

THE TREASURE TOWER.

A STORY OF MALTA.

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CHAPTER I.

A MALTESE GARDEN.

HE ISLAND OF Malta basked in spring sunshine. The glow of light was intensely brilliant on rock and rampart, after weeks of rain, and already suggested the speedy approach of blighting summer heat.

The harbor of Valletta wore the usual aspect of European animation. The Russian Corvette *Ladislav* had just cast anchor, having on board a young grand duke, who was making the tour of the world in a leisurely and princely fashion. Mercantile steamers came and went, amid puffing tugs, launches and yachts, while the native shore craft, the dhajisas, darted about laden with fresh fruit, or transporting nimble tailors and washerwomen in search of work. Occasionally a torpedo boat of sinister appearance glided through the throng of shipping, and vanished in some adjacent inlet, or the gig of a man-of-war cleaved a passage with rhythmical flash and dip of oars, toward the quay.

One of the latter, quitting the side of her majesty's ship *Sparrow*, recently arrived from Suda Bay, brought Flag Lieutenant Curzon to the shore. The young man made his way through a noisy crowd, and ascended the steps to the city of Valletta. Below him stretched the sparkling Mediterranean sea, and docks and moles thronged with shipping. Above him, towers, churches, palaces, with quaint balconies and a margin of stone wall, rose with a background of blue sky. His eye was attracted by wayside shrines at the angle of buildings, where lamps burned before saints gaudily adorned, shops displaying flagrant ornaments of gold and silver, and whole webs of Maltese lace, and groups of soldiers, nuns and priests. His nostrils were saluted by the fragrance of flowers, coffee and those latent odors of the southern seaport, garlic, and fish frying in oil. His ear was stunned by the jangled peal of church bells, mingled with the hum of voices.

Lieut. Arthur Curzon was supple and vigorous of form, and alert and decided in manner. His golden hair curled tightly on a small and shapely head, a closely trimmed beard framed a handsome face, with clearly-cut features, and lighted by a pair of keen blue eyes, capable of a great variety of expression. The sun-bronzed tint of the cheek, below the margin of a fair and open brow, revealed by the removal of the cap, and certain accentuations of resolution and maturity gradually deepening around the lips, alone redeemed the entire physiognomy from a youthful insouciance and merry audacity which were eminently attractive and boyish.

Climbing the stone steps from the port to the old town on the height of this most populous of islands, he may have aptly represented that "The sword of war opens the way of commerce."

Truly the officer was ready to cope with any adventure or danger which fate might have in store for him on this day of fitful spring weather. He came of a family noted for intrepid courage and originality of mind and character. A commonplace world, devoid of enthusiasm, pronounced the race eccentric, perhaps a trifle mad. Descended from Scandinavian sea rovers, who had settled on the northern coast of Scotland centuries ago, the Curzons numbered prelates, soldiers, and faithful followers of the Stuarts among their members.

The first object ever noticed by Arthur Curzon in infancy had been the portrait of an ancestor suspended above the chimney-piece in his grandfather's castle, wearing a helmet of different colored metals, a gold chain around the neck, and carrying a horn of the chase, studded with precious stones.

Lieut. Curzon had won honorable mention at the storming of Alexandria, and aspired to promotion in the service by fresh exertion, when opportunity offered. For the rest, he was a sailor on shore for a holiday.

He directed his steps to the Strada Zecca, and paused before a palace of somber aspect, with a projecting roof which cast a deep shadow on the pavement below. The memory of the Knights Templar seemed to brood over the spot, undisturbed by modern innovation or change.

The visitor was met at the door by a servant with the intelligence that the mistress of the house was absent on an excursion. Mrs. Griffith had left a charming note, written on pink paper, in three lines of gigantic feminine orthography, urging the young officer

to return for 5 o'clock tea in event of his obtaining leave to come ashore that day.

