

THE BROKEN COIN

A Story of Mystery and Adventure

By EMERSON HOUGH

From the Scenario by GRACE CUNARD

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Novelized From the Motion Picture Drama of the Same Name. Produced by the Universal Film Manufacturing Company.

SYNOPSIS.

Kitty Gray, newspaper woman, finds in a curio shop half of a broken coin, the mutilated inscription on which arouses her curiosity and leads her, at the order of her managing editor, to go to the principality of Grahoffen to piece out the story suggested by the inscription. She is followed, and on arrival in Grahoffen her adventures while chasing the secret of the broken coin begin.

FIFTEENTH INSTALLMENT

CHAPTER LV.

The wide wings of the air craft rose gracefully and steadily from the porous dip which it had made almost to the surface of the sea. Under the steady hand of the pilot it swung up and around and headed back toward the shore.

Below them now lay the towers of Grahoffen. The roar of the motor made conversation impossible, but the three occupants of the car looked at one another happily. Roleau, wet and weary, but smiling, had curled himself down as best he could, and accepted this last phase of his adventure with his usual philosophy.

To the relief of all three, at length they saw the green shores of Grahoffen waterfront rising up to meet them. The aeroplane, skillfully handled, spiraled gracefully down. Safe at length, they stepped from the car. Frederick and Kitty faced each other. "Are we then at the end of our perils?" asked Kitty. "Dare we believe it? I am weary with it all—I scarce know whether I am not in some harassing dream. Are we then safe again?"

"Let us hope it, mademoiselle," said Count Frederick. "But stay," said he. "How can we know what may have transpired at the palace in our absence? Only one thing is to be depended upon, and that is that Sachio will not relent. He will have some plot on foot—he will not admit his defeat."

"Let us go then," said Count Frederick, "and see. After what we have endured why trouble ourselves regarding what fate may have in addition? It all seems to me to have been in the hand of fate itself. Even I am of the mind that our little fears do not in the least alter the plans of the gods regarding us."

"That is the fatalism of a brave man," said Kitty, smiling. "What! Then you call me at least brave, mademoiselle? Would that I might find some other merit in your eyes—and would I might blot out my own sense of unworthiness in the conduct I have shown towards you, Mademoiselle!"

"This is no time for such matters, monsieur. Let us hasten." She spoke composedly, and even then was turning toward the palace.

Roleau, apart at a respectful distance, for the time made no attempt to intrude. Count Frederick and Kitty hurried off toward the plaza in front of the palace, whose grounds so recently had been the scene of the desperate encounter between the two armies. A certain peace had reigned there but now, yet it had been but the peace of exhaustion. The army of Grahoffen had withdrawn, that was true, but led by dauntless minds its retreat had been checked. With their defeat was but a relative term, a temporary condition. Even now they had summoned up their courage, and those but recently vanquished had set on foot a counter-attack against the capital of their recently victorious foe.

As they advanced they found the plaza once more filled with armed men, the forces of Grahoffen again upon the aggressive. By stealth now, rapidly and without the sound of martial music, they had stolen into the unguarded portion of the city. The courage of despair perhaps animated them in this undertaking. Yet now confidence and not despair seemed to rule among them as they gathered in front of the palace which still so grimly held its ancient secrets.

"Come quick!" exclaimed Frederick as this scene broke upon their gaze. "We are alone—our forces are scattered—they are upon us again in thousands. We must take refuge in the palace—only in its hidden recesses can we find any help now."

Carefully as might be, and as quickly, they gained access once more to the beleaguered palace of Grahoffen. In the anteroom they met none less than Michael, the puppet king himself. He was the image of terror now, and willing to babble to any of his woes.

"What shall we do? Where shall we go?" he exclaimed almost in despair. "They are at us again—they have no mercy on us—they do not stay defeated, my dear count. You, your Sachio does not relent—he will have our hearts' blood. It is terrible. Where shall we fly from him?"

Much of these broken utterances had truth in them. The Grahoffen troops were indeed in possession of the central defenses of the town. By virtue of the magic of persistence and speed of action Count Sachio himself once more had won to the head of his troops. From some place unknown

to them he reappeared, the man in whom they had confidence, and the man who had confidence in himself. With such an adversary King Michael, or even the stouter soul now at his side, might well find pause.

"Soon it will be indeed too late, your majesty," exclaimed Count Frederick. "Come—we must find some safety in the inner chambers of the palace. Luckily it was built for precisely such a crisis as this in its fate. Come, mademoiselle, your hand, quick. Your majesty, it is not beneath your dignity to hasten now."

