

The Essayan Statue

An Audacious Hazard of Nikolai, Independent Agent, as Related by His Lieutenant, Summers
By H. M. EGBERT

(Copyright, 1913, by W. G. Chapman)

I like to remember interludes in Nikolai's series of conspiracies and vengeance when he allowed his subtle humor to play like a lambent flame about his imagination, when tragedy turned comedy and success was not purchased by tears. The case of the Essayan statue well illustrates the lighter side of Nikolai's nature.

Everybody in Boston came to know Essayan after he formed the famous combination in corn. He must have made millions; and from the humble post of editor of a little revolutionary Armenian sheet, he became one of the city's leading bankers. Simultaneously his views underwent a change, as Nikolai discovered when he called on him.

"What?" shouted Essayan. "Contribute fifty thousand dollars to the revolutionary party? You must be crazy."

"Six months ago," said Nikolai thoughtfully, "you were bawling for vengeance upon Russia through the columns of your newspaper, and begging subscriptions for your Armenian compatriots against the tyrant of your country."

Essayan stroked his paunch, chuckling. "Maybe I did," he admitted. "But now I am a millionaire. My views have changed."

Nikolai looked round. We were seated in Essayan's private museum, in which he stored his statues. Essayan had gone in for culture. His collection must have been worth millions. Treasures of Greece and Rome adorned his galleries; there was an original Venus of Praxiteles, a Hermes by Phidias; bas-reliefs and friezes had been stripped for the banker from many an ancient temple. Nikolai frowned angrily.

"You must have spent five millions on that collection of yours," he said.

"Twelve millions," said Essayan suavely. "And all old, broken things at that. They tell me that my Hermes hadn't a head. They tell me that they're just as valuable when every statue has some part missing. I don't understand it myself—but they cost twelve millions."

Nikolai led him on to talk of his new hobby. It was evident that the Armenian took only a shadowy interest in the art side of his collection. He did not, in fact, remember whether it was his Apollo that had the missing arm or his Jupiter whose leg was gone. "But Berg knows," said the banker. "Berg's my art expert in London, and what he says goes. He's sending me a sample of old Egyptian mummies that's going to cost me half a million."

"If you can spare twelve millions for your confounded art hobby you can give me fifty thousand for the Armenian cause."

"Yet I'll wager you that before the year is out I'll sell you one of your own statues out of this gallery for three times the amount I've asked you."

"No, you won't," answered the banker placidly, "because I know you, and from this moment my museum's going to be bolted and barred and guarded, and nobody's going to enter. See?" Nikolai could with difficulty restrain his indignation when we were outside. "The selfish hog!" he muttered. "He spends twelve millions on that stuff when fifty thousand would rebuild those villages that the Russians burned last year, leaving hundreds of his countrymen homeless. Well, Summers, we'll win three times that amount and teach the scoundrel a lesson."

"Nikolai," I said, "I confess that breaking into a banker's house in Boston does not appeal to me. It isn't feasible. This is America, and what can be done in Europe won't go here."

"I'll do the breaking in," said Nikolai. "Or, rather, I shall be carried into the gallery in state and requested to spend the night there alone by Mr. Essayan. All you will be required to do will be to catch the statue in a blanket when I throw it out."

I knew that some audacious scheme had already been devised by my companion, but Nikolai refused to deliver himself of it. The year had several months to run and for two months we did nothing, except occasionally to wander in the neighborhood of the banker's house. Once we encountered Essayan as he was leaving his front door.

"Ha!" he snorted. "When are you going to sell me my own statue, what?" He led us back into the house. "Look!" he said. "You shall be warmly welcomed, gentlemen."

The door that led to the museum had been secured with iron bars, each of which terminated in a padlock. Essayan showed us a series of electric wires.

"They communicate with the police department, the private watchman's office, my own room, and the fire department. I shall expect you—soon!" "Some time this year," Nikolai answered. "Have you got your cargo of mummies yet, Mr. Essayan?"

"Next month I expect them," answered the banker. "Now show! Go away. You make me feel tired."

ship myself to Boston. You will take me in your stateroom on the voyage back, and I trust that you will let me out of my case at times for a little fresh air and exercise. The difficult part will be after we reach Boston harbor. I shall prepare for a stay of twenty-four hours or more at the custom house by making myself insensible with opium or some drug, to while away the time and prevent a feeling of cramp from lying in my case. I shall be consigned to Mr. Essayan, our fat Armenian friend, and I have no doubt that he will consider me to be under his protection. You will report on the other side, and welcome me with open arms. Of course he will deposit me in his museum, where I hope to accomplish my undertaking."

