

A WARRIOR BOLD.

By ST. GEORGE RATHBORNE.

Author of "Little Miss Millions," "The Spider's Web," "Miss Caprice," "Dr. Jack's Widow," Etc., Etc.

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CHAPTER II—(Continued.)

Naturally, Charlie Stuart was justified in believing the girl to be the child of some Flemish citizen. True, she was not dressed in the usual Dutch fashion, but her golden tresses and blue eyes, that shone like twin stars, made him take the fact for granted.

He was, therefore, considerably surprised when, springing to her feet, she advanced a step or two toward them, holding out her hands, a look of great joy illuminating her face, and in a voice which the echoes of her recent sobs still haunted, addressed them in purest English:

"Oh, sirs! Heaven has heard my prayer and sent you to my rescue!" Stuart made up his mind then and there, strange as such a proceeding might be, that there was a deeper mystery about the presence of this young girl in these terrifying surroundings than had at first occurred to him.

Many things united to make him believe this—the fact of her not being missed by her party, her manner in avoiding any reference to the friends who should be so anxious—yes, then and there he became convinced that a story lay back of it as startling as any product of an opium smoker's dream. Charlie knew it would be well for him to divert the girl's mind as much as possible from the horrors she had so recently been forced to face. Thus as they walked along, he even grew somewhat merry, and his object was accomplished, since the girl's temporary trembling fit had passed away and she was now calm enough to ask questions regarding their opportune presence in the dismal place.

Several times Charlie knew she was looking at him intently. He believed that he could guess the reason—that she had a story to tell, a story far out of the ordinary run, and was studying him when she thought herself unobserved, studying him to determine whether she dared entrust him with its astonishing details.

CHAPTER III.

Charlie Makes an Engagement.

Who was she? This question came into Charlie's mind many times while they walked through those ghostly passages, seeking the worn stone stairs at the top of which stood the roughly hewn oak door studded with rusty nails.

At the foot of the worn stone steps the girl came to a sudden stop.

"Sir," she said, addressing Charlie as though he were the only party in sight, "unless I am mistaken these steps lead up to the museum of the Steen, and we have reached the exit of this horrible underground tomb."

"We can be in the light as soon as I unlock the door up yonder," he said quietly.

"One moment, before we ascend. I want to catch my breath—to tell you how grateful I am for your timely assistance."

"Please don't mention it," said Charlie.

"Indeed, it was a great pleasure, fair lady," chirruped Artemus, eagerly.

"You overwhelm me with confusion. I have, as you may well suppose, received something of a shock, and hardly feel equal to the task of explaining to you just now what strange circumstances brought me into the desperate predicament from which I have been rescued by your assistance. But I trust I may see you again soon, when the explanation that is due will be gladly given. Forgive me if I say I have been studying you all this time, and something tells me I may surely trust you with my life. God knows I need friends."

Her words thrilled Charlie.

"Pardon me, miss—I should have told you before—my name is Charlie Stuart. I am at present an exile from old London, in search of a mission. Perhaps I have found one," he said, with an amused smile.

A faint flush chased across her countenance.

"And I—am Arline Brand."

She had a small reticule attached to her girdle, as was the custom. Opening this, she took out a quaint little inlaid cardcase and handed him a bit of pasteboard.

"When you call, ask for me under that name, by which I am known. But let me say again—as a duty I owe you, Mr. Stuart—let me give you full warning that, while I appreciate the great favor you have done me, I must tell you I have enemies, and that if you should seek to continue the acquaintance so strangely begun, it might possibly bring you into trouble."

"I never yet have allowed fear of mortal man to influence my actions," Stuart said, proudly.

"But these men are cruel and unscrupulous. You can realize that after seeing to what a dreadful fate they would have condemned me because I refused to carry out their will."

"They are a set of precise scoundrels and cowards!" he declared.

"Ah! but perhaps they are all-powerful at court—men in touch with a dynasty that can shake the earth if aroused, to whom one poor human life is as a fallen leaf," she said, as if testing his loyalty.

