

THE SCARABEUS

BY EDWARD STRATTON HOLLOWAY.

(Copyright, 1904, by Edward Stratton Holloway.)

The shock given by the cabled news had not ceased to paralyze and numb. Orson stood peering out into the gray dimness of London...

"Before me is a vital of the ancient poison. There! I have taken it. Queer the solution never came to me before. It came just now—a inspiration. I have not slept for nights. The last drop was wrung out of life. What to do with the useless thing? Destroy it, of course. Of course!"

Orson dropped his hand. "Mad! But thank God that he was—when he did that." He read on.

"The treasures of the old kings are all yours. All! But let me whisper to you; bend over. No! No! There is Thya. Don't tell her I was going to whisper that. Don't, I say. God! I tell you don't!"

"And the Ptah-Hotep Scarabeus. Do you remember how it glowed and burgeoned, how the little fires of light seemed licking up in it? That is here, too. "Ask Thya. She will give you all at the old stand. But you must come and get them. You will not get them else. I have told her of you. She will know. "But listen! Maybe you'd better sink them in the Nile. No! Ye gods of Egypt, sink them! No! I say."

The writing trailed off illegibly into nothingness. Orson stood thinking. The warning was plain before him; but—Orson was a passenger on the next P. & O. steamer.

Orson paused outside the low door in the eastern inferno he knew so well—the narrow streets of the Oriental quarter of Cairo—thronged with natives, Jews, Greeks and Moors, with occasional glimpses of fair-haired Circassians, negroes and the luscious-eyed maidens of Upper Soudan.

"I am Orson," he said simply. She spread her hands about her. "It is yours." Then, taking from her dress the scarab, she placed it in his.

The place filled him with many memories; he glanced about—then turned to the gift to speak. She was gone. Orson lit a cigarette and sat down.

It was a fortnight later. A strange restlessness had taken hold of Orson. Fresh from the encounter on the desert he sat with his comrades in Julian's cafe. Cathcart was speaking.

"And Orson here, with his blond aureole and angel-blue eyes"—Cathcart laughed—"the devil's got him, too. You should have seen him handle the Arabs that got after the stuff."

"And I've seen him shift his step so he wouldn't crush a cricket," put in Zvakov. Orson flushed uneasily. "They were not crickets."

Cathcart persisted. "No more than you are the old Orson." He turned again to Zvakov. "It wasn't the doing—he was as quiet as a scythe moving grass, but—he laughed again—"Orson, all hell looked out of your eyes."

"Drop it!" At the note in Orson's voice the two men looked at each other. But Orson was already talking of other things, his tones as gentle as before.

Zvakov bent across the table that he might hear—the air was full of the clanking glasses, clanging voices, the strumming of guitars, the clash of cymbals. Red rays from the perforated lamp above turned the blue wreaths of smoke into a haze of purple, and, beyond, through the archway of the court hung the flat, orange disk of the rising moon.

Orson had his glass half full, and his lips—then set it down. That was all. There was not the change of a feature; but for Orson the world had turned over.

There had been a man to whom, after months of legal contest, the courts had given—Orson believed with a vile injustice—the title and estate Orson had claimed as his own. That man was also winning the one woman Orson would ever love.

Then when the typhoon of 1902 had struck the "Equator" in the Indian ocean and it had gone down with all on board, with her had gone the man who stood between Orson and his estate, between himself and the woman. To him, as next heir, the first had already come; the second in due time he hoped to win.

Now, across the cafe, there in the archway where the moonlight fell, sat the man. There was no halt in the swing of the incident Orson told, but he was thinking as a man thinks who has but an instant in which to decide his fate. He finished his story and, as the laughter of the others mingled with the noise about them, his glance fell upon his hand as it lay upon the table—rested upon the Ptah-Hotep Scarabeus in Arkwright's ring-setting, encircling his finger.

Its color was changing iridescently—its opalescent tints showing sea-green and the pink of the eastern sky. Then among these, as of the sunrise, shot reddish lights, until within all seemed a living flame. And now in Orson's eyes were the same glints of fire.

He looked about him. Close by, beaming, his one white hand rubbing the back of his head, stood Julius among his customers. "Pardon a moment," Orson rose.

The cafe keeper turned at the sound of Orson's voice—met the eyes fixed upon his own. He was under an obligation to the Norwegian that—villain though he was—Julian would not likely soon forget. And, in that instant of silence, Orson's gaze seemed to remind him of many things. "Do you see that man there in the left of the archway?" Orson asked carelessly. "Rather badly used up he is; head leaning on his hand. Put a gentle drop in the next drink he orders—gentle, mind you." Orson resumed his seat.

clouded the workings of his brain, but this would disappear. To Orson, familiar with the disease, the course to pursue was equally clear. He was as safe in Orson's hands as in those of a physician—fever alone considered. But the light showed Orson's face as haggard as the man's own. The struggle had been night-long. Remember! Orson had but to withhold his hand—and all would again be his. An hour later and Orson had not moved. There was a voice at his shoulder, slowly scornful.

