

A PRINCESS OF MARS

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Author of Tarzan of the Apes

STRANGE PEOPLE AND WAYS.

Synopsis—The author tells of his acquaintance with the hero of one of the most remarkable adventures ever recorded.

CHAPTER II—Continued.

The roof of the enclosure was a solid glass about four or five inches in thickness, and beneath this were several hundred large eggs, perfectly round and snowy white.

Five or six had already hatched and the grotesque caricatures which sat blinking in the sunlight were enough to cause me to doubt my sanity.

There was no hair on their bodies, which were of a very light yellow-green color.

The iris of the eyes is blood red, as in Albinos, while the pupil is dark.

I was given but little time to speculate on the wonders of my new discovery.

Their intentions were far more sinister. It was the rattling of the accoutrements of the foremost warrior which warned me.

wall. Some were surveying me with expressions which I afterward discovered marked extreme astonishment,

They were conversing together in low tones, and gesticulating and pointing toward me.

While the Martians are immense, their bones are very large and they are muscled only in proportion to the gravitation which they must overcome.

My feat, then, was as marvelous upon Mars as it would have been upon Earth.

I noted that each was armed with several other weapons in addition to the huge spear which I have described.

These rifles were of a white metal stocked with wood, which I learned later was a very light and intensely hard growth much prized on Mars.

With the exception of their ornaments all were naked. The women varied in appearance but little from the men, except that their tusks were much larger in proportion to their height.

The children were light in color, even lighter than the women, and all looked precisely alike to me, except that some were taller than others; older, I presumed.

The Martians, after conversing for a short time, turned and rode away in the direction from which they had come, leaving one of their number alone by the enclosure.

When his force had come to a halt he dismounted, threw down his spear and small arms and came around the end of the incubator toward me.

When he was within about fifty feet of me he unclasped an enormous metal armband and holding it toward me in the open palm of his hand, addressed



"My Effort Was Crowned With a Success Which Appalled Me No Less Than It Seemed to Surprise the Martian Warriors."

me in a clear, resonant voice, but in a language, it is needless to say, I could not understand.

As the silence became painful I concluded to hazard a little conversation on my own part, as I had guessed

that he was making overtures of peace.

Stretching my hand toward him I advanced and took the armband from his open palm, clasping it about my arm above the elbow; smiled at him and stood waiting.

He exchanged a few words with his men, motioned to me that I would ride behind one of them, and then mounted his own animal.

The entire cavalcade then turned and galloped away toward the range of hills in the distance.

In a short time we gained the foot of the mountains, and after traversing a narrow gorge came to an open valley, at the far extremity of which was a low tableland upon which I beheld an enormous city.

Upon closer observation I saw as we passed them that the buildings were deserted, and while not greatly decayed had the appearance of not having been tenanted for years, possibly for ages.

The assembled warriors and chieftains examined me closely, feeling my muscles and texture of my skin.

As he banged me down upon my feet his face was bent close to mine and I did the only thing a gentleman might do under the circumstances of brutality, boorishness and lack of consideration for a stranger's rights;

Only about one Martian in a thousand dies of sickness or disease, and possibly about twenty take the voluntary pilgrimage. The other nine hundred and seventy-nine die violent deaths in duels, in hunting, in aviation and in war;

As we neared the plaza and my presence was discovered we were immediately surrounded by hundreds of the creatures, who seemed anxious to pluck me from my seat behind the guard.

The building was low, but covered an enormous area. It was constructed of gleaming white marble inlaid with gold and brilliant stones which sparkled and schintillated in the sunlight.

On the floor of this chamber, which was dotted with highly carved wooden desks and chairs, were assembled about forty or fifty male Martians around the steps of a rostrum.

What struck me as most remarkable about this assemblage and the hall in which they were congregated was the fact that the creatures were entirely out of proportion to the desks, chairs, and other furnishings, these being of a size adapted to human beings such as I, whereas the great bulks of the Martians could scarcely have squeezed into the chairs, nor was there room beneath the desks for their long legs.

Our party had halted at the entrance to the building, and at a sign from the leader I had been lowered to the ground. Again locking his arm in mine, we had proceeded into the audience chamber.

Our party had halted at the entrance to the building, and at a sign from the leader I had been lowered to the ground.

Sola motioned me to be seated upon a pile of silks near the center of the room, and, turning, made a peculiar hissing sound, as though signaling to

the Martian chieftain. My captor merely strode up to the rostrum, the others making way for him as he advanced.

My captor, whose name was Tars Tarkas, evidently explained briefly the incidents connected with his expedition, including my capture, and when he had concluded the chieftain addressed me at some length.

I replied in our good old English tongue merely to convince him that neither of us could understand the other; but I noticed that when I smiled slightly on concluding he did likewise.

The ideas of humor among the green men of Mars are widely at variance with our conceptions of incitants to merriment.

The assembled warriors and chieftains examined me closely, feeling my muscles and texture of my skin.

Now, I had made no attempt to walk, since my first signal failure, except while tightly grasping and flitting about among the desks and chairs like some monstrous grasshopper.

As he banged me down upon my feet his face was bent close to mine and I did the only thing a gentleman might do under the circumstances of brutality, boorishness and lack of consideration for a stranger's rights;

The fellow whom I had struck lay where he had fallen, nor did any of his mates approach him.

As I was to learn, the Martian nights are extremely cold, and as there is practically no twilight or dawn, the changes in temperature are sudden and most uncomfortable, as are the transitions from brilliant daylight to darkness.

My exhibition had been witnessed by several hundred lesser Martians, and they immediately broke into demands for a repetition.

My fair companion was about eight feet tall, having just arrived at maturity, but not yet to her full height.

Another race of Martians in airships.

CHAPTER III.

A Fight That Won Friends. Sola stared into the brute's wicked-looking eyes, muttered a word or two of command, poignted to me, and left the chamber.

This was my first experience with a Martian watch dog, but it was destined not to be my last, for this fellow guarded me carefully during the time I remained a captive among these green men, twice saving my life, and never voluntarily being away from me a moment.

Sola returned bearing both food and drink. These she placed on the floor beside me, and seating herself a short



"In Response to Her Call I Obtained My First Sight of a New Martian Wonder."

ways off regarded me intently. The food consisted of about a pound of some solid substance of the consistency of cheese and almost tasteless, while the liquid was apparently milk from some animal.

After I had eaten I was greatly invigorated, but feeling the need of rest I stretched out upon the silks and was soon asleep. I must have slept several hours, as it was dark when I awoke, and I was very cold.

I presumed that my watchful guardian was Sola, nor was I wrong. This girl alone, among all the green Martians with whom I came in contact, disclosed characteristics of sympathy, kindness and affection; her ministrations to my bodily wants were unflinching, and her solicitous care saved me from much suffering and many hardships.

After Sola had replenished my coverings I again slept, nor did I awaken until daylight.

Another race of Martians in airships.

The moon resembles a marriage certificate, because it has something to do with the tide.

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