

THE BABY'S SNEEZE.

Thunder may rattle at midnight
Like muskets of hostile foe,
Or moon down the distant valley
As the clouds retreating go.

Blizzards may shriek in the cedars,
And gnaw at their steadfast roots;
Alarm bells clang through the silence
In time with the horns that toot.

Every force that is potent
And vocal with cumbersome sound,
May seek to rally the sleeper
Who dreams on enchanted ground.

Yet all must yield to a rival,
And giants go down on their knees;
The forces that marches as victor
Is only a baby's sneeze!

-J. B. Alden.

THE SOUDANESE SPY.

"Listen, Bruce, what's that?" Col. Carriston raised his hand with a gesture of silence and looked at me intently. Then we both dropped our cigars and rushed out to the door of the embassy.

A gun shot, plain and unmistakable, had echoed through the night air and we certainly had heard a faint cry.

But in the dreary street all was quiet and the solitary electric lamp reflected no shadows save our own on the pavement of the British embassy, while the palace across the way, with its coral facades and massive carved gates, showed no signs of life.

Then a gun went off, a drum began to rattle loudly, arms clashed, hurrying footsteps echoed on the stones, and shouts were given and answered. I listened in speechless astonishment, and then rushed back for my cap and sword. It was best to be prepared, though what possible ground for alarm existed I could not see. Suakim was protected by a line of sentries that extended a mile beyond the town. No signal had come from the outskirts, yet there was this turmoil in the very midst of the European quarter.

As I hurried back to the door the great palace gates swung open, and a squad of Egyptian soldiers trooped out, their swarthy faces shining under their crimson caps. Close behind them, escorted by several officers, came a tall, dignified looking man. He was bareheaded and held an unsharpened sword in his hand.

I recognized him at first sight as Achmed Ras, the Egyptian governor of Suakim. He glanced up and down the street and then hurried across to the embassy.

"You are a British officer?" he said, breathless with excitement.

"Capt. Dugdale, of the Ninth dragoons, at your command, your excellency," I said briefly.

"Thank you. I am in need of your services. An Arab prisoner, a captured spy of the Mahdi's, has made his escape. My stupid soldiers are to blame. The fellow has been gone some time now, and it is important that he be retaken, for he has stolen valuable plans of the town and fortifications. I fear my soldiers can do little, but if your dragoons will scour the plain—"

"Your excellency," I interrupted, "what you desire shall be done at once."

I mounted my horse, waved a hasty salute and galloped off down the narrow street, leaving Achmed Ras and Carriston hobnobbing together on the steps of the embassy, for Carriston was the British ambassador at Suakim. The hot blood was coursing madly through my veins, for I had only been at Suakim a week and the faintest touch of excitement was intensely welcome.

I remembered, too, having seen this escaped Arab only a few days previous, when he was being led captive through the streets of the town, a great black giant with muscular, brawny limbs and his black locks dangling in curls down his shoulders.

I spurred rapidly through the town, crossed the peninsula to the main land, where the troops were quartered side by side with the native population, and soon the bugle call to arms was floating out on the night air, and the jingling of spurs and the trampling of hoofs was heard on all sides. A few brief, concise orders and we galloped out onto the desert and scattered over the sandy plain. Chances were in our favor, for the moon was coming up slowly, and the enemy's outposts, where alone the Arab would find safety, were at that time three miles beyond the town.

I galloped straight across the plain, closely attended by a solitary trooper, a brave fellow named Tom Fraser. I kept as far as possible in the direction I judged the fugitive had taken and I hoped to have the pleasure of capturing him myself, for the trampling of my horse was muffled by the drifted sand and would not betray my approach until I should be close upon him.

A mile and a half from the town lay a belt of deserted intrenchments, from which the enemy had been driven a month or so previous. As we approached these we slackened our speed and began to look for a suitable crossing place. The British shells had leveled them in places and one of these points we soon found, a break in the trench with a gentle slope on either side. We rode slowly down into the hollow, and as our horses were commencing to ascend again Fraser suddenly tugged fiercely at my arm.

"Look, captain, look!" he whispered excitedly, and as I followed the range of his outstretched hand I saw a slight that made my heart leap. Off to the south extended the trenches in one unbroken formation, their mounds of sand rigid and exact, and outlined sharply in the moonlight against the right hand wall of earth was a swiftly moving shadow.