"In the days when there were men, what a man wanted—he took!" Orson got to his feet, facing the woman

you may be sure. But you must not talk. You have been ill!" Again she bent toward him, touching his forehead. "The fever is gone." Her fingers pressed his eyelids shut, and he was content. For months he had not known the touch of a woman's hand.

Neither moved. It would have been instructive to the man could he have seen the emotions which played in her eyes—amused, half tender, scoffing, satisfied, always subtle—always evil. So sitting, at length she started and looked up, for Orson stood beside her. With contempt he looked her through. And to Orson, also. It would have been instructive could he have seen her face as he turned away.

It became an immediate question what Orson should do with his prisoner. He wasted no time in searching for the motives of his holding. Though still resisting that mocking suggestion now with him

inch closer, closer. Now he bent over. The force of that terrible, silent struggle between good and evil reached the man upon the bed.

Though Orson did not know, beads of sweat stood out upon his forehead; his hands were clenched beneath the sheet. He would not cry out, but his body quivered. He expected death.

Then Orson gasped, staggered a little and went out.

VIII

Thya sat upon the divan, her feet curled beneath her. Her hands were pressed to her cheeks, holding the scarab within them. Her long, black hair was down, and between its strands looked out her face, alight with joy and passion.

"And you, my scarab," she crooned, "again we are together. Centuries of oblivion in the tomb, and now—he took you from me, but the curse still works. Didn't he see it—that Arkwright—engraved there

Orson's hands were about his throat. Then over Orson came again that passion to kill. Before his eyes swam a red mist. He saw nothing of the man's face growing darker, more purple under his grasp; nothing of the woman at the end of the long room, smiling, malignant, triumphant. Orson was but dimly conscious of his hands before him, grasping; while out of that enmeshing mist glowed one spark of flame upon his finger.

Then the light broke upon him. It was this that dragged him down. Throwing his enemy from him, he wrenched it from his finger, dropped it upon the anvil at his side, swung over it a huge hammer.

The woman sprang forward with a cry. It was too late. The hammer descended—the scarab flew into fragments. The woman pitched forward upon the floor. Over her bent the man, and now he cried to Orson:

"Take your cold, white woman—Oiga. This is she I love." He lifted the prostrate figure and raised her against his knee. She was a dried and withered mummy.

THE INDIAN CHIEF'S FAREWELL

Fatletic Episode in the Weary Life of a Big Brave Stalking on the Pike.

The Indian chief had stood silently smoking his calumet for nearly half an hour, a contemplative expression in his eagle eye, with his navy blue blanket pulled tightly around his lithe and towering form. The sun was blazing down upon his bare head, but he, of course, cared naught for that, reared, as he had been, to the heats of summer and the tempests of winter, without any head covering to shield him from the elements, except his long black hair, glossy as a raven's wing. It was also glossy as a crow's wing, but the crow is a common kind of bird, and no one ought to use it in a story like this is going to be.

Many strands of red and yellow yarn were twisted about the two braids into which his locks were separated, and down the center of the parting of his hair he had rubbed a pinch of red ochre after the custom of his tribe. Across his eyelids and extending from their outer edge to his ears was a broad band of yellow. There were other dabs of color where his discriminating fancy had encouraged him to continue the freshening of his physiognomy. And that stood contemplating. Some writers think that when the Indian thus stands or more generally sits, for hours, silent and melancholy, he is brooding over the fading away of his race before the conquering paleface, but since the census bureau has discovered that the Indian is not fading, but increasing in numbers, some other reason must be assigned for this meditative temper of his. But these reflections are delaying. One of our party, after gazing upon the Indian chief for some time in deep sympathy, turned to him and said:

"He is thinking of his people when they used to roam over this country and it was all their own. I've no doubt it rankles in his bosom to see us building towns and railroads all over it, and using him as part of our show, when we hold a world's fair. I am going to speak to him."

He stepped up and, holding out his hand to the Indian chief, said, "How?" The Indian chief, without changing his expression or looking at him, took the offered hand with a dignified gesture, and answered, "How?"

"What tribe you?" asked our companion. "Blackfeet," was the answer, and you could catch the proud inflection in his voice. "They great tribe, once."

"Yes; great tribe—long ago." "Are you with the show?" "Yes; Indian show." "Do you like show?" "No; me like be free back in north, where my people were long ago."

"How sad," said our friend, turning to us, and we felt all the pathos of that wild-untutored being's yearning for his native land. Just then we were startled by the Indian chief, relaxing the faraway and dejected look in his countenance and saying: "Have you got a cigar?"

