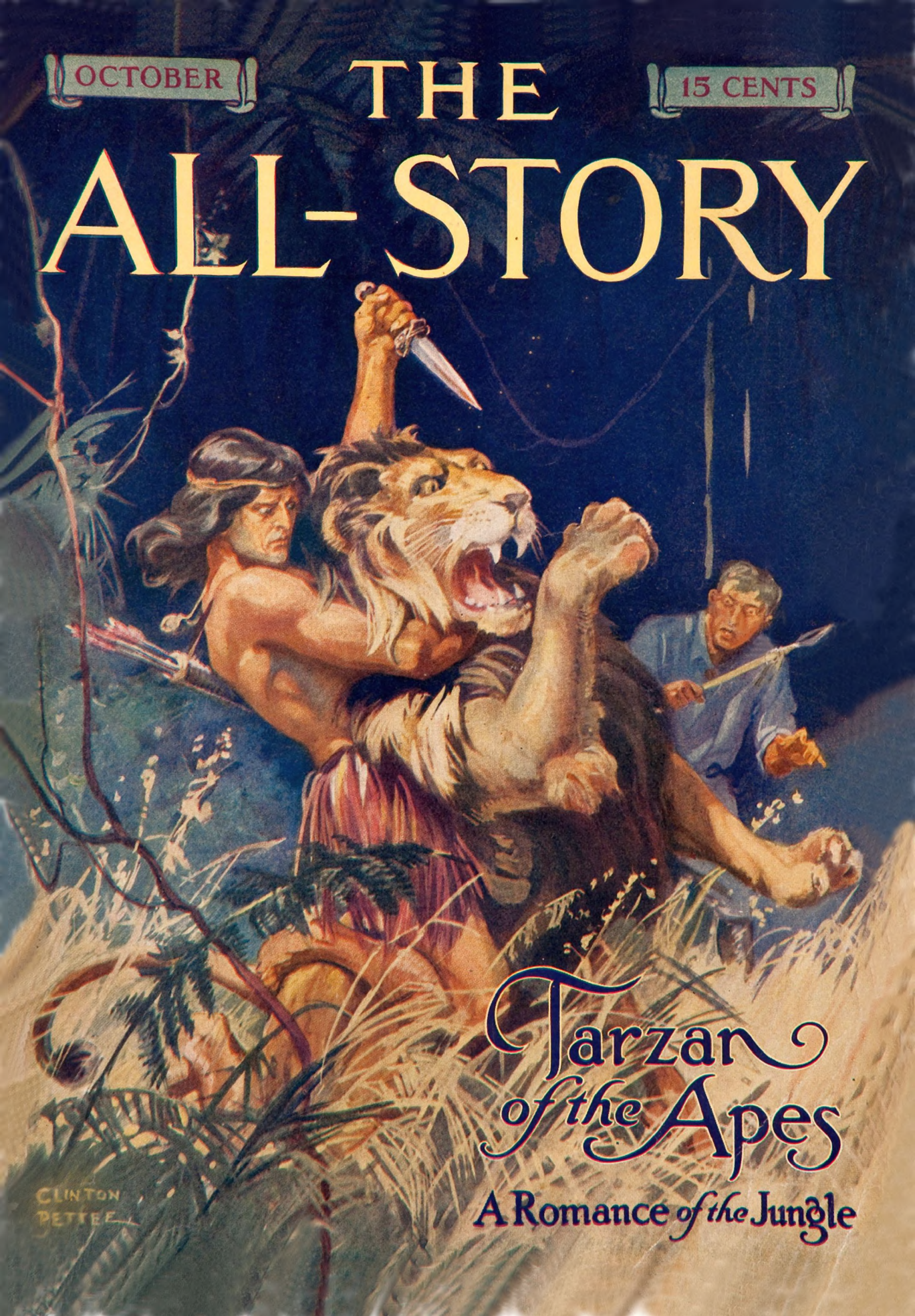
OCTOBER

15 CENTS

THE ALL-STORY



Tarzan of the Apes

A Romance of the Jungle

The fair skin
of a Child
is the
foundation
of
Womanly
Beauty

A Word to Mothers

The beauty and freshness of a child largely depends upon the condition of its skin, which is so tender and sensitive that only constant and unremitting care can keep it free from irritation.

The first necessity and safeguard in these matters is a soap that will act like balm upon the dainty skin, that soothes while it cleanses, is kind to the skin, and of a gentle emollient daintiness. No soap answers to this description so completely as

Pears' Soap

No soap is so comforting, so pure or so perfect in its hygienic influence. Bad soaps injure the skin and worry the child. Pears softens, preserves and beautifies.

The skin of a child is kept sweet, wholesome and healthy, and retains its softness and beauty to later years by the regular use of Pears,

The Great English Complexion Soap

OF ALL SCENTED SOAPS PEARS' OTTO OF ROSE IS THE BEST.

Three new styles

Victor-Victrola XI, $100
Mahogany or oak

Victor-Victrola X, $75
Mahogany or oak

Other styles $15 to $200

Victor-Victrola XIV, $150
Mahogany or oak

The greatest feature about these new instruments is the unequaled tone which has given the Victor-Victrola its supremacy among musical instruments.

There's nothing new about that of course, for this wonderful tone characterizes every Victor-Victrola.

The newness of these three instruments is in the design, and the improvements are really astonishing.

More beautiful, more artistic, more complete—and with no increase in price.

The greatest values ever offered in this greatest of all musical instruments.

Any Victor dealer in any city in the world will gladly show you these instruments and play any music you wish to hear.

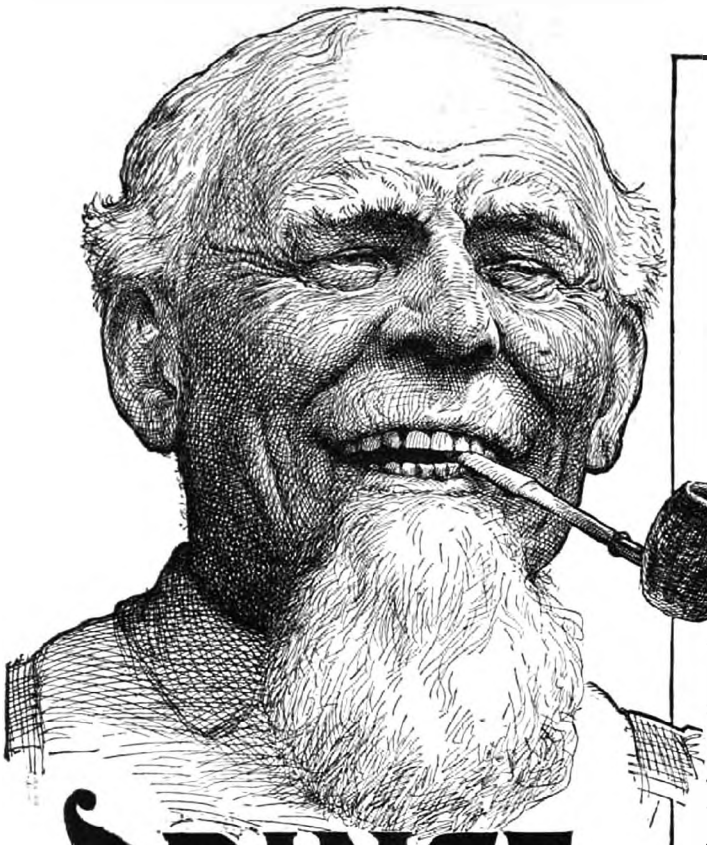
Victor Talking Machine Co., Camden, N. J., U. S. A.

Berliner Gramophone Co., Montreal, Canadian Distributors

Always use Victor Machines with Victor Records and Victor Needles—*the combination*. There is no other way to get the unequaled Victor tone.

Victor-Victrola

New Victor Records are on sale at all dealers on the 28th of each month



PRINCE ALBERT

the national joy smoke

Tender tongues

catch the hobnob habit with Prince Albert tobacco on the first fire-up, just as little ducks go to water, *natural like!*

It's this way: Prince Albert won't sting tongues, because the sting's *cut out* by the patented process that has revolutionized pipe tobacco.

With P. A. jammed in the bowl, you and every other man can smoke a pipe all you want and your tongue *won't even tingle!*

Just you figure out the joy of getting real fun out of a jimmy pipe and forget that old idea that pipe tobacco can't be free from the bite. It sure can, because P. A. knocked that galley-west two years ago. *It's the one pipe* tobacco that you can bet a house and lot on today, next week, next year!

Oh, stop a-wishing about it!

Go to it!

And listen, P. A. makes the best cigarette you ever rolled. Fresh, sweet, delicious—as bully good as in a pipe! And that's trotting *some!*

Buy Prince Albert everywhere—St. Paul, New York, Tampa, Winnipeg, Seattle, Five Corners, Kankakee—it's just the same glorious smoke. In 5c toppy red bags; 10c tidy red tins; handsome pound and half-pound humidors.

R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO CO.
Winston-Salem, N. C.

Pipeology

Here's a popular pipe—a corncob fitted with a wooden stem and a bone mouth bit. It's just a little niftier than the ordinary corncob, but costs no more. It imparts the same satisfaction to the smoker.

THE ALL-STORY

CONTENTS FOR OCTOBER, 1912

A Book--Complete in this Issue

Four Serial Stories

Six Short Stories

ISSUED MONTHLY BY THE FRANK A. MUNSEY COMPANY, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, and Temple House, Temple Avenue, E. C., London

FRANK A. MUNSEY, President. RICHARD H. TITHERINGTON, Secretary. CHRISTOPHER H. POPE, Treasurer.

Single Copies, 15c.

By the Year, $1.50

ENTERED AT THE NEW YORK POST-OFFICE AS SECOND-CLASS MAIL MATTER.

Classified Advertising

In the Munsey Magazines

	Line Rate	Special Combination Rate
Munsey's Magazine	$2.60	$5.65 Less 5% for Cash.
The Argosy	1.50	
The All-Story Magazine	1.00	
Railroad Man's Magazine	1.00	
	$6.00	

The Cavalier—$1.00 Per Line

November All-Story Forms Close September 16th.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS DEPARTMENT

is to quickly put the reader in touch with the newest needfuls for the home, office or farm—or person; to offer, or search out, an unusual business opportunity, or to suggest a service that may be performed satisfactorily through correspondence. It will pay a housewife or business man equally well to read these advertisements carefully.

"A New Force In Business" is a booklet that tells how to advertise successfully in the classified departments of the Munsey Publications. Mailed anywhere on request.

AGENTS & SALESMEN WANTED

A large well-known company about to spend $100,000 on a tremendous advertising campaign requires the services of a bright man or woman in each town and city. The work is easy, pleasant and highly respectable and no previous experience is necessary. We will pay a good salary and offer an unusual opportunity for advancement, to the person who can furnish good references. In addition to this salary, we offer a Maxwell Automobile, a Ford Automobile and over $3000 in prizes to the representatives doing the best work up to December 31. In your letter give age and references. Address: IRA B. ROBINSON, Advertising Manager, 127 Medford St., Boston, Mass.

WANTED—MAN OR WOMAN IN EACH COMMUNITY to act as our representative in a clean bona fide business, selling our high grade hosiery, underwear and knitted neckwear direct to consumers. With our co-operation a good income is assured without interference with your regular occupation. Send at once for full plans and particulars. IDEAL SUPPLY CO., 593 Broadway, N. Y. City.

NEW SUIT OFFER. Send name and address for wonderful suit offer and outfit to start; samples, styles, etc. We want live agents. Can make $1,000 to $2,000 a year. All business your territory turned over to you. We pay all express charges. Only one suit offer in your town. If you want a suit write quick before someone else gets prize. PARAGON TAILORING CO., Dept. 1087, Chicago, Ill.

400 PER CENT PROFIT—GLIDING CASTERS—NEW Invention. No rollers. Homes buy 6 to 40 sets. Hotels 50 to 500. Anyone can attach. Noiseless. Won't scratch floors. Save carpets and furniture. Set costs 3c. Sells 10c. to 25c. Exclusive territory. Samples 4c. EVERGRIP CASTER CO., 20D Warren St., N. Y.

WANTED — AGENTS TO SELL PRINTERS, ENGINEERS, MOTORMEN, anybody who wants clean hands, *Vanco*, the Perfect Hand Soap and Household Cleanser. Let anybody try a sample and you make a quick sale. Add twelve dollars per week easily to your income. We want hustling representatives in every shop. Enclose ten cents for a full-sized can and particulars. Address Box D, THE J. T. ROBERTSON COMPANY, Manchester, Conn.

LIVE AGENTS TO SELL AUTOMOBILE TIRE REPAIR KIT that will mend a puncture permanently in one minute. No charge for sample if reference is satisfactory. Write for full particulars and territory wanted to W. G. DUNHAM, 1845 Caton Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

AGENTS—$50 WEEKLY. We manufacture the best needle case made; a wonderful seller; 200% to 500% profit; talking unnecessary; our "Trust Scheme" Envelopes do the work; general agents can make $100 weekly; particulars free, or send 10c for a 25c sample containing 115 needles. PATY NEEDLE CO., 201 Union Sq., Somerville, Mass.

Agents can sell our Sun Ray Incandescent Kerosene Mantle Burners to everybody using lamps. Will sell on sight. New 1912 Model 100 candle power. Fit all lamps. Ten times brighter than gas. Write for catalog and free particulars. SIMPLEX GASLIGHT CO., Dept. M, New York City.

LIVE AGENTS WANTED—HUSTLERS TO HANDLE our attractive combination packages of soap and toilet articles with valuable premiums. One Michigan agent made $65 in 47 hours, another $21 in 8 hours, another $22.50 in 10 hours. Established over 16 years. Write to-day. DAVIS SOAP WORKS, 201 Davis Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

GREAT SELLER: 1912 NOVELTY FORTUNE Telling Chart "*Triplicity*"; a party game; anyone tells fortunes correctly; exclusive territory; retails 50c.; $1.00; send us trial order; money returned if unsatisfactory. FORTUNA SALES CO., 7 W. 38th St., New York.

HUSTLERS ARE MAKING BIG MONEY with the Fuller—the best and quickest selling line of sanitary household brushes made. Write now—we'll help you win. Catalog free. Sample outfit. Fuller Brush Co., 21 Hondley Place, Hartford, Conn.; Western Branch, Wichita, Kan.

Free sample goes with first letter. Something new. Every firm wants it. Orders from $1 to $100. Nice, pleasant business. Big demand everywhere. Write at once for free sample and particulars. Metcalfe Sales Co., 410 N. Clark St., Chicago.

AGENTS & SALESMEN WANTED

WE PAY YOU $2.00 a day and extra liberal commissions to take orders for toilet preparations, Rogers silverware, fountain pens, razors, novelties and fully guaranteed jewelry. You make sales at sight, giving your customers choice of many valuable premiums. We give you extra catalogs, allow credit, and share with you the profits on each of your orders. We offer agents the biggest money-making proposition in America. Now is also the best season to sell our big, new line of fully guaranteed holiday goods, beautifully illustrated in expensive large catalog free to agents. Write today. BEST MFG. CO., 50 Ontario St., Providence, R. I.

AGENTS—GENERAL AGENTS, HANDLE NEW INvention—Home Beauty and Massage Machine. Made of genuine aluminum and red rubber. Every woman buys. Great article—splendid profits. McGrath, N. Y., averages $54 weekly. Reed, Idaho, made $78 one week. Lord, W. Va., made $9 first hour. Write to-day for special proposition. QUEEN MFG. CO., 1137 Nasby Bldg., Toledo, Ohio.

STREETMEN and Boys to sell Taft, Wilson and Teddy Embossed Gold and Silver plated Campaign Fobs. Sell for 10c and 15c. 100 per cent profit. Go-getters answer. TITTMAN & HERR, Dept. J, 206 Canal St., N. Y.

AGENTS LOOK—Sell the French Egg Beater. Just out. Greatest seller known. Beats any mixture. 100 per cent profit. Write to-day for exclusive territory. Best proposition on the market. Address: The Great Western Supply Co., Cleveland, O.

GAS JET HEATER—BOTH SEXES—GET BUSY. High cost of coal creates great demand. Sample outfit supplied. Daily profit $5 upward. Let us prove it. SEED MFG. CO., 93 Reade St., New York.

AGENTS: 250%. WONDERFUL LITTLE ARTICLE. Sells like wildfire. Can be carried in pocket. Write at once for free sample. H. MATHEWS, 1001 Third St., Dayton, O.

AGENTS—HANDKERCHIEFS, DRESS GOODS. Carleton made $8.00 one afternoon; Mrs. Bosworth $25.00 in two days. Free Samples. Credit. Stamp brings particulars. FREEPORT MFG. CO., 41 Main St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

$100 MONTHLY AND EXPENSES TO TRUSTWORTHY MEN AND WOMEN to travel and distribute samples; big manufacturer. Steady work. S. SCHEFFER, Treas., M. Z., Chicago.

AGENTS WANTED IN EVERY COUNTY to sell the Transparent Handle Pocket Knife. Big commission paid. From $75 to $300 a month can be made. Write for terms. NOVELTY CUTLERY CO., No. 78 Bar St., Canton, Ohio.

AGENTS CAN EASILY MAKE $10.00 A DAY selling our Gold Window Letters, Novelty Signs, and Changeable Signs. Enormous demand. Merchants must have them. Catalogue free. SULLIVAN CO., 1233 W. Van Buren St., Chicago.

500% PROFIT. Your opportunity. Act *now*. Buyers everywhere for our U. S. Fire Extinguisher. Lowest cost. Quick sales. Exclusive territory given local agents and State Managers. United Mfg. Co., 1132 Jefferson, Toledo, O.

AGENTS.—PORTRAITS 35c, FRAMES 15c, SHEET PICTURES 1c, Stereoscopes 25c, Views 1c. 30 days' credit. *Samples and catalog free.* CONSOLIDATED PORTRAIT CO., Dept 1086, 1027 W. Adams St., Chicago.

AGENTS—ONE CENT INVESTED IN A POSTAL CARD will bring you a $35 to $60 a week proposition. AMERICAN ALUMINUM CO., Div. 077, Lemont, Illinois.

AGENTS: Represent reliable house. 400% profit selling "Gordon" photo-pillowtops. High-grade work. Easy sales. Make big money. Samples and Catalogue free. LUTHER GORDON CO., Dept. A, 208 N. 5th Avenue, Chicago.

I WILL START YOU EARNING $4 DAILY AT HOME in spare time, silvering mirrors. No capital. Anyone can do the work. Send for free instructive booklet, giving plans of operation. G. F. REDMOND, Dept. B, Boston, Mass.

ONE AGENT IN A TOWN CAN MAKE $10 DAILY selling "Naida" Embroidered Apparel Novelties. Easy to sell. Big profits. Sample Materials and Illus. Catal. Free. MADISON EMBROIDERY CO., Desk M-3, Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS & SALESMEN WANTED
—Continued

AGENTS—FOR BIGGER MONEY TRY BLITZ, the wonderful new polishing cloth. Cleans all metals a new way—like "lightning." Works like magic. Sells on sight. Everybody wants it. If you want to make $3 to $5 a day sell Blitz. No matter what you are selling or how much you are making take Blitz too and make more. Agents outfit postpaid for 25c with full instructions and receipt good for 25c. on first purchase. Write to-day. AUBURN SPECIALTIES CO., Dept. 157, Auburn, N. Y.

GREAT SUIT OFFER. Write us for startling offer on a suit for yourself, and outfit of samples, styles, etc. Only one suit offer in your town. We want you for agent so we can turn over all orders in territory to you. You get big business and easy money. Even new agents make $40 a week. If you want great suit offer write today or someone may get in first. American Woolen Mills Co., Dept. 1087, Chicago.

AGENTS make big money selling our new gold letters for office windows, store fronts and glass signs. Any one can put them on. Write today for free sample and full particulars. Metallic Sign Letter Co., 410 N. Clark St., Chicago.

AGENTS: $25 A WEEK for two hours work a day. A brand new hosiery proposition that beats them all. Write for terms and free samples if you mean business. GUARANTEED HOSIERY CO., 1001 Third St., Dayton, Ohio.

WANTED—LOCAL OR TRAVELING SALESMEN making small towns, to handle our new attractive, pocket shieline. Quick shipments, prompt commissions, no collecting. State territory covered. For particulars address. PEERLESS MFG. CO., 216 Sigel St., Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS—New "Colonial" 10-piece Aluminum Set. Opportunity unparalleled. Trust prices smashed. A fortune for you in the next six months. Housekeepers wild over it—don't delay. Dundee Mfg. Co., Factory M, Chauncy St., Boston, Mass.

WE FURNISH YOU CAPITAL to run a profitable business of your own. Become our local representative and sell guaranteed sweaters, shirts, neckties, underwear and hosiery direct from our factories to the homes. Write, STEADFAST MILLS, Dept. 25, Cohoes, N. Y.

HELP WANTED

YOUNG MAN, would you accept and wear a fine tailor-made suit just for showing it to your friends? Or a Slipon Raincoat free? Could you use $5 a day for a little spare time? Perhaps we can give you a steady job. Write at once and get beautiful samples, styles and this wonderful offer. BANNER TAILORING COMPANY, Dept. 688, Chicago.

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THE PERFECTION EXTENSION SHOE for any person with one short limb. No more unsightly cork soles, irons, etc., needed. Worn with ready made shoes. Shipped on trial. Write for booklet. HENRY R. LOTZ, 313 Third Ave., N. Y.

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$7.75 paid for *rare* date 1853 Quarters. $20 for a $1. Keep all money dated before 1881, and send 10c at once for New Illustrated Coin Value Book, 4x7. It may mean your fortune. Clark & Co., Coin Dealers, Box 62, Le Roy, N. Y.

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BIG MONEY WRITING SONGS. HUNDREDS OF DOLLARS HAVE BEEN MADE by writers of successful words or music. Past experience unnecessary. Send us your song poems, with or without music, or write for free particulars. Acceptance guaranteed, if available, by largest publishers in Washington—only place to secure copyright. H. Kirkus Dugdale Company, Dept. 297, Washington, D.C.

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SONG WRITERS. Poem Writers, Composers, send us your manuscripts today. Prompt publication if acceptable. No experience necessary. Successful writers make big money. P. J. HOWLEY MUSIC CO., 102 W. 42d Street, New York.

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AUTHORS—FOR 15 YEARS I HAVE EDITED, criticized and sold authors' manuscripts. I can dispose of salable work. Send 2c stamp for *Writer's Aid Leaflet A*. It will help you. Books published. HELEN NORWOOD HALSEY, Herald Square Hotel, New York City.

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DO NOT PAY FANCY PRICES for cheap new pianos; buy standard make slightly used. We have a large assortment of the best makes from $125 up, delivery free anywhere, and very easy terms. For sixty-five years Pease Pianos have been a standard of durability. Write for complete list. PEASE PIANOS, Leggett Av. & Barry St., Bronx, N. Y.

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AUTOMOBILE & MOTORCYCLE BARGAINS—EVERY make! Every model! Runabouts, Race Roadsters, Large touring cars $50 upward. Freight Prepaid. Guaranteed Five Years. Endless variety Motorcycles $20 upward—Diamond, Goodrich and other standard make automobile and motorcycle tires, 75 per cent reductions. Write to-day for prices and literature. A. C. C. A., Dept. 2F, 1709 Broadway, New York.