"It is the same—I see no reason why I should draw back." Taking out his watch, he continued, in the most deliberate fashion: "It is now almost

high noon. At eight, then, this evening, to the minute, I shall do myself the honor of calling upon you at your hotel, and until I am convinced that it is unlawful for me to do so, all the police of Antwerp shall not stop me in my rights of a British citizen traveling under the protection of his flag."

Arline impulsively held out her hand.

"I thank you. God bless you, Mr. Stuart!" she said, in broken tones.

And Charlie, as he felt the little hand quiver and throb in his, found a strong indignation arising within his breast, directed against those unknown parties who had so mercilessly condemned so charming a young woman to a cruel fate.

It was Artemus who unlocked the heavy door and ushered them into the garish light of day, who gravely relieved Charlie of his brass candlestick and placed it, together with the rusty keys, where they belonged.

Charlie saw that his companion glanced hastily to the right and left through her veil. Once he was almost sure she gave a start, but by no word did she signify discovery.

"Could you get a cab for me?" she asked with a perceptible tremor in her voice.

"Easily, no doubt. There are usually vehicles waiting outside the Steen. This way, please."

Before the vehicle started, Arline Brand threw back the veil, and again Charlie was given the privilege of looking into those honest blue orbs, rivaling the heavens in their hue.

"I will release you from your promise if you regret making it, Mr. Stuart," she said, softly.

"Thanks; but I am a singularly obstinate man, I fear. At eight to-night, I said, Besides, I confess to much curiosity to hear what you promised to tell."

Those wondrous eyes beamed upon him; a little hand crept out to allow of a parting pressure; then the vehicle lumbered away, leaving him there in front of the historic Steen, watching its progress down the crooked thoroughfare, and wondering at the change that had broken into his quiet life.

When Charlie Stuart reiterated his rash promise with regard to seeing the owner of those marvelous cerulean orbs that same evening, he had but a faint conception of the magnitude of the task he had taken upon himself.

He was dimly conscious of a figure hanging from the rear window of a second old vehicle—a figure that made all manner of pantomime gestures, and in which he recognized his friend Artemus.

Remembering the quaint methods by which Artemus invoked the dramatic muse, he ended with a laugh.

"No harm done, I imagine," he said, aloud. To his surprise some one added:

"That remains to be seen, young sir."

Turning indignantly to see who had dared to thus address him without invitation, Charlie faced a middle-aged gentleman of military aspect, who was regarding him with much urbanity.

"I am quite ready to explain the meaning of those words I uttered, young sir, on condition that you favor me with your name."

Charlie's first hasty inclination was to refuse point-blank, but he had up to this point of his existence never known the time when he found reason to be ashamed of his name. It belonged to one of the best families in Scotland, and his ancestry dated back to the days of Bruce and Wallace.

"That is a condition easily complied with, as I have never yet refused it to any man who felt enough interest in me to ask. It is Charlie Stuart."

The other bowed.

"Good! I see we shall get on together amazingly well. There need be no trouble whatever, since we agree so charmingly," he said.

"Ah! about what, now?" asked Charlie, once more keenly on his guard.

"H'm! Say, the pretty fraulein."

"But perhaps we do not agree on that subject; in fact, our views may be diametrically opposite. Tell me, why do you waylay me? I am a complete stranger; I never saw you before."

"Quite true, quite true, young sir," chuckled the other; "but I have seen you before. I know when you came to Antwerp, and just how you have employed your time since."

"The deuce you do! Then you must have known my name. Why did you ask for it?" with the light of suspicion and unbelief in his eyes.

"To ascertain how far you would have confidence in me. I see you are incredulous; but, young man, it is my especial business to know every stranger who comes to Antwerp, whether he be French, English, Russian, American or Turkish; also to discover as much with relation to his business here as is necessary to understand his status in society. Although you have never met me before, I doubt not you would recognize my name. Permit me."

A card was thrust into Charlie's hand.

Mechanically he glanced at it.

The result was peculiarly unpleasant.

It simply bore a name, but that name was as famous at St. Petersburg

and Paris as in Antwerp—Baron Demetrius Peterhoff.

