THE THRONE OF THE THOUSAND TERRORS.

BY WILLIAM LE QUEUX. Author of "Zoralda," "Stolen Souls," etc.

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PART L

Far couts, beyond the Alias moupfains, beyond that great limitless plain known and little understood in European civilization. In the great Sahara where nothing meets the naked eye life today is the same as it was ten centuries ago-the same as ft will ever be; free and charming in its simplicity, yet with many terrors ever present, and sun-blenched bones ever reminding the lonely traveler that a pricked water skin or a lame camel means the end of

On a recent journey from Biskra to Mourzouk, in Fezzan, I foolishly disregarded the injunctions of my old friend Emile Chandioux, the commandant of the outpost of Spahis stationed in the Arab town of In Salah, in the Touat Oasis, and was rendered extremely uncomfortable by the astouncing dis-covery that the acmel caravan I had joined in Zouin Timassanin, and with which I had been traveling for twenty days, belonged to the Kel-Izhaban, a tribe of marauders and outlaws whose depredations and releatless butchery of their weaker neighbors caused them to be held in awe from Morocco across to Tripoli, and from Biskra to Lake In addition, I ascertained that our shelkh, known to me as Sidi El-Adil, or "The Just," was really none other than the dreaded Abdul Melik, the pirate of the desert, agazinst whom the French government has sent three expeditions, and upon whose head a price had been set. With bronzed, aquiline features, long

gray beard, and keen, deep-set eyes; tall, erect, aglie and of commanding presence, he was a splendid specimen of the Arab of the plains. Though he expressed intense hatred for the Infi-del, and invoked curses most terrible upon the horsemen of the Roumis, in general, and my friend Capt. Chandioux, in particular, he nevertheless, treated me with haughty courtesy, and extended to me the hand of friendship. As to the head of our cavalcade of two hundred armed horsemen and a long string of camels, he rode day by day across the parched wilderness, interspersed by small sand-hills and naked ledges of rock, speckled with ethelbules half overwhelmed by sand, he was truly an imposing figure. His burnouse was of finest white wool,embroldered heavily with silk; the haick surrounding his face was of spotless china silk, nad around his head was wound many yards of brown camel's hair. The saddle upon which he sat was of crimson velvet, embroidered with gold and set with precious stones, and stirrups and spurs of massive silver completed the trappings of his splendid coal-black horse, which he managed with rare perfection and skill. On my white Ku-hai-lan stallion, I usually rode at his side, chatting to him, in his own tongue, while two hundred of his people, erect in their saddles, and with their long-barreled rifles slung behind, were ready to instantly execute his slightest wish.

Those days were breathless and blazing. Scorched by the sun, and half-suffocated by the sand-laden wind, our way lay through a wilderness that nature had forsaken. At night, now ever, when the outlaws of the desert had cast sand upon their feet and prayed their maghrib, and we had encamped under the paims of the oasis, eaten our dates and krouss-krouss, and slacked our thirst from our water skins, then commenced the real luxury of the daythe luxury of idleness-as, reclining on a mat in front of his tent, with coffee and a olgarette, the great Abdul-Melik would relate with slow distinctness stories of past encounters between his people and the hated Christians. While sentries with loaded rifles kept a vigilant lookout lest we should be surprised by the ever watchful Spahis or Chesseurs, balf a dozen Arabs would souat in a semi-circle before the great sheikh, and, twanging upon their guenibria those queer little banjoes fashioined from tortoise shells over which skin is stretched, would chant weirdly in a strange staccato, Arab songs of love and war. At that hour a coolness falls over everything, intense silence reigns, the sky above grows a deeper and deeper blue, and the palms and talha trees look mysterious in the halflight. Soon the stars shine out like diamond points, and it grew darker and darker, until the chill night breeze of ert stirs the feathery heads of the date palms. Then the lawless nomads, my companions, would wrap their burnouses closely about them, scoop out a hole in the warm sand, and there repose until the first flush of dawn.