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Genuine typewriter bargains; no matter what make, will quote you lowest prices and easiest terms, or rent, allowing rental on price. Write for big bargain list and catalogue 16. L. J. Peabody, 278 Devonshire St., Boston, Mass.

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WRITE FOR "FARMERS' OWN LETTERS," telling how they are making good in Texas Panhandle. It's free, and may show the way to you. You can buy fertile land in the Panhandle for $20 acre, nothing down—9 years to pay—only 6% interest. C. L. SEAGRAVES, Gen. Colonization Agt., A. T. & S. F. Ry., 1855 Railway Exchange, Chicago.

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"Mercantile Decoration" is the new name for window trimming. The window is a great salesman—and the man who can make the window display look at its best is regarded as a trade producer, and can earn a big salary anywhere. The exact science of window trimming is taught by the I. C. S. You can learn at home. Window trimming is pleasant work and leads to still higher positions. For free circular write to

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The I. C. S. Course in Good English teaches correct speaking and writing—gives special training in successful business letter writing. To learn the details of this Course write today to

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$3 AND YOU KEEP THIS 17 JEWEL ELGIN GUARANTEED 25 YEARS

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***Says*—Before you buy** any Watch I want you to see this Thin-Model 17-Jewel Elgin. It's the latest and finest product of the Elgin Factory.

We want to Send You this Magnificent 16 size, Thin Model 17-Jewel Elgin, fully Adjusted to Temperature, Isochronism and Three Positions, Complete with fine Double Strata Gold Case, Guaranteed 25 Years on

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And if you don't say this is the biggest Elgin Watch bargain you ever saw, send it back at our expense. If you wish to keep it, the way is easy. Pay us only $3.00, and the rest in similar amounts each month. No interest—no security—just common honesty among men. We want you to see for yourself that this fine Elgin is better than other Watches costing twice or three times as much.

Guaranteed For 25 YEARS

Send for Our Free Catalog Write today for particulars and we will send you OUR NEW FREE WATCH AND DIAMOND BOOK, also our book called ***"Facts vs. Bunc"*** or all about the watch business, both at home and abroad. Write today. Do it now and get posted.

HARRIS-GOAR CO. Dept. 574 KANSAS CITY, MO.

The House That Sells More Elgin Watches Than Any Other Firm in the World.

In answering any advertisement on this page it is desirable that you mention THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE.

It's Your Move

—to get in the King-Row of "Royal-Tailored Men"

Here it is again—this everlasting clothes question—nudging you once more with the need

for a new suit or overcoat. ¶How are you going to answer the call this Fall? (1) By the Grab-Bag system of slipping into the first convenient store, and slipping out again in a pot-luck-chosen, take-it-as-it-is-garment.

OR—(2) By the Royal Tailored-to-order System of having every detail of your suit or overcoat built exactly as you dictate it—of having fit, fabric and fashion moulded to your idea and identity. It means Uncertainty *versus* Certainty. And the price, in either case, is about the same.

For, note you this remarkable fact—Real Tailored-to-order clothes, by the Royal System, cost no more than the slipped-from-the-shelf kind. $20, $25, $30, $35 gives you, thru Royal Service, the world's best made-to-order workmanship.

"A Royal Dealer in Your Town Means a Broadway Tailor Shop Within Walking Distance"

THE ROYAL TAILORS

Chicago *Joseph Wolf* *President* New York

"$1 a Day Forfeit for Each Day's Delay When a Garment Order Isn't Finished On Time"

Royal Tailored-To-Your-Order Clothes

The Clothes That Real Men Wear

THE ALL-STORY

VOL. XXIV OCTOBER, 1912. No. 2

Tarzan of the Apes

by Edgar Rice Burroughs

(Norman Bean)

A BOOK—COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE.

CHAPTER I.

OUT TO SEA.

I HAD this story from one who had no business to tell it to me, or to any other. I may credit the seductive influence of an old vintage upon the narrator for the beginning of it, and my own skeptical incredulity during the days that followed for the balance of the strange tale.

When my convivial host discovered that he had told me so much, and that I was prone to doubtfulness, his foolish pride assumed the task the old vintage had commenced, and so he unearthed written evidence in the form of musty manuscript, and dry official records of the British Colonial Office, to support many of the salient features of his remarkable narrative.

I do not say the story is true, for I did not witness the happenings which it portrays.

The fact, however, that in the telling of it to you I have taken fictitious names for the principal characters quite sufficiently evidences the sincerity of my own belief that it may be true.

The yellow, mildewed pages of the diary of a man long dead and the records of the Colonial Office dovetail perfectly with the narrative of my convivial host, and so I give you the story as I pieced it out from these several various agencies.

If you do not find it credible, you will at least be as one with me in acknowledging that it is unique, remarkable, and interesting.

From the records of the Colonial Office and from the dead man's diary

we learn that a certain young English nobleman, whom we shall call John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, was commissioned to undertake a peculiarly delicate investigation of conditions in a British West Coast African colony from whose natives another European power was known to be recruiting soldiers for its army, which latter it used solely for the forcible collection of rubber and ivory from the savage tribes along the Congo and the Aruwimi.

The natives of the British colony complained that many of their young men were enticed away through the medium of fair and glowing promises, but that few, if any, ever returned to their families.

The Englishmen in Africa went even further, saying that these poor blacks were held in virtual slavery; for when their terms of enlistment expired, their ignorance was imposed upon by their white officers, and they were told that they had yet several years to serve.

So the Colonial Office appointed John Clayton to a new post in British West Africa, but his confidential instructions centered on a thorough investigation of the unfair treatment of black British subjects by the officers of a friendly European power.

Clayton was the type of Englishman that one likes best to associate with the noblest monuments of historic achievement upon a thousand victorious battle-fields—a strong, virile man — mentally, morally, and physically.

In stature he was above the average height; his eyes were gray, his features regular and strong; his carriage that of perfect, robust health influenced by his years of army training.

Political ambition had caused him to seek transference from the army to the Colonial Office, and so we find him, still young, entrusted with a delicate and important commission in the service of the queen.

When he received this appointment he was both elated and appalled. The preferment seemed to him in the nature of a well-merited reward for painstaking and intelligent service, and as a stepping-stone to posts of greater importance and responsibility; but, on the other hand, he had been married to the Hon. Alice Rutherford for scarce a three months, and it was the thought of taking this fair young girl into the dangers and isolation of tropical Africa that appalled him.

For her sake, he would have refused the appointment; but she would not have it so. Instead, she insisted that he accept, and take her with him.

There were mothers and brothers and sisters and aunts and cousins to express various opinions on the subject, but as to what they severally advised history is silent.

We only know that on a bright May morning in 1888, John, Lord Greystoke, and Lady Alice sailed from Dover on their way to Africa.

A month later they arrived at Freetown, where they chartered a small sailing vessel, the Fuwalda, which was to bear them to their final destination.

And here John, Lord Greystoke, and Lady Alice, his wife, vanished from the eyes and from the knowledge of men.

Two months after they weighed anchor and cleared from the port of Freetown, a half-dozen British warvessels were scouring the south Atlantic for trace of them or their little vessel, and it was almost immediately that the wreckage was found upon the shores of St. Helena which convinced the world that the Fuwalda had gone down with all on board, and thus the search was stopped ere it had scarce begun.

The Fuwulda, a barkantine of about one hundred tons, was a vessel of the type often seen in coastwise trade in the far southern Atlantic. Their crews composed of the offscourings of the sea—unhanged murderers and cutthroats of every race and every nation, and the Fuwulda was no exception to the rule.

Her officers were swarthy bullies, hating and hated by their crew.

The captain, while a competent seaman, was a brute in his treatment of his men. He knew, or at least he used, but two arguments in his dealings with them—a belaying-pin and a revolver—nor is it likely that the motley aggregation he signed would have understood aught else.

From the second day out from Freetown, John Clayton and his young wife witnessed scenes upon the deck of the Fuwalda such as they had believed were never enacted outside the covers of printed stories of the sea.

It was on the morning of the second day that there was forged the first link in a chain of circumstances that ended in a life for one then unborn such as has probably never been paralleled in the history of man.

Two sailors were washing down the decks of the Fuwalda, the first mate was on duty, and the captain had stopped to speak with John Clayton and Lady Alice.

The men were working backward toward the little party, who were turned away from the sailors. Closer and closer they came, until one of them was directly behind the captain. In another moment he would have passed by, and this strange narrative had never been recorded.

But just that instant the captain swung round to leave Lord and Lady Greystoke, and, as he did so, tripped against the sailor and sprawled headlong upon the deck, overturning the water-pail so that he was drenched in its dirty contents.

For an instant the scene was ludicrous; but only for an instant. With a volley of awful oaths, his face suffused with the scarlet of mortification and rage, the captain regained his feet, and with a terrific blow felled the sailor to the deck.

The man was small and rather old, so that the brutality of the act was thus accentuated.

The other seaman, however, was neither old nor small—a huge bear of a man, with fierce black mustache, and a great bull neck set between massive shoulders.

As he saw his mate go down he crouched, and, with a snarl, sprang upon the captain, crushing him to his knees with a single mighty blow.

From scarlet, the officer's face went white, for this was mutiny; and mutiny he had met and subdued before in his brutal career. Without waiting to rise, he whipped a revolver from his pocket and fired pointblank at the great mountain of muscle towering before him.

Quick as he was, John Clayton was almost as quick, so that the bullet which was intended for the sailor's heart lodged in the sailor's leg instead, for Lord Greystoke had struck down the captain's arm as he had seen the weapon flash in the sun.

Words passed between Clayton and the captain, and the former made it plain that he was disgusted with the brutality displayed toward the crew, nor would he countenance anything further of the kind while he and Lady Greystoke remained passengers.

The captain was on the point of making an angry reply, but, thinking better of it, turned on his heel and strode, black and scowling, forward.

He did not care to antagonize an English official, for the queen's mighty arm wielded a punitive instrument which he could appreciate, and which he feared — England's far-reaching navy.

The two sailors picked themselves up, the older man assisting his wounded comrade. The big fellow, who was known among his mates as Black Michael, tried his leg gingerly, and, finding that it bore his weight, turned to Clayton with a word of gruff thanks.

Though the fellow's tone was surly, his words were evidently well-meant. Ere he had scarce finished his little speech he had turned and was limping off toward the forecastle with the very apparent intention of forestalling any further conversation.

They did not see him again for several days, nor did the captain vouchsafe them more than the surliest of grunts when he was forced to speak to them.

They messed in his cabin, as they had before the unfortunate occurrence; but the captain was careful to see that his duties never permitted him to eat at the same time as they did.

The other officers were coarse, illiterate fellows, but little above the villainous crew they bullied, and were only too glad to avoid social intercourse with the polished English noble and his lady, so that the Claytons were left very much to themselves.

There was in the whole atmosphere of the craft that undefinable something which presages disaster. Outwardly, to the knowledge of the Claytons, all went on as before upon the little vessel, but that there was an undertow leading them toward some unknown danger both felt, though they did not speak of it to each other.

On the second day after the wounding of Black Michael, Clayton came on deck just in time to see the limp body of one of the crew being carried below by four of his fellows, while the first mate, a heavy belaying-pin in his hand, stood glowering at the little party of sullen sailors.

Clayton asked no questions—he did not need to—and the following day, as the great lines of a British battle-ship grew out of the distant horizon, he half determined to demand that he and Lady Alice be put aboard her, for his fears were steadily increasing that nothing but harm could result from remaining on the lowering, sullen Fuwalda.

Toward noon they were within speaking distance of the British vessel, but when Clayton had about decided to ask the captain to put them aboard her, the obvious ridiculousness of such a request became suddenly apparent. What reason could he give the officer commanding her majesty's ship for desiring to go back in the direction from which he had just come!

Faith, what if he told them that two insubordinate seamen had been roughly handled by their officers. They would but laugh in their sleeves and attribute his reason for wishing to leave the ship to but one thing—cowardice.

John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, did not ask to be transferred to the British man-of-war, and late in the afternoon he saw her upperworks fade below the far horizon, but not before he learned that which confirmed his greatest fears and caused him to curse the false pride which had restrained him from seeking safety for his young wife, when safety was within reach—a safety which was now gone forever.

It was mid-afternoon that brought the little old sailor, who had been felled by the captain a few days before, to where Clayton and his wife stood by the ship's side watching the ever-diminishing outlines of the great battle-ship. The old fellow was polishing brasses, and as he came close to Clayton he said, in a low tone:

"'Ell's to pay, sir, on this 'ere craft, an' mark my word for it, sir. 'Ell's to pay."

"What do you mean, my good fellow?" asked Clayton.

"W'y, hasn't ye seen wat's goin' on? Hasn't ye 'eard that devil's spawn of a capting an' 'is mates knockin' the bloomin' lights outen 'arf the crew?

"Two busted 'eads yeste'day, an' three to-day. Black Michael's as good as new agin an' 'e's not the bully to stand for it, not 'e; an' mark my word for it, sir."

"You mean, my man, that the crew contemplates mutiny?" asked Clayton.

"Mutiny!" exclaimed the old fellow. "Mutiny! They means murder, sir, an' mark my word for it, sir."

"When?"

"Hit's comin', sir; hit's comin', but I'm not a sayin' w'en, an' I've said too much now, but ye was a good sort t'other day, an' I thought it no more'n right to warn ye. But keep a still tongue in yer 'ead, an' when ye hear shootin', git below an' stay there.

"That's all, only keep a still tongue in yer 'ead, or they'll put a pill between yer ribs, an' mark my word for it, sir."

The old fellow went on with his polishing, which carried him away from where the Claytons were standing.

"Deuced cheerful outlook, Alice," said Clayton.

"You should warn the captain at once, John. Possibly the trouble may be averted yet," she said.

"I suppose I should, but yet from purely selfish motives I am almost prompted 'to keep a still tongue in my 'ead.' Whatever they do now they will spare us in recognition of my stand for this fellow Black Michael, but should they find that I had betrayed them, there would be no mercy shown us, Alice."

"You have but one duty, John, and that lies in the interest of vested authority. If you do not warn the captain, you are as much a party to whatever follows as though you had helped to plot and carry it out with your own head and hands."

"You do not understand, dear," replied Clayton. "It is of you I am thinking—there lies my first duty. The captain has brought this condition upon himself, so why should I risk subjecting my wife to unthinkable horrors in a probably futile attempt to save him from his own brutal folly? You have no conception, dear, of what would follow were this pack of cutthroats to gain control of the Fuwalda."

"Duty is duty. No amount of sophistries may change it. I would be a poor wife for an English lord were I to be responsible for his shirking a plain duty."

"Have it as you will, then, Alice," he answered, smiling. "Maybe we are borrowing trouble.

"Mutiny on the high sea may have been common a hundred years ago, but in this good year 1888 it is the least likely of happenings.

"But there goes the captain to his cabin now. If I am going to warn him, I might as well get the beastly job over, for I have little stomach to talk with the brute at all."

So saying, he strolled carelessly in the direction of the companionway through which the captain had passed, and a moment later was knocking at his door.

"Come in," growled the deep tones of that surly officer.

And when Clayton had entered and closed the door behind him:

"Well?"

"I have come to report the gist of a conversation I heard to-day, because I feel that, while there may be nothing to it, it is as well that you be forearmed. In short, the men contemplate mutiny and murder."

"It's a lie!" roared the captain. "And if you have been interfering again with the discipline of this ship, or meddling in affairs that don't concern you, you can take the consequences on your own shoulders. I don't care whether you are an English lord or not. I'm captain of this here ship, and from now on you keep your meddling nose out of my business."

As he reached this peroration, the captain had worked himself up to such a frenzy of rage that he was fairly purple of face, and shrieked the last words at the top of his voice; emphasizing his remarks by a loud thumping of the table with one huge fist and shaking the other in Clayton's face.

Greystoke never turned a hair, but stood eying the excited man with level gaze.

"Captain Billings," he drawled finally, "if you will pardon my candor, I might remark that you are something of an ass."

Whereupon he turned and left the cabin with the same indifferent ease that was habitual with him, and which was more surely calculated to raise the ire of a man of Billings's class than a torrent of invective.

So, whereas the captain might easily have been brought to regret his hasty speech had Clayton attempted to conciliate him, his temper was now irre-

vocably set in the mold in which Clayton had left it, and the last chance of their working together for their common good was gone.

"If I had saved my breath," said Clayton, as he rejoined his wife, "I should likewise have saved myself a bit of a calling. The fellow proved ungrateful. Fairly jumped at me like a mad dog.

"He and his ship may go hang, for all I care; and until we are safe off the thing I shall spend my energies in looking after our own welfare. And I rather fancy the first step to that end should be to go to our cabin and look over my revolvers. I am sorry now that we packed the larger guns and the ammunition with the stuff below."

They found their quarters in a bad state of disorder. Clothing from their open boxes and bags strewed the little apartment, and even their beds had been torn to pieces.

"Evidently some one was more anxious about our belongings than we," said Clayton. "By Jove, I wonder what the bounder was after. Let's have a look, Alice, and see what's missing."

A thorough search revealed the fact that nothing had been taken but Clayton's two revolvers and the small supply of ammunition he had saved out for them.

"Those are the very things I most wish they had left us," said Clayton: "and the fact that they wished for them and them alone is the most sinister circumstance of all that have transpired since we set foot on this miserable hulk."

"What are we to do, John?" asked his wife. "I shall not urge you to go again to the captain, for I cannot see you affronted further by the ignorant fellow. Possibly our best chance for salvation lies in maintaining a neutral position.

"If the officers are able to prevent a mutiny, we have nothing to fear, while if the mutineers are victorious, our one slim hope lies in not having attempted to thwart or antagonize them."

"Right you are, Alice. We'll keep in the middle of the road."

As they fell to in an effort to straighten up their cabin, Clayton and his wife simultaneously noticed the corner of a piece of paper protruding from beneath the doorway of their quarters. As Clayton stooped to reach for it he was amazed to see it move further into the room, and then he realized that it was being pushed under the door by some one from without.

Quickly and silently he stepped toward the door, but, as he reached for the knob to throw it open, his wife's hand fell upon his wrist.

"No, John," she whispered. "They do not wish to be seen, and so we cannot afford to see them. Do not forget that we are keeping the middle of the road."

Clayton smiled and dropped his hand to his side. Thus they stood watching the little bit of white paper until it finally remained at rest upon the floor just inside the door.

Then Clayton stooped and picked it up. It was a bit of grimy, white paper, roughly folded into a ragged square. Opening it they found a crude message printed in uncouth letters, with many evidences of an accustomed task.

Translated, it was a warning to the Claytons to refrain from reporting the loss of the revolvers, or from repeating what the old sailor had told them—to refrain on pain of death.

"I rather imagine we'll be good," said Clayton with a rueful smile. "About all we can do is to sit tight and wait for whatever may come."

CHAPTER II.

THE SAVAGE HOME.

Nor did they have long to wait, for the next morning, as Clayton was emerging on deck for his accustomed walk before breakfast, a shot rang out, and then another, and another.

The sight which met his eyes confirmed his worst fears. Facing the little knot of officers was the entire motley crew of the Fuwalda, and at their head stood Black Michael.

At the first volley from the officers the men ran for shelter, and from points of vantage behind masts, wheelhouse, and cabin they returned the fire of the five men who represented the hated authority of the ship.

Two of their number had gone down before the captain's revolver, and they lay where they had fallen between the combatants.

Presently the first mate lunged forward upon his face, and at a cry of command from Black Michael the bloodthirsty ruffians charged the remaining four. The crew had been able to muster but six firearms, so most of them were armed with boat-hooks, axes, hatchets, and crowbars.

The captain had emptied his revolver and was reloading as the charge was made. The second mate's gun had jammed, and so there were but two weapons opposed to them as they rapidly approached the officers, who now started to give back before the infuriated rush of their men.

Both sides were cursing and swearing in a frightful manner, which, together with the reports of the firearms and the screams and groans of the wounded, turned the deck of the Fuwalda to the likeness of a madhouse.

Before the officers had taken a dozen backward steps the men were upon them. An ax in the hands of a negro cleft the captain from forehead to chin, and an instant later the others were down, dead or wounded from dozens of blows and bullet wounds.

Short and grisly had been the work of the mutineers of the Fuwalda, and through it all John Clayton had stood leaning carelessly beside the companionway puffing meditatively upon his pipe as though he had been but watching an indifferent cricket match.

As the last officer went down he bethought him that it was time that he returned to his wife lest some member of the crew find her alone below.

Though outwardly calm and indifferent, Clayton was inwardly apprehensive and wrought up, for he feared for his wife's safety at the hands of these ignorant, half-brutes into whose hands fate had so remorselessly thrown them.

As he turned to descend the ladder he was surprised to see his wife standing at his elbow.

"How long have you been here, Alice?"

"Since the beginning," she replied. "What can we hope for at the hands of such as those?"

"Breakfast," he answered, smiling bravely in an attempt to allay her fears. "At least," he added, "I'm going to ask them. Come with me, Alice. We must not let them think we expect any but courteous treatment."

The men had by this time surrounded the dead and wounded officers, and without either partiality or compassion proceeded to throw both living and dead over the sides of the vessel. With equal heartlessness they disposed of their own wounded, and the bodies of the three sailors to whom a merciful Providence had vouchsafed instant death before the bullets of the officers.

Presently one of the crew spied the approaching Claytons, and with a cry of: "Here's two more for the fishes," rushed toward them with uplifted ax.

But Black Michael was even quicker, so that the fellow went down with a bullet in his back before he had taken a half-dozen steps.

With a loud roar, Black Michael attracted the attention of the others, and pointing to Lord and Lady Greystroke, cried:

"These here are my friends, and they are to be left alone. D'ye understand?

"I'm captain of this ship now, an' w'at I says goes," he added. Then to Clayton: "Keep to yourselves and nobody'll harm ye."

The Claytons heeded Black Michael's instructions so well that they saw but

little of the crew and knew nothing of the plans the men were making.

Occasionally they heard faint echos of brawls and quarreling among the mutineers, and on two occasions the vicious bark of firearms rang out on the still air. But Black Michael was a fit leader for this heterogeneous band of cutthroats, and, withal, held them in fair subjection to his rule.

On the fifth day following the murder of the ship's officers, the lookout sighted land. Whether island or mainland, Black Michael did not know, but he announced to Clayton that if investigation showed that the place was habitable, he and Lady Greystoke were to be put ashore with their belongings.

"You'll be all right there for a few months," he explained, "and by that time we'll have been able to make an inhabited coast somewheres and scatter a bit. Then I'll see that yer gover'ment's notified where you be, an' they'll soon send a man-o'-war to fetch ye off.

"You may be all right, but it would be a hard matter to land you in civilization without a lot o' questions being asked, an' none o' us here has any very convincin' answers up our sleeves."

Clayton remonstrated against the inhumanity of landing them upon an unknown shore to be left to the mercies of savage beasts, and, possibly, still more savage men.

But his words were of no avail, and only tended to anger Black Michael, so Clayton was forced to desist and make the best of a bad situation.

About three o'clock in the afternoon they came about off a beautiful wooded shore opposite the mouth of what appeared to be a land-locked harbor.

Black Michael sent a small boat filled with men to sound the entrance in an effort to determine if the Fuwalda could be safely worked through the entrance.

In about an hour they returned and reported deep water through the passage as well as far into the little basin.