"But Essayan will recognize the statue," I objected.

"Neither Essayan nor Berg himself will recognize it," Nikolai answered. "We readily procured a mummy in London, and, on the night before our return journey, Nikolai gave me my final instructions."

"All you will have to do," he said, "will be to wait at the back of the house with a blanket and catch what I shall throw out to you. You will have a pony trap in waiting—or perhaps it would be still better to be in the guise of the collector of waste from barrels. In this way you will not be under suspicion. You will wait, of course, until the watchman has made his round; then I shall throw down the statue."

We unwrapped the mummy from its fastenings. I confess it was a somewhat gruesome undertaking, and when finally we stood looking down upon the features of that ancient Egyptian, I detected in it an uncanny resemblance to Nikolai. There was the same high forehead, the same eagle nose; moreover, the proportions, shriveled though they were, were little short of Nikolai's. He laughed.

"Reincarnation!" he said, smiling down on the grotesque thing. "Well, if so, my worthy ancestor in the flesh, we shall put you to good purpose."

We left the mummy in our rooms—there was no way to dispose of it—and Nikolai got into the boat. I wrapped the windings round him and placed a pillow beneath his head. Then, having bored a number of holes in the case, which I rubbed with a pigment to make them appear as though they were the product of time, I put on the lid.

"How do you feel?" I asked.

"Well, but stuffy," came Nikolai's answer faintly from within the case. Then he called to me to raise the lid. "For heaven's sake do not forget to lay by a goodly supply of food for my use in your stateroom," he said. "As you may have observed, I am a great trencherman. Now shut her down."

He tested the air for half an hour and found it breathable. Then he emerged and we made our final dispositions.

On the following day I boarded the Hispaniola, sailing from Liverpool for Boston. The mummy was hoisted on board, and a little while afterward Nikolai came to life within my stateroom. The voyage across the Atlantic was uneventful, and although my mummy caused considerable talk among the stewards, nobody suspected that it contained a very much up-to-date passenger.

We arrived on Sunday. The case would be delivered on the following morning, Nikolai said, and the customs officers promised to hurry it through. I forgot what duty I paid; it was well worth it. On Monday night, about the hour of twelve, Nikolai was to emerge from the mummy case, select his statue and throw it down to me.

Then I remembered that the hour would be too early for the advent of the ash-barrel collector. I hit on a new plan. I would drive a past the watchman in an automobile; I would pretend that the machine had broken down, and would stop in the street for repairs.

This plan I carried into effect. The banker was in the country, I had learned, and the house deserted. It would be the easiest matter to accomplish my scheme. Soon after midnight I drove up toward Essayan's house. I duly stopped the machine, uttered an exclamation of anger, descended, and burrowed into the ground beneath it. As I had anticipated, the watchman paused on his round.

"Broken down?" he inquired sympathetically.

"I'm not doing this for fun," I answered, with feigned anger. He watched me for a while and then resumed his patrol of the house. The moment that he disappeared I sprang from under the machine, seized the blanket I had brought, and whistled twice, the appointed signal. Then, looking up, I saw Nikolai's head appear from an upper window.

Nikolai motioned with his hands; I spread the blanket and braced myself to receive the weight of the statue. To my astonishment, however, I received, not what I had expected, but an oblate spheroid, that hurtled heavily through the air and descended into the receptacle. I glanced at it hastily. It was the fore part of a female head—of course in marble.

The next object that came down to me was a single hand. I looked up; I thought I saw Nikolai smiling. "Don't cut it up so fine," I whispered. I do not know whether he heard. A single finger next came down; but an instant later I was staggering under the weight of a torso and the hind part of a head, which seemed to me to be the complimentary piece of the first one that had descended. Again I sought the safety of the bottom of the automobile.

The watchman paused so long this time that I thought best to crawl out. "It's the carbureter," I explained, with a very dim understanding of the meaning of the term. "And I think my spark plug's fouled. Do you know of any repair shop in the neighborhood?"

"Not at this time of the night," answered the watchman, gloating, as it seemed to me, over my misfortune. This was his revenge for my previous reception of his sympathetic inquiries. "Oh, well, I'll start the blamed thing somehow," I answered, and began fumbling the mechanism again.