Even as we looked the specter vanished round a curve, and we saw it no more.

We thundered on in silence. I clutched the reins tightly with one hand and with the other I held my saber. The Arab was unarmed and I would take him alive, I thought, and lead him back in triumph to Suakim. This all passed through my mind in an instant and then we galloped round the curve and saw our prey in full view before us.

He was struggling along painfully and limping as though one leg was hurt. The moon shone full upon him, and to my surprise I saw that he carried a great shield and one of those enormous double edged swords which these Arabs use with such terrible effect. He had doubtless found them in the trench.

We called on him to surrender, but he never even turned until as we were close upon him he suddenly whirled round in desperation and confronted us menacingly. We drew our sabers and dashed upon him.

Just here, extending full across the trench, was a rugged depression, caused, probably, by an exploding shell.

This we failed to see; and, while Fraser's horse leaped it gallantly, my animal stumbled and fell, and down I went, partly beneath him.

I tried to rise, but my ankle was badly sprained, and with a cry of pain I dropped down behind the horse. Then I forgot everything in what I saw going on before me. The Arab had retreated against the wall and was fiercely keeping Fraser at bay. Their swords clashed until the sparks flew, and Fraser's heavy strokes were intercepted by the Arab's leathern shield.

They fought on in silence, and in the moonlight I saw the Arab's terrible face, the eyes sparkling with hatred, and the white teeth clenched in deadly determination. Clash after clash rang on the night air.

Suddenly Fraser spurred on his horse and dealt a fearful blow at the Arab's exposed head, but quick as a flash the great sword flew up and the short saber striking full and forcibly against the awful edge, broke off close beside the hilt, and lay shining on the sand at their feet. What followed I can never forget. It will haunt me to my dying day.

Fraser threw up his right hand, with the broken hilt, and with the left reached for his revolver, and then, as I looked on, stupid with horror, the Arab raised his great sword aloft with both hands, and with all the force of his desperate strength he hurled it forward like a catapult.

The gleaming blade flashed the moonlight from its edge and crushed with an awful sound through poor Fraser's head, cleaving its way through the skull and between the shoulders and on down through the back, until its point fairly touched the rear of the saddle.

Split in twain from head to waist, the poor fellow dropped to the ground without a cry, and his plunging steed trampled over the body and then galloped in mad fright down the trench.

Wholly engrossed in this awful scene, I forgot my own peril and only realized it fully when the Arab, bracing himself against the wall of the trench, began to drag his sword out of Fraser's body.

With a shudder I reached for my pistol, and grew faint for an instant when I remembered that it lay under the horse in the holster. I was wholly at the Arab's mercy. The wretch was still tugging at the sword and seemed unable to loosen it. If only I had my pistol how nicely I could bring him down.

All at once I saw something glitter in one of Fraser's outstretched hands, and the sight of it gave me a thrill of hope. It was his revolver, which he had succeeded in grasping just before the blow fell.

If I could reach it before the Arab could extricate his sword I was saved. If not—Fraser's fate would be mine. I gritted my teeth, seized my saber firmly and rose erect. The Arab saw me, and with a savage imprecation to Allah he threw himself on the sword with a terrible effort. Still it clung to Fraser's body, and then as I leaped toward him, forgetful of my sprained ankle, and flourished my saber fiercely, he grabbed up his shield and fell back a few yards, keeping on the defensive. I uttered a loud shout to intimidate him and then bent over poor Fraser.

I grasped the revolver, but the dead man's hand was closed on it with a grip like iron. I gave a strong pull and then another, and just as the stiffened fingers loosened their clasp my injured ankle asserted itself and I fell heavily to one side. The wary Arab was watching his chance, and before I could even turn he leaped on me like a tiger and we rolled over on the sand, splashing through a pool of Fraser's crimson life blood.

The Arab had clutched at my throat but missed it, and clasping each other's shoulders we floundered about the trench, now one uppermost and now the other. With clenched teeth and struggling for breath we fought on bitterly, knowing that one or the other must die. I could feel the Arab's hot breath upon my neck and his huge brass earrings flapped against my cheeks. I still held the pistol tightly in my left hand. If I could only get a chance to use it. Very foolishly I relaxed my grasp a brief second, and in that lightning like interval the Arab seized the advantage and fastened both his brawny hands firmly on my throat.