Before dark the Fuwalda lay peacefully at anchor upon the bosom of the still, mirrorlike surface of the harbor.

The surrounding shores were beautiful with semitropical verdure, while in the distance the country rose from the ocean in hill and tableland, almost uniformly clothed by primeval forest.

No signs of habitation were visible, but that the land might easily support human life was evidenced by the abundant bird and animal life of which the watchers on the Fuwalda's deck caught occasional glimpses, as well as by the shimmer of a little river which emptied into the harbor, insuring fresh water in plentitude.

As darkness settled upon the earth, Clayton and Lady Alice still stood by the ship's rail in silent contemplation of their future abode. From the dark shadows of the mighty forest came the wild calls of savage beasts—the deep roar of the lion, and, occasionally, the scream of a tiger.

The woman shrank closer to the man in terror-stricken anticipation of the horrors lying in wait for them in the awful blackness of the nights to come, when they two should be alone upon that wild and lonely shore.

Later in the evening Black Michael joined them long enough to instruct them to make their preparations for landing on the morrow. They tried to persuade him to take them to some more hospitable shore near enough to civilization, so that they might hope to fall into friendly hands. But no pleas, or threats, or promises of reward could move him.

"I am the only man aboard who would not rather see you both safely dead, and while I know that that's the sensible way to make sure of our own necks, yet I am not the man to forget a favor. You saved my life once, and in return I'm goin' to spare yours, but that's all I can do.

"The men won't stand for any more, and if we don't get you landed pretty quick, they may even change their minds about giving you that much show. I'll put all your stuff

ashore with you, as well as cookin' utensils an' some old sails for tents, an' enough grub to last you until you can find fruit and game.

"So that with your guns for protection, you ought to be able to live here easy enough until help comes. When I get safely hid away, I'll see to it that the British gover'ment learns about where you be; for the life of me I couldn't tell 'em exactly where, for I don't know myself. But they'll find you all right."

After he had left them they went silently below, each wrapped in gloomy forebodings.

Clayton did not believe that Black Michael had the slightest intention of notifying the British government of their whereabouts, nor was he any too sure but that some treachery was contemplated for the following day when they should be on shore with the sailors who would have to accompany them with their belongings.

Once out of Black Michael's sight, any of the men might strike them down, and still leave Black Michael's conscience clear.

And even should they escape that fate, was it not but to be faced with far graver dangers? Alone, he might hope to survive for years; for he was a strong athletic man.

But what of Alice, and that other little life so soon to be launched amid the hardships and grave dangers of a primeval world?

The man shuddered as he meditated upon the awful gravity, the fearful helplessness, of their situation. But it was a merciful Providence which prevented him from foreseeing the hideous reality which awaited them in the grim depths of that gloomy wood.

Early next morning their numerous chests and boxes were hoisted on deck and lowered to waiting small boats for transportation to shore.

There was a great quantity and variety of stuff, as the Claytons had expected a possible five to eight years' residence in their new home, so that, in addition to the many necessities they had brought, were also many luxuries.

Black Michael was determined that nothing belonging to the Claytons should be left on board. Whether out of compassion for them, or in furtherance of his own interests, it were difficult to say.

There is no question but that the presence of property of a missing British official upon a suspicious vessel would have been a difficult thing to explain in any civilized port in the world.

So zealous was he in his efforts to carry out his intentions that he insisted upon the return of Clayton's revolvers to him by the sailors in whose possession they were.

Into the small boats were also loaded salt meats and biscuit, with a small supply of potatoes and beans, matches and cooking vessels, a chest of tools, and the old sails which Black Michael had promised them.

As though himself fearing the very thing which Clayton had suspected, Black Michael accompanied them to shore, and was the last to leave them when the small boats, having filled the ship's casks with fresh water, were pushed out toward the waiting Fuwalda.

As the boats moved slowly over the smooth waters of the bay, Clayton and his wife stood silently watching their departure, in the breasts of both a feeling of impending disaster and utter hopelessness.

And behind them, over the edge of a low ridge, other eyes watched—close-set, wicked eyes, gleaming beneath shaggy brows.

As the Fuwalda passed through the narrow entrance to the harbor and out of sight behind a projecting point, Lady Alice threw her arms about Clayton's neck and burst into uncontrolled sobs.

Bravely had she faced the dangers of the mutiny; with heroic fortitude she had looked into the terrible future; but now that the horror of absolute solitude was upon them, her over-

wrought nerves gave way, and the reaction came.

He did not attempt to check her tears. It were better that nature have her way in relieving these long-pent emotions, and it was many minutes before the girl—little more than a child she was—could again gain mastery of herself.

"Oh, John," she cried at last, "the horror of it! What are we to do? What are we to do?"

"There is but one thing to do, Alice," and he spoke as quietly as though they were sitting in their snug living-room at home, "and that is work. Work must be our salvation. We must not give ourselves time to think, for in that direction lies madness.

"We must work and wait. I am sure that relief will come, and come quickly, when once it is apparent that the Fuwalda has been lost, even though Black Michael does not keep his word to us."

"But, John, if it were only you and I," she sobbed, "we could endure it, I know; but—"

"Yes, dear," he answered gently, "I have been thinking of that, also; but we must face it, as we must face whatever comes, bravely and with the utmost confidence in our ability to cope with circumstances whatever they may be. Hundreds of thousands of years ago our ancestors of the dim and distant past faced the same problems which we must face, possibly in these same primeval forests.

"That we are here to-day evidences their victory."

"Ah, John, I wish that I might be a man with a man's philosophy, but I am but a woman, seeing with my heart rather than my head, and all that I can see is too horrible, too unthinkable to put into words.

"I only hope you are right. I will do my best to be a brave primeval woman, a fit mate for the primeval man."

Clayton's first thought was to arrange a sleeping shelter for the night; something which might serve to protect them from prowling beasts of prey.

He opened the box containing his rifles and ammunition, that they might both be armed against possible attack while at work, and then together they sought a location for their first night's sleeping place.

A hundred yards from the beach was a little level spot, fairly free of trees, and here they decided eventually to build a permanent house, but, for the time being, they both thought it best to construct a little platform in the trees out of reach of the larger of the savage beasts.

To this end Clayton selected four trees which formed a rectangle about eight feet square, and cutting long branches from other trees, he constructed a framework around them, about ten feet from the ground, fastening the ends of the branches securely to the trees by means of rope, a quantity of which Black Michael had furnished him from the hold of the Fuwalda.

Across this framework Clayton placed other smaller branches quite close together. This platform he paved with the huge fronds of elephant's ear, which grew in profusion about them, and over the fronds he laid a great sail folded into several thicknesses.

Seven feet higher he constructed a similar, though lighter platform, to serve as roof, and from the sides of this he suspended the balance of his sail-cloth for walls.

When completed, he had a rather snug little nest, to which he carried their blankets and some of the lighter luggage.

It was now late in the afternoon, and the balance of the daylight hours were devoted to the building of a rude ladder by means of which Lady Alice could mount to her new home.

All during the day the forest about them had been filled with excited birds of brilliant plumage, and dancing, chat-

tering monkeys, who watched these new arrivals and their wonderful nest-building operations with every mark of keenest interest and fascination.

Notwithstanding that both Clayton and his wife kept a sharp lookout, they saw nothing of larger animals, though on two occasions they had seen their little simian neighbors come screaming and chattering from the near-by ridge, casting affrighted glances back over their little shoulders, and evincing as plainly as though by speech that they were fleeing some terrible thing which lay concealed there.

Just before dusk Clayton finished his ladder, and, filling a great basin with water from the near-by stream, the two mounted to the comparative safety of their aerial chamber.

As it was quite warm, Clayton had left the side-curtains thrown back over the roof, and as they squatted, like Turks, upon their blankets, Lady Alice, straining her eyes into the darkening shadows of the wood, suddenly reached out and grasped Clayton's arm.

"John," she whispered, "look! What is it, a man?"

As Clayton turned his eyes in the direction she indicated, he saw silhouetted dimly against the shadows beyond, a great figure standing upright upon the ridge.

For a moment it stood as though listening, and then turned slowly, and melted into the shadows of the jungle.

"What is it, John?"

"I do not know, Alice," he answered gravely. "It is too dark to see so far, and it may have been but a shadow cast by the rising moon."

"No, John, if it was not a man it was some huge and grotesque mockery of man. Oh, I am afraid!"

He gathered her in his arms, whispering words of courage and love into her ears, for the greatest pain of their misfortunes, to Clayton, was the mental anguish of his young wife. Himself brave and fearless, he was yet able to appreciate the awful suffering which fear entails—a rare gift, though but one of many which had made the young Lord Greystoke respected and loved by all who knew him.

Soon after he lowered the curtain-walls, tying them securely to the trees so that, except for a little opening toward the beach, they were entirely enclosed.

As it was now pitch dark within their tiny eery, they lay down upon their blankets to try to wrest, through sleep, a brief respite of forgetfulness.

Clayton lay facing the opening at the front, a rifle and a brace of revolvers at his hand.

Scarcely had they closed their eyes than the terrifying cry of a tiger rang out from the jungle behind them.

Closer and closer it came until they could hear the great beast directly beneath them. For an hour or more they heard it sniffing and clawing at the trees which supported their platform, but at last it roamed away across the beach, where Clayton could see it clearly in the moonlight—a great, handsome beast, the largest he had ever seen.

During the long hours of darkness they caught but fitful snatches of sleep, for the night noises of a great jungle teeming with myriad animal life kept their overwrought nerves on edge. So that a hundred times they were startled to wakefulness by piercing screams, or the stealthy moving of great bodies beneath them.

CHAPTER III.

LIFE AND DEATH.

MORNING found them but little, if at all refreshed, though it was with a feeling of intense relief that they saw the day dawn.

As soon as they had made their meager breakfast of salt pork, coffee, and biscuit, Clayton commenced work upon their house, for he realized that they could hope for no safety and no peace of mind at night until four strong walls effectually barred the jungle life from them.

The task was arduous and required the better part of a month, though he built but one small room. He constructed his cabin of small logs about six inches in diameter, stopping the chinks with clay which he found at the depth of a few feet beneath the surface soil.

At one end he built a fireplace of small stones from the beach. These also he set in clay, and when the house had been entirely completed he applied a coating of the clay to the entire outside surface to the thickness of four inches.

In the window opening he set small branches about an inch in diameter, both vertically and horizontally, and so woven that they formed a substantial grating that could withstand the strength of a powerful animal. Thus they obtained air and proper ventilation without fear of lessening the safety of their cabin.

The A-shaped roof was thatched with small branches laid close together, and over these long jungle grass, with a final coating of clay.

The door he built of pieces of the packing-boxes which had held their belongings; nailing one piece upon another, the grain of contiguous layers running transversely, until he had a solid body some three inches thick, and of such great strength that they were both forced to laugh as they gazed upon it.

Here the greatest difficulty confronted Clayton, for he had no means whereby to hang his massive door now that he had built it. After two days' work, however, he succeeded in fashioning two massive hard-wood hinges, and with these he hung the door so that it opened and closed easily.

The stuccoing and other final touches were added after they had moved into the house, which they had done as soon as the roof was on, piling their boxes before the door at night, and thus having a comparatively safe and comfortable habitation.

The building of a bed, chairs, table, and shelves was a relatively easy matter, so that by the end of the second month they were well settled, and, but for the constant dread of attack by wild beasts and the ever-growing loneliness, they were not uncomfortable or unhappy.

At night great beasts snarled and roared about their tiny cabin, but so accustomed may one become to oft-repeated noises that soon they paid little attention to them, sleeping soundly the whole night through.

Thrice had they caught fleeting glimpses of the great manlike figures of the first night, but never at sufficiently close range to know positively whether they were man or brute.

The brilliant birds and the little monkeys had become accustomed to their new acquaintances. As they had evidently never seen human beings before, they presently, after their first fright had worn off, approached closer and closer, impelled by that strange curiosity which dominates wild creatures, so that within the first month several of the birds had gone so far as even to accept morsels of food from the hands of the Claytons.

One afternoon, while Clayton was working upon an addition to their cabin, for he contemplated building several more rooms, a number of their grotesque little friends came shrieking and scolding through the trees from the direction of the ridge.

Ever as they fled, they cast fearful glances back at them, and, finally, they stopped near Clayton, jabbering excitedly to him as though to warn him of approaching danger.

At last he saw it, the thing the little monkeys so feared—the man-brute of which the Claytons had caught occasional fleeting glimpses.

It was approaching through the jungle in a semierect position, now and then placing the backs of its closed fists upon the ground—a great anthropoid ape, and, as it advanced, it emitted deep gutteral growls and an occasional low barking sound.

Clayton was at some distance from the cabin, having come to fell a particularly perfect tree for his building operations. Grown careless from months of continued safety, during which time they had seen no dangerous animals during the daylight hours, he had left his rifles and revolvers all within the little cabin, and now that he saw the great ape crashing through the underbrush directly toward him, and from a direction which practically cut him off from escape, he felt a vague little shiver play up and down his spine.

He knew that, armed only with an ax, his chances with this ferocious monster were small indeed, and Alice — oh, Heaven — he thought, what would become of Alice?

There was yet a slight chance of reaching the cabin, and he turned and ran toward it, shouting an alarm to his wife to run in and close the great door in case the ape cut off his retreat.

Lady Greystoke had been sitting a little way from the cabin, and when she heard his cry, she looked up to see the ape springing with almost incredible swiftness, in an effort to head off Clayton.

With a low cry she sprang toward the cabin, and, as she entered, gave a backward glance which filled her soul with terror, for the brute had intercepted her husband who now stood at bay, grasping his ax with both hands, ready to swing it upon the infuriated animal when he should make his final charge.

"Close and bolt the door, Alice," cried Clayton. "I can finish this fellow with my ax."

But he knew he lied, and so did she.

The ape was a huge bull, weighing probably three hundred pounds. His nasty, close-set eyes gleamed hatred from beneath his shaggy brows, while his great canine fangs were bared in a horrid snarl as he paused a moment before Clayton.

Over the brute's shoulder Clayton could see the doorway of his cabin, not twenty paces distant, and a great wave of horror and fear swept over him as he saw his young wife emerge, armed with one of his rifles.

She had always been afraid of firearms, and would never touch them, but now she rushed toward the ape with the fearlessness of a lioness protecting its young.

"Back, Alice!" shouted Clayton. "For Heaven's sake go back."

But she would not heed, and just then the ape charged so that Clayton could say no more.

The man swung his ax with all his mighty strength; but the powerful brute grasped it in those terrible hands, and, tearing it from Clayton's grasp, hurled it far to one side.

With a snarl he closed upon his defenseless victim; but ere his fangs had reached the throat they thirsted for there was a sharp report and a bullet entered the brute's back between his shoulders.

Throwing Clayton to the ground, the beast turned upon his new enemy. There before him stood the terrified girl, vainly trying to fire another bullet into the animal's body; but she did not understand the mechanism of the gun, and the hammer fell futilely upon an empty cartridge.

Screaming with rage and pain, the ape flew at the delicate woman, who went down beneath him to merciful unconsciousness.

Almost simultaneously Clayton regained his feet and, without thought of the utter hopelessness of it, he rushed forward to drag the ape from his wife's prostrate form.

With little or no effort he succeeded, and the great bulk rolled inertly upon the turf before him. The ape was dead. The bullet had done its work.

A hasty examination of his wife revealed no marks upon her, and Clayton decided that the huge brute had died the instant he had sprung toward Alice.

Gently he lifted his wife's still unconscious form and bore her to the

little cabin, but it was fully two hours before she regained consciousness.

Her first words filled Clayton with vague apprehension. For some time after regaining her senses Alice gazed wonderingly about the interior of the little cabin, and then, with a satisfied little sigh, said:

"Oh, John, it is so good to be really home! I have had an awful dream, dear. I thought we were no longer in London, but in some horrible place where great beasts attacked us."

"There, there, Alice," he said, stroking her forehead. "Try to sleep again, and do not worry your little head about bad dreams."

That night a little son was born in the tiny cabin beside the primeval forest, while a great tiger screamed before the door and the deep notes of the lion's roar sounded from beyond the ridge.

Lady Greystoke never recovered from the shock of the great ape's attack, and, though she lived for a year after her baby was born, she was never again outside the cabin, nor did she ever fully realize that she was not in England.

Sometimes she would question Clayton as to the strange noises of the nights, the absence of servants and friends, and the strange rudeness of the furnishings within her room; but, though he made no effort to deceive her, never could she grasp the meaning of it all.

In other ways she was quite rational, and the joy and happiness she took in the possession of her little son and the constant attentions of her husband made that year a very happy one for her, the happiest of her life.

That it would have been beset by worries and apprehension had she been in full command of her mental faculties Clayton well knew; so that, while he suffered terribly to see her so, there were times when he was almost glad for her sake that she could not understand.

Long since had Clayton given up any hope of rescue, except through accident. With unremitting zeal he had worked to beautify the interior of the cabin.

Skins of lion and tiger covered the floor. Cupboards and bookcases lined the walls. Odd vases made by his own hands from the clay of the region held beautiful tropical flowers. Curtains of grass and bamboo covered the windows, and, most arduous task of all with his meager assortment of tools, he had fashioned lumber to neatly seal the walls and ceiling and lay a smooth floor within the cabin.

That he had been able to turn his hands at all to such unaccustomed labor was a source of mild wonder to him. He loved, however, the work, because it was for her and the tiny life that had come to cheer them, though adding a hundredfold to his responsibilities and to the terribleness of their situation.

During the year that followed Clayton was several times attacked by the great apes which now seemed to infest the vicinity of the cabin; but, as he never ventured out except with both rifle and revolvers, he had little fear of the huge beasts.

He had strengthened the window protections and fitted a unique wooden lock to the cabin door, so that when he hunted for game and fruits he had no fear that any animal could break into the little home.

At first much of the game he shot from the cabin windows, but toward the end the animals learned to fear the strange lair whence issued the terrifying thunder of his rifle.

In his leisure Clayton read, often aloud to his wife, from the store of books he had brought for their new home. Among these were many for little children—picture-books, primers, readers — for they had known that their little child would be old enough for such before they had hoped to return to England.

At other times Clayton wrote in his diary, which he had always been ac-

customed to keep in French, and in which he recorded the details of their strange life. This book he kept locked in a little metal box.

A year from the day her little son was born Lady Alice passed quietly away in the night. So peaceful was her end that it was hours before Clayton could realize that his wife was dead.

The horror of the situation came to him very slowly, and it is doubtful that he ever fully realized the enormity of his sorrow and the fearful responsibility that had devolved upon him with the care of that wee thing, his son, still a nursing babe.

The last entry in his diary was made the morning following her death. In it he recites the sad details in a matter-of-fact way that adds to the pathos of it—for it breathes an apathy born of long sorrow and hopelessness, which even this cruel blow could scarcely awake to further suffering:

> My little son is crying for nourishment. Oh, Alice, Alice, what shall I do?

And as John Clayton wrote the last words his hand was ever destined to pen, he dropped his head wearily upon his outstretched arms where they rested upon the table he had built for her who lay still and cold in the bed beside him.

For a long time no sound broke the deathlike stillness of the jungle midday save the wailing of the tiny man-child.

CHAPTER IV.

THE APES.

In the forest of the tableland a mile back from the ocean old Kerchak, the ape, was on a rampage of rage among his people.

The younger and lighter members of his tribe scampered to the higher branches of the great trees to escape his wrath, risking their lives upon branches that scarce supported their weight rather than face old Kerchak in one of his fits of uncontrolled anger.

The other males scattered in all directions, but not before the infuriated brute had felt the vertebræ of one snap between his foaming jaws. A luckless young female slipped from an insecure hold upon a high branch and came crashing to the ground, almost at Kerchak's feet.

With a wild scream he was upon her, tearing a great piece from her side with his mighty teeth, and striking her viciously upon her head and shoulders with a broken tree-limb until her skull was crushed to a jelly.

Then he spied Kala, who, returning from a search for food with her young babe, was ignorant of the state of the mighty male's temper until the shrill warnings of her fellows caused her to scamper madly for safety.

But Kerchak was close upon her, so close that he had almost grasped her ankle had she not made a furious leap far into space from one tree to another—a perilous chance which apes seldom take, unless so closely pursued by danger that there is no other alternative.

She made the leap successfully; but as she grasped the limb of the further tree the sudden jar loosened the hold of the tiny babe where it clung frantically to her neck, and she saw the little thing hurled, turning and twisting, to the ground thirty feet below.

With a low cry of dismay Kala rushed headlong to its side, thoughtless now of the danger from Kerchak; but when she gathered the wee, mangled form to her bosom life had left it.

With low moans she sat cuddling the body to her, nor did Kerchak attempt to molest her. With the death of the babe his fit of demoniacal rage passed as suddenly as it had seized him.

Kerchak was a huge king ape, weighing perhaps three hundred and fifty pounds. His forehead was extremely low and receding, his eyes bloodshot, small and close set to his coarse, flat nose; his ears large and thin, but smaller than most of his kind.

His awful temper and his mighty strength made him supreme among the little tribe into which he had been born some twenty years before.

Now that he was in his prime, there was no simian in all the mighty forest through which he roved that dared contest his right to rule, nor did the other and larger animals molest him.

Old Tantor, the elephant, alone of all the wild, savage life, feared him not — and he alone did Kerchak fear. When Tantor trumpeted the great ape scurried with his fellows high among the trees of the second terrace.

The tribe of anthropoids, over which Kerchak ruled with an iron hand and bared fangs, numbered some six or eight families, each family consisting of an adult male with his wives and children—some sixty or seventy apes, all told.

Kala was the youngest wife of a male called Tublat, meaning "Broken-Nose," and the child she had seen dashed to death was her first, for she was but nine or ten years old.

Notwithstanding her youth, she was large and powerful—a splendid, clean-limbed animal, with a round, high forehead, which denoted more intelligence than most of her kind possessed. So, also, she had a greater capacity for mother love and mother sorrow.

But she was still an ape, a huge, fierce, terrible beast of a species closely allied to the gorilla, yet with more intelligence, which, with the strength of their cousins, made her kind the most fearsome of those awe-inspiring progenitors of man.

When the tribe saw that Kerchak's rage had ceased they came slowly down from their arboreal retreats and pursued again the various occupations which he had interrupted. The young played and frolicked about among the trees and bushes.

Some of the adults lay prone upon the soft mat of dead and decaying vegetation which covered the ground, while others turned over pieces of fallen branches and clods of earth in search of the small bugs and reptiles which formed a part of their food.

Others, again, searched the surrounding trees for fruit, nuts, small birds, and eggs.

They had passed an hour or so thus when Kerchak called them together, and, with a word of command to them to follow him, set off toward the sea.

They traveled for the most part upon the ground, where it was open, following the path of the great elephants whose comings and goings break the only roads through the tangled jungle mazes of bush, vine, creeper, and tree. When they walked it was with a rolling, awkward motion, placing the knuckles of their closed hands upon the ground and swinging their ungainly bodies forward.

But when the way was through the lower trees they moved more swiftly, swinging from branch to branch with the agility of their smaller cousins, the monkeys. And all the way Kala carried her little dead baby hugged closely to her breast.

It was shortly after noon when they reached a ridge overlooking the beach, where, below them, lay the tiny cottage which was Kerchak's goal.