He passed on upon his beat and I looked up to Nikolai. A fore-arm came whizzing through the air; an arm; a second leg; then the greater part of a trunk; finally two ears. And then, as I still waited, I saw Nikolai perched upon the windowsill. I motioned him back and crawled beneath the automobile again.

This time the watchman hardly looked at me. When he was gone I bundled the items into the machine. I looked

ourselves that we had snaken off our pursuers. We were premature. I heard a chug, chug, chug behind us. As I turned my head I saw the policeman leap upon the watchman's motor-bicycle and shoot in our direction.

Now followed a pretty chase. The motor-bicycle was as swift as the automobile. Time and again the policeman caught us; but one turn of the wheel and our hunger bulk turned in upon him dangerously, threatening to shake him from his perch. He whistled all the while. Crowds came pouring out of side streets. Once he drew his revolver, but a slight movement in his direction caused a deft collision, and, in saving himself, our pursuer lost his weapon. By now we were speeding through Boston's streets, the city streets, which were as light as day and filled with theater crowds. Soon we should be compelled to halt. Multitudes took up the chase. We turned off along the Common, shot across the grass, and sped along the deserted glades beneath the old trees; and all the while the policeman followed us, riding now behind, now at our sides. We could not shake him off.

Suddenly a desperate expedient occurred to me. I turned, and, groping among the fragments of the dismembered statue, I found the leg. I seized it by the ankle and, taking aim, flung it with all my might at our pursuer. It struck him squarely beneath the chin. He swerved and toppled from his machine, and went crashing with it upon the ground. Nikolai pulled the machine to a standstill, sprang

up. Nikolai was throwing out a rope. I caught the end as he signaled me and waited, my heart beating fast, for his descent. He came down at a terrific pace and landed heavily upon the ground, his hands bleeding from the contact with the rope. A filmy white dust had settled all over him, giving him the appearance of a miller. He sprang into the machine.

"Let her go, Summers," he cried, and, even as he spoke, the watchman came back before his time and in an opposite direction. He had evidently suspected something. One glance at Nikolai was sufficient for his suspicions to leap into full activity. He snatched a whistle from his neck and placed it to his lips.

Before he could blow Nikolai had seized him by the throat and grasped his hands. "Into the auto with him, Summers," he cried in a low, penetrating whisper. "Give a hand." I pulled the struggling man inside. "Now let her go," Nikolai cried. "Hurry, man."

And then a lamentable aspect of our situation made itself manifest. The automobile had actually broken down. I had disarranged the gear in some manner. It would not stir.

"Crank her, crank her," cried Nikolai, still struggling with the watchman, whose powerful strength was almost a match for his own. "Here! Take him and I'll start the engine."

He forced him into my arms and leaped out again. The moment that he had left the automobile my antagonist disengaged himself with ease and blew a shrill, prolonged blast upon his whistle. A moment later I heard the thump of a policeman's nightstick upon the pavement, two or three blocks away.

The watchman's strength was more than mine. The only fortunate circumstance was that as yet he had not seen the broken pieces of the statue in the tonneau. In front, Nikolai was cranking furiously. The watchman called and shouts re-echoed from the street. Then the engine began to chug and Nikolai leaped in, just as the watchman gained the street.

A policeman had darted up and, as the wheels began to move, he grasped at my collar. I shook him off. We left him and the watchman behind. A moment later we were traversing the street at full speed and congratulating ourselves that we had snaken off our pursuers. We were premature.

Clearly the banker did not apprehend attack from within; and for the safety of his house he trusted his watchman. Nikolai's first act was to discover the upper window from which he could get into touch with me. His second was to rearrange the contents of the mummy case, so that, when it was opened, the absence of any body would arouse suspicion of trickery on the

dealer's part rather than suggest that it had been used as a medium for burglary. Having done this Nikolai entered the statue gallery.

"I had already formed my scheme," Summers said, "but what struck me at once was the very mutilated condition of Essayan's statues. Hardly a one but lacked some member of the body. And then I remembered Essayan's comment upon this fact, and how he had boasted that he did not know one from the other—knew only that he had paid out twelve million dollars for them."

"Now, this was my scheme. I did not intend to steal a statue. I planned to steal parts of several statues; to chop a leg from one that had two legs, an arm from one that had two arms; a torso from a statue that was otherwise complete; fingers and legs and ears and other members to make up my complete art object."

"Summers, my plan succeeded beyond expectation. I have robbed Essayan of an entire statue; yet so skillfully has it been done that the ignorant fool will never discover that he has lost anything."