About five weeks after I had inadvertently thrown in my lot with the Kel-Izaban, and after penetrating a region, that as far as I am aware, has never been explored by Europeans, for it remains a blank upon the most recent map issued by the Depot de la Guerre, we were one evening, at a spot



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Vet slippers or green embrondered with had been in had vented.

jevidently prearranged, joined by a body of 800 horsemen, who armed themselves with the rifles obtained from our camels' packs, and then, leaving the camels n charge of half a dozen men in a rocky valley, called the Angoua, we all continued our way in high spirits, jesting, laughing and singing snatches of songs. Throughout that night and during the following day we rode at the same steady pace, with only brief halts that were absolutely necessary. On the second night darkness fell swiftly, but the moon rose, and under its mystic light we sped forward, until suddenly the gaunt man, in a dirty ragged burnouse who acted as our guide, shouted, and we pulled up quickly. Then, in the moonlight, I could just distinguish among the trees of the little oasis a few low, white houses, of what I subse quently learned was the little desert vilage of Tilouat, inhabited by the Kel-Emoghri, and distant ten leagues from

the town of Ideles. Abdul-Melik shouted an order clear and distinct. Whereupon the horsemen spread themselves out in two long lines, and with their guns carried across their saddles, the first line crept slowly and silently forward. By this movement I knew that we were about to attack the village, and held my own rifle ready for purposes of self-defense. Sitting in the cond line, I advanced with the others, and the breathless moments that fellowed were full of excitement, I had become a pirate of the desert, one of a band of fierce outlaws, reports of whose terrible atrocities had sent a thrill of horror across Europe on more than one ecasion.

Suddenly a shot startled us and at the same moment a muttered curse fell from the sheikh's lips as he saw that our presence had been detected, for the shot had been fired in the village a sound of warning. Almost instantly it was apparent that we had been betrayed, for a great body of horsemen galloped on to meet us, and in a few moments I found myself lying behind my horse pouring forth voiley after volley from my repeating rifle.

The fusilade was deafening, and for fully half an hour it was kept up. About twenty of our men had been killed or wounded, when suddenly the first line rose with loud shouts as if they were one man and, mounting rode straight at their opponents, while we dashed at headlong speed upon our enemies almost ere they had time to realize our intention. The melee wes awful, Swords, rifles and keen, crooked jambiyahs were used with terible effect, but very soon all resistance was at an end the work of looting the

Half demented by excitement and success, my companions entered the ouses, shot down the women with relentless cruelty, tore from them what litle jewelry they possessed and plundered, wrecked and burned their homes out of sheer delight in destruction. I stood watching the terrible scene, shuddering at the inhuman brutality of my companions, but unable to avert the terrible calamity that had fallen so swiftly upon the peaceful little place. The fiendishness of the outlaws had alas, not been exaggerated, Abdul-Melik laughed gleefully, uttering some "Silence, jade!" words as he rode past me swift as the wind. But heeded them not. I loathed.

despised and hated him. While dawn spread in saffron streaks the work of plunder still proceeded, but when the sun shone forth only the smoke-blackened walls of Tilouat remained standing. The plunder was quickly packed upon our horses, and oon afterwards we rode off, carrying with us twenty men and women who had been captured. All of whom, I was informed, would eventually find their way into the great slave market far away at Mourzouk.

At sundown, five days afterwards, we descended into a rocky valley, and suddenly came upon a wonderful mass of scattered ruins, of amazing magnitude and extent, which Abdul-Melik told me were the remains of a forgoten city called Tihodayen, and as we approached I saw by the massive walls of hewr stone, the fallen columns half imbedded in the sand, and, by an inscription over an arched door, that they were relics of the Roman occupation. When we dismounted. I found that the ruined city gave shelter to the outlaws, and was their habitual hiding place,

An hour later, reclining on mats under the walls of what had once been a great palace, the outlaw Sheikh and myself ate our evening meal of saubu-



OUR GUIDE SHOUTED AND WE PULLED UP QUICKLY.

saj, beryseh and luzinyeh, and drank copiously of dushab, that luscious datesirup that is so acceptable after the heat and burden of the Saharan day, merry, for it appeared that they kept stores of food concealed there,