Pursued by vague noises of combat and by countless vague fears conjured up by their surroundings, deep in the hidden fastnesses, they went on until at length they were far below the level of the rooms devoted to the usual purposes of the daily life of the palace. Below them, before them, all was darkness and gloom. They were well among the subterranean dungeons which had held so long their secrets against all comers.

Michael was the prey of yet added apprehensions as he found himself thus leaving the light of day and venturing among these regions whose traditions held them so potent in terror for the human mind as once they had offered terrors to the human body. Yet he could do no more than follow the guidance of the bolder mind which now led on.

They were followed in some part by the refugees of the palace, as anxious as themselves to find some refuge. So at length they halted in an abiding place which for the time at least was silent—a deep dungeon where light and sound alike were cut off. Such had been their haste that all were well-nigh exhausted—Michael spent most of all and voicing most of all the babbling of his mortal anguish. Thus circumstanced, they found such places of rest as offered and waited for what might come.

Meanwhile the relentless Sachio was searching some entrance into the palace, the hiding place of his enemies, and, as he supposed, also of the woman whom he had called his friend—the woman whom he feared most of all.

"Break in the door, men," he cried. "Smash in any window. Enter, in the name of our own king. We have them defeated now, and they must not escape—they are trapped here, and we will soon have them in our hands."

His men obeyed. There came soon the splintering of wood, the crashing of glass at the palace windows. Before many moments had passed the legions of Grahoffen were pouring through the breach and overrunning the interior of the palace. Sachio, with some hurried instructions to an aide, led on the advance. All through the upper portion of the palace the echo of hurrying footsteps resounded.

"They are coming," said Kitty at length quietly to her companions. They have taken the palace. We cannot escape. This must be the end. They will have us out now at any cost."

"What shall we do? Where shall we hide? What will become of me?" wailed Michael. "Save me, Frederick, save me. What shall I do?" "You shall keep silent, your majesty, if you please. You can go nowhere better than this. I will do what I can," rejoined Frederick. "Most beloved majesty, you are in a hard case, but pray you, trouble us not too much in the work of doing what we can for your majesty and ourselves."

Trying now this door, now that, advancing, receding, the men of Grahoffen came on. They filled up the corridors, all the reception halls of the front and rear of the Grahoffen palace. Count Sachio, his king, his leaders and their soldiers—all now joined in the last dash upon what they thought to be the finish of their enemy's last citadel.

Aloof and apart, concealed for the time in the remote cell which had received them, Count Frederick and his companions hoped against hope for yet a little while, but hoped in vain. Again came the crashing of doors, the rush of feet on the stone floors. Useless to contend against their numbers—the last door was broken through. Discovered, surrounded, trapped, Count Frederick and his companions faced their assailants.

"So," laughed Sachio, as he stood panting but triumphant, after his last attack. "So, at last! You have run far, my friends, and dodged us very nimbly. Where shall you go now, my good count—where shall you go, my pretty one—and you, your august majesty of Grahoffen, before whom I must tremble—what is the next place of retreat for you?"

His taunt had truth under it. The last card seemed to have been played, and played to an awful loss. There seemed to be no further retreat; the little resistance which Frederick and Kitty could offer would serve for naught against such odds; as best they might they endeavored to protect their king, who covered in a

corner of the room, half moaning in helpless terror.

"And yet now, at the last instant, it was Count Frederick himself to whom it was given to devise a plan, desperate in itself, yet, as it chanced, effective.

His eyes fell upon a great wheel, rusty and long disused, which thrust out of one corner of the room. As he saw it his gaze kindled with the sudden thought which it suggested. He knew what it was and what it meant—what hope it offered now.

"Keep them talking," he whispered to Kitty, in a quick aside. "Engage them for just a moment—keep them busy—wait."

Count Frederick knew that this wheel and the levers beyond controlled the drainage outlet of the great moat which surrounded the rear portion of the castle. Those lower gates once opened, there was nothing to prevent flooding of the subterranean passages. The moat waters had been used for that very purpose in the past—so ran tradition—and great had been the slaughter wrought upon ancient enemies of Grahoffen through that very means. Here they were living in the past—here they demanded of the past its secrets—here they were surrounded by all the grim memorials of the past. Why, then, thought Count Frederick, why not use that past and the means that once had been sufficient to it?

He laid his hand upon the wheel. It had not yielded to an arm less powerful than his, and even his strength was necessary to its limit before he could force it to yield, long disused as it had been here. But at length it did turn a little, and then more and yet more.