To this the papers bore witness on the following day. I call this extract from the Boston Record-Mirror.

"A daring robbery was attempted last night at the house of Mr. Essayan, the well-known banker. The thieves made their appearance in an automobile, and had almost succeeded in effecting an entrance when they were surprised by the night watchman. A desperate struggle followed, but the night watch-

man having foiled their attempt to kidnap him in their machine, succeeded in drawing his whistle and in warning the police. Officer 2270 gave chase upon his motor-cycle and followed the burglars as far as the Common, when he was struck by some missile and felled unconscious. The thieves succeeded in escaping and so far have not been traced, though it is thought that the identity of at least one of them is known to Mr. Essayan—who had, in fact, been led to expect just such an attempt. It is believed that Mr. Essayan's art gallery was the object of the attempt. However, a careful examination by Mr. Essayan revealed the fact that the gallery was never entered."

A month later Nikolai and I were in London, in the guise of art agents from the Levant. We interested Mr. Berg in our new statue.

"Dug up near Candia, Crete," said Nikolai, in broken English. "The mutilated condition is ascribed to the fact that the statue was demolished and buried by an earthquake about the time of Augustus."

"It has been pieced together creditably," said Berg, examining it with extraordinary interest. "A truly remarkable piece of work. I should say that it had been made experimentally by one versed in the various schools of the civilized world about the time of Christ. Other statues, for instance, show the influence of some special school, but this head seems to have been modeled after the school of Phidias; here we have one leg of contemporary Cretan sculpture and its fellow of Roman work. Possibly a composite, prepared by pupils in the local school. As a curiosity it should be of vast interest; but I am not prepared to offer an exorbitant amount. How much do you want for it?"

"Two hundred thousand dollars, American," Nikolai answered. "Call it a hundred and fifty thousand and I'll purchase it," said Berg. Nikolai agreed reluctantly.

"By the way," he continued, when Berg had signed in Essayan's name, "is that the Mr. Essayan who received the mysterious empty mummy case last month, as a curiosity it should be of vast interest; but I am not prepared to offer an exorbitant amount. How much do you want for it?"

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KEEPING TAB ON THE CHICKEN FLOCK



Fine Group of White Rock Chickens.

(By ANNA GALLIGHER.)
A large proportion of the losses, especially among the young poultry, could easily be prevented by the use of common sense and a little forethought. A few years ago we lost a lot of high priced eggs because we placed the thermometer too near the water pipes in the incubator. Instead of setting it on a level with the eggs it was fastened to a little box, where it could not be overturned. We thought it a very clever idea at the time, but found out too late that we had made a mistake. Being so near the pipes, the heat caused the thermometer to register several degrees too high. That is, it was several degrees higher than the temperature down where the eggs were. Only one chick hatched, and it died. The eggs were broken and examined. We found that they contained chicks in nearly all stages of development. This taught us a lesson that has never been forgotten, and that was not our last by any means. In the poultry business it is just one lesson after another; and still we don't pretend to know it all. One never gets too old to learn, but we never make the same mistake twice, but try to learn something through every mistake made, and that is some consolation when things go wrong. Whatever the trouble is, we try to find the cause and remove it.

A neighbor of ours lost nearly a hundred young chicks last year because of ignorance or carelessness—probably a little of both. The chicks were not properly cared for and they became very lousy. They had been hatched with hens, but were placed in a small brooder, inclosed in a small yard where not a spear of grass could grow. In spite of the fact that there was no lack of grass on the place, and also plenty of shade, not a bit of either was provided for the chicks.

They would probably all have died sooner or later, anyway, but as stated above they got very lousy and the owner made a short job of it by applying lard. This did the work—it killed all the chicks inside of an hour or two, and it is not at all likely that any lice escaped.

Now it was not the lard alone that did all this mischief, although it had been applied too freely. This happened to be when the thermometer registered 90 degrees in the shade. The chicks had no shade except the brooder, which was about as good as none; to make matters worse, the owner, after treating the chicks to lard, went to call at a neighbor's house, and

TAKE CARE OF THE HARNESS

Should Be Cleaned at Least Once Every Year—Frequent Sponging Will Help Appearance.