On commencing to smoke, Abdul-Melik ordered that the captives should be brought before him, and when a few minutes later they were ushered into erator." his presence, they with one exception, fell upon their knees and groveled, and cried aloud for mercy. The single captive who begged no favor was a young dark- haired girl, of exquisite beauty. black, piercing eyes, pretty, with dimpled cheeks, and a complexion almost as fair as an Englishwoman's, She wore a zouave of crimson velvet heavily embroidered with gold, a heavy golden girdle confined her waist, and her wide trousers were of palest rose-pink silk. while her tiny feet were thrust into velvet slippers of green embroidered with

cents per bottle. Sold by all continued waiting, he ordered the re-

ly set him at defiance. Then turning his teen eyes upon her, he noted how extremely handsome she was, and, while she returned his gaze unflinchingly, beauty held me in fascination. In all my journeys in the Land of the Sun had never before seen such an absolutely perfect face.
"Who art thou?" demanded the

dreaded chief, roughly. What is thy "I am called Khadidja Fathma daughter of Ali Ben Ushashami, cadi of

ideles," she answered, in a firm, defiant "All Ben Ushashami!" echoed Abdul-Melik, knitting his brows fiercely. "Thou art his daughter; the daughter of that accursed son of offal who en-

leavored to betray me into the hands of the Roumis?" he cried, exultantly. 'I have kindled the lights of knowledge at the flambeau of prophecy, and I vowed that I would ere many moons seek vengeance."

"I have anticipated this thy wrath ever since thy horde of cowardly rufflans laid hands upon me," she answered, with a contemptuous toss of her prety head. "But the daughter of the cadi Iveles craveth not mercy from servant of Eblis."
"Darest thou insult me, wench?" he

cried, pale with passion, and starting up as if to strike her. "Thou art the child of the man who would have given me into the hands of the Spahis for the sake of the two bags of gold offered for my head. I will return his good offices by sending him tomorrow a present he will perhaps appreciate, the present of thine own hands. He will then be convinced that Abel-Melik knoweth how to repay those who seek to injure him."
"Dost thou intend to strike off my she gasped, pale as death,

fort to remain calm. "At sunrise the vultures will feast upon thee, and thine hands will be on their way to Ideles," he answered, a sinister smile playing about his hard

nevertheles making a strenuous ef-

"Malec hath already set his curse upon thee," she said, "and by each murder thou committest so thou createst for thyself a fresh torture in Al-Hawiyat,



"WHO ART THOU?" DEMANDED THE DREADED CHIEF ROUGHLY.

where thy food will be offal and thou will slack thy thirst with boiling pitch. True. I have fallen captive into thine hands, having Journeyed to Tilouat to see my father's mother, who was dying; but thinkest thou that I fear thee? No," she added, with flashing eyes, "Though the people dread thee as the great and powerful chief, I despise thee and all thy miserable parasites. It thou smitest off my hands, it is but the same punishment as thou hast meted out to others of my sex. Thou art,after all, a mere coward who maketh

"Silence, jade!" he cried in tumult of passion, and, turning to the men beside him, commanded: her away, secure her alone till dawn, and then let her hands be struck off and brought to me."

PART II.

Roughly the men dragged her away. but ere she went she cast at us a look of haughty scornfulness, and, shrugging her shoulders, treated this terrible mandate with ineffable disdain.

"The jade's hands shall be sent to her father, the cadi, as a souvenir of the in-terest he taketh in my welfare," the Shelkh muttered aloud: Her tongue will never again uter a rebuke or insult. Verily, Allah hath delivered into my hands a weapon to use against mine

I utered eager words of intercession, pointing out the cruelty of taking her young life, but he only laughed derisively, and I was compelled to sit beside him while the other captives were questioned and inspected.

That night I sought repose in a shed that had been erected in a portion of the ruins, but found sleep impossible. The defiantly beautiful face of the young girl who was to die at dawn kept recurring to me with tantalizing vividness, and at length I rose, determined, if possible, to save her. Noiselessly I crept out, my footsteps muffled by the sand, saddled one of Abdul-Melik's own horses, and without attracting the notice of either sentry on duty at each end of the encampment, I entered the ruin, where, confined to an iron ring in the masonry by a leather band she rouched, silent and thoughtful.