The result was beyond all calculation. There came the sound of rippling, and then of rushing waters. It came in the passages back of the invaders. It filled the stone floors along the corridors. It lapped their feet. It bathed their ankles. It rose swiftly to their knees. And then consternation seized upon all those who but now had stood triumphant, taunting, menacing. Of a truth, the trapped creatures had turned and wrought their own vengeance.

"Quick, get to safety," commanded Frederick now. And even as he and his companions found a little higher level in another chamber whence they could see the work of the waters on their foes, those foes themselves began to cry out in terror at the mysterious enemy against which they could not battle.

"Your Majesty," exclaimed Count Sachio now to the tall figure at his side—"your majesty!" King Cortislaw it was who had been summoned to see the last struggles of

We do not want you to cumber our corridors with your dead. Let it be peace then, and this time let your word be kept. Begone then, and thank good fortune, and not your just deserts, that you have life left for you. If any of you remains death shall be his fate at once. Decide quickly, my good Sachio. You have not long to live. The moat waters are not yet touched—they will flood these channels in the rock to their very roofs. Decide then."

"Enough, enough," cried Sachio, holding up his hands. "We submit—we surrender—we agree."

Count Frederick reversed the wheel. Little by little, the gurgling and rushing of the waters ceased. They reached their own level again. Once more the old moat was locked, and once more a drawn battle had been fought over that secret which still remained hidden deep somewhere in those rock caverns.

Little by little, slowly and in deep humiliation, the forces of Grahoffen found their way out as best they might—or at least most of them did, including Sachio and Cortislaw, his king.

Presently Frederick, Kitty and King Michael were alone once more, rescued as much by fate, by chance, as by their own wits—keen as those had been.

"So, your majesty," said Count Frederick to King Michael, "where there is will there is way—it seems the proverb is proved true once more. We were not far alike from death and burial here ourselves. Had our friends the enemies remained much longer, we would have taken toll of them to the last man. 'Twas lucky, my recollection of the old tradition about the wheel and the water gates."

"But come now, perhaps your majesty will rest," said he in conclusion. "I think we shall now have better opportunity to do so. Unless I am now far mistaken, our friends of Grahoffen will leave us. Not only with fire and sword, but with the waters under the earth, we have smitten them."

"As for you, mademoiselle," said he when at length they had escorted the monarch to a place of greater safety, "I congratulate you also on the escape. You aided handsomely as ever. But for your courage we could not have succeeded."

"It was nothing," said Kitty. "The trapped animal fights desperately."

"It is of no importance," said Count Frederick calmly. A peril passed is passed, and need give us no more concern. But stay, there was some unfinished business between you and me, mademoiselle. Tell me, why should we be enemies still, since we have learned to fight shoulder to shoulder against the enemies of our

for that ancient torture chamber somewhere below the palace, in which, as he knew, there rested the secret of Grahoffen. But since he was unguided, how could he know when at length he was close to the door which barred him from that secret?

He did find a closed door, in a part of the subterranean chambers not yet flooded by the waters of the moat. He could not find entrance—the door was locked—he had no time to seek for any key. Looking about him hastily, he saw only upon the floor a scrap of paper, an old, stained, charred, dismembered piece of parchment, left there by whose hand he could not guess. Curiously regarding it, he picked it up to examine it more closely. It bore some ancient inscription which he could but ill decipher—an inscription in Latin. Count Sachio cudgeoned his wits to bring to his aid such store of knowledge of dead languages as once was his in his college days. Hurried as he was, and disoriented as the inscription was, he could make but little of it.

"By the rood," exclaimed he, "here is something strange enough—a parchment from God knows where, by God knows whom. It says something about a king or an heir to a kingdom—it says something about an abduction. Why, here we come upon a pretty story. I'll warrant half my chance of reward in this war this paper has something to do with the secret of Grahoffen. At least I will take it with me."

He thrust it into his pocket and hurried on into the open to join his fleeing comrades. Even as those left behind in the palace began to take counsel of restoring some order after the ruin which had been wrought, Count Sachio, in possession of one more unfinished secret, was outside the walls.

As he passed from the front of the palace, he came directly in the line of vision of Kitty, who was watching the retreat of the Grahoffen forces. Something in Sachio's haste, his air of uncertainty withal, attracted her attention.

"I'm sure," said she to herself, "there is some mischief in his mind. As a rule it has been safe to follow yonder rascal—I will do so now." And that she did.

Sachio hastened out through the palace grounds, bound for some path which without question was familiar to him, and which now he fancied would offer him quick egress from a situation so lacking in attractions.