This wonderful man had been at the head of the famous Third Section in Russia; he had been the terror of Nihilists for years; an argus-eyed head of police; until, unfortunately, a cog slipped with fatal result, since the Czar Alexander was murdered through the instrumentality of a bomb, and from that hour Baron Peterhoff's usefulness in Russia was at an end.

"Ah!" Charlie said, very calmly; "I have heard of you very often, Baron; but, really, I confess the prospect of meeting so renowned a character never entered my mind. To what am I indebted for the honor?"

Again the distinguished gentleman uttered the word that had startled Charlie before.

"To the pretty fraulein."

Charlie frowned.

"See here, Baron—I know this lady as Mlle. Arline Brand. Surely there must be a mistake."

"She has golden hair?"

"Yes."

"And eyes so blue"—holding up his hands in a dramatic manner that would have delighted Artemus—"that they shame the lovely skies of the Riviera."

Charlie groaned an assent. A crushing weight seemed to press upon his brain and he felt as though tottering on the verge of a precipice.

"As to the name," continued the Baron, coolly, "what does it matter? Mlle. Arline Brand is as good as another—indeed, when you come to examine it, there is something of the adventurous stripe about so delightful a cognomen, don't you think, young sir? To my knowledge that is only one of a score of different names the lady has adopted within the last few years."

"Adventurers!"

How like the shock of a rattlesnake's stroke the mention of that word fell upon Charlie's hearing.

"Since you have been so kind as to give me warning, suppose you tell me who this wonderful lady of many names is?" he asked, coldly.

"You must have heard of the Countess Isolde Brabant."

It was a name he had often seen mentioned in London and continental papers, a name belonging to a beautiful Russian young woman, given over heart and soul to the cause of Nihilism, connected with high families in the Land of the White Czar, banished through royal decree, and now turned adventuress in Vienna, Paris and other capitals of Europe.

He shuddered at the picture.

"At least I am under favors to you, Baron, for your kindness; and if I make a fool of myself it will not be for lack of warning."

"Well, young sir, I owe my life to your father. Before Sebastopol, when a fierce engagement was in progress, I had been cut down and lay there helpless, when a squadron of British dragoons charged. They would have crushed me to atoms, but that a wounded Highlander captain, crawling over, shielded my body with his own, and, raising himself, waved his tartan in the air, at which the dragoons separated, sweeping past to the left and to the right. That brave Highlander was your noble father. For years we corresponded; but in my eventful life the memory of the debt I owed him—more shame to me—became obscured by other issues. Young sir, for his sake I have sought to save you from the snare of the fowler. Be warned in time."

A cab, doubtless previously signaled, dashed up, the busy Baron jumped in, waved his hand to Charlie, and was gone.

He left a very puzzled and deeply worried young man in front of the Steen.

Charlie seemed wrestling with the problem, and drawn first this way, then that; but his natural obstinacy finally won out.

"Well," he muttered through his teeth, "I said eight o'clock to-night; and, come weal or come woe, I shall keep the appointment."

(To be continued.)

QUESTION DEVIL COULDN'T ANSWER

Unable to Predict Action of a New York Jury.

While waiting for the verdict in the Patrick case a few days ago somebody remarked to Mr. Van Diver of the District Attorney's office, that he thought the jury would acquit the lawyer who had conspired with William Marsh Rice's valet to gain possession of the Texas millionaire's fortune. Mr. Van Diver, who had followed the case closely for several months, doubted this, but added reflectively:

"Of course, nothing is more uncertain than the action of a jury. I remember a story my father told me when I was a boy in Alabama. The story was of His Satanic Majesty and a plain citizen who met one day on a narrow pathway cut in the edge of a cliff. On one side there yawned a precipice. On the other side was the solid rock. There was only room for one to pass, and of these two, one must lie down and let the other walk over him."

"If you'll propound three questions I can't answer," suggested Satan, "I'll lie down and let you pass over my body." The citizen asked:

"What is whiter than snow?"

"Cotton," was the answer.

"What is sweeter than sugar?"

"That's easy again; molasses."