One of us handed him a Havana. He lit it, took a few deliberate puffs, and broke out: "Do you know, gent, I hate to smoke that blanked old pipe; it's a nuisance. But it's in the contract to go lugging this confounded old blanket around, too. It's worse than a Turkish bath. If it wasn't for the exposition business, but they have so many expostions now that it makes me a regular income. I've been at Buffalo and Omaha, Chicago, Paris, and two years in London, and I expect to go to Portland next year. But it's thunder to have to drag like this in hot weather." Then, turning to us, he grinned and said: "Great chief done, Good-by," and "stalked" off. Really, we could see that he walked like any other man, only it is proper that an Indian should stalk. Then we all slipped our friend on the back with loud roars and he set 'em up.—St. Louis Globe Democrat.



ORSON'S HANDS WERE ABOUT HIS THROAT, THEN OVER ORSON AGAIN CAME THAT PASSION TO KILL.

who on that first day two weeks before had turned over to him John Arkwright's possessions. The change in her was appalling. Her fresh beauty had died. Save for the variable lights in her eyes, life seemed to have gone out of her, leaving her shrunken, numbed. And as her glance rested upon the scarab on Orson's finger, her old animation returned and into her cheeks came again the rich glow of youth.

"You!" said Orson. "Why?" "Am I not needed?" "No!" said Orson, harshly. "Then you do propose to take what—your wish." She nodded toward the figure on the couch.

He shook his head slowly from side to side. "I thought not. Then you had better take that haggard face of yours away to rest. He is safe. What is it to me?"

And, though this was but the second time he had seen the woman, Orson felt that there was little sympathy indeed for which she cared. He rose, left the room and threw himself upon his bed.

Hours later, when he again appeared, she would not go till he had sought his restaurant and eaten. Then, "I will come tomorrow—with the museum's call." He thanked her, but protested.

She glanced again at the unconscious man and asked suggestively: "Do you wish, then, to get someone in to care for him?" There was no reply that could be made.

Toward evening the man opened his eyes intelligently and looked into Orson's face. Reading no pity there he turned to the wall. Then over Orson came a spasm of remorse. He had seen in the countenance of the man before him the vestiges of that struggle which one knows who goes down into death, and who, having by a miracle escaped it, with life, riches, love before him, had opened his eyes upon the face of one who would grant no quarter—himself, Orson.

And then the other side—Orson's own—once wronged out of all those things which make life good, God himself had seemed to stretch out his hand against the wrongdoer. So his possessions had come to Orson with the hope also that when time had dulled the edge of sorrow, her love might return to him who had once believed it his own.

Then had come the summons here, and with it some strange force in his life, which sometimes seemed to twist his nature, as he knew it, all awry. And now this! The hour struck, and Orson, rising, took up the medicine and bent over the couch. The man looked up imbecilically; then came the old mocking smile that had always set Orson's blood on fire. But the man opened his mouth for the dose.

Neither had spoken a word. The next morning when the man awoke he looked up into the face of Thya, bending over him. His eyes opened wonder-wide; he passed his hand across them as if to brush away the visions of fevered hours. But she was there still—her hand now upon his forehead, deliciously soft and sympathetic.

He took the medicine she offered, murmuring his thanks. Often his eyes sought her as now she leaned among the pillows of the divan. In her was both the liltiest charm and the swift alertness of the serpent, and in her lightly poised head, one more full of dark Egyptian beauty, was fascination. Twice, as she smiled, meeting his gaze, her eyes held his, but for the most part she seemed unconscious of his presence. At last he spoke.

"Why am I here?" She shrugged her shoulders. The fierce look again shone in his face. "What are you to him—Orson?" "Nothing." Indolently she took a seat by his couch.

"Then why are you here, if I may ask?" She laughed softly. "Not on his account,

day and night—"What they wanted they took"—he had his man and meant to keep his clutches upon him. Wherefore, using the tools which littered Arkwright's strange rookery, he soon made fast the few avenues of escape from the inner room and transferred his prisoner thence.

Thya he trusted not at all, but, after that second day, gracefully banished her from the house, though inquiring how he might serve her in return for her kindness.

She half turned, laughing over her shoulder. "Fear not as to that reward—it will come."

Orson did not admire complications. He shut the door with a shrug of relief. Then, to his wrath, he discovered daily evidence of her presence. He must go out for aid and food, and during those absences she came—and gloried in leaving traces of her visits. It was clear that she possessed some means of entrance unknown to himself. That she came and went without visible means he, with his Norse mysticism, was almost, indeed, ready to believe.

And the prisoner? The second day, as Orson left food by his bed, he looked up. "Fattening the calf for butchery—or what?" Orson's voice was quiet, but it cut the air. "You know what I want—Oiga and my estate."