In Sachio's mind was but one thought. He was cogitating even as he fled upon the contents of the paper in his pocket. Half he drew it out as he hastened. "A king," said he—"abducted; who was he? What was his age—what king? 'Tis indeed a cunning plot to vex my soul yet further"

In Kitty's mind, as she followed him with her eyes, and presently followed him in person, there was no inkling of this problem which was troubling good Count Sachio. What concerned her was some indefinite feeling that she must keep him in sight. Once more her instinct proved of service.

Count Sachio passed among the shrubbery of the place, eager to find such shelter as he might—concealment which would offer him safety and an opportunity to examine yet more thoroughly this curious bit of paper which he had safe in his pocket. He thrust this way and that. A button of his coat entangled in the branch of a shrub. He detached it hastily and passed on. As he did so, he did not notice that his cherished bit of paper left his pocket and fell upon the ground. Trust eyes as keen as Kitty's to note this incident of his flight. An instant later she had pounced upon it and was herself hurrying for concealment. Once more her wits were at sword's point with those of the doughtiest of her foes.

Kitty herself, glancing hastily at that paper, could make no more of it than had Sachio. "What can it mean?" thought she. But whatever it meant, of one thing she was sure—Count Sachio would return for it.

She had not long to wait to find this suspicion confirmed. Soon she heard him hurrying back—saw him bending over the place where he last had been sure of the possession of the paper—saw him look about here and there hastily, hurriedly, eagerly. Now indeed she was confirmed in her own suspicions.

"Aha, Count Sachio," said she to herself, "once more I have something which you covet."

She had occasion to find once more that the possession of something Count Sachio coveted carried with it a certain danger to the possessor.

Looking this way and that for some place of safety, Kitty saw a thickly branching tree which to her notion might offer a shelter. Without hesitation she climbed up hand over hand, the paper with her, and sought such concealment as she could in the branches. From this place of vantage she could look down and cover the country to some distance. She could see therefore a little guard of Grahoffen soldiers who were returning, hunting evidently for their leader, Count Sachio. A moment later and they had met.

"It was here," said Sachio—"but here I dropped it. It must have been taken—someone has followed me—someone is concealed not far from here. Come, men, we must search. 'Twas a bit of paper—of no value to any but me, but I must have it, do you hear?"

Like some hounds questing for the scent they scattered here and there among the trees. It was left for Count Sachio himself to discover Kitty's hiding place. He stood laughing as he looked up.

"What, mademoiselle, soon you do me the honor to follow me—perhaps you did me the honor to take into possession something of my property. Prithce—come down, my dear."

"I will not," rejoined Kitty—"if I choose to stay here 'tis none of your business."

The dark flush of anger came to Count Sachio's swarthy features. "Listen, my sweeting," said he, "I have no time to waste words with you or anyone. You have what is mine, and what I want. Come down—you must—either alive or dead. One day you will find that Count Sachio is not one with whom you can idly trifle. Quick now, the paper."

Pale and terrified, for a moment almost unnerved, the unhappy girl made no answer. "Ready, guards," commanded Sachio to his men. "Take aim. You, there—drag her out of yonder tree."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

TELLS OF PREHISTORIC EGYPT

Lecturer at the British Museum Describes Face Paint Found in Ancient Graves.

Mr. Hancock has just delivered a lecture on prehistoric Egypt at the British museum, the first of a course of four lectures.

After a detailed discussion of the dynastic Egyptians on the one hand and the prehistoric aborigines on the other, in the course of which he showed a large number of ivory, slate, bone and clay figurines recovered from early Egyptian graves, together with a number of skulls, he proceeded to examine some early ceremonial slate palettes, which are illustrative of the fauna of the country at that period, as well as of the artist's skill. These palettes were used for toilet purposes, the malachite which was used for face paint being ground upon them, and it is interesting to note that traces of paint are still visible on some of them.

They are of further importance, inasmuch as they illustrate pictorially the traditional conquest of the North by the South prior to the unification of all Egypt under one monarch, the legendary Mona, one whose historical counterparts would appear to have been Aha-Men.

The early predynastic Egyptians were Neolithic, and the flints of their workmanship are the finest wrought flints in the world, but later on copper came into use.

The Semitic element in the Egyptian language proves conclusively that there was a Semitic element in the blood of the dynastic Egyptians, but this fact does not seem to have much bearing on the connection between the early Egyptian and Babylonian civilization as illustrated by the use of cylinder seals and similar shaped mace heads in both countries in the very earliest times, for at the period in question the Sumerians and not the Semites were in all probability the ruling factors in Babylonian civilization. Mr. Hancock concluded his lecture with some remarks on the paintings on early Egyptian pottery, which showed that they knew how to build and navigate sailing boats as well as rowing boats from the earliest times.

Art of Japan.