"What will be the next verdict rendered in this county by a petit jury?"

"Pass on your way," said the Devil, as he made a carpet of himself."

The natives of Palestine have a kettledrum, the body being made of pottery and the head covered with parchment. It is provided with a cord and is borne in festal processions.

Judge Blackenham's Heroic Moment

BY JAMES NOEL JOHNSON.

(Copyright, 1902, by Daily Story Pub. Co.)

I have been spending a bit of the torrid season with my friend Judge Thomas Marshall Blackenham of Tygart Creek, Kentucky.

After dinner to-day the Judge led the way to the broad veranda. The Judge ponderously seated himself in a shrieking rustic rocking-chair, threw his fat right leg across the left, pushed backward and rested a chunky fist (that held the handle of a palm leaf) on the center of his protuberant girth.

Soon through the heated silence came the imperious voice of Mrs. Blackenham:

"Do all that over again, my lady! I saw you souse a plate in the water, turn it over a time or two, give it a slap and a swipe with the drying rag and dismiss it. Do it all over again."

"That's tough on Lillie, hot as it is, but there is no help for it," spoke the Judge in smiling sympathy; "her mother would never abate one jot or tittle of her stringent housewifery exactions."

"What a wonderfully lucky man you are, Judge," I said, with the frank freedom of intimacy. "In your wife the beautiful and practical have met in harmonious union. How could you, with your careless habits, ever win a woman of such punctilious preciseness?"

The Judge rolled his sunset face over toward me. He affected indignation. "What do you mean, sub? While probably I am no prize beauty now, I was the Lochinvar of this state. I was the glass of gallantry, the beau ideal, the tossing blossom of Kentucky chivalry, sub! 'Twas her was a lucky woman, sub; yes, sub, though at one time, sub, she didn't have the propah appreciation of it, probably."

"She was the reverse of practical, too, when she was young, sub. She had gone to school at Lexington a few terms, and when she returned her little brown head fairly swarmed with romantic ideas. A dishrag in her white hands then would have seemed defilement. Though rich in all the alluring grace of manner and physical attributes of perfect femininity, she seemed to possess no inclination for the sterner sex. We young fellows in the community who aspired to hold heads on a level with hers were greatly nonplused at her frigid bearing. We couldn't believe she was a born hamster. Her glowing lips, her pink-mantled cheeks, her sparkling blue eyes, her form filling all the rules of perfect symmetry, her step light as if she trod an unpalpable substance, all conspired to resent such a charge. But she gave scant attention to us, I tell you."

"Tom Baker bought a span of fine bay horses and a buggy to match. Every day he would dash by her house, his grand steeds smiting the hard road with rapid, ringing hoofs, his buggy wheels richly humming, the black top catching and throwing sunlight at every motion. 'Twas all vanity and vexation. She scarcely gave his showy equipage a glance, or if she did deign a look it was to wonder why a young man of his lean means should incur so much expense to advertise himself a fool. He soon sold his rig at half price and left for Frankfort, where he is now a popular saloonkeeper."

"Milt Turner bought a suit of clothes on a credit—worth seventy-five dollars. The next Sunday when he thought she was badly in need of his company home, she told him her pa was all the company she required. He is now a restaurant keeper in Chicago."

"John De Laney, knowing her to be a church member, thought the short cut to her heart was the ministerial path. Accordingly he went to Cincinnati, and for six months gorged his mind on theology. He returned with a smooth face, an affected meek, but withal, superior clerical smile, a long-tailed, black coat and a nicely gotten up parson voice. He made an appointment to preach, but lo! though the house was jammed by a curious throng, the only one he would have

on my shoulders. I was analyzing the situation—drawing intelligent deductions from the failures of others. I made noiseless, but exhaustive inquiries into the habits and secret tastes of this anomalous beauty. I finally learned she was an unquenchable reader of heroic literature. I went to town and secretly learned from the woman who kept the book store, the titles of all those high-spired novels that constituted her daily mental and emotional feed, and I bought them. Day and night I would lie on my couch and read novels. Dark, randsome chaos rushed through the pages, scattering heroic deeds at every turn and corner.