In vain I struggled and strove to turn, the bony fingers were pressing my windpipe and the hideous face was glaring into mine with a mocking smile.

I was choking, suffocating—all sense

was leaving me.

Must I die thus? It was horrible.

With a fearful effort, the strength that madness alone can give, I twisted the Arab sideways. My left arm was free. My hand still clutched the pistol. I raised it with a jerk. I put the muzzle to his ear. With the last atom of strength I pulled the trigger, and as the stunning report echoed through the trench with thunderous reverberations everything grew black and dim.

Attracted by the pistol shot they found us there half an hour later still locked in a close embrace. My uniform was splattered with the Arab's blood. Messengers were sent to Suakim for stretchers, and while waiting the body of my desperate foe was buried where he lay in the trench, and beside him was laid my horse, whose neck had broken in the fall. We marched mournfully back to Suakim, and the next day poor Fraser was laid to rest in the English cemetery on the shores of the Red sea. I've been in many a skirmish with the Arabs since, but that night in the trenches outside Suakim was the closest call I ever had, and as a living remembrance of it I have kept that great two edged sword which split Tom Fraser nearly in half before my very eyes.—William Murray Graydon in Philadelphia Times.

THE GRATEFUL GOBLIN.

Nick Nickson was a woodchopper. He had lived close to the forest for many years with his wife and children. It was seldom Nick went to town or anywhere else, because he had a great deal of work to do to keep his family alive. Wood hewing never was much of a paying business, and Nick found it no better. But he never complained. He did the best he could in the best manner, and for the rest he trusted to a kind Providence to assist him and his wife and children.

Nick had now been going into the woods for twenty-five years, and as he was walking along this morning he was thinking of that fact more than once. "I have worked very hard," he muttered to himself as he stopped before a beautiful young oak tree ready to take off his jacket and start operations. "I have worked very hard," he said again, "and I think I ought to be pensioned off soon. But I don't think there is much chance. Where should I get the money to keep my folks at home without work? But there, it is no use growling now on the day of my twenty-fifth anniversary in the wood chopping line. Providence has stood by me so long, and I don't think I shall be forgotten in the future. Do your duty with all your might, with all your strength, with all your ability, and with an unwearied spirit of energy and perseverance; that is my motto, and success is bound to follow some time or other."

By this time Nick had taken his top coat off and laid it and his hat down in the long grass. Then he took his ax in his hands, and after looking at the tree from its base to its crown he gave the first blow. Thick splinters flew in all directions, and Nick dropped his ax and jumped back from the tree.

"What is the matter?" he said. "did I not hear a noise somewhere like the whining of a child?"

He stood and listened for a few moments, but all seemed to be quiet. Then he resumed his task. But he had only made one more blow at the tree when he was stopped again. This time he heard these words: "Get me out! Get me out!"

"Who is it that calls there?" Nick asked, who was not in the least afraid.

"It is I, the goblin of Blinkingdale!" a thin voice replied.

"But where are you to be found?"

"I am in the oak you have been hewing at, and I hallooed out because I was afraid you might kill me."

"Well, tell me where I ought to strike in order to extricate you without doing you any bodily harm," replied Nick Nickson.

"The ax is too big and too sharp altogether," now said the voice from the tree; "take your pocket knife and start cutting the bark about two feet from the ground. But be very careful or you will hurt me."

Nick now took his knife and he began cutting the bark. Piece by piece flew out, until at last he got to a hollow space, when the voice in the tree let out a shriek that was so loud and terrible all the trees in the wood seemed to be shaken by it.

"Now you have cut my beard, you old villain of a woodchopper," cried the goblin. "Oh, I will kill you if you are not careful."

Poor Nick trembled with fear, because he had often heard of goblins and their cruelty to people. But he soon realized that he was yet master of the situation, and he need not be afraid of the goblin.

"Look here, Mr. Goblin," said Nick, "if you mean to kill me when you get out, I think I will leave you where you are and go home. Good-by."

"For gracious sake, don't do that, my good man, so hallooed the goblin; "I did not mean what I said then, but you did hurt me, and no mistake. But be careful of my beard; it is very long, and it hurts very much if you pull only one of the hairs out. Now I will tell you something else. If you get me out without doing me any more harm I will give you a great reward, and make you the richest man in the world."