A certain fastidiousness, a certain love of scrupulous and cleanly order, belongs to the Japanese character; we find it in their manners, their habits, their furniture, in all their workmanship. The word exquisite, so often vaguely misapplied, is an epithet truly applicable to the art of Japan. The faults of this character are a tendency to the smallness which often goes with neatness. The Japanese do not work under the pressure of abundant ideas and torrential emotions; they do not fall into the excessive extravagance which sometimes besets the Chinese.

But their unflinching sense of style compensates in great measure for their lack of more genial exuberance. Taste with them, as with artists like Velasquez and Whistler, becomes no mere negative avoidance. One might well compare the Japanese genius in some aspects with the Latin genius, as it is shown in much of the poetry of the Romans and of the French, where a telling economy of words and fineness of handling are made to compensate for a slowness or even complete absence of matter.—Laurence Binyon, in the Atlantic.

Safe Servers of the Race.

Brilliant! There is safety in mediocrity. Brilliant men and women are always carried away by their ambitions, for which they will sacrifice everything. A dray horse for a long pull and a race horse for a spurt. A plodder to solve problems and the venturesome to try their fortunes with fate. The statesmen whose names survive and whose achievements make splendid pages in recorded history were the careful, earnest, studious men of affairs—not the comets that shot across the sky, nor the skyrocketers that leaped high into the air, leaving a trail of sparks and a stick that fell to the ground.—Leslie's.

Not Concerned With Him.

Bill Nye used to tell this story of the late Myron W. Reed of Denver: Reed was a bright and original preacher, and many curious people came to hear him. Once a man from the Gunnison country arrived at his church rather late Sunday morning while Reed was making a low but earnest prayer. "Louder," yelled the late comer. Mr. Reed ceased his prayer for a moment, looked at the gentleman from over the range, and said: "My friend, I wasn't speaking to you; I was addressing God."



Under the Steady Hand of the Pilot the Aircraft Headed for Shore.

his adversary. He stood now trapped like the meanest of these retainers about him, and neither could find hope.

"The wheel, the wheel," called Sachio at length. "Stop him, men—he is opening the water gates—stop him at once."

Himself and a few men endeavored to go at Frederick, but met the irate Kitty, who put up a tigerlike resistance to protect her comrade at his work. The sound of shots came, the mingled sounds of much confused lamentation from those now threatened with drowning in these deep subterranean passages.

"What," exclaimed Cortislaw to Sachio, "is it my fate to drown like a rat here in their palace? Quick, Sachio, offer them peace—offer them treaty."

Even the sense of chagrin was lost to Sachio now in his terror for his life and that of his sovereign. He advanced through the water as best he might until he caught the attention of Frederick, still busy at his task.

"Halt, Count Frederick," he cried. "Wait—we offer parley—we offer a truce—we offer you peace, if so you will protect the life of our sovereign."

"So then," exclaimed Frederick, "your sovereign is here?" "I admit he is," said Sachio. "I admit also that you have the upper hand of us once more. We cannot perish like so much vermin here—stop your cursed wheel and give us respite, or soon it will be too late."

"Are you sincere, Count Sachio?" demanded Frederick—"may we believe your word? We have had cause to doubt it more than once."

"Doubt it then no more. Cut off these floods which are drowning us inch by inch, and we will leave your palace and leave the town. I give you my word and that of my sovereign."

city? We have been together in more than one peril—we have well-nigh perished together a score of times—and together we have avenged ourselves. Do you find no augury in that? Soldiers who fight together and who win to safety together usually are friends—why should not we be friends?"

He advanced toward her now, his arms extended, in his face all his awakened passion as he saw her once more so close at his side.

"What!" exclaimed Kitty, pushing him back. "Surrender—you ask me to surrender! Why should I? We are but now out of a situation which leaves me disposed for anything but light matters. Why should I think of you at all, monsieur le comte, who have been indeed the cause of so many of these perils which you mention now. Until I find the missing half of my coin I have another mission in life, and other matters to consider, than to talk of such things as these you now suggest."

She turned from him. He stood looking after her, baffled and unhappy, smiling sadly as he saw her go.

"One time, mademoiselle," said he to himself—"some day! Tomorrow may bring another day!"

CHAPTER LVI.

King Cortislaw, safe at last from the danger he had encountered in the subterranean passageways of the palace, was greeted with cheers by his men when at length he emerged. Surrounded by his soldiers and his officers, he passed out in retreat from the scene which but now had been a triumph for his arms.

His officers attended him—all save one, Count Sachio, indomitable even in defeat, lingered for just a time behind the others in the escape from the submerged passages. Hurrying here and there, he sought as best he might, unguided,