"Fi-amani-illah!" I whispered, as I approached. "I come to have speech with thee, and to assist thee to escape." "Who art thou?" she inquired, struggling to her feet and peering at me in

A Roumi, who is determined that the outlaw's command shall never be executed," and taking the jambiyah from my girdle, I severed the thongs that confined her hands and ankles, and the next second she was free. Briefly I explained how I had sadled

a fleet horse and placed a saddle-bag with food upon it.

"If I get safely away I shall owe my life to you, she added, with intense gratitude, pressing my hand for an instant while my companions feasted and made to her quivering lips. "I know this place, and ere two moons have risen I can travel through the rocky and be at my father's house in Ideles Tell me thy name, so that my father may know who was his daughter's lib-

I told her, and in the same hasty breath asked for some souvenir.

"Alas, I have nothing," she answered, "nothing but a strange ornament which my father's mother gave to me immediately before she died, ar hour previous to the attack being made deep into the breast of her dress she drew forth a rough disc of copper about the size of a crown piece with ahole in it as if it had been strung upon

thread. When she gave it to me she told me it had been in her possession for years, that it was a talisman against terror, and that some curious legend was atdefiant, with her hands secured behind tached to it, the nature of which I do not now recollect. There was a strange writing upon it in some foreign tongue of the Roumis that no one had been able

its possession would always remind me of her and slipped it into the pocket of my gandoura

Then together we crept along under the shadow of the wall, and, gaining the spot where the horse stood in readiness, I held her for a second in my embrace, while she kissed me, uttering a fervent word of thanks and afterwards assisted her into the saddle. Then a mo



WHEN SUDDENLY THE SPADE OF ONE OF THE SPAHIS STRUCK SOMETHING HARD.

nent later, with a whispered "Allah iselemeck!" she sped away, with her unbound hair flying behind her, and was instantly lost in the darkness.

On realizing that she was gone I was least I had saved her from a horrible doom, I returned to my litle shed, and, wrapping myself in my burnouse, slept tenced the unfortunate wretches to torsoundly until the sun had risen high in the heavens.

Opening my eyes, I at once rememered Khadidja's quaint souvenir, and on examining it was astonished to find both obverse and reverse of the roughly fashloned disc covered with an incription in English crudely engraved, or rather scratched, apparently with killed in his own stronghold at Aujila closely, I was enabled, after some difficurty, to read the following surprising

"This record I leave for the person into whose hands it may fall, for I am starving. Whosoever reads this let him hasten to Zemnou, in the Zelas desert, two days from the well of El Ameima,, and from the Babel-Qued pace twenty steps westward outside the city wall, and under the second bastion let him dig. There will he be rewarded. the Kasbah of Borku by order of the of her harem she is still in ignorance sultan Othman. Sunday, June 13, that, by the curious little souvenir with

Chatteris! Instantly it occurred to me that a celebrated English explorer, Geographical society of that name, had years ago been lost, and his fate had redifficulty within the impregnable citwhose little mountain kingdom was situate five hundred miles south of Mour zouk, between the Tibesti mountains and Lake Tsad, a secret that for half a century had been in the keeping of Arabs who could not decipher it.

What might not be buried at the spot indicated by this curious relic of the great traveler? My curiosity was excited to the utmost. Impatient to investigate the truth, but compelled, nevertheless, to remain silent until such time as I could escape from my undesirable companions, I concealed the disc in my ganduora and rose to join Abdul-Melik at his morning meal. Khadidja's escape caused the old out-

law intense chagrin, and his anger knew no bounds, but luckily no suspicion fell upon me, and, having remained with them during two whole moons, I succeeded one day, when we were near the town of Rhat, in evading them and getting away. As quickly as possible, I returned to In Salah, where exhibited the metal disc with its strange inscription to Capt Chandioux, who became at once interested in it, announcing his intention to accompany me next day to investigate the truth of the engraved record. With an escort of twenty Spahis, all