He had seen many of his kind go to their deaths before the loud noise made by the little black stick in the hands of the strange white ape who lived in that wonderful lair, and Kerchak had made up his brute mind to own that death-dealing contrivance and to explore the interior of the mysterious den.

He wanted to feel his teeth sink into the neck of the queer animal that he had learned to hate and fear, and, because of this, he came often with his tribe to reconnoiter, waiting for a time when the white ape should be off his guard.

Of late they had quit attacking, or even showing themselves; for every time they had done so in the past the little stick had roared out the terrible message of death to some member of the tribe.

To-day there was no sign of the man

about, and from where they watched they could see that the cabin door was open. Slowly, cautiously, and noiselessly they crept through the jungle toward the little cabin.

There were no growls, no fierce screams of rage—the little black stick had taught them to come quietly, lest they awaken it.

On they came, until Kerchak himself slunk stealthily to the very door and peered within. Behind him were two males, and then Kala, closely straining the little dead form to her breast.

Inside the den they saw the strange white ape lying half across a table, his head buried in his arms; and on the bed lay a figure covered by a sail-cloth, while from a tiny rustic cradle came the plaintive wailing of a babe.

Noiselessly Kerchak entered, crouching for the charge; and then John Clayton rose with a sudden start and faced them.

The sight that met his eyes must have frozen him with horror, for there, within the door, stood three great bull apes, while behind them crowded many more; how many he never knew, for his revolvers were hanging on the far wall beside his rifle, and Kerchak was charging.

When Kerchak released the limp form which had been John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, he turned his attention toward the little cradle; but Kala was there before him, and when he would have grasped the child she snatched it herself, and before he could intercept her she had bolted through the door and taken refuge in a high tree.

As she took up the little live baby of Alice Clayton she dropped the dead body of her own into the empty cradle.

The wail of the living had answered the call of universal motherhood within her wild breast which the dead could not still.

High up among the branches of a mighty tree she hugged the shrieking infant to her bosom, and soon the instinct that was as dominant in this fierce female as it had been in the breast of his tender and beautiful mother—the instinct of mother love—reached out to the tiny man-child's half-formed understanding, and he became quiet.

Then hunger closed the gap between them, and the son of an English lord and an English lady nursed at the breast of Kala, the great ape.

In the mean time the beasts within the cabin were warily examining the contents of this strange lair.

Once satisfied that Clayton was dead, Kerchak turned his attention to the thing which lay upon the bed, covered by a piece of sail-cloth.

Gingerly he lifted one corner of the shroud; but when he saw the body of the woman beneath he tore the cloth roughly from her form and seized the still, white throat in his huge, hairy hands.

A moment he let his fingers sink deep into the cold flesh, and then, realizing that she was already dead, he turned from her to examine the contents of the room; nor did he again molest the body of either Lady Alice or Sir John.

The rifle hanging upon the wall caught his first attention; it was for this strange, death-dealing thunder-stick that he had yearned for months; but, now that it was within his grasp, he scarcely had the temerity to seize it.

Cautiously he approached the thing, ready to flee precipitately should it speak in its roaring tones, as he had heard it speak before, the last words to those of his kind who, through ignorance or rashness, had attacked the wonderful white ape that had borne it.

Deep in the beast's intelligence was something which assured him that the thunder-stick was only dangerous when in the hands of one who could manipulate it; but yet it was several minutes ere he could bring himself to touch it.

Instead, he walked back and forth along the floor before it, turning his head so that never once did his eyes leave the object of his desire.

Using his long arms as a man uses

crutches, and rolling his huge body from side to side with each stride, the great king ape paced to and fro, uttering deep growls, occasionally punctuated with that ear-piercing scream, than which there is no more terrifying noise in all the jungle.

Presently he halted before the rifle. Slowly he raised a huge hand until it almost touched the shining barrel, only to withdraw it once more and continue his hurried pacing.

It was as though the great brute, by this show of fearlessness, and through the medium of his wild voice, were endeavoring to bolster his courage to the point which would permit him to take the rifle in his hand.

Again he stopped, and this time succeeded in forcing his reluctant hand to the cold steel, only to snatch it away almost immediately and resume his restless beat.

Time after time this strange ceremony was repeated, but on each occasion with increased confidence, until, finally, the rifle was torn from its hook and lay in the grasp of the great brute.

Finding that it harmed him not, Kerchak began to examine it closely. He felt of it from end to end, peered down the black depths of the muzzle, fingered the sights, the breach, the stock, and finally the trigger.

During all these operations the apes who had entered sat huddled near the door watching their chief, while those outside strained and crowded to catch a glimpse of what transpired within.

Suddenly Kerchak's finger closed upon the trigger, there was a deafening roar in the little room, and the apes at and beyond the door fell over one another in their wild anxiety to escape.

Kerchak was equally frightened; so frightened, in fact, that he quite forgot to throw aside the author of that fearful noise, but bolted for the door with it tightly clutched in one hand.

As he passed through the opening, the front sight of the rifle caught upon the edge of the inswung door with sufficient force to close it tightly after the fleeing ape.

When Kerchak came to a halt a short distance from the cabin, and discovered that he still held the rifle, he dropped it as though it had burned him, nor did he again essay to recover it. The noise had been too much for his brute nerves; but he was now quite convinced that the terrible stick was quite harmless by itself if left alone.

It was an hour before the apes could again bring themselves to approach the cabin to continue their investigations; and when they finally did so, they found to their chagrin that the door was closed and so securely fastened that they could not force it.

The cleverly constructed latch which Clayton had made for the door had sprung as Kerchak passed out; nor could the apes find means of ingress through the heavily barred windows.

After roaming about the vicinity for a short time, they started back for the deeper forests and the higher land from whence they had come.

Kala had not once come to earth with her little adopted babe, but now Kerchak called to her to descend with the rest; and as there was no note of anger in his voice, she dropped lightly from branch to branch and joined the others on their homeward march.

Those of the apes who attempted to examine Kala's strange baby were repulsed with bared fangs and menacing growls, accompanied by words of warning from Kala.

When they assured her that they meant the child no harm she permitted them to come close, but would not allow them to touch her charge.

It was as though she knew that her baby was frail and delicate, and feared lest the rough hands of her fellows might injure the little thing.

Another thing she did, and which made traveling an onerous trial for her. Remembering the death of her own little one, she clung desperately to the new babe, with one hand, whenever they were upon the march.

The other young rode upon their mothers' backs, their little arms tightly clasping the hairy necks before them, while their legs were locked beneath their mothers' armpits.

Not so with Kala. She held the small form of the little Lord Greystoke tightly to her breast, where the dainty hands clutched the long black hair that covered her. She had seen one child fall from her back to terrible death, and she would take no further chances with this one.

CHAPTER V.

THE WHITE APE.

TENDERLY Kala nursed her little waif, wondering silently why it did not gain strength and agility as did the little apes of other mothers. It was nearly a year from the time the little fellow came into her possession before he would walk alone; and as for climbing—my, but how stupid he was!

Kala sometimes talked with the older females about her young hopeful, but none of them could understand how a child could be so slow and backward in learning to care for itself. Why, it could not even find food alone, and more than twelve moons had passed since Kala had come upon it.

Had they known that the child had seen thirteen moons before it had come into Kala's possession, they would have considered its case as absolutely hopeless, for the little apes of their own tribe were as far advanced in two or three moons as was this little stranger after twenty-five.

Tublat, Kala's husband, was sorely vexed, and but for the female's careful watching would have put the child out of the way.

"He will never be a great ape," he argued. "Always will you have to carry him and protect him. What good will he be to the tribe? None; only a burden.

"Let us leave him quietly sleeping among the tall grasses, that you may bear other and stronger apes to guard us in our old age."

"Never, Broken-Nose," replied Kala. "If I must carry him forever, so be it."

Tublat went to Kerchak to urge him to use his authority with Kala, and force her to give up little Tarzan, which was the name they had given to the tiny Lord Greystoke, and which meant "White-Skin."

But when Kerchak spoke to her about it Kala threatened to run away from the tribe if they did not leave her in peace with the child; and as this is one of the unalienable rights of the junglefolk, if they be dissatisfied among their own people, they bothered her no more, for Kala was a fine clean-limbed young female, and they did not wish to lose her.

As Tarzan grew he made more rapid strides, so that by the time he was ten years old he was an excellent climber, and on the ground could do many wonderful things which were beyond the powers of his little brothers and sisters.

In many ways did he differ from them, and they often marveled at his superior cunning, but in strength and size he was deficient; for at ten the great anthropoids were fully grown, some of them towering over six feet in height, while little Tarzan was still but a half-grown boy.

Yet such a boy!

From early infancy he had used his hands to swing from branch to branch after the manner of his giant mother, and as he grew older he spent hour upon hour daily speeding through the tree-tops with his brothers and sisters.

He could spring twenty feet across space at the dizzy heights of the forest top, and grasp with unerring precision, and without apparent jar, a limb waving wildly in the path of an approaching tornado.

He could drop twenty feet at a stretch from limb to limb in rapid descent to the ground, or he could gain the utmost pinnacle of the loftiest tropical giant with the ease and swift-

ness of a squirrel. Though but ten years old he was fully as strong as the average man of thirty, and far more agile than the most practised athlete ever becomes. And day by day his strength was increasing.

His life among the fierce apes had been happy; for his recollection held no other life, nor did he know that there existed within the universe aught else than his little forest and the wild jungle animals with which he was familiar.

He was nearly ten before he commenced to realize that a great difference existed between himself and his fellows. His little body, burned almost black by exposure, suddenly caused him feelings of intense shame, for he realized that it was entirely hairless, like some low snake or reptile.

He attempted to obviate this by plastering himself from head to foot with mud, but this soon dried and fell off. Beside, it felt so uncomfortable that he quickly decided that he preferred the shame to the discomfort.

In the higher land which his tribe frequented was a little lake, and it was here that Tarzan first saw his face in the clear, still waters of its bosom.

It was on a sultry day of the dry season that he and one of his cousins had gone down to the bank to drink. As they leaned over, both little faces were mirrored on the placid pool; the fierce and terrible features of the ape beside those of the aristocratic scion of an old English house.

Tarzan was appalled. It had been bad enough to be hairless, but to own such a countenance! He wondered that the other apes could look at him at all.

That tiny slit of a mouth and those puny white teeth! How they looked beside the mighty lips and powerful fangs of his more fortunate brothers!

And the little pinched nose of him: so thin was it that it looked half starved. He turned red as he compared it with the beautiful broad nostrils of his companion. Such a generous nose! Why, it spread half across his face! It certainly must be fine to be so handsome, thought poor little Tarzan.

But when he saw his own eyes—ah! that was the final blow—a brown spot, a gray circle, and then blank whiteness! Frightful! Not even the snakes had such hideous eyes as he.

So intent was he upon this personal appraisement of his features that he did not hear the parting of the tall grass behind him as a great body pushed itself stealthily through the jungle; nor did his companion, the ape, hear either, for he was drinking, and the noise of his sucking lips drowned the quiet approach of the intruder.

Not thirty paces behind the two he crouched — Sabor, the tiger — lashing his tail. Cautiously he moved a great padded paw forward, noiselessly placing it before he lifted the next. Thus he advanced; his belly low, almost touching the surface of the ground—a great cat preparing to spring upon its prey.

Now he was within ten feet of the two unsuspecting little play-fellows—carefully he drew his hind feet well up beneath his body, the great muscles rolling under the beautiful skin of black and yellow! So low he was crouching that he seemed flattened to the earth except for the upward bend of the glossy back as it gathered for the spring.

No longer the tail lashed—quiet and straight behind him it lay.

An instant he paused thus as though turned to stone, and then, with an awful scream, he sprang.

Sabor, the tiger, was a wise hunter. To one less wise the wild alarm of his fierce cry as he sprang would have seemed a foolish thing, for could he not more surely have fallen upon his victims had he but quietly leaped without that loud shriek?

But Sabor knew well the wondrous quickness of the junglefolk and their almost unbelievable powers of hearing. To them the sudden scraping of one

blade of grass across another were as effectual a warning as his loudest cry, and Sabor knew that he could not make that leap without a little noise.

His wild scream was not a warning, but instead was meant to freeze his poor victims in a paralysis of terror for the tiny fraction of an instant, which would suffice for his mighty claws to sink into their soft flesh and hold them beyond peradventure of escape.

In so far as the ape was concerned Sabor reasoned correctly. The little fellow crouched trembling just an instant, but that instant was quite long enough to prove his undoing.

Not so, however, with Tarzan, the man-child. His life amidst the dangers of the jungle had taught him to meet emergencies with self-confidence, and his higher intelligence resulted in a quickness of mental action far beyond the powers of the apes.

So the scream of Sabor, the tiger, galvanized the brain and muscles of little Tarzan into instant action.

Before him lay the deep waters of the little lake, behind him certain death; a cruel death beneath tearing claws and rending fangs.

Tarzan had always hated water except as a medium for quenching his thirst. He hated it because he connected it with the chill and discomfort of the torrential rains, and he feared it for the thunder and lightning and wind which accompanied it.

The deep waters of the lake he had been taught by his wild mother to avoid, and further, had he not seen little Neeta sink beneath its quiet surface only a few short weeks before never to return to the tribe?

But of the two evils his quick mind chose the lesser, and before the great beast had covered half his leap Tarzan felt the chill waters close above his head.

He could not swim, and the water was very deep; but still he lost no particle of that self-confidence and resourcefulness which were the badges of his superior being.

Rapidly he moved his hands and feet in an attempt to scramble upward, and, possibly more by chance than design, he fell into the stroke that a dog uses when swimming, so that within a few seconds his nose was above water and he found that he could keep it there by continuing his strokes, and also make progress through the water.

He was much surprised and pleased with this new acquirement which had been so suddenly thrust upon him, but he had no time for thinking much upon it.

He was now swimming parallel to the bank, and there he saw the cruel beast that would have seized him crouching upon the still form of his playmate.

The tiger was intently watching Tarzan, evidently expecting him to return to shore; but this the boy had no intention of doing.

Instead he raised his voice in the call of distress common to his tribe, adding to it the warning which would prevent would-be rescuers from running into the clutches of Sabor.

Almost immediately there came an answer from the distance, and presently forty or fifty great apes swung rapidly and majestically through the trees toward the scenes of tragedy.

In the van was Kala, for she had recognized the tones of her best-beloved, and with her was the mother of the little ape who lay dead beneath cruel Sabor.

Though more powerful and better equipped for fighting than the apes, the tiger had no desire to meet these enraged adults, and with a snarl of hatred he sprang quickly into the brush and disappeared.

Tarzan now swam to shore and clambered quickly upon dry land. The feeling of freshness and exhilaration which the cool waters had imparted to him, filled his being with grateful surprise, and ever after he lost no opportunity to take a daily plunge in lake or stream or ocean when it was possible to do so.

For a long time Kala could not accustom herself to the sight; for though her people could swim when forced to it, they did not like to enter water; and never did so voluntarily.

The adventure with the tiger gave Tarzan food for pleasurable memories, for it was such affairs which broke the monotony of his daily life, which otherwise would have been but a dull round of searching for food, eating, and sleeping.

The tribe to which he belonged roamed a tract extending, roughly, twenty-five miles along the seacoast and some fifty miles inland. This they traversed almost continually, seldom remaining long in one locality; but as they moved through the trees with great speed they often covered the territory in a very few days. Again they would remain for months in the same locality.

Much depended upon food supply, climatic conditions, and the prevalence of animals of the more dangerous species; though Kerchak often led them on long marches for no other reason than that he had tired of remaining in the same place.

At night they slept where darkness overtook them, lying upon the ground, and sometimes covering their heads, and more seldom their bodies, with the great leaves of the elephant's ear. Two or three might lie cuddled in each other's arms for additional warmth if the night were chill, and thus Tarzan had slept in Kala's arms nightly for all these years.

That the huge fierce brute loved this child of another race is beyond question, and he, too, gave to the great, hairy beast all the affection that would have belonged to his fair young mother had she lived.

When he was disobedient she cuffed him, it is true, but she was never cruel to him, and was more often caressing than chastising him.

Tublat, her husband, always hated Tarzan, and on several occasions had come near ending his youthful career.

Tarzan on his part never lost an opportunity to show that he fully reciprocated his foster-father's sentiments, and whenever he could safely annoy him or make faces at him or hurl insults upon him from the safety of his mother's arms or the slender branches of the higher trees, he did so.

His superior intelligence and cunning permitted him to invent a thousand diabolical tricks to add to the burdens of Tublat's life.

Early in his boyhood he had learned to form ropes by twisting and tying long grasses together, and with these he was forever tripping Tublat or attempting to hang him from some overhanging branch.

By constant playing and experimenting with these he learned to tie rude knots, and make sliding nooses, and with these he and the younger apes amused themselves. What Tarzan did they tried to do also, but he alone originated and became proficient.

One day while playing thus Tarzan had thrown his rope at one of his fleeing companions, retaining the other end in his grasp. By accident the noose fell squarely about the running ape's neck, bringing him to a sudden and surprising halt.

Ah, here was a new game, a fine game, thought Tarzan, and immediately he attempted to repeat the trick. And thus, by painstaking and continued practise, he learned the art of roping.

Now, indeed, was the life of Tublat a living nightmare. In sleep, upon the march, night or day, he never knew when that quiet noose would slip about his neck and nearly choke the life out of him. Kala punished, Tublat swore dire vengeance, and old Kerchak took notice and warned and threatened; but all to no avail.

Tarzan defied them all, and the thin, strong noose continued to settle about Tublat's neck whenever he least expected it. The other apes derived unlimited amusement from Tublat's discomfiture, for Broken-Nose was a disagreeable old fellow, whom no one liked, anyway.

In Tarzan's clever little mind many thoughts revolved, and back of these was his divine power of reason.

If he could catch his fellow apes with his long arm of many grasses, why not Sabor, the tiger?

It was the germ of a thought, which, however, was destined to mull round in his conscious and subconscious minds until it resulted in magnificent achievement.

But that came in later years.

CHAPTER VI.

JUNGLE BATTLES.

THE wanderings of the tribe brought them often near the closed and silent cabin by the little landlocked harbor. To Tarzan this was always a source of never-ending mystery and pleasure.

He would peck into the curtained windows, or, climbing upon the roof, peer down the black depths of the chimney in vain endeavor to solve the unknown wonders that lay within those strong walls.

His little childish imagination pictured wonderful creatures within, and the very impossibility of forcing entrance added a thousandfold to his desire to do so.

He would clamber about the roof and windows for hours attempting to discover means of ingress, but to the door he paid little attention, for this was apparently as solid as the walls.

It was in the next visit to the vicinity following the adventure with old Sabor that, as he approached the cabin, Tarzan noticed that from a distance the door appeared as though an independent part of the wall in which it was set, and for the first time it occurred to him that this might prove the means of entrance which had so long eluded him.

He was alone, as was often the case when he visited the cabin. The apes had no love for it, the story of the thunder-stick, having lost nothing in the telling during these ten years, had quite surrounded the white man's deserted cabin with an atmosphere of weirdness and terror for the simians.

The story of his own connection with the cabin had never been told him, for the language of the apes has few words, and so they could talk but little of what they had seen in the cabin, for they had no words accurately to describe either the strange people or their belongings, and so, long before Tarzan was old enough to understand, the subject had been forgotten by the tribe.

Only in a dim, vague way had Kala explained to him that his father had been a strange white ape, but he did not know that Kala was not his own mother.

On this day, then, he went directly to the door and spent hours examining it and fussing with the hinges, the knob, and the latch. Finally he stumbled upon the right combination and the door swung creakingly open before his astonished eyes.

For some minutes he did not dare venture within, but finally, as his eyes became accustomed to the dim light of the interior he slowly and cautiously entered.

In the middle of the floor lay a skeleton, every vestige of flesh gone from the bones to which still clung the mildewed remnants of what had once been clothing; upon the bed lay a similar gruesome thing, but smaller, while in a tiny cradle near by was a third, a wee mite of a skeleton.

To none of these evidences of an old tragedy did little Tarzan give but passing heed. His wild jungle life had inured him to the sight of dead and dying animals, and had he known that he was looking upon the remains of his own father and mother he would have been no more greatly moved.

The furnishings and other contents of the room it was which riveted his attention. He examined many things minutely—strange tools and weapons, books, papers, clothing—what little had withstood the ravages of time in the humid atmosphere of the jungle coast.

He opened chests and cupboards, such as did not baffle his small experience, and in these he found the contents much better preserved.

Among other things he found a sharp hunting-knife, on the keen blade of which he immediately proceeded to cut his finger. Nothing daunted, he continued his experiments, finding that he could hack and hew splinters of wood from the table and chairs with this new toy.

For a long time this amused him, but finally tiring he continued his explorations. In a cupboard filled with books he came across one with brightly colored pictures—it was a child's illustrated alphabet—

A is for Archer
Who shoots with a bow.
B is for Boy,
His first name is Joe.

The pictures interested him greatly. There were many apes with faces similar to his own, and farther over in the book he found, under "M," some little monkeys such as he saw daily flitting through the trees of his primeval forest. But nowhere was pictured any of his own people; in all the book was none that resembled Kerchak or 'Tublat or Kala.

At first he tried to pick the little figures from the paper, but he soon saw that they were not real, though he knew not what they might be, nor had he any words to describe them.

The boats and trains and cows and horses were quite meaningless to him, but not quite so baffling as the odd little figures which appeared beneath and between the colored pictures—some strange kind of bugs he thought they might be, for many of them had legs, though nowhere could he find one with eyes and a mouth. It was his first introduction to the letters of the alphabet, and he was over ten years old.

Of course he had never before seen print, or never had spoken with any living thing which had the remotest idea that such a thing as a written language existed, and never had he seen any one reading.

So what wonder that the little boy was quite at a loss to guess the meaning of these strange figures.

Near the back of the book he found his old enemy, Sabor, the tiger, and, just above him, coiled Histah, the snake.

Oh, it was most engrossing! Never before in all his ten years had he enjoyed anything so much. So absorbed was he that he did not note the approaching dusk, until it was quite upon him.

He put the book back in the cupboard and closed the door, for he did not wish any one else to find and destroy his treasure, and as he went out into the gathering darkness he closed the great door of the cabin behind him as it had been before he discovered the secret of its lock, but before he left he had noticed the hunting-knife lying where he had thrown it upon the floor, and this he picked up and took with him to show to his fellows.

He had taken scarce a dozen steps toward the jungle when a great form rose up before him from the shadows of a low bush.

At first he thought it was one of his own people, but in another instant he realized that it was a huge gorilla.

So close was he that there was no chance for flight, and little Tarzan knew that he must stand and fight for his life; for these great beasts were the deadly enemies of his tribe, and neither one or the other ever asked or gave quarter.

Had Tarzan been a full-grown bull ape of the species of his tribe he would have been more than a match for the gorilla, but being only a little English boy, though enormously muscular for such, he stood no show against his cruel antagonist. In his veins, however, flowed the blood of the best of a race of mighty fighters, and back of this was the training of his short lifetime among the fierce brutes of the jungle.

He knew no fear, as we know it; his

heart beat the faster, but from the excitement and exhilaration of adventure. Had the opportunity presented itself he would have escaped, but solely because his judgment told him he was no match for the great thing which confronted him. And as flight was out of the question, he faced the gorilla squarely and bravely without a tremor of a single muscle, or any sign of panic.