Lieut. Curzon read the note and consulted his watch, which indicated the hour of 3. How should he while away the time until the return of his cousin? He loitered in the shops and bought a festoon of lace in a helpless, masculine fashion, wherewith to cheer the declining years of a maiden aunt, dwelling in a provincial town of England, if permitted to escape the Malta postoffice. He bethought him of a bevy of little cousins in Devonshire, launching recklessly into the purchase of silver filigree crosses for their benefit. Then he decided to stretch his limbs by means of a country walk.

Quitting the streets of Valletta the young man soon left behind him the encircling fortifications, with a sense of freedom in movement after the cramping inaction of shipboard. The unattractive aspect of the country could not rob the spirits of the sailor on shore of unwonted elasticity. Before him extended a gray and nearly treeless region, broken by villages of flat-roofed houses clustered about the church with a dome. The intervening spaces were chiefly subdivided by stone walls, as a shelter from the wind for the crops fostered in the soil brought from Sicily.

The pedestrian paused at length, weary of the dusty highway. He glanced wistfully in the direction of the arid ledges of the shore, and the sea beyond, which glittered in the sunshine, with changing tints wrought by passing clouds, and broke in white foam among the rocks.

He chose a short cut to gain the shore. If the measure led to trespassing upon his neighbor's ground, he trusted to personal adroitness to extricate himself from all embarrassments.

He skirted a deserted chapel on a ridge, and was descending the slope beyond, when an object attracted his keen eye, and brought him to a halt in his rapid walk. A human hand and arm, clenched and rigid, as if in death, projected from the entrance of a half-ruined structure in his path. Had the arm not been thus extended, Lieut. Curzon would have passed on without noticing, especially the building.

Strange whim of destiny!

He approached and peeped into the place. Shadows obscured the interior, but he recognized a temple, probably of the early Phœnician settlers of the island, built of rough blocks of stone. Traces of a primitive altar were discernible, still adorned with the rude idols of the twelve Children of the Sun, the Kabiri, once worshipped here. The spot was silent, humid, chill, save when a stray sunbeam filtered through the pervading darkness to gild the semblance of nearly effaced carvings, mere rudimentary hints of decoration, on wall and roof, or danced with a flickering motion above the pavement, weaving a pattern of mosaic with motes and shade.

An old man lay on his face, motionless, and with a fragrant of marble table overturned beside him on the ground.

The officer's first suspicion was of murder. Anticipating some accident, he lifted the victim of foul play, as he supposed, and speedily ascertained that no trace of violence was perceptible, either on the pinched and shriveled features, white hair, or small body. He was further reassured when the old man gave utterance to a feeble groan, and opened his eyes, with a manifest effort to collect his thoughts, bewildered by an interval of insensibility.

"The place would not be safe," he muttered in English. "No! No! Far from safe, this ruin."

"Do you live near by? If you can pull yourself together a little I will help you home," said Lieut. Curzon, in a tone of encouragement.

The old man was silent. He passed a trembling hand across his brow, and then shaded his eyes, the better to examine the face bending over him, while his own features expressed a scared surprise, agitation, and even furtive suspicion and distrust.



AN OLD MAN LAY ON HIS FACE. "I have not the pleasure of knowing you," he retorted, after a pause, and with perceptible petulance. Lieut. Curzon smiled involuntarily. "Shall I call your people?" he suggested, with unabated good humor. "No, I must have stumbled over that fragment of table. How did you find me?" His manner was more collected and confident, but he eyed the stranger

askance as he struggled to regain an upright posture.

"You have had a fainting fit, a vertigo, I fancy," said the officer, glancing around the spot, in the hope of describing some person to whom he might consign the human burthen thus unexpectedly cast upon his care. No aid appeared.

The old man placed his hand on the sleeve of his companion, as if to aid his vacillating movements. Lieut. Curzon was inspired by a sentiment of repulsion, mingled with the compassion of the strong for the weak. The hand, thin and nervous, resembled a claw, and the fingers, infirm yet groping, clutched at the muscular arm of the sailor with a disagreeable tenacity of hold. This member was the same which had attracted his notice, stretched forth from the entrance of the temple.

"Did I speak? Did I say anything—odd?" demanded the old man, eagerly.