"I now had the key that I was sure would unlock the door of her indifference. I would be a novel hero, and wouldn't be long about it."

"I had a cousin living in Kansas City, and thither I went on a two months' visit."

"While there I contrived, on paper, to become a hero of the first water. I went to a job printer with a piece of newspaper, blank on one side."

"I next day mailed a clipping to the local paper of my home county. I didn't forget to inclose a crisp ten dollar bill, and a request that the editor should publish the clipping and say nothing about how he had come by it. Heroes must be modest, you know. He was a personal friend of mine, and I knew I could trust him. Well, the next issue of the East Kentucky Deadshot had the following article, topped with fireworks headlines:

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[From the Kansas City Journal.]

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Last evening, while Mrs. Ella Edwards, a wealthy and beautiful young widow of Southworth street, was going home from a call she was set upon by three masked robbers. At the place where the miscreants came upon her there is a long distance between the street lamps, and as a most favorable locality for the perpetration of villainous deeds, Mrs. Edwards was within a block of her home and never anticipated any foul play, as she was used to traversing that part of the street in the early evening. All at once, when about midway between the lamps, the three men sprang out and seized her. One threw a cloak over her head, but not before she had uttered a piercing scream. Instantly, as if he had risen from the earth, the bold Kentuckian sprang like a lion among them. Right and left he landed with his Herculean arms. There was a terrible struggle as the three footpads were powerful men. Undaunted by their resistance the Kentuckian fought them single-handed, never yielding an inch. Two fell as though smitten by sledge hammers. The third turned in an endeavor to escape, but came to a sudden halt with a bullet in his left leg. The noise of the shot brought policemen to the spot. All three of the assailants were arrested. One of them is "Cribber" Darnley, a veteran footpad, who has served several terms, and is regarded as a dangerous man to tackle. Another of the beautiful trio is "Cross-eyed" Bronson, wanted badly in New York and Philadelphia for safe cracking. He has murdered several officers who have attempted to arrest him. The third is "Bully" Adams, who last year cleared out an entire sheriff's posse trying to capture him.

The lady lost nothing except her consciousness. Her pocketbook, containing three hundred dollars, her gold watch and diamond necklace were jotted from the hands of the robbers when Col. Blackenham's mighty fists landed. Col. Blackenham, like all heroes, is an exceedingly modest man, and acts as if he were not aware he had done anything out of the ordinary. In the meantime, his deed is the theme of universal praise. Col. Blackenham refused to accept the gold watch the grateful lady brought him to take, but later on—who knows? The old, old story, possibly.

"Well, sub, I staid away long enough to let that story sink into the heart of the beautiful Flossie, and prepare for me a haven of welcome and favor."

"When I returned I demeaned myself as becomes a modest hero, unassuming, but with a quiet dignity that bespeaks the importance of the man on whom it sits."

"When I met Flossie at church there was no ice on her, no sub. She bowed to me, smiled, trembled a little while her eyes emitted sparks that flew upward from a very warm heart. She took a proffered arm and leaned on it with that air of delicious dependence so grateful to the heart of the true hero."

"After we had been married about two weeks I told her about my ruse. She gazed at me a long time, her expression a compound of mirth, astonishment and mock contempt."

"Finally, she made a motion as if throwing something away.

"There, now!" she exclaimed, knitting her brow. "No more romance reading for me. As for you, Mr. Blackenham, I want you to study law

ence. I would be a novel hero, and wouldn't be long about it."

"I had a cousin living in Kansas City, and thither I went on a two months' visit."

"While there I contrived, on paper, to become a hero of the first water. I went to a job printer with a piece of newspaper, blank on one side."

"I next day mailed a clipping to the local paper of my home county. I didn't forget to inclose a crisp ten dollar bill, and a request that the editor should publish the clipping and say nothing about how he had come by it. Heroes must be modest, you know. He was a personal friend of mine, and I knew I could trust him. Well, the next issue of the East Kentucky Deadshot had the following article, topped with fireworks headlines:

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