In fact, he met the brute midway in its charge, striking its huge body with his closed fists and as futilely as if he had been a fly attacking an elephant. But in one hand he still clutched the knife he had found, and as the brute, striking and biting, closed upon him, the boy accidentally turned the point toward the hairy breast.

As it sank deep into the body of him, the gorilla shrieked in pain and rage.

But the boy had learned in that brief second a use for his sharp and shining toy, so that, as the tearing, striking beast dragged him to earth he plunged the blade repeatedly into its breast.

The gorilla, fighting after the manner of its kind, struck terrific blows with its open hand, and tore the flesh at the boy's throat and chest with its mighty tusks.

For a moment they rolled upon the ground in the fierce frenzy of combat. More and more weakly the torn and bleeding arm struck home with the long sharp blade, then the little figure stiffened with a spasmodic jerk, and Tarzan, the young Lord Greystoke, rolled senseless upon the dead and decaying vegetation which carpeted his jungle home.

A mile back in the forest the tribe had heard the fierce challenge of the gorilla, and, as was his custom when any danger threatened, Kerchak called his people together, partly for mutual protection against a common enemy, since this gorilla might be but one of several, and also to see that all members of the tribe were accounted for.

It was soon discovered that Tarzan was missing, and Tublat was strongly opposed to sending assistance. Kerchak himself had no liking for the strange little waif, so he listened to Tublat, and finally, with a shrug of his shoulders, turned back to the pile of leaves on which he had made his bed.

But Kala was of a different mind. In fact, she had waited but to learn that Tarzan was absent ere she was fairly flying through the matted branches toward the point from which the cries of the gorilla were still plainly audible.

Darkness had fallen, and an early moon was sending its faint light to cast strange, grotesque shadows among the dense foliage of the forest.

Here and there the brilliant rays penetrated to earth, but for the most part they only served to accentuate the Stygian blackness of the jungle.

Like some huge fantom, Kala swung noiselessly from tree to tree, now running nimbly along a great branch, now swinging through space at the end of another, to grasp that of a further tree in her rapid progress toward the tragedy her knowledge of jungle life told her was being enacted.

The cries of the gorilla had told her plainly that it was in mortal combat with some other denizen of the fierce wood. Suddenly the cries ceased, and the silence of death reigned throughout the jungle.

Kala could not understand, for the voice of the gorilla had at the last been raised in the agony of suffering and death; but no sound had come to her by which she possibly could determine the nature of his antagonist.

That her little Tarzan could destroy a great bull gorilla she knew to be improbable; and, so, as she neared the spot from which the sounds of the struggle had come, she moved more warily. With extreme caution she traversed the lowest branches, peering eagerly into the moon-splashed blackness for a sign of the combatants.

Presently she came upon them, lying in an open space full under the brilliant moon—Tarzan's torn and bloody form, and beside it a great bull gorilla, stone dead. With a low cry Kala rushed to

Tarzan's side, and, gathering the poor, blood-covered body to her breast, listened for a sign of life. Faintly she heard it—the weak beating of the little heart.

Tenderly she bore him back through the inky jungle to where the tribe lay, and for many days and nights she sat guard beside him, bringing him food and water, and brushing the flies and other insects from his cruel wounds.

Of medicine or surgery the poor thing knew nothing. She could but lick the wounds, and thus she kept them cleansed, that healing nature might the more quickly do her work.

At first Tarzan would eat nothing, but rolled and tossed in a wild delirium of fever. All he craved was water, and this she brought him in the only way she could, bearing it in her own mouth.

No human mother could have shown more unselfish and sacrificing devotion than did this poor wild brute for the little orphaned waif whom fate had thrown into her keeping.

At last the fever abated, and the boy commenced to mend. No complaint passed his tight-set lips, though the pain of his wounds was excruciating.

A portion of his chest was laid bare to the ribs, three of which had been broken by the mighty blows of the gorilla; one arm was nearly severed by the giant fangs, and a great piece had been torn from his neck, exposing his jugular vein, which the cruel jaws had missed but by a miracle.

With the stoicism of the brutes who had raised him, he endured his suffering quietly, preferring to crawl away from the others and lie huddled in some clump of tall grasses rather than to show his misery before their eyes.

Kala, alone, he was glad to have with him.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LIGHT OF KNOWLEDGE.

After what seemed an eternity to the little sufferer he was once more able to walk, and from then on his recovery was rapid, so that in another month he was as strong and active as ever.

During his convalescence he had gone over in his mind many times the battle with the gorilla, and his first thought was to recover the wonderful little weapon which had transformed him from a hopelessly outclassed weakling to the superior of the mighty terror of the jungle.

Also, he was anxious to return to the cabin and continue his investigations of the wondrous contents.

So, early one morning, he set forth alone upon his quest. After a little search he located the clean-picked bones of his late adversary, and close by, partly buried beneath the fallen leaves, he found the knife, now red with rust from its exposure to the dampness of the ground and from the dried blood of the gorilla.

He did not like the change in its former bright and gleaming surface; but it was still a formidable weapon, and one which he meant to use to advantage whenever the opportunity presented itself. He had in mind that no more would he run from the wanton attacks of old Tublat.

In another moment he was at the cabin, and after a short time had again thrown the latch and entered. His first concern was to learn the mechanism of the lock, and this he did by examining it closely, while the door was open so that he could learn precisely what caused it to hold the door and by what means it released at his touch.

He found that he could close and lock the door from within, and this he did so that there would be no chance of his being molested while at his investigations.

He commenced a systematic search of the cabin; but his attention was soon riveted by the books which seemed to exert a strange and powerful influence over him, so that he could scarce attend to aught else for the lure of the wondrous puzzle which their purpose presented to him.

Among the other books were a primer, some child's readers, numerous picture-books, and a great dictionary. All of these he examined; but the pictures caught his fancy most, though the strange little bugs which covered the pages where there were no pictures excited his wonder and deepest thought.

Squatting upon his haunches on the table-top — his smooth, brown, naked body bent over the book which rested in his strong, slender hands, and his great shock of long, black hair falling about his well-shaped head and bright, intelligent eyes—Tarzan of the apes, little primitive man, presented a picture filled at once with pathos and with promise—an allegorical figure of the primordial groping through the black night of ignorance toward the light of learning.

His face was tense in study, for he had grasped in a hazy, nebulous way the rudiments of a thought which was destined to prove the key and the solution to the puzzling problem of the strange little bugs.

In his hands was a primer opened at a picture of a little ape similar to himself, but covered, except for hands and face, with strange, colored fur, for such he thought the jacket and trousers to be.

Beneath the picture were three little bugs:

BOY

And now he had discovered in the text upon the page that these three were repeated many times in the same sequence.

Another fact he learned, and that was that there were comparatively few individual bugs; but these were repeated many times, occasionally alone, but more often in company with others.

Slowly he turned the pages, scanning the pictures and the text for a repetition of the combination b-o-y; presently he found it beneath a picture of another little ape and a strange animal which went upon four legs like the jackal, and somewhat resembled him. Beneath this picture the bugs appeared as—

A BOY AND A DOG

There they were, the three little bugs which always accompanied the little ape.

And so he progressed very, very slowly, for it was a hard and laborious task which he had set himself without knowing it—a task which might seem to you or to me impossible—learning to read without having the slightest knowledge of letters or written language, or the faintest idea that such things existed.

He did not accomplish it in a day, or in a week, or in a month, or in a year; but slowly, very slowly, he learned.

By the time he was fifteen he knew the various combinations of letters which stood for every pictured figure in the little primer and in one or two of the picture-books.

Of the meaning and use of the articles and conjunctions, verbs, adverbs, and pronouns he had but the faintest and haziest conception.

One day when he was about twelve he found a number of lead-pencils in a hitherto undiscovered drawer beneath the table, and in scratching upon the table with one of them he was delighted to discover the black line it left behind it.

He worked so assiduously with this new toy that the table-top was soon a mass of scrawly loops and irregular lines and his pencil-point worn down to the wood. Then he took another pencil, but this time he had a definite object in view.

He would attempt to reproduce some of the little bugs that scrambled over the pages of his books.

It was a difficult task, for he held the pencil as one would grasp the hilt of a dagger, which does not add greatly to ease in writing nor to the legibility of the results.

But he persevered for months, at

such times as he was able to come to the cabin, until at last by repeated experimenting he found a position in which to hold the pencil that best permitted him to guide and control it, so that at last he could roughly reproduce any of the little bugs.

Thus he made a beginning at writing.

Copying the bugs taught him another thing, their number; and, though he could not count as we understand it, yet he had an idea of quantity, the base of his calculations being the number of fingers upon one of his hands.

His search through the various books convinced him that he had discovered all the different kinds of bugs most often repeated in combination, and he arranged them in proper order with great ease because of the frequency with which he had perused the fascinating alphabet picture-book.

His education progressed — but his greatest finds were in the inexhaustable storehouse of the huge illustrated dictionary; for he learned more through the medium of pictures than text, even after he had grasped the significance of the bugs.

When he discovered the arrangement of words in alphabetical order he delighted in searching for and finding the combinations with which he was familiar, and the words which followed them, their definitions, led him still further into the mazes of erudition.

By the time he was seventeen he had learned to read the simple child's primer and had fully realized the true and wonderful purpose of the bugs.

No longer did he feel shame for his hairless body or his human features, for now his reason told him that he was of a different race from his wild and hairy companions. He was a "M-A-N," they were "A-P-E-S," and the little apes which scurried through the forest top were "M-O-N-K-E-Y-S." He knew, too, that old Sabor was a "T-I-G-E-R," and Histah a "S-N-A-K-E," and Tantor an "E-L-E-P-H-A-N-T."

From then on his progress was rapid. With the help of the great dictionary and the active intelligence of a healthy mind endowed by inheritance with more than ordinary reasoning powers he shrewdly guessed at much which he could not really understand, and more often than not his guesses were close to the mark of truth.

There were many breaks in his education, caused by the migratory habits of his tribe, but even when removed from recourse to his books his active brain continued to search out the mysteries of his fascinating avocation.

Pieces of bark and flat leaves, and even smooth stretches of flat earth provided him with copy-books whereon to scratch with the point of his hunting-knife the lessons he was learning.

Nor did he neglect the sterner duties of life while following the bent of his inclination toward the solving of the mystery of his library.

He practised with his rope and played with his sharp knife, which he had learned to keep keen by whetting upon flat stones.

The tribe had grown larger since Tarzan had come among them.

Under the leadership of Kerchak they had been able to frighten the other tribes from their part of the jungle so that they had plenty to eat and little or no loss from predatory incursions of neighbors.

The younger males as they became adult found it more comfortable to take wives from their own tribe, or, if they captured one of another tribe, to bring her back to Kerchak's band and live in amity rather than attempt to set up new establishments of their own or make war upon the redoubtable Kerchak.

Occasionally one more ferocious than his fellows would attempt this latter alternative, but none had come yet who could wrest the palm of victory from the fierce and brutal ape.

Tarzan held a peculiar position in the tribe.

They seemed to consider him one of

them and yet in some way different. The older males either ignored him entirely or else hated him so vindictively that but for his wonderous agility and speed and the fierce protection of the huge Kala he would have been despatched at an early age.

Tublat was his most consistent enemy, but it was through Tublat that, when he was about thirteen, the persecution of his enemies suddenly ceased and he was left severely alone. except on the occasions when one of them ran amuck in the throes of one of those strange fits of insane rage which attack the males of many of the fiercer animals of the jungle. Then none was safe.

On the day that Tarzan established his right to respect, the tribe was gathered about a small natural amphitheater which the jungle had left free from its entangling vines and creepers.

The space was almost circular in shape. Upon every hand rose the mighty giants of the untouched forest, with the matted undergrowth banked so closely that the only opening into the arena was through the upper branches of the trees.

Here, safe from interruption, the tribe often gathered. In the center of the amphitheater was one of those strange earthen drums which the anthropoids build for the queer rites the sounds of which men have heard in the fastnesses of the jungle, but which none has ever witnessed.

Many travelers have seen the drums of the great apes, and some have heard the sounds of its beating and the noise of the weird revelry of these first lords of the jungle, but Tarzan, Lord Greystoke, is, doubtless, the only human being who ever joined in the fierce intoxication of the Dum-Dum.

From this primitive function has risen, unquestionably, all the forms and ceremonials of modern church and state. Down through the countless ages from beyond the uttermost ramparts of a dawning humanity our hairy forebears danced the rites of the Dum-Dum to the sound of their earthen drums, beneath the bright light of a tropical moon in the depth of the mighty jungles.

On the day that Tarzan won his emancipation from the persecution that had followed him remorselessly for twelve of his thirteen years of life, the tribe, now a full hundred strong, trooped silently through the lower terrace of the jungle-trees and dropped noiselessly upon the floor of the amphitheater.

The rites of the Dum-Dum marked important events in the life of the tribe —a victory, the capture of a prisoner, the killing of some large, fierce denizen of the jungle, the death or accession of a king.

To-day it was the killing of a giant ape, a member of another tribe, and as the people of Kerchak entered the arena, two mighty bulls might have been seen bearing the body of the vanquished between them. They laid their burden before the earthen drum and then squatted beside it as guards, while the other members of the community curled themselves in grassy nooks to sleep until the rising moon should give the signal for the commencement of the orgy.

For hours absolute quiet reigned in the little clearing, except as it was broken by the discordant notes of parrots or the screeching and twittering of the thousand jungle birds flitting ceaselessly among the vivid orchids and flamboyant blossoms which festooned the moss-covered branches.

At length, as darkness settled upon the jungle, the apes commenced to bestir themselves, and soon they formed a great circle about the earthen drum.

The females and young squatted in a thin line at the outer periphery of the circle, while just in front of them ranged the adult males. Before the drum sat three old females, each armed with a knotted branch fifteen or eighteen inches in length.

Slowly and softly they began tapping upon the resounding surface of the

drum as the first faint rays of the ascending moon silvered the tree-tops.

As the light increased the females augmented the frequency and force of their blows until presently a rhythmical din pervaded the jungle for miles in every direction. Huge brutes stopped in their hunting, with up-pricked ears and raised heads, to listen to the dull booming that betokened the Dum-Dum of the apes.

Occasionally one would raise his shrill scream or thunderous roar in answering challenge to the savage din of the anthropoids, but none came near to investigate or attack, for the great apes, assembled in all the power of their numbers, filled the breasts of their jungle neighbors with deep respect.

As the din of the drum rose to almost deafening volume Kerchak sprang into the open space between the squatting males and the drummers.

Standing erect he threw his head far back, and looking full into the eye of the rising moon, he beat upon his breast with his great hairy paws and emitted his fearful roaring shriek.

Once—twice—thrice that terrifying cry rang out across the teeming solitude of that unspeakably quick, yet unthinkably dead, world.

Then, crouching, Kerchak slunk noiselessly round the open circle, veering far away from the dead body lying before the altar-drum, but, as he passed, keeping his little, fierce, wicked, red eyes upon the corpse.

Another male then sprang into the arena, and, repeating the horrid cries of his king, followed stealthily in his wake. Another and another followed in quick succession until the jungle reverberated with the now almost ceaseless notes of their bloodthirsty screams.

It was the challenge and the hunt.

When all the adult males had joined in the thin line of circling dancers the attack commenced.

Kerchak, seizing a huge club from the pile which lay at hand for the purpose, rushed furiously upon the dead ape, dealing the corpse a terrific blow, at the same time emitting the growls and snarls of combat!.

The din of the drum was now increased, as well as the frequency of the blows, and the warriors, as each approached the victim of the hunt and delivered his bludgeon blow, joined in the mad whirl of the death dance.

Tarzan was one of the wild, leaping horde. His brown, sweat-streaked, muscular body glistening in the moonlight, shone supple and graceful among the uncouth, awkward, hairy brutes about him.

None more craftily stealthy in the mimic hunt, none more ferocious than he in the fierceness of the attack, none leaped higher into the air in the dance of death.

As the noise and rapidity of the drum-beats increased, the dancers apparently became intoxicated with the rhythm and the savage yells. Their leaps and bounds increased, their bared fangs dripped, and their lips and breasts were flecked with foam.

For half an hour the weird dance went on, until, at a sign from Kerchak, the noise of the drums ceased, the female drummers scampering hurriedly through the line of dancers toward the outer rim of squatting spectators. Then, as one man, the males rushed headlong upon the thing which their terrific blows had reduced to a mass of hairy pulp.

Flesh seldom came to their jaws in satisfying quantities, so a fit finale to their wild revel was a taste of fresh-killed meat, and it was to the purpose of devouring their late enemy that they now turned their attention.

Tarzan, more than the apes, craved and needed flesh. Descended from a race of meat-eaters, never in his life, he thought, had he once satisfied his appetite for animal food, and so now his agile little body wormed its way far into the mass of struggling apes in an endeavor to obtain a share which his strength would have been unequal to the task of winning for him.

At his side hung the hunting-knife of his unknown father in a sheath self-fashioned in copy of one he had seen among the pictures of his treasure-books.

At last he reached the fast-disappearing feast and with his sharp knife slashed off a more generous portion than he had hoped for.

Then he wriggled out from beneath the struggling mass, clutching his prize close.

Among those circling futilely the outskirts of the banqueters was old Tublat. He had been among the first at the feast, but had retreated with a goodly share to eat in quiet, and was now forcing his way back for more.

So it was that he spied Tarzan emerging from the clawing throng.

Tublat's bloodshot, pig eyes sent out wicked gleams of hate as they fell upon the object of his loathing. In them, too, was greed for the meat the boy carried.

But Tarzan saw his arch enemy as quickly, and, divining what the beast would do, leaped nimbly away toward the women and children, hoping to hide himself among them. Tublat, however, was close upon him, so that he had no opportunity to seek a place of concealment, but saw that he would be put to it to escape at all.

Swiftly he sped toward the trees, and with a bound gained a lower limb with one hand, and then, transferring his burden to his teeth, he climbed rapidly upward, closely followed by Tublat.

Up, up he went to the waving pinnacle of a lofty monarch of the forest where his heavy pursuer dare not follow him. Perched there he hurled taunts and insults at the raging beast fifty feet below him.

And then Tublat went mad.

With horrifying screams and roars he rushed to the ground, and among the females and young, sinking his great fangs into a dozen tiny necks and tearing great pieces from the backs and breasts of the females who fell into his clutches.

In the brilliant moonlight Tarzan witnessed the mad carnival of rage. He saw the females and the young scamper to the safety of the trees, and then the great bulls in the center of the arena felt the mighty fangs of their demented fellow, and with one accord melted into the black shadows of the overhanging forest.

There was but one in the amphitheater beside Tublat, a belated female running swiftly toward the tree where Tarzan perched, and close behind her came the awful Tublat.

It was Kala, and as quickly as Tarzan saw that Tublat was gaining on her he dropped with the rapidity of a falling stone from branch to branch toward his foster-mother.

Now she was beneath the overhanging limbs, and close above her crouched Tarzan, waiting the outcome of the race.

She leaped into the air, grasping a low-hanging branch, but almost over the head of Tublat, so nearly had he distanced her. She should have been safe now, but there was a rending, tearing sound, the branch broke and precipitated her full upon the head of Tublat, knocking him to the ground.

Both were up in an instant; but as quick as they had been, Tarzan had been quicker, so that the infuriated bull found himself facing the man-child who stood between him and Kala.

Nothing could have suited the fierce beast better, and with a roar of triumph he leaped upon the little Lord Greystoke. But his fangs never closed in that nut-brown flesh.

A muscular hand shot out and grasped the hairy throat, and another plunged a keen hunting-knife a dozen times into the broad breast. Like lightning the blows fell, and only ceased when Tarzan felt the limp form crumple beneath him.

As the body rolled to the ground Tarzan of the apes placed his foot upon the neck of his lifelong enemy and, raising his eyes to the full moon,

threw back his fierce young head, and voiced the wild cry of his people.

One by one the tribe swung down from their arboreal retreats and formed a circle about Tarzan and his vanquished foe. When they had all come Tarzan turned toward them.

"I am Tarzan," he cried. "I am a great killer. Let all respect Tarzan of the apes and Kala, his mother. There be none among you as mighty as Tarzan. Let his enemies beware."

Looking full into the wicked red eyes of Kerchak, the young Lord Greystoke beat upon his mighty breast and screamed out once more his shrill cry of defiance.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TREE-TOP HUNTER.

THE morning after the Dum-Dum the tribe started slowly back through the forest toward the coast.

The body of Tublat lay where it had fallen, for the people of Kerchak did not eat their own dead.

The march was but a leisurely search for food. Cabbage-palm and gray plum, pisang and scitamine, they found in abundance, with wild pineapple, and occasionally small mammals, birds, eggs, reptiles, and insects. The nuts they cracked between their powerful jaws, or, if too hard, broke by pounding between stones.

Once old Sabor, crossing their path, sent them scurrying to the safety of the higher branches; for if he respected their number and their sharp fangs, they, on their part, held his cruel and mighty ferocity in equal esteem.

Upon a low-hanging branch sat Tarzan, directly above the majestic, supple body as it forged silently through the thick jungle. He hurled a pineapple at the ancient enemy of his people. The great beast stopped and, turning, eyed the taunting figure above him.

With an angry lash of his tail he bared his yellow fangs, curling his great lips in a hideous snarl that wrinkled his bristling snout in serried ridges, and closed his wicked eyes to two narrow slits of rage and hatred.

With back-laid ears, he looked into the eyes of Tarzan of the apes and sounded his fierce, shrill challenge.

And from the safety of his overhanging limb the ape-child sent back the fearsome answer of his kind.

For a moment the two eyed each other in silence, and then the great cat turned into the jungle, which swallowed him as the ocean engulfs a tossed pebble.

But into the mind of Tarzan a great plan sprang. He had killed the fierce Tublat, so was he not therefore a mighty fighter? Now would he track down the crafty Sabor, and slay him likewise. He would be a mighty hunter, also.

At the bottom of his little English heart beat the great desire to cover his nakedness with clothes, for he had learned from his picture-books that all men were so covered, while monkeys and apes and every other living thing went naked.

Clothes, therefore, must be truly a badge of greatness, the insignia of the superiority of man over all other animals; for surely there could be no other reason for wearing the hideous things.

Many moons ago, when he had been much smaller, he had desired the skin of Sabor, the tiger, or Numa, the lion, or Sheeta, the leopard, to cover his hairless body that he might no longer resemble hideous Histah, the snake. Now he was proud of his sleek skin, for it betokened his descent from a mighty race, and the conflicting desires to go naked in prideful proof of his ancestry, or to conform to the customs of his own kind and wear uncomfortable apparel, found first one and then the other in the ascendency.

As the tribe continued their slow way through the forest after the passing of Sabor, the tiger, Tarzan's head was filled with his great scheme for slaying his enemy, and for many days thereafter he thought of little else.

On this day, however, he presently had other and more immediate interests to attract his attention.

Of a sudden it became as midnight; the noises of the jungle ceased; the trees stood motionless, as though in paralyzed expectancy of some great and imminent disaster. All nature waited.

Faintly, from a distance, came a low, sad moaning. Nearer and nearer it approached, mounting louder and louder in volume.

The great trees bent in unison as though pressed earthward by a mighty hand. Further and further toward the ground they inclined, and still there was no sound save the deep and awesome moaning of the wind.

