled land below the temple of Horemkhu—it is close at hand," I answered. "If any see us, we will say that we are pilgrims who have lost our way at night among the tombs. Vail thyself closely, therefore, Cleopatra; and beware lest thou dost show aught of those gems about thee."

So she vailed herself, and I lifted her on to the ass which was tethered close at hand. We walked slowly through the sand till we came to the place where the symbol of the God Horemkhu, fashioned as a mighty sphinx (whom the Greeks call Harmachis), and crowned with the royal crown of Egypt, looks out in majesty across the land, his eyes ever fixed upon the East. Even as we walked the first arrow of the rising sun quivered through the gray air, striking upon Horemkhu's lips of buoyant. Then the light gathered and grew upon the gleaming sides of twenty pyramids, and, like a promise of Life to Death, rowed on the portals of ten thousand tombs. Then from his horizon bed Royal Ka rose up in pomp, and it was day.

And passing the temple of granite and of alabaster that was built before the days of Chufu, to the glory of the majesty of Horemkhu, we descended the slope and came to the water of the canal. There we drank; and sweeter was that draught of muddy water than all the choicest wine of Alexandria. Also we washed the mummy dust and grime from our hands and brows and made us clean. And as she bathed her neck, stooping over the water, one of the great emeralds slipped from Cleopatra's breast and fell into the water, and it was but by chance that at length I found it in the mire. Then, once more, I lifted Cleopatra on to the beast, and slowly, for I was very weary, we marched back to the banks of Sinhor, where our craft was. And having at length come thither, seeing no one save some few peasants going out to labor on the lands, I turned the ass loose in that same field where we had found him, and we boarded the craft while the crew were yet sleeping. Then, waking them, we bade them make all sail, saying that we had left the enuch to sojourn awhile behind us, as in our haste we had done. So we sailed, and the gentle wind with which the ornaments of gold we could bring hither, we hid away.

And passing the temple of granite and of alabaster that was built before the days of Chufu, to the glory of the majesty of Horemkhu, we descended the slope and came to the water of the canal. There we drank; and sweeter was that draught of muddy water than all the choicest wine of Alexandria. Also we washed the mummy dust and grime from our hands and brows and made us clean. And as she bathed her neck, stooping over the water, one of the great emeralds slipped from Cleopatra's breast and fell into the water, and it was but by chance that at length I found it in the mire. Then, once more, I lifted Cleopatra on to the beast, and slowly, for I was very weary, we marched back to the banks of Sinhor, where our craft was. And having at length come thither, seeing no one save some few peasants going out to labor on the lands, I turned the ass loose in that same field where we had found him, and we boarded the craft while the crew were yet sleeping. Then, waking them, we bade them make all sail, saying that we had left the enuch to sojourn awhile behind us, as in our haste we had done. So we sailed, and the gentle wind with which the ornaments of gold we could bring hither, we hid away.

Four days and more we spent in coming to Alexandria, for the wind was for the most part against us; and they were happy days! At first, indeed, Cleopatra was somewhat silent and heavy at heart, for what she had seen and felt in the womb of the pyramid weighed her down. But soon her imperial spirit awoke and shook the burden from her breast and she became bright again—now gay, now learned; now loving and now cold; now queenly and now altogether simple—ever changing as the winds of heaven, and, as the heaven, deep, beautiful and unsearchable!

Night after night for those four unhappy nights, the last happy hours I ever was to know, we sat hand in hand upon the deck and heard the waters lap the vessel's side, and watched the soft footfall of the moon as she trod the depths of the Nile. There we sat and talked of love, talked of our marriage and all that we would do. Also I drew up plans of war and of defense against the Roman, which, now we had the means to carry out; and she approved them, sweetly saying that what seemed good to me was good to her. And so all too swiftly passed the days. O those nights upon the Nile! their memory haunts me yet! Dead are those dear nights, dead is the moon that lit them and lost in the wide salt sea are the waters which rocked us on their breast: For all things end in darkness and ashes, and those who so in folly shall reap in sorrow love to cold, and those who love to love, all there, by the Nile! And so, at length, once more we stood within the walls of that fair palace on the Lochias, and the dream was done.

"Whither hast thou wandered with Cleopatra, Harmachis?" asked Charmion of me when I met her by chance on that day of return. "On some new mission of betrayal or was it but a love journey?"

"I went with Cleopatra upon secret business of the State," I answered, sternly.

"So those who go secretly, go evilly; and foul their name to fly at night. Not but what thou art wise, for scarce would it beseech thee, Harmachis, to show thy face in Egypt!"