"How did you get into that tree?" asked Nick of the goblin.

"To tell you that would be a very long story to relate. Be it sufficient for you to know that I have been in that tree

twenty-five years today. You have got me out of my long imprisonment, and I will give you a reward when the time comes."

With the last word the goblin had vanished.

"Well, but where is my reward?" cried Nick. "It is all very well to say I shall have it when the time comes, but when will that be? Oh, you mean little scamp of a goblin, to get me first to extricate you from an oak tree, where you were buried for twenty-five years, and then to run away from me because you are too stingy to thank me for it. Ah! this is an ungrateful, cruel world. Just when I thought that I was to be made rich, too. Ah, well! never mind; let me continue at my work of wood chopping, but I will be careful not to have any more to do with goblins."

Nick now worked away with his ax in a mad humor. He struck the trunk of the oak with terrific force. It seemed to satisfy his anger, because he imagined every time the ax hit the tree he was hurting the little goblin. In a few moments the roots of the tree lay bare, and behold! what did Nick find? At the very base of the oak he saw a little black ebony box. He picked it up and he noticed there was no lock to it.

On the top was written the two words: "Open me!" But the words were spelled backward, and when Nick looked at them it read in his mind: "em nepO!" Nick never had been very sharp in book learning, and it never struck him to try and make some sense out of the words "em nepO." He saw that he did not know what it meant and he did not trouble any more. When he went home he took the box along with him, thinking it would make a toy for one of his children.

Arrived at his little cottage he found one of his neighbors sitting on the doorstep. Nick showed him the little black box, told him where he found it and related to him his adventure with the goblin. The neighbor was a pretty shrewd

old man, and no sooner had he looked at the handwriting on the box when he knew what it meant. He had read it backward. But he never said so to Nick. When he went home he quietly put the box in his pocket. Nick did not notice it. He was too honest himself to suppose any one else a thief.

When the neighbor got into his cottage he immediately got a chisel and a hammer and smashed the box open. Inside he found a piece of paper, which was wrapped around a tiny little silver key. On the paper he read these lines:

In the forest by the brook,
Where the silver maple grows,
You will find a little nook
That with solid silver flows.

These lines were signed, "Your Grateful Goblin."

The man at once understood all. He knew where the box came from, and he knew that the goblin who had been in the oak had intended this for Nick. "Nick is a fool," the man said to himself. "I am going to lift the treasure. Why did he not keep the box for himself?"

He accordingly went into the forest. He found the little nook, just as he was told, beside the silver maple tree. Examining the ground, he noticed a tiny keyhole. He had already put the key into the hole; he turned it around, and he saw the shining silver in the nook, when his hand was suddenly arrested by the goblin.

"You are not the man who liberated me from the oak tree!" said the little man.

The thief then had to confess that he got hold of the box because his neighbor Nick could not read backward.

"Well, you had no business to be a thief, and you certainly had no right to take that box which did not belong to you."

"I am sorry," replied the man; "if you will forgive me I will go home and tell Nickson all about this silver treasure, and he can come and get it himself."

"No, there is no necessity for that. Anyhow, I do not believe you would keep your word. But now that you have found this silver treasure, take it and carry it to your home; it shall be yours." Then the goblin vanished.

The man at once began to fill his pockets with silver. When they were filled he took his cap, then his handkerchief, then he took off his coat and used it as a bag. But when all were filled he could not carry the load; it was too heavy. So he had to leave some behind. He hurried home and gave the silver to his wife, then he took a wheelbarrow and returned to the work by the brook. He loaded the wheelbarrow to its utmost capacity before he left for home. On his way to his cottage, however, he had to cross a small bridge which led over a stream, and when he was in the center of this bridge the boards broke under him, and the wheelbarrow, the silver and the man fell down into the deep. The load had been too heavy. The man was too greedy; he wanted too much, and now he was drowned and he had nothing at all. It was fortunate for his wife and children that he had brought some of the treasure home, and they were saved from starvation.

Now we will return to Nick Nickson, the woodchopper. He never missed the little black box at all. Next morning he returned to the forest and worked away at chopping down trees as hard as ever. Sometimes he would think about the goblin, and then Nick would murmur: "The world is very ungrateful. The next goblin I find in a tree has to stay there for all I care."