Then, suddenly, the jungle giants whipped back, lashing their mighty tops in angry and deafening protest. A vivid and blinding light flashed from the whirling, inky clouds above. The cannonade of thunder belched forth its fearsome challenge. The deluge came —an inferno broke loose upon the jungle.

The tribe huddled, shivering from the cold rain, at the base of great trees. The lightning, darting and flashing through the blackness, showed wildly waving branches, whipping streamers, and bending trunks.

Now and again some patriarch of the woods, rent by a flashing bolt, would crash in a thousand pieces among the surrounding trees, carrying down numberless branches and smaller neighbors to add to the tangle of the jungle.

Branches, great and small, hurtled through the verdure, carrying death and destruction to countless unhappy denizens of the world below.

For hours the fury of the storm continued without surcease, and still the tribe huddled close in shivering fear. In constant danger from falling trunks and branches, and paralyzed by the lightning and the bellowing thunder, they crouched in pitiful misery until the storm passed.

The end was as sudden as the beginning. The wind ceased; the sun shone forth—nature smiled once more.

The dripping leaves and branches and the moist petals of gorgeous flowers glistened in the splendor of the returning day. And so—as Nature forgot, her children forgot also. Busy life went on as it had before the darkness and the fright.

But to Tarzan a dawning light had come to explain the mystery of clothes. How snug he would have been beneath the heavy coat of Sabor, the tiger! And so was added a further incentive to the adventure.

For several months the tribe hovered near the beach where stood Tarzan's cabin, and his studies took up the greater portion of his time, but always when journeying through the forest he kept his rope in readiness, and many were the smaller animals that fell into the snare of the quick-thrown noose.

Once it fell about the short neck of Horta, the boar, and his mad lunge for freedom toppled Tarzan from the overhanging limbs where he had lain in wait and from whence he had launched his sinuous coil.

The mighty tusker turned at the sound of his falling body, and, seeing only the easy prey of a young ape, he lowered his head and charged madly at the surprised youth.

Tarzan, happily, was uninjured by the fall, alighting catlike upon all-fours far outspread to take up the shock. He was on his feet in an instant, and had gained the safety of a low limb as Horta, the boar, rushed futilely beneath.

Thus it was that Tarzan learned by experience the limitations as well as the possibilities of his strange weapon.

He lost a long rope on this occasion, but he knew that had it been Sabor, the tiger, who had thus dragged him from his perch, the outcome might have been very different, for he would have lost his life, doubtless, into the bargain.

It took him many days to braid a new rope, but when, finally, it was done, he

went forth purposely to hunt, and lie in wait among the dense foliage of a great branch right above a well-beaten trail that led to water.

Several small animals passed unharmed beneath him. He did not want such insignificant game. It would take a strong animal to test the efficacy of his new scheme.

At last came he whom Tarzan sought, with lithe sinews rolling beneath shimmering hide; fat and glossy came Sabor, the tiger.

His great padded feet fell soft and noiseless on the narrow trail. His head was high in ever alert attention; his long tail moved slowly in sinuous and graceful undulations.

Nearer and nearer he came to where Tarzan of the apes crouched upon his limb, the coils of his long rope ready in his hand.

Like a thing of bronze, motionless as death, sat Tarzan. Sabor, the tiger, passed beneath. One stride beyond he took—a second, a third, and then the silent coil shot out above him.

For an instant the spreading noose hung above his head like a great snake, and then, as he looked upward to detect the origin of the swishing sound of the rope, it settled about his neck. With a quick jerk Tarzan snapped the noose tight about the snowy throat, and then he dropped the rope and clung to his support with both hands.

Sabor, the tiger, was trapped.

With a bound the startled beast turned into the jungle, but Tarzan was not to lose another rope through the same cause as the first. He had learned from experience.

Sabor, the tiger, had taken but half his second bound when he felt the rope tighten about his neck. His body turned completely over in the air, and he fell with a heavy crash upon his back. Tarzan had fastened the end of the rope securely to the trunk of the great tree on which he sat.

Thus far his plan had worked to perfection, but when he grasped the rope, bracing himself behind a crotch of two mighty branches, he found that dragging the mighty, struggling, clawing, biting, screaming mass of iron-muscled fury up to the tree and hanging him was a very different proposition.

The weight of old Sabor was immense, and when he braced his huge paws nothing less than Tantor, the elephant, himself, could have budged him.

The tiger was now back in the path where he could see the author of the indignity which had been placed upon him. Screaming with rage he suddenly charged, leaping high into the air, but when his huge body struck the limb on which Tarzan had been, the boy was no longer there.

Instead he perched lightly upon a smaller branch twenty feet above the raging captive. For a moment Sabor hung himself across the branch, while Tarzan mocked, and hurled twigs and branches at his unprotected face.

Presently the beast dropped to the earth again, and Tarzan came quickly to seize the rope, but Sabor had now found that it was only a slender cord that held him, and grasping it in his huge jaws, severed it before Tarzan could tighten the strangling noose a second time.

Tarzan was much hurt. His well-laid plan had come to naught. He sat there screaming at the roaring creature beneath him and making mocking grimaces.

Sabor paced back and forth beneath the tree for hours. Four times he crouched and sprang at the dancing sprite above him, but he might as well have clutched at the illusive wind that murmured through the tree-tops.

At last Tarzan tired of the sport, and with a parting roar of challenge and a well-aimed ripe fruit that spread soft and sticky over the snarling face of his enemy, he swung rapidly through the trees, a hundred feet above the ground, and in a short time was among the members of his tribe.

Here he recounted the details of his adventure, with swelling chest and such considerable swagger that he quite

impressed even his bitterest enemies, while Kala fairly danced for joy and pride.

CHAPTER IX.

MAN AND MAN.

TARZAN of the apes lived on in his wild, jungle existence with little change for several years, only that he grew stronger and wiser, and learned from his books more and more of the strange worlds which lay somewhere outside his primeval forest.

To him life was never monotonous or stale. There was always Pisah, the fish, to be caught in the streams and the lakes, and Sabor, the tiger, with his ferocious cousins to keep one ever on the alert and give zest to every instant that one spent upon the ground.

Often they hunted him, and more often he hunted them, but though they never quite reached him with their cruel claws, yet there were times when one could scarce have passed a thick leaf between their talons and his smooth hide.

Quick was Sabor, the tiger, and quick were Numa and Sheeta, his cousins, but Tarzan of the apes was lightning.

With Tantor, the elephant, he made friends. On many moonlight nights Tarzan and the elephant walked together, and where the way was clear Tarzan rode, perched high upon Tantor's mighty back.

All else of the jungle were his enemies, except his own tribe, among whom he now had many friends.

Many days during these years he spent in the cabin of his father, where still lay, untouched, the bones of his parents and the little skeleton of Kala's baby. At eighteen he read fluently and understood nearly all he read.

Also could he write, with printed letters, rapidly and plainly, but script he had not mastered, for, though there were several copy-books among his treasures, there was so little written English in the cabin that he saw no use for bothering with this other form of writing, though he could read it laboriously.

Thus, at eighteen, we find him, an English lordling, who could speak no English, yet who could read and write his native language. Never had he seen a human being other than himself, for the little area traversed by his tribe was watered by no great river to bring down the savage natives of the interior.

High hills shut it off on three sides, the ocean on the fourth. It was alive with lions, and tigers, and leopards, and poisonous snakes. Its untouched mazes of matted jungle had as yet uninvited no hardy pioneer from among the humans beyond its frontier.

But as Tarzan of the apes sat one day in the cabin of his father, delving into the mysteries of a new book, the ancient security of his jungle was broken forever.

At the far eastern confine a strange cavalcade strung, in single file, over the brow of a low hill.

In advance were fifty black warriors armed with slender wooden spears with ends hard baked over slow fires, and long bows and poisoned arrows. On their backs were oval shields, in their noses hung rings, while from the kinky wool of their heads protruded tufts of gay feathers.

Across their foreheads were tattooed three parallel lines of color, and on each breast three concentric circles. Their yellow teeth were filed to sharp points, and their great protruding lips added still further to the brutishness of their appearance.

Following them were several hundred women and children, the former bearing upon their heads great burdens of cooking-pots, household utensils, and ivory. In the rear were a hundred warriors, similar in all respects to the advance guard.

That they more greatly feared an attack from the rear than whatever unknown enemies might lurk ahead was evidenced by the formation of the

column; and such was the fact, for they were fleeing from the white man's soldiers who had so harassed them for rubber and ivory that they had turned upon their conquerors one day and massacred a white officer and a small detachment of his black troops.

For many days they had gorged themselves on meat, but eventually a stronger body of troops had come and fallen upon their village by night to revenge the death of their comrades. That night the black soldiers of the white man had had meat a plenty, and this little remnant of a once powerful tribe had slunk off into the gloomy jungle toward the unknown and freedom.

But what meant freedom and the pursuit of happiness to these savage blacks meant consternation and death to many of the wild denizens of their new home.

For three days the little cavalcade marched slowly through the heart of this unknown and untracked forest, until finally, early in the fourth day, they came upon a little spot, near the banks of a small river, which seemed less thickly overgrown than any ground they had encountered before.

Here they set to work to build a new village, and in a month a great clearing had been made, huts and palisades erected, plantains, yams, and maize planted, and they had taken up their old life in their new home. Here there were no white men, no soldiers, nor any rubber or ivory to be gathered for thankless task-masters.

Several moons passed ere the blacks ventured far into the territory surrounding their new village. Several had already fallen prey to old Sabor, the tiger, and because the jungle was so infested with these fierce and bloodthirsty cats, and with lions and leopards, the ebony warriors hesitated to trust themselves far from the safety of their palisades.

But one day Kulonga, a son of the old king, Mbonga, wandered far into the dense mazes to the west. Warily he stepped, his slender lance ever ready, his long oval shield grasped in his left hand close to his body.

At his back his bow, and in the quiver upon his shield many slim, straight arrows, well smeared with the thick, dark, tarry substance that rendered deadly their tiniest needle prick.

Night found Kulonga far from the palisades of his father's village, but still headed westward, and climbing into the fork of a great tree he fashioned a rude platform and curled himself for sleep.

Three miles west of him slept the tribe of Kerchak.

Early the next morning the apes were astir, moving through the jungle in search of food. Tarzan, as was his custom, prosecuted his search in the direction of the cabin, so that by leisurely hunting on the way his hunger was appeased by the time he reached the beach.

The apes scattered by ones, and twos, and threes in all directions, but always within sound of a signal of alarm.

Kala had moved slowly along an elephant track toward the east, and was busily engaged in turning over rotted limbs and logs in search of esculent bugs and fungi, when the faintest shadow of a strange noise brought her to startled attention.

For fifty yards before her the trail was straight, and down this leafy tunnel she looked straight at the stealthily advancing figure of a strange and fearful creature.

It was Kulonga.

Kala did not wait to see more; but, turning, moved rapidly back along the trail. She did not run; but, after the manner of her kind when not roused, sought rather to avoid than to escape.

Close after her came Kulonga. Here was meat. He could make a killing and feast well this day. On he hurried, his spear poised for the throw.

At a turning of the trail he came in sight of her again upon another straight stretch. His spear-hand went far back, the muscles rolled, lightning

like, beneath the sleek hide. Out shot the arm, and the spear sped toward Kala.

A poor cast. It but grazed her side.

With a cry of rage and pain Kala turned upon her tormentor. In an instant the trees were crashing beneath the weight of hurrying apes, swinging rapidly toward the scene of trouble in answer to Kala's scream.

As Kala charged, Kulonga unslung his bow and fitted an arrow with almost unthinkable quickness. Drawing the shaft far back, he drove the poisoned missile straight into the heart of the great she-ape.

With a horrid scream Kala plunged forward upon her face before the astonished members of her tribe.

Roaring and shrieking, the apes dashed toward Kulonga; but that wary savage was fleeing down the trail like a frightened antelope. He knew something of the ferocity of these wild, hairy creatures, and his one desire was to put as many miles between himself and them as he possibly could.

They followed him, racing through the trees for a long distance; but finally one by one they abandoned the chase and returned to the scene of the tragedy.

None of them had ever seen a man before other than Tarzan, and so they wondered vaguely what strange manner of creature it might be that had invaded their jungle.

On the far beach by the little cabin Tarzan heard the faint echoes of the conflict, and, knowing that something was seriously amiss among the tribe, he hastened rapidly toward the direction of the sound.

When he arrived he found the entire tribe gathered jabbering about the dead body of his slain mother.

Tarzan's grief and anger were unbounded. He roared out his hideous challenge time and again. He beat upon his chest with his fists, and then he fell upon the body of Kala and sobbed out the pitiful sorrowing of his lonely heart.

To lose the only creature in all one's world who ever had manifested love and affection for one is a great bereavement indeed.

What though Kala was a fierce and hideous ape! To Tarzan she had been kind; she had been beautiful.

Upon her he had lavished, unknown to himself, all the reverence and respect and love that a normal English boy feels for his own mother. He had never known another; and so to Kala was given, though mutely, all that would have belonged to the fair and lovely Lady Alice had she lived.

After the first outburst of grief Tarzan controlled himself, and, questioning the members of the tribe who had witnessed the killing of Kala, he learned all that their meager vocabulary could vouchsafe him.

It was enough, however, for his needs. It told him of a strange, hairless, black ape with feathers growing upon its head, who launched death from a slender branch, and then ran with the fleetness of Bara, the deer, toward the rising sun.

Tarzan waited no longer; but, leaping into the branches of the trees, sped rapidly through the forest. He knew the windings of the elephant trail along which Kala's murderer had flown, and he cut straight through the jungle to intercept the black warrior, who was evidently following the tortuous détours of the trail.

At his side was the hunting-knife of his unknown sire, and across his shoulders the coils of his own long rope. In an hour he struck the trail again, and, coming to earth, examined the soil minutely.

In the soft mud on the bank of a tiny rivulet he found footprints such as he alone in all the jungle had ever made, but much larger than his. His heart beat fast. Could it be that he was trailing a man—one of his own race?

There were two sets of imprints pointing in opposite directions. So his quarry had already passed on his return along the trail. As he examined the

newer spoor a tiny particle of earth toppled from the outer edge of one of the footprints to the bottom of its shallow depression—ah, the trail was very fresh, his prey must have but scarcely passed.

Tarzan swung himself to the trees once more, and with swift noiselessness sped along high above the trail.

He had covered barely a mile when he came upon the black warrior standing in a little open space. In his hand was his slender bow, to which he had fitted one of his death-dealing arrows.

Opposite him across the little clearing stood Horta, the boar, with lowered head and foam-flecked tusks, ready to charge.

Tarzan looked with wonder upon the strange creature beneath him—so like him in form, and yet so different in face and color. His books had portrayed a *negro;* but how different had been the dull, dead print to this sleek thing of ebony, pulsing with life.

As the man stood there with taut-drawn bow Tarzan recognized in him not so much the negro as the "*archer*" of his picture-book—

A stands for Archer

How wonderful! Tarzan almost betrayed his presence in the deep excitement of his discovery.

But things were commencing to happen below him. The sinewy black arm had drawn the shaft far back; Horta, the boar, was charging.

The black released the poisoned arrow, and Tarzan saw it fly with the quickness of thought and lodge in the bristling neck of the boar.

Scarcely had the shaft left his bow ere Kulonga had fitted another to it; but Horta, the boar, was upon him so quickly that he had no time to discharge it. With a bound the black leaped entirely over the rushing beast, and, turning with incredible swiftness, planted a second arrow in Horta's back.

Then Kulonga sprang into a near-by tree.

Horta wheeled to charge his enemy once more. A dozen steps he took, then he staggered and fell upon his side. For a moment his muscles stiffened and relaxed convulsively, then he lay still.

Kulonga came down from his tree. With the knife that hung at his side he cut several large pieces from the boar's body, and in the center of the trail he built a fire, cooking and eating as much as he wanted. The rest he left where it had fallen.

Tarzan was an interested spectator. His desire to kill burned fiercely in his wild breast, but his desire to learn was even greater. He would follow this savage creature for a while and know from whence he came. He could kill him at his leisure later, when the bow and deadly arrows were laid aside.

When Kulonga had finished his repast and disappeared beyond a near turning of the path, Tarzan dropped quietly to the ground. With his knife he severed many strips of meat from Horta's carcass, but he did not cook them.

He had seen fire, but only when the lightning had destroyed some great tree. That any creature of the jungle could produce the red-and-yellow fangs which devoured wood and left nothing but fine dust surprised Tarzan greatly. Also, why the black warrior had ruined his delicious repast by plunging it into the blighting heat was quite beyond him. Possibly the fire was a friend with whom the archer was sharing his food.

Tarzan would not ruin good meat in any such foolish manner, so he gobbled down a great quantity of the raw flesh, burying the balance of the carcass beside the trail where he could find it upon his return.

And then Lord Greystoke wiped his greasy fingers upon his naked thighs and took up the trail of Kulonga, the son of Mbonga, the king; while in far-off London another Lord Greystoke, the younger brother of the real Lord Greystoke's father, sent back his chops

to the club's chef because they were underdone, and when he had finished his repast he dipped his finger-ends into a silver bowl of scented water and dried them upon a piece of snowy damask.

All day Tarzan followed Kulonga, hovering above him in the trees like some malign spirit. Twice more he saw him hurl his arrows of destruction—once at Dango, the hyena, and again at Manu, the monkey. In each instance the animal died almost instantly, for Kulonga's poison was very fresh and very deadly.

Tarzan thought much on this wonderous method of slaying as he swung slowly along at a safe distance behind his quarry. He knew that alone the tiny prick of the arrow could not so quickly despatch these wild things of the jungle, who were often torn and scratched and gored in a frightful manner as they fought with their jungle neighbors, yet as often recovered as not.

No, there was something mysterious connected with these tiny slivers of wood which could bring death by a mere scratch. He must look into the matter.

That night Kulonga slept in the crotch of a mighty tree, and far above him crouched Tarzan of the apes.

When Kulonga awoke he found that his bow and arrows had disappeared. The black warrior was furious and frightened, but more frightened than furious. He searched the ground below the tree, and he searched the tree above the ground; but there was no sign of either bow or arrows or of the nocturnal marauder.

Kulonga was panic-stricken. His spear he had hurled at Kala, and had not recovered; and, now that his bow and arrows were gone, he was defenseless except for a single knife. His only hope lay in reaching the village of Mbonga as quickly as his legs would carry him.

That he was not far from home he was certain, so he took to the trail at a rapid trot. From a great mass of impenetrable foliage a few yards away emerged Tarzan of the apes to swing quietly in his wake.

Kulonga's bow and arrows were securely tied high in the top of a giant tree, from which a patch of bark had been removed by a sharp knife near to the ground and a branch half cut through and left hanging about fifty feet higher up. Thus Tarzan blazed the forest trails and marked his caches.

As Kulonga continued his journey Tarzan closed up on him until he traveled almost over the black's head. His rope he now held coiled in his right hand; he was almost ready for the kill.

The moment was delayed only because Tarzan was anxious to ascertain the black warrior's destination, and presently he was rewarded, for they came suddenly in view of a great clearing, at one end of which lay many strange lairs.

Tarzan was directly over Kulonga as he made the discovery. The forest ended abruptly, and beyond lay two hundred yards of planted fields between the jungle and the village.

Tarzan must act quickly or his prey would be gone; but Tarzan's life training left so little space between decision and action when an emergency confronted him that there was not even room for the shadow of a thought between.

Thus, as Kulonga emerged from the shadow of the jungle, a slender coil of rope sped sinuously above him from the lowest branch of a mighty tree directly upon the edge of Mbonga's fields. Ere the king's son had taken a half-dozen steps into the clearing the quick noose tightened about his neck.

So rapidly did Tarzan of the apes drag back his prey that Kulonga's cry of alarm was throttled in his windpipe. Hand over hand Tarzan drew the struggling black until he had him hanging by his neck in mid air; then Tarzan, climbing to a larger branch, pulled the still thrashing victim well up into the sheltering verdure of the tree.

He fastened the rope securely to a stout branch, and then, descending, plunged his hunting-knife into Kulonga's heart. Kala was avenged.

Tarzan examined the black minutely; never had he seen any other human being. The knife with its sheath and belt caught his fancy; he appropriated them. A copper anklet also took his fancy, and this he put on his own leg.

He examined and admired the tattooing on the forehead and breast. He marveled at the sharp-filed teeth. He investigated and appropriated the feathered head-dress, and then he prepared to get down to business, for Tarzan of the apes was hungry, and here was meat; meat of the kill, which jungle ethics permitted him to eat.

How may we judge him, by what standards, this ape-man with the heart and head and body of an English gentleman, and the training of a wild beast?

Tublat, whom he had hated and who had hated him, he had killed in fair fight, and yet never had the thought of eating of Tublat's flesh entered his head. It would have been as revolting to him as is cannibalism to us.

But who was Kulonga, that he might not be eaten as fairly as Horta, the boar, or Bara, the deer? Was he not simply another of the countless wild things of the jungle who preyed upon one another to satisfy the cravings of hunger?

Of a sudden, a strange doubt stayed his hand. Had not his books taught him that he was a man? And was not "the archer" a man, also?

Did men eat men? Alas, he did not know. Why, then, this hesitancy? Once more he essayed the effort, but of a sudden a qualm of nausea overwhelmed him. He did not understand.

All he knew was that he could not eat the flesh of this black man, and thus a hereditary instinct, ages old, usurped the functions of his untaught mind and saved him from transgressing a world-wide law of whose very existence he was ignorant.

Quickly he lowered Kulonga's body to the ground, removed the noose, and took to the trees again.

CHAPTER X.

THE FEAR-FANTOM.

FROM a lofty perch Tarzan viewed the village of thatched huts across the intervening plantation.

He saw that at one point the forest touched the village, and to this spot he made his way, lured by a fever of curiosity to behold animals of his own kind, and to learn more of their ways and view the strange lairs in which they lived.

His life among the brutes of the jungle left no opening for any thought that these could be other than enemies. Similarity of form led him to no erroneous conception of the welcome that would be accorded him should he be discovered.

Tarzan of the apes was no sentimentalist. He knew nothing of the brotherhood of man. All things outside his own tribe were his deadly enemies, with the few exceptions of which Tantor, the elephant, was a marked example.

And he realized all this without malice or hatred. To kill was the law of the wild world he knew. Few were his primitive pleasures, but the greatest of these was to hunt and kill, and so he accorded to others the right to cherish the same desires as he, even though he himself might be the object of their hunt.

His strange life had left him neither morose nor bloodthirsty. That he joyed in killing, and that he killed with a laugh upon his handsome lips, betokened no innate cruelty. He killed for food most often, but, being a man, he sometimes killed for pleasure, a thing which no other animal does; for it has remained for man alone among all creatures to kill senselessly and wantonly for the mere pleasure of inflicting suffering and death.

And when he killed for revenge, or in defense, he did that also without hysteria, but it was a very businesslike proceeding which admitted of no levity.

So it was that now, as he cautiously approached the village of Mbonga he was quite prepared either to kill or be killed should he be discovered. He proceeded with unwonted stealth, for Kulonga had taught him great respect for the little sharp splinters of wood which dealt death so swiftly and unerringly.

At length he came to a great tree, heavy with thick foliage and loaded with pendant loops of giant creepers. From this almost impenetrable bower above the village he crouched, looking down upon the scene below him.

There were naked children running and playing in the street. There were women grinding dried plantain in crude stone mortars, while others were fashioning cakes from the powdered flour. Out in the fields he could see still other women hoeing, weeding, or gathering.