I heard, and felt my passion rise within me; for could I bear this fair girl's scorn. "Hast thou never a word without a sting?" I asked. "Know, then, that I went whither thou hadst never dared to go; to gather means to aid Egypt from the grasp of Antony."

"So!" she answered, looking up swiftly. "Thou foolish man! Better hadst thou done to save thy labor for Antony who grasp Egypt in thy despite. What power hast thou to-day in Egypt?"

"In my despite that he may do; but in despite of Cleopatra that he can not do," I said.

"Nay, but with the aid of Cleopatra he can and will do it," she answered, with a bitter smile. "When the Queen sails in state up Cydnus stream she will surely draw this course Antony thence to Alexandria, conquering, and yet, like thee, a slave!"

"It is false! I say that it is false! Cleopatra goes not to Tarsus, and Antony comes not to Alexandria; or, if he come, 'twill be to take the chance of war!"

"Now, thinkest thou thus?" she answered, with a little laugh. "Well, if it please thee, think as thou wilt. Within three days thou shalt know. 'Tis pretty to see how easily thou art fooled. Farewell! Go, dream on Love, for surely Love is sweet."

And she went, leaving me angered and troubled at heart.

That day I saw Cleopatra no more, but on the day which followed I saw her. She was in a heavy mood, and had no greeting for me. I spoke to her of the defense of Egypt, but she put the matter away.

"Why dost thou weary me?" she said, with anger; "canst thou not see that I am lost in troubles? When Dellius hath had his answer, then will we speak of these matters."

"Ay," I said, "when Dellius hath had his answer, and knowest thou that but yesterday Charmion—whom about the palace they name the 'keeper of the Queen's secrets'—Charmion did swear that the answer would be: 'Go in peace; I come to Antony!'"

"Naught knows Charmion of my heart," said Cleopatra, stamping her foot in anger, "and if she talk so freely the girl shall be scourged from out my court, as is her desert. Though, in truth," she added, "she hath more wisdom in that small head of hers than all my privy councillors—ay, and more wit to use it. Knowest thou that I have sold a portion of those gems to the rich Jews of Alexandria, and at a great price, ay, at five thousand sestertia for each one. But a few, in truth, for more they could not buy as yet. 'Twas rare to see their eyes when they fell upon them—large as apples they grew with avarice and I wonder. And now leave me, Harmachis, for I am weary. The memory of that dread night is with me yet."

I bowed and rose to go, and yet stood waiting.

"Fare me, Cleopatra; 'tis of our marriage."

"Our marriage! Why, are we not indeed already wed?" she answered.

"Yes, but not before the world. Thou didst promise."

"Ay, Harmachis, I did promise, and tomorrow, when I have rid me of this Dellius, I will keep my promise and name thee Cleopatra's Lord before the court. See that thou art in thy place. Art content?"

And she stretched out her hand for me to kiss, looking on me with strange eyes, as though she struggled with herself. Then I went, but that night once more I strove to see Cleopatra and could not. "The Lady Charmion was with the Queen," so said the eunuchs, and none might enter.

On the morrow the court met in the great hall one hour before midday, and thither I went with a trembling heart to hear Cleopatra's answer to Dellius and to hear myself made as a full and splendid court; there were councillors, lords, captains, eunuchs and waiting women—all save Charmion. The hour passed, but Cleopatra and Charmion came not. At length Charmion entered gently by a side entrance and took her place among the waiting ladies about the throne. Even as she did so she cast a glance at me, and there was triumph in her eyes, though over what she triumphed I knew not. Little did I guess that she had but now brought about my ruin and sealed the fate of Egypt.

Then presently the trumpets blared, and clad in his robes of state, the uras crown upon her head, and on her breast, flashing like a star, that great emerald scarabæus which she had dragged from dead Pharaoh's heart, Cleopatra, followed by a glittering guard of Northmen, swept in splendor to her throne. Dark was her lovely face, and dark her sinuous eyes, and none might read their message, though all that court searched therein for a sign of what should come. She seated herself slowly as one who may not be moved, and spoke to the Chief of the Heralds in the Greek tongue:

"Does the Ambassador of the noble Antony wait?"

The herald bowed low and made assent. "Let him come in and hear our answer."

The doors were flung wide, and, followed by his train of knights, Dellius, clad in his golden armor, and his purple and gold chlamys, walked with catlike step up the great hall, and made obeisance before the throne.