The man met Orson's gaze a long minute with all his wealth of insolence; then rolled back, again with his face to the wall. Orson's fingers ached to writhe out his life. It was the hour of the sista and the streets without were silent. Orson was alone with his enemy. The power grasped his him, and his great frame moved, inch by

to warn? When he profaned the tomb was he in too great haste to see, or did he fall to heed? Well, he is in torment now, and, we being here together, the others will follow—soon."

She bent her head, caressing the scarab, laughing softly.

"Ah! now I see; loose in your golden setting—that is why he left you as he went out. The glow lights up in you. It will not be long now. He will again wear you upon his finger, and then—The days have passed and the other is now strong. He is there, quiet, alert, a cobra, watching his chance to strike."

"But here, my scarab, is M'sieu Orson at the door. All honor to M'sieu—till hell take him swift and strong. He shall find you where he left you. Now, my scarab, soon!"

Orson was at work upon the setting of the ring; but his tools were not delicate. Arkwright's necessity had mainly been for heavy implements—hammers, bars and wedges—with which to force the tombs of ancient kings.

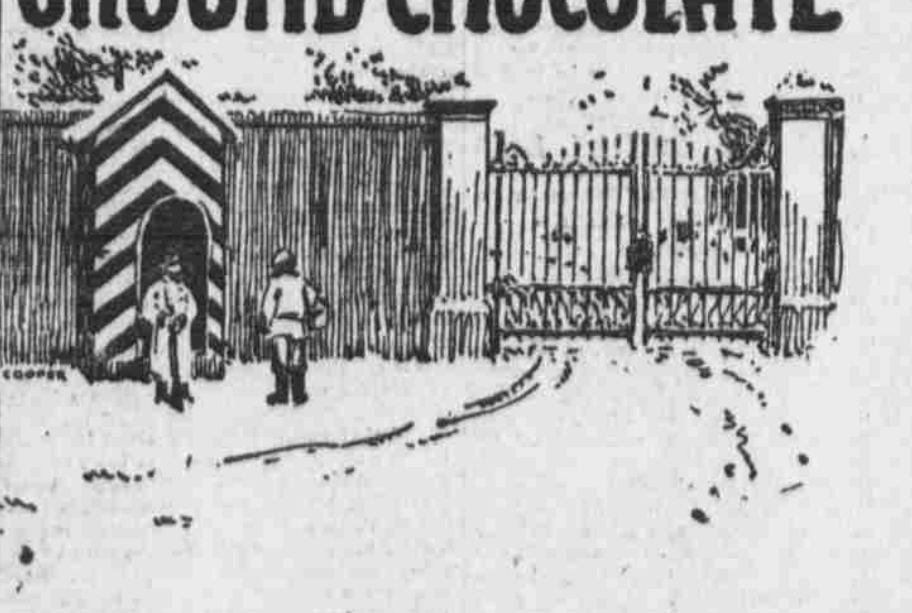
He had difficulty in closing the setting about the stone, and the ring remained somewhat distorted. Orson slipped it on his finger, where it stayed. He leaned over, pressed it carefully against the anvil, rounding out its contour.

Behind him, at the farther end of the room, silently, the girl was at the door to the inner chamber. It opened. She stood aside, pressing into the man's hand, as he came out, a long chisel. He stole down the room toward Orson. He raised the weapon. Orson turned and threw up his arm. The chisel flew from the man's grasp.

GHIRARDELLI'S GROUND CHOCOLATE

Defend Nerves and tissues by drinking Ghirardelli's Ground Chocolate

Contains all the nutriment of cocoa—delicious, wholesome, refreshing. Always fresh—always ready for use.



MEXICAN Mustang Liniment cures Frostbites and Chilblains.

MEXICAN Mustang Liniment for Man, Beast or Poultry.

MEXICAN Mustang Liniment cures Cuts, Burns, Bruises.

MEXICAN Mustang Liniment Best thing for a lame horse.

MEXICAN Mustang Liniment heals Old Sores quickly.

MEXICAN Mustang Liniment cures Sprains and Strains.

MEXICAN Mustang Liniment drives out all inflammation.

MEXICAN Mustang Liniment cures Canned Ulcer in cows.

MEXICAN Mustang Liniment is a positive cure for Piles.

Advertisement for OMAHA CLOTHING CO. featuring 'IF YOU WANT CREDIT Come Here and Get It'. Includes text about credit accounts, a 'GOOD FOR \$1.00' coupon, and the address 1314 Farnam Street.

Advertisement for TOURIST CARS, featuring 'EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR' and 'DOUBLE BERTH \$5.75'. Includes the Union Pacific logo and contact information for City Ticket Office.

Advertisement for a 'WANTED' girl for general housework, located at Mrs. John Jones, 1900 Some street.

Advertisement for COOK'S CHAMPAGNE, featuring 'IMPERIAL HAIR REGENERATOR' and 'SERVED EVERYWHERE'.