"Nothing of importance," was the brief rejoinder.

"People will seek here for traces of the Greeks and the earlier Phœnicians, but there only remains rubbish, you understand, absolute rubbish!" He broke off with a short laugh.

"Ah!" assented the other, drily.

The old man emerged from the temple, still clinging for support to the opportune aid vouchsafed him by chance. Lieut. Curzon, a trifle bored, submitted to the task of assisting him. What did it matter, after all? He had to deal with a feeble and aged creature, who was possibly a little cracked as regarded brains, and who had exceeded his strength pottering about a ruin intent on archaeological research. Surely the old man's family must have looked him up in time, even if he had not taken the direction of the temple, and discovered the other fallen in a swoon.

The pair traversed a considerable distance, walking slowly and with some difficulty. The old man paused to rest occasionally, and wiped the moisture from his temples with his pocket handkerchief. He repeated, with a garrulous insistence, his first assertion that the temple contained no relics and was wholly unworthy of a visit on the part of a stranger. The conviction was gradually forced on the frank and unsuspecting mind of the sailor, that he inspired uneasiness



A YOUNG GIRL STOOD BESIDE A FOUNTAIN.

and fear in his companion, instead of any sort of confidence. Why? He could not determine. He checked a final allusion to the temple by a curt denial of personal interest in the relics of Malta. This decisive assertion was possibly misunderstood by the weakened faculties of age, as suspicion seemed to increase rather than be allayed.

They gained a high wall, such as elsewhere protected the fruit trees from the sirocco, and a house, which resembled a tower, was visible within the inclosure.

As they approached, a voice, youthful and fresh, proclaimed in Italian—"What would I like best as a fairy gift, Dr. Giovanni Battista Busatti? Very, very rich, I should like to be rich, very rich, incredibly rich! I might have a new dress in that case, and go to a ball. After my visit to the Monte di Pietà, you will understand that, my friend."

A man's voice replied, slowly and distinctly, with a slight vibration of emotion perceptible in the tone—"You are already rich in beauty and amiability, Signorina."

A laugh, deliciously pure and silvery, was the sole acknowledgment vouchsafed for the compliment. An expression of amusement dawned in the bright, blue eyes of Lieut. Curzon.

On the other side of the garden wall dwelt a girl who longed to go to a ball. Was she pretty?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

How Bavarians Frighten Spirits. In the little village of Egmaning, in Bavaria, a curious nocturnal exhibition has just taken place. A few minutes after midnight there suddenly appeared in the village a party of 150 armed men, mostly peasant proprietors, driving apparently some imaginary specters before them. Presently every man discharged his firearm. Many of the inhabitants who were indoors, behind strong barriers, trembled at the thought of the carnage that must have ensued.

Then a specially appointed person recited the "Record of Deadly Sins" by way of exorcising the spirits of evil supposed to be hovering about. As a rule, nobody dared venture out; but one more bold than his fellows did open his door and expostulated against such an unwarrantable disturbance of the night. But the firing party heeded him not. This ceremony of exorcising the evil spirits from the village continued for an hour. And as suddenly as the party had arrived so suddenly did they disperse. There was a strong smell of powder in the air, but not a trace of brimstone.

Bolota, a new discovery in the forests of Surinam, is a substitute for the rapidly disappearing India rubber and gutta percha.

Society Note.

Old man Snobberly of Fifth avenue came home one day last week and found his wife in despair, shedding bitter tears, etc. "What's the matter? Any misfortune occurred?" "Just think of it—our Gus, the pride of our life, has gone and—"

"And what? Speak! Don't keep me in suspense!" "He has gone and engaged himself to a sewing girl."

"You don't say so! Why this is something appalling!" "And they say she is respectable."

"Respectable? Worse and worse! He may bring disgrace on us by actually marrying her."—Texas Siftings.

A Wandering Gourmand.

Meandering Mike (the tramp)—I am not really hungry, missus, but will be pleased to sample anything you may have in the line of salads. I am traveling through the country getting a few points for a book I am writing on cookery.