"Most Royal and beautiful Egypt," he said, in his soft voice, "as thou hast graciously been pleased to bid me, thy servant, I am here to take thy answer to the letter of the noble Antony the Triumvir, whom tomorrow I sail to meet at Tarsus, in Cilicia. And this will I say, Royal Egypt—craving pardon the while for the boldness of my speech—bethink thee, well before those sweet lips. Dost Antony, and Antony will wreck thee. But, like thy mother Aphrodite, rise glorious on his sight from the bosom of the Cyprian Wave, and for wreck he will give thee all that can be done to woman's Royalty—empire and pomp of place, cities and the sway of men, fame and wealth and the diadem of rule made sure. For mark: Antony holds this Eastern World in the hollow of his warlike hand, and at his will kings are, and at his frown they cease to be."

And Dellius bowed his head, and folding his hands meekly on his breast, awaited answer.

For awhile Cleopatra answered not, but sat like the sphinx Horemkhu, dumb and inscrutable, gazing with lost eyes down the length of that great hall.

Then, like soft music, her answer came, and trembling I listened for Egypt's challenge to the Roman:

"Noble Dellius, much have we bethought us of the matter of thy message from great Antony to our poor Royalty of Egypt. Much have we bethought us, and counsel have we taken from the oracles of the gods, and from the wisest among our friends, and from the teaching of our heart, that ever, like a nesting bird, broods over our people's weal. Sharp are the words that thou hast brought across the sea; methinks better had they been fitted to the ears of some petty, half-tamed Prince than to those of Egypt's Queen. Therefore have we numbered the regions that we can gather, and the triremes and the galleys wherewith we may breast the sea, and the moneys which shall buy us all things wanting to our war, and thus we find, that, though Antony be strong, yet hath Egypt taught to fear from the strength of Antony."

She paused, and a murmur of applause of her high words ran down the hall. Only Dellius stretched out his hands as though to push them back. Then came the end:

"Noble Dellius! Half are we minded there to bid our tongue stop, and, strong within our fortresses of stone and our other fortresses built of the hearts of men, abide the issue. And yet thus shalt thou not go. Guiltless are we of those charges against us that have come to our ears of noble Antony, and which now he rudely shouts in ours; nor will we journey into Cilicia to answer them."

Here the murmur arose anew, while my heart beat high in triumph, and in the pause that followed Dellius spoke once more.

"Then, Royal Egypt, my word to Antony is 'word war!'"

"Nay," she answered, "it shall be to one of peace. Listen! We said that we would not come to make answer to these charges, nor will we. But—and she smiled for the first time—"gladly will we come, and that swiftly, in royal friendship to make known our fellowship of peace upon the banks of Cydnus."

I heard, and was bewildered. Could I hear aright? Was it thus that Cleopatra kept her oaths? Moved beyond the hold of reason, I lifted up my voice and cried:

"O Queen, remember!"

Like a lioness she turned upon me, with a flashing of the eyes and a swift shake of her lovely head.

"Peace, slave!" she said, "who hadst thee break in upon our counsels! Mind thoudy stars, and leave matters of the world to the rulers of the world!"

I sank back ashamed, and as I did so once more I saw the smile of triumph on the face of Charmion, followed by what was, perchance, the shadow of pity for my fall.

"Now that you brawling charlatan," said Dellius, pointing at me with his jeweled finger, "hath been rebuked, grant me leave, O Egypt, to thank thee from the heart for these gentle words."

"We ask no thanks from thee, noble Dellius; nor lies it in thy mouth to

chide our servant," broke in Cleopatra, frowning heavily; "we will take thee from the lips of Antony alone. Get thee to thy master, and say to him that ere he can make ready a fitting welcome our kins shall follow in the track of thine. And—"

farewell! Upon thy vessel thou shalt find some small token of our bounty."

Dellius bowed thrice and withdrew, while the court stood waiting the Queen's word. And I, too, waited, wondering if she would yet make good her promise and name me Royal Spouse there in the face of Egypt. But naught she said. Only still frowning heavily, she rose and, followed by the guards, left the throne and passed into the Alabaster Hall. Then the court broke up, and as the lords and councillors went by they looked on me with mockery. For though none knew all my secret nor how it stood 'twixt me and Cleopatra, yet were they jealous of the favor shown me by the Queen, and rejoiced greatly at my fall. But I cared no heed of their mocking as I stood cast down in misery and felt the world of Hope slip from 'neath my feet.

CHAPTER XX.

OF THE REPROACH OF HARMACHIS; OF THE STRUGGLE OF CLEOPATRA WITH THE GUARDS; OF THE QUICK BLOW STRUCK BY HARMACHIS; AND OF THE SECRET SPEECH OF CLEOPATRA.