After he had chopped down one tree he was astonished to find again a little black box at the roots. He picked it up

and read again: "Open me." But this time the writing was straight, and not backward; so Nick read it at once, and, of course, understood.

"Open ye! All right, that is easily done." He put the box on the ground, took his ax, hit it one stroke and the box was smashed. Inside Nick found a piece of paper wound around a beautiful golden key of the finest workmanship. Nick took the paper and, looking at it close, he saw that it contained the following verse:

At the castle on the mount
Is a golden treasure,
Where golden red is often found
Waiting for your measure.

The slip of paper was signed: "The Grateful Goblin." Nick looked at the writing long and intently. "Well," he said, at last, "I will at once go and find out whether that goblin has played another trick on me. I might as well be fooled twice as once."

He immediately ran toward the mountain, which stood not far into the forest. Arrived there he climbed up the steep ascent, and when he got to the walls of the castle he walked all around until he found the yellow golden rod growing everywhere. Then he examined the wall. In a moment he noticed a small hole in the wall, which seemed to have been made for his golden key. Putting it in the hole and turning round was done in a second. Nick already beheld the glittering mass of shining gold before him when the goblin appeared.

"So here you are, then," he said to Nick; "so you did not give the box away this time. Why did you not keep the other?"

Nick explained to the goblin that he did not know what the box contained.

"Why did you not open it?"

"I don't know."

"Well, your neighbor did, though, and he got a silver treasure. But I punished him before he was able to enjoy it, and he is now dead in the stream. Now, look here, Nick, you fancied that I did not mean to give you your reward as promised."

"Well, it looked like it, did it not?"

"Looked like it has nothing to do with it. You should have trusted me, and have a little patience. However, you are a pretty good fellow, Nick, and now here is your treasure. Enjoy it with your wife and children, live long and be happy; good-by, and remember sometimes the Grateful Goblin."

Nick was now alone with his treasure. He took a good lot home with him, and he and his dear ones lived in the future as happy as happy can be.—Globe Democrat.

WILLIAM AT HOME.

Like His Grandfather the Young Emperor Loves to Live Simply.

A writer in the Berlin Tageblatt gives some interesting particulars concerning the home life of the Emperor, William II. Like his grandfather, the Emperor loves to live simply, and, when his habits are not interfered with by the presence of distinguished guests at the castle, he rises at seven, breakfasts at 7:30 and dines with the Emperor at the unfashionable hour of one. His favorite relaxation is to play with his children.

Every day he receives upon the average about six hundred letters. These are brought to him on a salver as they arrive, and he opens those letters which bear a hand-writing, a coat of arms or a postmark which is known to him or excites his curiosity. The rest of the correspondence goes unopened to the Civil Cabinet, the members of which deal with it as may be necessary. The majority of the envelopes contain begging letters or personal petitions. The Emperor has only one body servant at a time in attendance upon him, and this man shaves him, takes care of his wardrobe, and affords him what assistance he requires while dressing.

Much of the Emperor's time is spent in his private library, where he writes much and rapidly. Every new book and every newspaper dealing with military or naval subjects, whether it be in German, French, Russian or English, is seen by him, and besides being a regular bibliomane so far as regards books on strategy and military history, he is an enthusiastic collector of portraits and autographs of his more celebrated contemporaries. He leaves the education of his children entirely to the direction of the Empress, who is not only a strict disciplinarian, but also extremely attentive to the religious training of the young Princes. This she at present herself undertakes. The children have various masters and governesses who visit them; but they have as yet no military governor, or even any personal servants or attendants beyond such a nursery staff as might be found in any well-to-do bourgeois family in Berlin. At the outset of his reign the Emperor rendered himself somewhat notorious by his readiness to speak in public. Curiously enough he has the reputation among his personal friends of being one of the most silent of men, save on the rare occasions when he throws off the monarch and gives reign to his natural high spirits. So much is this the case that in his household the saying is: "The Emperor never speaks; he only orders."

—A SONG SPOUNG OF A CHURCH at Rock Springs, Ga., a flying squirrel has his nest, and on Sundays, every time the congregation begins to sing, the squirrel comes out to the edge of his nest and listens, returning when the singing ceases.