(By A. JOSEPH, Genesee, Cal.)
Harness should be cleaned thoroughly at least once a year, the spring being the best time. Take the harness all apart and soak the parts in a wash tub of lukewarm water with a handful of washing soda in it. Let the harness soak fifteen or twenty minutes and then scrub with an ordinary scrubbing brush. When the leather is nearly dry use edge blacking. It can be obtained from a harnessmaker. If you cannot get it, take half gallon of vinegar and put three or four pieces of iron in it for three or four days or until the vinegar is a rich golden color. Give the leather a good coat of this fluid, and rub the harness thoroughly. Take a quart of neatfoot oil and a half pint of kerosene. Mix and warm them and give the harness two coats of this, using it freely.

When the oil has dried, sponge the harness with lukewarm water and castile soap. Use the imported castile soap, as the oil in it also helps to soften the leather.

Harness treated in this way will look like new and give about double wear, and can be kept looking well by sponging with the castile soap frequently.

Control Boll Weevil.

Occasionally the theory is announced that the boll weevil can be controlled by late planting better than by early planting of the cotton crop. The bureau of entomology has conducted many experiments to determine whether late planted cotton will produce a satisfactory crop. The results have all been negative.

Shelter in Pasture.

Shade and shelter should be in every sheep pasture. If there are plenty of trees, well and good, otherwise a cheap building should be put up.

Avoid All Draughts.

The flockmaster should carefully guard against exposing the flock to draught. When they lie in a draught they are liable to become affected with catarrh and to contract colds which produce coughing more or less violent. These coughs frequently become chronic.

Paddock for Idle Horses.

Farm horses that are not to be used through the winter have a roomy paddock in which to exercise every fair day.

CONGRESS ASKED TO PRINCIPAL

Secretary Lane Appeals to Legislature of Carnotite Ore From Being Use—Commodity Will Cure Still Property of U. S.

Washington.—Like the wave of hot indignation which sometimes sweeps over a nation and leads irresistibly to the realization that the United States is in danger of losing one of its richest possessions has been sudden-

borne to the minds of the public the last few weeks. Radium will cure cancer. And the American people are on the verge of losing its precious deposits of carnotite ore, now the principal source of the strangest of metals, to be shipped abroad for the benefit of foreign institutions. If ever protection needed, it is here.

Franklin K. Lane, secretary of the Interior, has informed congress that he should act and act quickly. The treatment of Representative Bremner of New Jersey, who is suffering from a great diseased mass that surrounds the shoulder, has enforced the warning.

Fortunately most of the deposits of carnotite are still government property. Even should the private stores be sold abroad in the highest market, the people of the United States, of whom one in every ten over the age of fifty is (or was) doomed to die of cancer, have still an enormous amount of raw material with which to work.

Radium will cure some types of cancer absolutely. It may cure all we can't say as to the last point be-

NOTES OF THE DAIRY FARM

Dairying is One of Few Absolutely Permanent Systems of Agriculture—Name Your Cows.

A cow's ancestry is valuable so far as it teaches us how to produce her counterpart. Give each cow a name and call by it, and you will be surprised to how soon she will answer to it. Surrounding conditions have to do with the milk producing value any ration.

Dairy cows cannot make as good use of whole grain as they can of grain that has been ground. In the generality of cases, but with their first calf do not start high a test of butter-fat as they at a more mature age.

A period of rest before freshening will usually produce a larger yield of milk than where the animal is close up to calving.

A man can better afford to sell his milk than to produce it. The price of the butter includes the price of the milk and the cost of labor and at their market-value. Much farm butter sells at a price, not because it is in itself better, but because it is made to suit the maker and not the buyer.

A stud of the kind of butter best in one's market is quite sure to high prices—as much so as knowledge of the principles underlying good butter-making.

We can warm water more cheaply in some other way than through a cow.

The dairy cow's stable should be warm, ventilation and drainage.

Dairy farming is one of the few absolutely permanent systems of agriculture. Do not try to cheat your cows by giving them an ounce less anything than they will profitably consume, nor crowd them at any time beyond their normal capacity.

Progress in dairying is greater where there is the most intense interest. These associations stimulate interest and progress.

Money in Honey.

No product of the farm will more readily when taken direct to market by the producer than honey. This is because the average consumer does not know how to select the best honey. There are many who have found that a demand for their product has exceeded the supply they have been compelled to buy much of their honey through the dealer. Dealers are being a good business of supplying honey to this class of trade.

TRAGEDY OF SUPERSTITION

Widow Gives Life That Husband Might Complete Studies of Theory of Worship.

Calcutta, India.—An extraordinary tragedy of superstition is reported from Burdwan, where a native Brahmin murdered his wife in a ceremonial.

Brahmin had for some time been following the principles of Tantrism.

Dr. Howard A. Kelly.



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