"At length," being gone, I, too, turned to go, when a eunuch struck me on the shoulder and roughly bade me wait on the presence of the Queen. An hour past and this fellow would have crawled to me on his knees, but he had heard, and now he treated me—"

so brutish is the nature of such slaves—as the work treats the fallen, with scorn. For to come low after being great is to learn all shame. Unhappy, therefore, are the great, for they may fall!"

I turned upon the slave with so fierce a word that, ere-like, he sprang behind me; then I passed on to the Alabaster Hall, and was admitted to the guards. In the center of the hall, nigh to the fountain, sat Cleopatra, and with her were Charmion and the Greek girls Iras, and Merira and other of her waiting ladies. "Go," she said to these, "I would speak with my astrologer." So they went, and left us face to face.

"Stand thou there," she said, lifting her face for the first time. "Come not near me, Harmachis; I trust thee not. Perchance thou hast found another dagger. Now, what hast thou to say? By what right dost thou dare to break in upon my talk with the Roman?"

I felt the blood rush through me like a storm, bitterness and burning anger took hold upon my heart. "What hast thou to say, Cleopatra?" I answered boldly.

"Where is thy oath, sworn on the dead heart of Menkara, the ever-living? Where now thy challenge to this Roman Antony? Where thy oath that thou wouldst call me 'husband in the face of Egypt?' And I choiced and ceased."

"Well does it become Harmachis, who never was forsown, to speak to me of oaths!" she said, in bitter mockery. "And yet, O thou most pure Priest of Isis; and yet, O thou most faithful friend, who never didst betray thy friends; and yet, O thou most steadfast, honorable and upright man, who never didst barter thy birthright, thy country and thy cause for the price of woman's passing love; by what token knowest thou that my word is void?"

"TO BE CONTINUED."

"A LITTLE NONSENSE."

"Karlino, what're you doin' wid' yo' bes' for muf?" "Only jes' sprinklin' a little hair restorer on it. De wool's fallin' out."—Time.

"Physician—'Why, man, you sent word you had the grip.' Patient—'I know, doctor, but I didn't think you'd take time to visit a fellow who only had a common every day broken leg.'—Philadelphia Inquirer.

"Smarty—'I wonder how the moon manages to sustain her social status among the heavenly bodies when she gets full so often.' Tarty—'Oh, she stars all wink at her delinquencies.'—Drake's Magazine.

"Ponsonby—'I understand that Digby's wife is deaf and dumb.' Snagg—'That so? I wonder if she converses with her fingers?' Ponsonby—'Guess so. Digby is about the baldest man I ever saw.'—Burlington Free Press.

"Employer—'William, Mrs. Spriggins complains that she received only one of the bundles she had put up here last night.' William—'That's funny, sir. I wrote Mrs. Spriggins on one bundle and put ditto on each of the others.'"

"Bride—'Are there many tunnels on this railroad, Charles, dear?' Bridgroom—'Quite a number, dearest. I selected it on purpose. If I remember rightly we are coming to one in a few moments.' Brakeman (entering)—'Select your partners for the tunnel, please.'—America.

"Stern Parent—'You can not have my daughter unless you love her as your life.' Lover—'Oh, sir, I'll die if she isn't mine.' Stern Parent—'What, sir? You would take your life?' Lover—'No, I would hardly do that.' Stern Parent—'Then you can't take my daughter.'—Munsey's Weekly.

"Stranger—'Where does that new dentist have his office?' Policeman—'You mean the one who pulls teeth without pain?' Stranger—'Yes.' Policeman—'Go right around the corner. You will have no trouble finding his office. You can hear his patients yell half a block away.'—Texas Siftings.

"John—'Clara, I've got an important question to ask you.' Clara—'I know what it is. You want me to be your wife. I dreamed it. Well, take me.' John (rather nonplussed)—'You dreamed it?' Clara—'Yes, I dreamed last night that you asked me what I am asking you, and that you took me in your arms and kissed me after I said you.'—What could John do?—Boston Courier.

"Musician—'I am getting up a benefit concert, and I have been traveling around selling tickets all the morning. I have done all the work myself, perchance, the shadow of pity for my fall.'"

"Now that you brawling charlatan," said Dellius, pointing at me with his jeweled finger, "hath been rebuked, grant me leave, O Egypt, to thank thee from the heart for these gentle words."

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POWDERS USED ABROAD.

Efforts to Solve the Problem of a Battle Without Smoke.