well monted and armed, we rode out of In Salah at dawn, and for nine days continued our journey across the desert due eastward, first taking in the caravan route to Tarz Oulli, beyond the French boundary, and continuing through the rocky region of the Ibehaouen and cross the Djedid Oasis, until one evening, at the maghrib hour, the high white walls and three tall minarts of the desert city of Zemnou came within view. It was unsafe to take the Spahis nearer, therefore we returned and bivouacked until darkness set in. Then, dressed in the haick and burnouse of the Arab of the plain, Chandioux with myself and three Saphis, carrying spades concealed beneath our floowing drapery, approached the town and crept under the shadow of the wals until we reached the Bab-el-Oued, or principal gate. Guarded by strong watch towers on either side, the gate was closed, and silently we crept, anxious and breathless, on over the sand westward, until we had counted twenty paces and

reached the second bastion. Then, after glancing eagerly around to reassure ourselves that we were not observed, we all five commenced to dig beneath the wall. Discovery, we knew, would mean death. Th sand was loose but full of stones, and for some time we worked without result. Indeed, I began to fear that some one had already been able to decipher the record and obeyed its injunctions, when suddenly the spade of one of the Spahis struck something hard, and he uttered an With one accord ejaculation. worked with a will, and within ten minutes were unearthing an object of ex-



SHE SPLD AWAY, WITH HER UN-BOUND HAIR FLYING BE-

traordinary shape. At first it puzzled us considerably, but at length, when we had cleared the earth sufficintly to remove it, we made a cursory examination and discovered it was a kind of stool with a semi-circular seat, supported by six short columns of twisted gold in imitation of serpents, the seat itself being of god,inlaid with many precious stones, while the feet consisted of six great yellow topass, beautifully cut and highly polished, held in the sep-

pents' mouths. The gold had been dimmed by long contact with the earth, but the gems, as we rubbed off the sand that clung to them, gleamed and sparkled in the tapers' fitful rays.

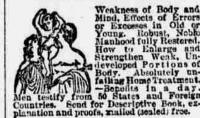
he stool, orthrone was so heavy that it was with difficulty two mer draged it out of the trench, and breathless with anxiety, we all lent a willing hand to carry it over the five miles of open desert to where the men were awaiting us. Our arrival was greeted with cheers, but quickly the strange relic was wrapped in saddle bags and secured upon the back of a spare horse, and we set out on the first stage of our return journey, reaching In Salah in safety ten days later, and learning with satisfaction on our arival that Abdul-Melik had, during our absence, een killed in a skirmish with the Spahis in the Ahaggar. Not until I had brought the jeweled

seat to England and exhibited it before meeting of the Royal Geographical society was I aware of its real antiquarian value. From the letters sent ome by the intrepid Dr. Chatteris, and still preserved in the archives of the society, it appeared that during 1839 Salman, the great Shelkh of Aujila, assembled a formidable following, and having proclaimed himself Sultan of Tunis, led an expedition through the country, extorting money from the people by reason of horrible tortures and fearful barbarities. While sentencing his unfortunate victims, he always used a curiously shaped judgment seat. which for ages had been the property of the Sultans of Sokoto, and it thus seized with regret, but feeling that at became known and dreaded as the Throne of the Thousand Terrors, it only being used on occasions when he senture for the purpose of extracting from them information as to where their wealth was concealed.

Against this fierce rebel the Bey of Tunis was compelled to send a great expedition, and after several sanguin ary encounters at Sinaun, and in the Um-el-Cheil, he was utterly routed and the point of a knife. Investigating it Dr. Chatteris, in the last letter that reached England, mentioned that he had secured the jeweled throne, but that on account of the superstitions of the Arabs it was an extremely difficult matter to convey it to the coast.

Fearing lest he should lose it, he had apparently buried it, and soon afterwards unfortunately fell into the hands of the Sultan of Borku, who held him captive until his death.

Khadidja is still living in Ideles, where she is happily married to the younger John Edward Chatteris, held captive in son of the governor, but in the seclusion which she rewarded her infidel friend. she added to our national collection of antiquities a valuable and highly in archaeologist and Fellow of the Royal teresting relic. Visitors to the British museum will experience but little difficulty in finding it, for in the Oriental mained a complete mystery. This, then, section at the present moment one of was a message inscribed with apparent the most frequently inspected and greatly admired treasures is the quaint, adel of the warrior sultan of Borku, historic and beleweled Throne of the



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