All wore strange protruding girdles of dried grass about their hips and many were loaded with brass and copper anklets, armlets, and bracelets. Round many a dusky neck hung curiously coiled strands of wire, while several were further ornamented by huge nose-rings.

Tarzan of the apes looked with growing wonder at these strange creatures. Dozing in the shade he saw several men, while at the extreme outskirts of the clearing he occasionally caught glimpses of armed warriors apparently on guard.

He noticed that the women alone worked. Nowhere was there evidence of a man tilling the fields or performing any of the homely duties of the village.

Finally his eyes rested upon a woman directly beneath him.

Before her was a small caldron standing over a low fire and in it bubbled a thick, reddish, tarry mass. On one side of her lay a quantity of wooden arrows which she dipped into the seething substance, and then laid them on a narrow rack of boughs which stood at her other side.

Tarzan of the apes was fascinated. Here was the secret of the destructiveness of "the archer's" tiny missiles. He noted the extreme care which the woman took that none of the matter should touch her hands, and once when a part spattered upon one of her fingers he saw her plunge the member into a vessel of water and quickly rub the tiny stain away with a handful of leaves.

Tarzan of the apes knew nothing of poison, but his shrewd reasoning told him that it was this deadly stuff that killed; not the little arrow, which was merely the messenger that carried it into the body of its victim.

How he should like to have more of those little death-dealing slivers. If the woman would only leave her work for an instant he could drop down, gather up a handful, and be back in the tree again before she drew three breaths.

As he was trying to think out some plan to distract her attention he heard a wild cry from across the clearing. He looked and saw a black warrior standing beneath the very tree in which he had killed the murderer of Kala an hour before.

The fellow was shouting and waving his spear above his head. Now and again he would point to something on the ground before him.

The village was in an uproar instantly. Armed men rushed from the interior of many a hut and raced madly across the clearing toward the excited sentry. After them trooped the old men, and the women and children until, in a moment, the village was deserted.

Tarzan of the apes knew that they had found the body of his victim, but that interested him far less than the fact that no one remained in the village to prevent his taking a supply of the arrows which lay below him.

He dropped to the ground beside the caldron of poison, and stood motionless, his quick eyes scanning the interior of the palisade.

No one was in sight. His eyes rested upon the open doorway of a near-by hut. He would take a look within, thought Tarzan, and so, cautiously, he approached the low thatched building.

For a moment he hesitated without, listening intently. There was no sound, and he glided into the semidarkness of the interior.

Weapons hung against the walls, long spears, strangely shaped knives, a couple of narrow shields. In the center of the room was a cooking-pot, and at the far end a litter of dry grasses covered by woven mats which evidently served the owners as beds and bedding. Several human skulls lay upon the floor.

Tarzan of the apes felt of each article, hefted the spears, smelled of them, for he " saw " largely through his sensitive and highly trained nostrils. He determined to own one of these long-pointed sticks, but he could not take one on this trip because of the arrows he meant to carry.

One by one, as he took each article from the walls, he placed them in a pile in the center of the room, and on top of all he placed the cooking-pot, inverted, and on top of this he laid one of the grinning skulls, upon which he fastened the head-dress of the dead Kulonga.

Then he stood back and surveyed his work, and grinned. Tarzan of the apes was a joker.

But now he heard, without, the sounds of many voices, and long, mournful howls, and mighty wailing. He was startled. Had he remained too long?

Quickly he reached the doorway and peered down the village street toward the village gate.

The natives were not yet in sight, though he could plainly hear them approaching across the plantation. They must be very near.

Like a flash he sprang across the opening to the pile of arrows. Gathering up all he could carry under one arm, with a kick he overturned the seething caldron, and disappeared into the foliage, just as the first of the returning natives entered the gate at the far end of the village. He turned to watch the proceedings below, poised like some wild bird ready to take swift wing at the first sign of danger.

The natives filed up the street, four of them bearing the body of Kulonga. Behind trailed the women, uttering strange cries and weird lamentation. On they came to the portals of the very hut in which Tarzan had wrought his depredations.

Scarcely had half a dozen entered the building ere they came rushing out in wild, jabbering confusion. The others hastened to gather about. There was much excited gesticulating, pointing, and chattering. Several of the warriors approached and peered within.

Finally an old fellow with many ornaments of metal about his arms and legs, and a necklace of dried human hands depending upon his chest, entered the hut.

It was Mbonga, the king, father of Kulonga.

For a few moments all were silent. Then Mbonga emerged, a look of mingled wrath and fear writ upon his hideous countenance. He spoke a few words to the assembled warriors, and in an instant the men were flying through the little village searching minutely every hut and corner within the palisade.

Scarcely had the search commenced than the overturned caldron was discovered, and with it the theft of the poisoned arrows. Nothing more they found, and it was a thoroughly awed and frightened group of savages which huddled round their king a few moments later.

Mbonga could explain nothing of the strange events that had taken place. The finding of the still warm body of Kulonga—on the very verge of their

fields, and within easy ear-shot of the village—knifed and stripped at the door of his father's home, was in itself sufficiently mysterious, but these last awesome discoveries within the village, within the dead Kulonga's own hut, filled their hearts with dismay, and conjured in their poor brains only the most frightful of superstitious explanations.

They stood in little groups, talking in low tones, and casting affrighted glances behind them from their great rolling eyes.

Tarzan of the apes watched them for a while from his lofty perch in the great tree. There was much in their demeanor which he could not understand, for he was ignorant of superstition, and of fear of any kind he had but a vague conception.

The sun was high in the heavens. Tarzan had not broken fast this day, and it was many miles to where lay the toothsome remains of Horta the boar.

So he turned his back upon the village of Mbonga and melted away into the leafy fastness of the forest.

CHAPTER XI.

KING OF THE APES.

It was not yet dark when he reached the tribe, though he stopped to exhume and devour the remains of the wild boar he had cached the preceding day, and again to get Kulonga's bow and arrows from the tree-top in which he had hidden them.

It was a well-laden Tarzan who dropped from the branches into the midst of the tribe of Kerchak.

With swelling chest he narrated the glories of his adventure and exhibited the spoils of conquest.

Kerchak grunted and turned away, for he was jealous of this strange member of his band. In his little evil brain he sought for some excuse to wreak his hatred upon Tarzan.

The next day Tarzan was practising with his bow and arrows at the first gleam of dawn. At first he lost nearly every bolt he shot, but finally he learned to guide the little shafts with fair accuracy, and ere a month had passed he was no mean shot; but his proficiency had cost him nearly his entire supply of arrows.

The tribe continued to find the hunting good in the vicinity of the beach, and so Tarzan of the apes varied his archery practise with further investigation of his father's little store of books.

It was during this period that the young English lord found hidden in the back of one of the cupboards in the cabin a little metal box. The key was in the lock, and a few moments investigation and experimentation were rewarded with the successful opening of the receptacle.

In it he found a faded photograph of a smooth-faced young man, a golden locket studded with diamonds, linked to a small gold chain, a few letters and a small book.

Tarzan examined these all minutely.

The photograph he liked most of all, for the eyes were smiling, and the face was open and frank. It was his father.

The locket, too, took his fancy, and he placed the chain about his neck in imitation of the ornamentation he had seen to be so common among the black men he had visited. The brilliant stones gleamed strangely against his smooth, brown hide.

The letters he could scarcely decipher for he had learned little or nothing of script, so he put them back in the box with the photograph and turned his attention to the little book.

This was almost entirely filled with fine script, but while the little bugs were all familiar to him, their arrangement and the combinations in which they occurred were strange and entirely incomprehensible.

Tarzan had long since learned the use of the dictionary, but much to his sorrow and perplexity it proved of no avail to him in this emergency. Not a word of all that was writ in the little

book could he find, and so he put it back in the little metal box, but with a determination to work out the mysteries of it later on.

Poor little ape-man! Had he but known it that baffling little mystery held between its seal covers the key to his origin, the answer to the strange riddle of his strange life.

It was the diary of John Clayton, Lord Greystoke—kept in French, as had always been his custom.

Tarzan replaced the box in the cupboard, but always thereafter he carried the features of the strong, smiling face of his father in his heart, and in his head a fixed determination to solve the mystery of the strange words in the little black book.

At present he had more important business in hand, for his supply of arrows was exhausted, and he must needs journey to the black men's village and renew it.

Early the following morning he set out, and, traveling rapidly, he came before midday to the little clearing. Once more he took up his position in the great tree, and, as before, he saw the women in the fields and the village street, and the little caldron of bubbling poison directly beneath him.

For hours he lay awaiting his opportunity to drop down unseen and gather up the arrows for which he had come, but nothing now occurred to call the villagers away from their homes. The day wore on, and still Tarzan of the apes crouched above the unsuspecting woman at the caldron.

Presently the workers in the fields returned. The hunting warriors emerged from the forest, and when all were within the palisade, the gates were closed and barred.

Many cooking-pots were now in evidence about the village. Before each hut a woman presided over a boiling stew, while little cakes of plantain and cassava puddings were on every hand.

Suddenly there came a hail from the edge of the clearing.

Tarzan looked.

It was a party of belated hunters returning from the north, and among them they half led, half carried a struggling animal.

As they approached the village the gates were thrown open to admit them, and then, as the people saw the victim of the chase, a savage cry rose to the heavens, for the quarry was a man.

As he was dragged, still resisting, into the village street, the women and children set upon him with sticks and stones, and Tarzan of the apes, young and savage beast of the jungle, wondered at the cruel brutality of his own kind.

Sabor, the tiger, alone of all the junglefolk, tortured his prey. The ethics of all the others meted a quick and merciful death to their victims.

Tarzan had learned from his books but scattered fragments of the ways of human beings.

When he had followed Kulonga through the forest he had expected to come to a city of strange houses on wheels, puffing clouds of black smoke from a huge tree stuck in the roof of one of them—or a sea covered with mighty floating buildings which he had learned were called, variously, ships and boats and steamers and craft.

He had been sorely disappointed with the poor little village of the blacks, hidden away in his own jungle, and with not a single house as large as his own cabin upon the distant beach.

Now, he saw that these people were more wicked than his own apes, and as savage and cruel as Sabor himself. Tarzan began to hold his own kind in but low esteem.

Now they had tied their victim to a post near the center of the village, directly before Mbonga's hut, and they formed a dancing, yelling circle about him, alive with flashing knives and menacing spears.

In a larger circle squatted the women, yelling and beating upon drums. It reminded Tarzan of the Dum-Dum, and so he knew what to expect. He wondered if they would spring upon

their meat while it was still alive. The apes did not do such things as that.

The circle of warriors about the cringing captive drew closer to their prey, in savage abandon to the maddening music of the drums. Presently a spear reached out and pricked the victim. It was the signal for fifty others.

Eyes, ears, arms, and legs were pierced; every inch of the poor writhing body that did not cover a vital organ became the target of the cruel lancers.

The women and children shrieked their delight. The warriors licked their hideous lips in anticipation of the feast to come, and vied with one another in the savagery and loathsomeness of the cruel indignities with which they tortured the still conscious prisoner.

Then it was that Tarzan of the apes saw his chance. All eyes were fixed upon the thrilling spectacle at the stake. The light of day had given place to the darkness of a moonless night, and only the fires in the immediate vicinity of the orgy had been kept alight to cast a restless light upon the scene.

Gently the lithe boy dropped to the earth at the end of the village street. Quickly he gathered up the arrows—all of them this time, for he had brought a number of long fibers to bind them into a bundle.

Without haste he wrapped them securely, and then, ere he turned to leave, the devil of capriciousness entered his heart. He looked about for some hint of a wild prank to play upon these strange, grotesque creatures that they might be again aware of his presence among them.

Dropping his bundle of arrows at the foot of the tree, Tarzan crept among the shadows at the side of the street until he came to the same hut he had entered on the occasion of his first visit.

Inside all was darkness. His groping hands soon found the object for which he sought, and without further delay he turned again toward the door.

He had taken but a step, however, ere his quick ear caught the sound of approaching footsteps. In another instant the figure of a woman darkened the entrance of the hut.

Tarzan drew back silently to the far wall, and his hand sought his knife. The woman came quickly to the center of the hut, and there she paused for an instant, feeling about with her hands for the thing she sought. Evidently it was not in its accustomed place, for she explored ever nearer and nearer the wall where Tarzan stood.

So close was she now that the ape-man felt the animal warmth of her naked body. Up went the hunting-knife, and then the woman turned to one side, and soon a guttural "Ah!" proclaimed that her search had at last been successful.

Immediately she turned and left the hut, and as she passed through the doorway Tarzan saw that she carried a cooking pot in her hand.

He followed closely after her, and as he reconnoitered from the shadows of the doorway he saw that all the women of the village were hastening to and from the various huts with pots and kettles. These they were filling with water and placing over a number of fires near the stake where the dying victim now hung inert and bloody.

Choosing a moment when none seemed near, Tarzan hastened to his bundle of arrows beneath the great tree at the end of the village street. As on the former occasion, he overthrew the caldron before leaping, sinuous and catlike, into the lower branches of the forest giant.

Silently he climbed to a great height until he found a point where he could look through a leafy opening upon the scene beneath him.

The women were now preparing the prisoner for their cooking pots, while the men stood about resting after the fatigue of their mad revel. Comparative quiet reigned in the village.

Tarzan raised aloft the thing he had pilfered from the hut, and, with aim made true by years of fruit and coco-

nut throwing, launched it toward the group of savages.

Squarely among them it fell, striking one of the warriors full upon the head and felling him to the ground, and then it rolled among the women and stopped beside the half-butchered thing they were preparing to feast upon.

All gazed in consternation at it for an instant, and then, with one accord, broke and ran for their huts.

It was a grinning human skull which looked up at them from the ground. The dropping of the thing out of the open sky was a miracle well aimed to work upon their superstitious fears.

Tarzan of the apes left them filled with terror at this new manifestation of the presence of some unseen and unearthly power which lurked in the forest about their village.

Later, when they discovered the overturned caldron, and that once more their arrows had been pilfered, it dawned upon them that they had offended some great god who ruled this part of the jungle. From then on an offering of food was daily placed below the great tree from whence the arrows had disappeared, in an effort to conciliate the mighty one.

But the seed of fear was deep sown, and had he but known it, Tarzan of the apes had laid the foundation for much future misery for himself and his tribe.

That night he slept in the forest not far from the village, and early the next morning set out slowly on his homeward march, hunting as he traveled. Only a few berries and an occasional grubworm rewarded his search, and he was half famished when, looking up from a log he had been rooting beneath, he saw Sabor, the tiger, standing in the center of the trail not twenty paces from him.

The great yellow eyes were fixed upon him with a wicked and baleful gleam, and the red tongue licked the longing lips as Sabor crouched, worming his stealthy way with belly flattened against the earth.

Tarzan did not attempt to escape. He welcomed the opportunity for which, in fact, he had been searching for days past.

Quickly he unslung his bow and fitted a well-daubed arrow, and as Sabor sprang, the tiny missile leaped to meet him in mid air. At the same instant Tarzan of the apes jumped to one side, and as the tiger struck the ground beyond another death-tipped arrow sank deep into his loin.

With a mighty roar the beast turned and charged once more, only to be met with a third arrow full in one eye; but this time he was too close upon the ape-man for the latter to side-step.

Tarzan of the apes went down beneath the body of his enemy, but with gleaming knife drawn and striking home. For a moment they lay there, and then Tarzan realized that the inert mass lying upon him was beyond power to injure.

With difficulty he wriggled from beneath the great weight, and as he stood erect and gazed down upon the trophy of his skill, a mighty wave of exultation swept over him.

With swelling breast, he placed a foot upon the body of his powerful enemy, and throwing back his fine young head, roared out the awful chalenge of the victorious bull ape.

The forest echoed with the savage and triumphant pæan. Birds fell still, and the larger animals and beasts of prey slunk stealthily away, for few there were of all the jungle who sought for trouble with the great anthropoids.

And in London another Lord Greystoke was speaking to his kind in the House of Lords, but none trembled at the sound of his soft voice.

Sabor proved most unsavory eating even to Tarzan of the apes, but hunger served as a sauce, and ere long the well-fed ape-man was ready to sleep again. First, however, he must remove the hide, for it was as much for this as for any other purpose that he had desired to encompass the destruction of Sabor, the tiger.

Deftly he removed the great pelt, for he had practised often on smaller animals, and, when the task was finished, he carried his trophy to the fork of a high tree. There, curling himself securely in a crotch, he fell into deep slumber.

What with loss of sleep, arduous exercise, and a hearty meal, Tarzan of the apes slept the sun round, awakening about noon of the following day. He straightway repaired to the carcass of Sabor, but was angered to find the bones picked clean by other hungry denizens of the jungle.

Half an hour's leisurely progress through the forest brought to sight a young deer, and before ever the creature knew that an enemy was near a tiny arrow had lodged in its neck.

So quickly the virus worked that at the end of a dozen leaps the deer plunged headlong into the undergrowth, dead. Again did Tarzan feast well, but this time he did not sleep.

Instead, he hastened on toward the point where he had left the tribe, and when he had found them proudly exhibited the skin of Sabor, the tiger.

"Look!" he cried, "Apes of Kerchak. See what Tarzan, the killer, has done. Who else among you has ever killed one of Sabor's people? Tarzan is mightiest among you, for Tarzan is no ape; Tarzan is—" But here he stopped, for in the language of the anthropoids there was no word for man, and Tarzan could only write the word in English; he could not pronounce it.

The tribe had gathered about to look upon the proof of his wondrous prowess, and to listen to his words.

Only Kerchak hung back, nursing his hatred and his rage.

Suddenly something snapped in the brain of the anthropoid. With a frightful roar the great beast sprang among the assemblage.

Biting and striking with his huge hands, he killed and maimed a dozen ere the balance could escape to the upper terraces of the forest.

Frothing and shrieking in the insanity of his fury, Kerchak looked about for the object of his greatest hatred, and there, upon a near-by limb, he saw him sitting.

"Come down, Tarzan, great killer!" cried Kerchak, ready for battle. "Come down and feel the fangs of a greater! Do mighty fighters fly to the trees at danger?"

And he emitted the volleying challenge of his kind.

Quietly Tarzan dropped to the ground. Breathlessly the tribe watched Kerchak, still roaring, charge the relatively puny figure.

Nearly seven feet stood Kerchak on his short legs. His enormous shoulders were bunched and rounded with huge muscles. The back of his short neck was as a single lump of iron sinew which bulged beyond the base of his skull, so that his head seemed like a small ball protruding from a huge mountain of flesh.

His back-drawn, snarling lips exposed his great fighting fangs, and his bloodshot eyes gleamed in horrid reflection of his madness.

Awaiting him stood Tarzan, himself a mighty muscled animal, but his six feet of height and his great rolling sinews seemed pitifully inadequate to the ordeal which awaited them in their struggle with Kerchak.

His bow and arrows lay some distance away, where he had dropped them while showing Sabor's hide to his fellow apes, and he confronted Kerchak with only his knife and his superior intellect to offset the ferocious strength of his enemy.

As his antagonist came roaring toward him, Lord Greystoke tore his long knife from its sheath, and with an answering challenge as horrid and blood-curdling as that of the beast he faced, rushed swiftly to meet the attack. He was too shrewd to allow those long hairy arms to encircle him, and just as their bodies were about to crash together, Tarzan of the apes grasped one of the huge wrists of his

assailant, and, springing lightly to one side, drove his knife to the hilt into Kerchak's body, below the heart.

Before he could wrench the blade free again, Kerchak's quick lunge to grasp him in those awful arms had torn the hilt from Tarzan's hand.

Kerchak aimed a terrific blow at the ape-man's head with the flat of his hand, a blow which had it landed might easily have crushed in the side of Tarzan's skull.

The man was too quick, and, ducking the blow, himself delivered a mighty one with clenched fist in the pit of Kerchak's stomach.

The ape was staggered by the blow, and what with the mortal wound in his side had almost collapsed, when, with one mighty effort he rallied for an instant—just long enough to enable him to wrest his arm free from Tarzan's grasp and close in a terrific clinch with his wiry opponent.

Straining the ape-man close to him, his great jaws sought Tarzan's throat, but the young lord's sinewy fingers were at Kerchak's own before the cruel fangs could close on the sleek brown skin.

Thus they struggled, the one to crush out his opponent's life with those awful teeth, the other to close forever the windpipe beneath his strong grasp, the while he held the snarling mouth from him.

The greater strength of the ape was slowly prevailing, and the teeth of the straining beast were scarce an inch from Tarzan's throat when, with a shuddering tremor, the great body stiffened for an instant and then sank limply to the ground.

Kerchak was dead, and Tarzan of the apes the victor.

Withdrawing the knife that had so often rendered him master of far mightier muscles than his own, Tarzan of the apes placed his foot upon the neck of his vanquished enemy, and once again, loud through the forest rang the fierce, wild cry of the conqueror.

And thus came the young Lord Greystoke into the kingship of the apes.

CHAPTER XII.

MAN'S REASON.

THERE was one of the tribe of Tarzan who questioned his authority, and that was Terkoz, the son of Tublat, but he so feared the keen knife and the deathly arrows of his new lord that he confined the manifestation of his objections to petty disobediences and irritating mannerisms. Tarzan knew, however, that he but waited his opportunity to wrest the kingship from him by some sudden stroke of treachery, and so he was always on guard against surprise.

For months the life of the little band went on much as it had before, except that Tarzan's greater intelligence and his ability as a hunter were the means of providing for them more bountifully than ever before. Most of them, therefore, were more than content with the change in rulers.

Tarzan led them by night to the fields of the black men, and there, warned by their chief's superior wisdom, they ate only what they required, nor did they destroy what they could not eat, as is the way of Manu, the monkey, and of most apes. While the blacks were wroth at the continued pilfering of their fields, they were not discouraged in their efforts to cultivate the land as would have been the case had Tarzan permitted his people to lay wanton waste the plantation.

During this period Tarzan paid many norturnal visits to the village, where he often renewed his supply of arrows. He soon noticed the food always standing at the foot of the tree, which was his avenue into the palisade, and, after a little, he commenced to eat whatever the blacks put there.

When the poor savages saw that the food disapeared overnight, they were filled with consternation and awe, for it was one thing to put food out to

propitiate a god or a devil, but quite another thing to have the spirit really come into the village and eat it.

Nor was this all. The periodic disappearance of their arrows, and the strange pranks perpetrated by unseen hands, had wrought them to such a state that life became a burden in their new home. Mbonga and his head men began to talk of abandoning the village and seeking a site farther in the jungle.

Presently the black warriors began to strike farther and farther into the heart of the forest when they went to hunt, looking for a site for a new village.

More and more often was the tribe of Tarzan disturbed by these wandering huntsmen. The fierce solitude of the primeval forest was broken by new, strange cries. No longer was there safety for bird or beast. Man had come.

Other animals passed up and down the jungle by day and by night—fierce, cruel beasts—but their weaker neighbors only fled from their immediate vicinity to return again when the danger was past.

With man it is different. When he comes many of the larger animals instinctively leave the district entirely, seldom if ever to return; and it has always been thus with the great anthropoids. They flee man as man flees a pestilence.