Nothing is receiving more attention just now from officers of the army and navy than new powders. So far four European countries are known to possess a distinct nitrate powder. Those countries are France, Germany, Italy, Belgium. All but the French powder are believed to be still in an experimental state, though it is difficult to learn any thing definite from the government sources.

Dr. Griffiths, the renowned expert on powders, is the only living man outside of the official circles of the French government known to have had in his possession one of the new Lebel rifle cartridges. Dr. Griffiths was employed by the French government under an oath of secrecy to examine and give an opinion on the Lebel powder. All that he has publicly said is: "If all the Lebel powder is the same as that handed to me it is certainly most excellent." Vague rumors have been circulated to the effect that the Lebel powder speedily deteriorates under certain climatic influences. Even this report can not be confirmed or denied, but, judging from Dr. Griffiths' opinion of the nitrate, it is fair to presume that the powder is serviceable.

The German powder is entirely distinct from the Lebel powder, but no report has yet been received that it gives to a projectile an initial velocity of over 2,100 feet per second, as does the Lebel powder. Of the Italian powder, the last report received says that the Italian Government has ordered the immediate cessation of the manufacture of the new cartridges, serious defects in it having been discovered. As to the Belgian powder, nothing definite is known.

The French and Germans claim to have passed the experimental stage; Belgium lays claim to the same honor. Austria and Russia are examining smokeless powders. Report has it that Russia will be provided with the Lebel powder in the event of allying herself with France and the "powers."

From England comes the story that when the Emperor of Austria saw the work with the German's smokeless powder during the recent manoeuvres he instantly exclaimed: "No such powder for me. None of it for Austria. If my troops use such powder they will no longer be enveloped with smoke. They will become exposed. None of it, I say, for Austria." But in a week the Emperor changed his mind.

The only smokeless powder ever introduced into the United States is the Schultze sporting powder. Except for sporting purposes the Schultze powder has no especial advantages. The powder is the invention of a German army officer named Schultze, who sold out his rights to an English firm. The powder is white, and weighs about one-half as much as the best grade of black powder. In efficiency the Schultze powder is equal to the best grade of black powder. It is extremely clean, and is nearly smokeless.

But as a rifle powder the Schultze is impracticable. It is very quick in burning, and this disqualifies it for use in rifles. The same objection applies to its use in heavy ordnance. To use a charge of 125 pounds of Schultze powder in one of the 8-inch rifles would, in all likelihood, burst the gun without affording any velocity to the projectile.

Dr. Griffiths is working on the Schultze powder with the object of adapting it to rifle use. The powder has been moistened so as to give it slowness in burning, and in that condition has given good results in rifles. But in very damp air it is found that the powder becomes still more moist, and again under the reverse conditions it dries rapidly. The English, it is understood, have the first claim on the Schultze powder should Dr. Griffiths succeed in adapting it to rifle and ordnance use.

It is certain, however, that whatever the United States Government does in the matter of obtaining a smokeless powder, it will never consent to buying it from foreign firms unless those firms agree to establish works in this country.

—N. Y. Times.

Don't Bribe Your Own Judge.

A man's mind is a court, and his passions are, all of them, tricky lawyers. In ordinary times you can not go into any court and hear the statements of the counsel without feeling that there is a great deal of ingenuity exerted to cover up some things, and unduly magnify other things, so as to make out the best possible case for the side whose interest it is the desire of the special pleaders to advance. But there sits that old stupid judge—stupid because he will be just—and he puts the lawyer right on this side, and puts the lawyer right on that side, and holds every thing to the law and to the fact that he may come at justice—at least in theory. Now, every man has a judge within him—his conscience, and there are many men whose consciences have been bribed; and when these bribed consciences are presiding over the court which is constantly held in the heart, they are all the while excusing themselves for giving their adherence to things that are wrong. They need to be reminded that in every case they should look at every thing in the light of eternal justice.—N. Y. Ledger.

Even a Toad Will Hit Back.

"I once saw something when a small boy," said an old stager, "that I never heard of since, that was a toad attack a snake after the latter had been forced to let go his hold. It was in a blacksmith shop, built of logs, in Indiana county. The blacksmith was working at his anvil when a squeaking sound was heard at one side of the shop, which attracted attention. Turning to look the blacksmith and the narrator saw a large toad dragging himself into the inclosure, with a fifteen-inch garter snake following. The snake had the hind leg of the toad swallowed. With a pair of hot tongs the blacksmith caught the snake, which released its hold as quickly as possible. Instead of hopping away, as was to be expected, the toad turned itself around, and leaping six inches high in the air, came down on the body of the snake and bit it savagely."—Pittsburgh Dispatch.