The Wife of a Farmer—How do you travel? Meandering Mike—Well, mostly on foot, as it gives me a better chance to pick up things as I go along.—Truth.

Seeking a Foreign Climate.

In search of pleasure or business, should be preceded by the purchase of nature's great invigorator, Keweenaw's Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy. It is the best and most general medicinal safeguard in existence. Sailors, miners, commercial travelers, tourists, and all who travel by land or sea, should keep it in the most prominent places. Headaches, constipation, indigestion, nervousness, nervousness and other ailments are remedied by it.

Lord Chief Justice Russell, of England, has decided that gambling in the rise and fall of stocks is not gambling. This will ease a good many troubled consciences on the street.

Mother—That note paper is certainly very quaint, but are you sure it is fashionable? Daughter—Oh, it must be. It is almost impossible to write on it.—N. Y. Weekly.

The first article of human clothing mentioned in history was an apron. It is spoken of in the book of Genesis, II, C. 4004.

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A Slight Distinction.

Senator Siders—What made Senator Wayback withdraw his bill? Didn't he say he'd never give up until monopoly was killed? Lobbyist—Not exactly; he said he wouldn't yield until the monopoly "gave up."—Puck.

If the Baby is Cutting Teeth.

Be sure and use that old and well-tried remedy, Mrs. Watson's Soothing Syrup for Children Teething.

Literally True.

"How could you conscientiously tell Miss Elder that she is the only woman you ever loved?" "It is a fact. Compared to her the others are mere girls."—Boston Budget.

A philologist of high repute is authority for the statement that there are 72 languages spoken in Russia.

Colorado has one copper mine.

A sea otter skin brought \$1,000.



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Brazil's diamond output is decreasing.

Central Pacific has an 80-ton locomotive.

French soldiers' shoes have rubber heels.

In certain Parisian restaurants a shilling is charged for the use of tablecloths.

The manufacture of razors by machinery has become an important industry in Germany.

There are about 13,000,000 houses in this country with less than six people to each on the average.

John Fox, of Zealand, Mich., is totally blind, but makes a business of repairing sewing machines.

Atlanta has more churches than any city in the South, and their seating capacity will accommodate 65,000 people.

Think We Have Angry Faces.

Japanese, unused to visitors from the Western world, speak of their "angry faces" because they do not smile. Japanese children have been known to run shrieking from an American or English lady, frightened by what seemed to them her huge size, fierce face, staring blue eyes and white, uncanny skin.

Analogous.

Student—Isn't it strange that meters and feet are used as a measurement of gas as well as poetry?

Professor—Not at all. Gas first came into general use about the time that modern magazine poetry became prevalent.—Brooklyn Life.

The new water works tower just completed at Eden park, Cincinnati, is the highest artificial structure in America. The floor of the tower, reaching by elevators, is 525 feet above the Ohio river. The base is 404 feet above the stream. If the height of the elevator shall be added to the observation floor the grand total height is 589 feet.

In the Bank of England 60 folio volumes or ledgers are filled daily with writing in keeping the accounts.

For twenty years folks all over the world have cured rheumatism, neuralgia, and all other pains and aches by using St. Jacobs Oil. There must be something in it, for you couldn't fool all the people for so many years.

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 Third—Words used must be English and must be found in the dictionary. If two words are spelled alike only one can be used. Abbreviations, obsolete words and names of persons or places are barred. Lists purposely stuffed not considered.
 Fourth—The same letter must not be used twice in one word, except the letter T, which may be used twice in any word, as it appears twice in the prize word.
 Fifth—Each contestant must become a subscriber to the Omaha Weekly World-Herald for one year, and must send his dollar to pay for his subscription with his list of words.
 Sixth—Every contestant whose list contains as many as thirty words, whether he wins a prize or not, will receive a portfolio containing handsome photo engraved copies of sixteen famous paintings—size of each picture 10x12 inches, with history of the painting.
 Seventh—In case two or more prize winning lists contain the same number of words the one that is first received will be given preference.
 Eighth—Prizes will be awarded and shipped to winners within ten days after the contest closes.

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