For a short time the tribe of Tarzan lingered in the vicinity of the beach because their new chief hated the thought of leaving the treasured contents of the little cabin forever. But when one day a member of the tribe discovered the blacks in great numbers on the banks of a stream that had for generations been their watering-place, and in the act of clearing the jungle and erecting many huts, the apes would remain no longer, and so Tarzan led them away inland for many marches to a spot as yet undefiled by the foot of a human being.

Once every moon Tarzan would go swinging rapidly back through the swaying branches to have a day with his books, and to replenish his supply of arrows. This latter task was becoming more and more difficult, for the blacks had taken to hiding their supply at night in granaries and living-huts.

This necessitated watching by day to discover where the arrows were being concealed.

Twice he had entered huts at night while the inmates lay sleeping upon their mats, and stolen the arrows from the very sides of the warriors. But he realized this to be too fraught with danger, and so he commenced picking up solitary hunters with his long deadly noose, stripping them of weapons and ornaments and dropping their bodies from a high tree into the village street during the still watches of the night.

These various escapades again so terrorized the blacks that, had it not been for the monthly respite between Tarzan's visits, in which they had opportunity to renew hope that each fresh incursion would prove the last, they soon would have abandoned their new village.

The blacks had not as yet come upon Tarzan's cabin on the distant beach, but the ape-man lived in constant dread that, while he was away with the tribe, they would discover and despoil his treasure. So it came that he spent more and more time in the vicinity of his father's last home, and less and less with the tribe.

Presently the members of his little community began to suffer on account of his neglect, for disputes and quarrels constantly arose which only the king might settle peaceably.

At last some of the older apes spoke to Tarzan on the subject, and for a month thereafter he remained constantly with the tribe.

The duties of kingship among the anthropoids are not many or arduous.

In the afternoon comes Thaka, possibly, to complain that old Mungo has stolen his new wife. Then must Tarzan summon all before him, and if he finds that the wife prefers her new

lord, he commands that matters remain as they are, or possibly that Mungo give Thaka one of his daughters in exchange.

Whatever his decision, the apes accept it as final, and return to their occupations satisfied.

Then comes Tana, shrieking and holding tight her side from which blood is streaming. Gunto, her husband, has cruelly bitten her! And Gunto, summoned, says that Tana is lazy and will not bring him nuts and beetles or scratch his back for him.

So Tarzan scolds them both and threatens Gunto with a taste of the death-bearing slivers if he abuses Tana further. Tana, for her part, is compelled to promise better attention to her wifely duties.

And so it goes, little family differences for the most part, which, if left unsettled, would result finally in greater factional strife, and the eventual dismemberment of the tribe.

Tarzan tired of it as he found that kingship meant the curtailment of his liberty. He longed for the little cabin and the sun-kissed sea—for the cool interior of the well-built house, and for the never-ending wonders of the many books.

As he had grown older, he found that he had grown away from his people. Their interests and his were far removed. They had not kept pace with him, nor could they understand aught of the many strange and wonderful dreams that passed through the active brain of their human king.

So limited was their vocabulary that Tarzan could not even talk with them of the many new truths, and the fields of thought that his reading had opened up before his longing eyes.

Among the tribe he no longer had friends and cronies as of old. A little child may find companionship in many strange and simple creatures, but to a grown man there must be some semblance of equality in intellect as the basis for agreeable consociation.

Had Kala lived, Tarzan would have sacrificed all else to remain near her, but now that she was dead, and the playful friends of his childhood grown into surly brutes, he felt that he much preferred the peace and solitude of his cabin to the irksome duties of leadership among a horde of wild beasts.

The hatred and jealousy of Terkoz, son of Tublat, did much to counteract the effect of Tarzan's desire to renounce his kingship among the apes, for, stubborn young Englishman that he was, he could not bring himself to retreat in the face of so malignant an enemy.

That Terkoz would be chosen leader in his stead, he knew full well, for time and again the ferocious brute had established his claim to physical supremacy over the few bull apes who had dared resent his savage bullying.

Tarzan would have liked to subdue the beast without recourse to knife or arrows. So much had his great strength and agility increased in the period following his maturity that he had come to believe that he might master the redoubtable Terkoz in a hand-to-hand fight were it not for the terrible advantage the anthropoid's huge fighting fangs gave him over the poorly armed Tarzan.

The entire matter was taken out of Tarzan's hands one day by force of circumstances, and his future left open to him, so that he might go or stay without any stain upon his savage escutcheon.

It happened thus:

The tribe was feeding quietly, spread over a considerable area, when a great screaming rose some distance east of where Tarzan lay upon his belly beside a limpid brook, attempting to catch an elusive fish in his quick, brown hands.

With one accord the tribe swung rapidly toward the frightened cries, and there found Terkoz holding an old female by the hair and beating her unmercifully with his great hands.

As Tarzan approached, he raised his hand aloft for Terkoz to desist, for the female was not his, but belonged to a

poor old ape whose fighting days were long over, and who, therefore, could not protect his family.

Terkoz knew that it was against the laws of his kind to strike the woman of another, but being a bully, he had taken advantage of the weakness of the female's husband to chastise her because she had refused to give up to him a tender young rodent she had captured.

When Terkoz saw Tarzan approaching without his arrows, he continued to belabor the poor woman in a studied effort to affront his hated chieftain.

Tarzan did not repeat his warning signal, but instead rushed bodily upon the waiting Terkoz.

Never had the ape-man fought so terrible a battle since that long-gone day when the great king gorilla had so horribly manhandled him ere the new-found knife had, by accident, pricked the savage heart.

Tarzan's knife on the present occasion but barely offset the gleaming fangs of Terkoz, and what little advantage the ape had over the man in brute strength was almost balanced by the latter's wonderful quickness and agility.

In the sum total of their points, however, the anthropoid had a shade the better of the battle, and had there been no other personal attribute to influence the final outcome, Tarzan of the apes, the young Lord Greystoke, would have died as he had lived—an unknown savage beast in equatorial Africa.

But there was that which had raised him far above his fellows of the jungle—that little spark which spells the vast difference between man and brute—Reason. This it was that saved him from death beneath the iron muscles and tearing fangs of Terkoz.

Scarcely had they fought a dozen seconds ere they were rolling upon the ground, striking, tearing and rending—two great savage beasts battling to the death.

Terkoz had a dozen knife-wounds on head and breast, and Tarzan was torn and bleeding—his scalp in one place half torn from his head, so that a great piece hung down over one eye, obstructing his vision.

But so far the young Englishman had been able to keep the horrible fangs from his jugular and, as they fought less fiercely for a moment to regain their breath, Tarzan formed a cunning plan. He would work his way to the other's back and, clinging there with tooth and nail, drive his knife home until Terkoz was no more.

The maneuver was accomplished more easily than he had hoped, for the stupid beast, not knowing what Tarzan was attempting, made no particular effort to prevent the accomplishment of the design.

But when, finally, he realized that his antagonist was fastened to him where his teeth and fists alike were useless against him, Terkoz hurled himself about upon the ground so violently that Tarzan could but cling desperately to the leaping, turning, twisting body, and ere he had struck a blow the knife was hurled from his hand by a heavy impact against the earth.

Tarzan found himself defenseless.

During the rollings and squirmings of the next few minutes, Tarzan's hold was loosened a dozen times until finally an accidental circumstance of those swift and ever-changing evolutions gave him a new hold with his right hand, which he soon realized was absolutely unassailable.

His arm was passed beneath Terkoz's arm from behind, and his hand and forearm encircled the back of Terkoz's neck. It was the half-Nelson of modern wrestling which the untaught ape-man had stumbled upon, but divine reason showed him in an instant the value of the thing he had discovered. It was the difference to him between life and death.

And so he struggled to encompass a similar hold with the left hand. In a few moments Terkoz's bull-neck was creaking beneath a full-Nelson.

There was no more lunging about

now, the two lay perfectly still upon the ground, Tarzan upon Terkoz's back. Slowly the bullet-head of the ape was being forced lower and lower upon his chest.

Tarzan knew what the result would be. In an instant the neck would break. Then there came to Terkoz's rescue the same thing that had put him in these sore straights — a man's reasoning power.

"If I kill him," thought Tarzan, "what advantage will it be to me? Will it not but rob the tribe of a great fighter? And if Terkoz is dead, he will know nothing of my supremacy, while alive he will be an example to the other apes."

"*Ka-goda?*" hissed Tarzan in Terkoz's ear, which, in ape tongue, means, freely translated: "Do you surrender?"

For a moment there was no reply, and Tarzan added a few more ounces of pressure, which elicited a horrified shriek of pain from the great beast.

"*Ka-goda?*" repeated Tarzan.

"*Ka-goda!*" cried Terkoz.

"Listen," said Tarzan, easing up a trifle, but not releasing his hold. "I am Tarzan, King of the Apes, mighty hunter, mighty fighter. In all the jungle there is none so great.

"You have said: '*Ka-goda*' to me. All the tribe have heard. Quarrel no more with your king or your people, for next time I shall kill you. Do you understand?"

"*Huh,*" assented Terkoz.

"And you are satisfied?"

"*Huh,*" said the ape.

Tarzan let him up, and in a few minutes all were back at their vocations, as though naught had occurred to mar the tranquillity of their primeval forest haunts.

But deep in the minds of the apes was rooted the conviction that Tarzan was a mighty fighter and a strange creature. Strange because he had had it in his power to kill his enemy, but had allowed him to live—unharmed.

That afternoon as the tribe came together, as was their wont before darkness settled on the jungle, Tarzan, his wounds washed in the limpid waters of the little stream, called the old males about him.

"You have seen again to-day that Tarzan of the apes is the greatest among you," he said.

"*Huh,*" they replied with one voice. "Tarzan is great."

"Tarzan," he continued, "is not an ape. He is not like his people. His ways are not their ways, and so Tarzan is going back to the lair of his own kind by the waters of the great lake which has no further shore. You must choose another to rule you. Tarzan will not return."

And thus young Lord Greystoke took the first step toward the goal which he had set himself—the finding of other white men like himself.

CHAPTER XIII.

HIS OWN KIND.

THE following morning Tarzan, lame and sore from the wounds of his battle with Terkoz, set out toward the west and the sea-coast.

He traveled very slowly, sleeping in the jungle at night, and reaching his cabin late the following morning.

For several days he moved about but little, only enough to gather what fruit and nuts he required to satisfy the demands of hunger.

In ten days he was quite sound again, except for a terrible, half-healed scar which, starting above his left eye, ran across the top of his head, ending at the right ear. It was the mark left by Terkoz when he had torn the scalp away.

During his convalescence Tarzan tried to fashion a mantle from the skin of Sabor, the tiger, which had lain all this time in the cabin. But he found the hide had dried as stiff as a board, and, as he knew naught of tanning, he was forced to abandon his cherished plan.

Then he determined to filch what few garments he could from one of the black men of Mbonga's village, for he had decided to mark his evolution from the lower orders in every possible manner, and nothing seemed to him a more distinguishing badge of manhood than ornaments and clothing.

To this end, therefore, he collected the various arm and leg ornaments he had taken from the black warriors who had succumbed to his swift and silent noose, and donned them all.

About his neck hung the golden chain from which depended the diamond-encrusted locket of his mother, the Lady Alice. At his back was a quiver of arrows slung from a leathern shoulder-belt, another piece of loot from some vanquished black.

About his waist was a belt of tiny strips of rawhide fashioned by himself as a support for the home-made scabbard in which hung his father's hunting-knife. The long bow which had been Kulonga's hung over his left shoulder.

The young Lord Greystoke was indeed a strange and warlike figure, his mass of black hair falling to his shoulders behind and cut with his hunting knife to a rude bang upon his forehead, that it might not fall before his eyes.

His straight and perfect figure, muscled as the best of the ancient Roman gladiators must have been muscled, and yet with the soft and sinuous curves of a Greek god, told at a glance the wondrous combination of enormous strength with suppleness and speed.

A personification was Tarzan of the apes, of the primitive man, the hunter, the warrior.

With the noble poise of his handsome head upon those broad shoulders, and the fire of life and intelligence in those fine, clear eyes, he might readily have typified some demigod of a wild and warlike bygone people of his ancient forest.

But of these things Tarzan did not think.

He was worried because he had no clothing to indicate to all the jungle folks that he was a man and not an ape, and grave doubt often entered his mind as to whether he might not yet become an ape.

Was not hair commencing to grow upon his face? All the apes had hair upon theirs, but the black men were entirely hairless, with very few exceptions.

True, he had seen pictures in his books of men with great masses of hair upon lip and cheek and chin, but, nevertheless. Tarzan was afraid. Almost daily he whetted his keen knife and scraped and whittled at his young beard to eradicate this degrading emblem of apehood.

And so he learned to shave—rudely and painfully, it is true—but, nevertheless, effectively.

When he felt quite strong again, after his bloody battle with Terkoz, Tarzan set off one morning toward Mbonga's village. He was moving carelessly along a winding jungle trail, instead of making his progress through the trees, when suddenly he came face to face with a black warrior.

The look of surprise on the savage face was almost comical, and before Tarzan could unsling his bow the fellow had turned and fled down the path crying out in alarm as though to others before him.

Tarzan took to the trees in pursuit, and in a few moments came in view of the fleeing quarry.

There were three of them, and they were racing madly in single file through the dense undergrowth.

Tarzan easily distanced them, nor did they see his silent passage above their heads, nor note the crouching figure squatted upon a low branch ahead of them beneath which the trail led them.

Tarzan let the first two pass beneath him, but as the third came swiftly on the quiet noose dropped about the black throat. A quick jerk drew it taut.

There was an agonized scream from

the victim, and his fellows turned to see his struggling body rise as by magic slowly into the dense foliage of the trees above.

With shrieks they wheeled once more and plunged on in their effort to escape.

Tarzan despatched his prisoner quickly and silently, removed the weapons and ornaments and—greatest joy of all—a handsome doeskin breechcloth, which he quickly transferred to his own person.

Now indeed was he dressed as a man should be. None there was who could doubt his high origin. How he should like to have returned to the tribe to parade before their envious gaze this wondrous finery.

Taking the body across his shoulder, he moved more slowly through the trees toward the little palisaded village, for he again needed arrows.

As he approached quite close to the enclosure he saw an excited group surrounding the two fugitives, who, trembling with fright and exhaustion, were scarce able to recount the uncanny details of their adventure.

Mirando, they said, who had been ahead of them a short distance, had suddenly come screaming toward them, crying that a terrible white and naked warrior was pursuing him. The three of them had made for the village as rapidly as their legs would carry them.

Again Mirando's cry of terror had caused them to look back, and there they had seen the most horrible sight—their companion's body flying upward into the trees, his arms and legs beating the air, and his tongue protruding from his open mouth. No other sound did he utter, nor was there any creature in sight about him.

The villagers were worked up into a state of panic, but wise Mbonga affected to feel considerable skepticism regarding the tale, and attributed the whole fabrication to their fright in the face of some real danger.

"You tell us this great story," he said, "because you do not dare to speak the truth. You do not dare admit that when the tiger sprang upon Mirando you ran away and left him. You are cowards."

Scarcely had Mbonga ceased speaking when a great crashing of branches in the trees above them caused the blacks to look up in renewed terror. The sight that met their eyes made even Mbonga shudder.

Turning and twisting in the air came the dead body of Mirando, to sprawl with a sickening limpness upon the ground at their feet.

With one accord the blacks took to their heels, nor did they stop until the last of them was lost in the shadows of the jungle.

Again Tarzan came down into the village and renewed his supply of arrows, and ate of the offering of food which the blacks had made to appease his wrath.

Before he left he carried the body of Mirando to the gate of the village, and propped it up against the palisade in such a way that the dead face seemed to be peering round the edge of the gate-post down the path which led to the jungle.

Then he returned, hunting, always hunting, to the cabin by the beach.

It took a dozen attempts on the part of the thoroughly frightened blacks to reenter the village, past the grinning face of their dead fellow, and when they found the food and arrows gone, they knew, what they only too well feared, that Mirando had seen the evil spirit of the jungle.

Only those who saw this terrible god of the jungle died; for was it not true that none left alive in the village had ever seen him? Therefore, those who had died at his hands must have seen him and paid the penalty with their lives.

As long as they supplied him with arrows and food, he would not harm them unless they looked upon him, so it was ordered by Mbonga that in addition to the food offering there should also be laid out an offering of arrows

for this Munango-Keewati, and this was done from then on.

When Tarzan came in sight of the beach where stood his cabin, a strange and unusual spectacle met his vision.

On the placid waters of the land-locked harbor floated a great ship, and on the beach a small boat was drawn up.

But, most wonderful of all, a number of white men like himself were moving about between the beach and his cabin.

Tarzan saw that in many ways they were like the men of his picture-books. He crept closer through the trees until he was almost above them.

There were ten men. Swarthy, sun-tanned, and villainous-looking fellows. Now they had congregated by the boat and were talking in loud, angry tones, with much gesticulating and shaking of fists.

Presently one of them, a dwarfed, mean-faced, black-bearded fellow with a countenance which reminded Tarzan of Pamba, the rat, laid his hand upon the shoulder of a giant who stood next him, and with whom all the others had been arguing and quarreling.

The little man pointed inland, so that the giant was forced to turn away from the others to look in the direction indicated. As he turned, the mean-faced man drew a revolver from his belt and shot the giant in the back.

The big fellow threw his hands above his head, his knees bent beneath him, and, without a sound, he tumbled forward upon the beach, dead.

Tarzan puckered his brows into a frown of deep thought. It was well, thought he, that he had not given way to his first impulse to rush forward and greet these white men as brothers.

They were evidently no different from the black men—no more civilized than the apes—no less cruel than Sabor, the tiger.

For a moment the others stood looking at the killer and the giant lying dead upon the beach.

Then one of them laughed and slapped the little man upon the back. There was much more talk and gesticulating, but less quarreling.

Presently they launched the boat and all jumped into it and rowed away toward the great ship, upon whose deck Tarzan could see other figures moving about.

When they had clambered aboard, Tarzan slipped to earth behind a great tree and crept to his cabin, keeping it always between himself and the ship.

Creeping in at the door he found that everything had been ransacked. His books and pencils strewed the floor. His weapons and shields and other little store of treasures were littered about.

As he saw what had been done a wave of anger surged through him. The new scar upon his forehead stood suddenly out, a bar of inflamed crimson against his tawny hide.

Quickly he ran to the cupboard and searched in the far recess of the lower shelf. Ah! He breathed a sigh of relief as he drew out the little tin box, and, opening it, found his greatest treasures undisturbed.

The photograph of the smiling, strong-faced young man, and the little black puzzle book were safe.

What was that?

His quick ear had caught a faint but unfamiliar sound.

Running to the window he looked toward the harbor. Another boat was being lowered from the ship. Soon he saw many people clambering over the sides of the larger vessel and dropping into the boats. They were coming back in full force.

For a moment longer Tarzan watched while a number of boxes and bundles were lowered into the waiting boats, then, as they shoved off from the ship's side, the ape-man snatched up a piece of paper, and with a pencil printed on it several lines of strong, well-made, almost letter-perfect characters.

This notice he stuck upon the door with a small, sharp splinter of wood. Then gathering up his precious tin box, his arrows, and as many bows and

spears as he could carry, he hastened out of doors and disappeared into the forest.

When the two boats were beached upon the silvery sand it was a strange assortment of humanity that clambered ashore.

Some twenty souls in all there were, if the fifteen rough and villainous appearing seamen could have been said to possess that immortal spark, since they were, forsooth, a most filthy and bloodthirsty-looking aggregation.

The others of the party were of different stamp.

One was an elderly man, with white hair and large rimmed spectacles. His slightly stooped shoulders were draped in an ill-fitting, though immaculate, frock-coat; a shiny silk hat added to the incongruity of his garb in an African jungle.

The second member of the party was a tall young man in white ducks. While directly behind came another elderly man with a very high forehead and a fussy, excitable manner.

After these came a huge negress clothed like Solomon as to colors. Her great eyes rolling in evident terror, first toward the jungle and then toward the cursing band of sailors who were removing the bales and boxes from the boats.

The last member of the party to disembark was a girl of about nineteen, and it was the young man who stood at the boat's bow to lift her high and dry upon land. She gave him a brave and pretty smile of thanks.

In silence the party advanced toward the cabin. It was evident that whatever their intentions, all had been decided upon before they left the ship.

They came to the door, the sailors carrying the boxes and bales, followed by the five who were of so different a class. Then the men put down their burdens, and then one caught sight of the notice which Tarzan had posted.

"Ho, mates!" he cried. "What's here? This sign was not posted an hour ago or I'll eat the cook."

The others gathered about, craning their necks over the shoulders of those before them, but as few of them could read at all, and then only after the most laborious fashion, one finally turned to the little old man of the top-hat and frock-coat.

"Hi, perfesser," he called, "step for'rd and read the bloomin' notice."

Thus addressed, the old man came slowly to where the sailors stood, followed by the other members of his party. Adjusting his spectacles, he looked for a moment at the placard, and then, turning away, strolled off, muttering to himself: "Most remarkable—most remarkable!"

"Hi, old fossil!" cried the man who had first called on him for assistance, "didje think we wanted of you to read the bloomin' notice to yourself? Come back here and read it out loud, you old barnacle."

The old man stopped and, turning back, said: "Oh, yes, my dear sir, a thousand pardons. It was thoughtless of me, yes—very thoughtless. Most remarkable—most remarkable!"

Again he faced the notice and read it through, and doubtless would have turned off again to ruminate had not the sailor grasped him roughly by the collar and howled into his ear:

"Read it out loud, you blithering idiot."

"Ah, yes, indeed," replied the professor softly, and, adjusting his spectacles once more, he read aloud:

THIS IS THE HOUSE OF TARZAN, THE KILLER OF BEASTS AND MANY BLACK MEN.
DO NOT HARM THE THINGS WHICH ARE TARZAN'S.
TARZAN WATCHES.
TARZAN OF THE APES.

"Who the devil is Tarzan?" cried the sailor who had before spoken.

"He evidently speaks English," said the young man.

"But what does 'Tarzan of the apes' mean?" cried the girl.

"I do not know, Miss Porter," re-

plied the young man, "unless we have discovered a runaway simian from the London Zoo who has brought back a European education to his jungle home. What do you make of it, Professor Porter?" he added, turning to the old man.

Professor Archimedes Q. Porter adjusted his spectacles.

"Ah, yes, indeed; yes, indeed — most remarkable, most remarkable. I can add nothing further to what I have already remarked in elucidation of this truly momentous occurrence." The professor turned slowly in the direction of the jungle.

"But, papa," cried the girl, "you haven't said anything about it yet!"

"Tut-tut, child; tut-tut," responded Professor Porter, in a kindly and indulgent tone.

He wandered slowly off in still another direction, his eyes bent upon the ground at his feet, his hands clasped behind him beneath the flowing tails of his coat.

"I reckon the daffy old bounder don't know no more'n we do about it," growled the rat-faced sailor.

"Keep a civil tongue in your head," cried the young man, his face paling in anger at the insulting tone of the sailor. "You've murdered our officers and robbed us. We are absolutely in your power, but, so help me, you'll treat Professor Porter and Miss Porter with respect or I'll break that neck of yours with my bare hands—guns or no guns."

The young fellow stepped so close to the rat-faced sailor that the latter, though he bore two revolvers and a villainous-looking knife in his belt, slunk back abashed.

"You coward!" cried the young man. "You've never dared shoot a man until his back was turned. You don't dare shoot me even then."

He turned his back full upon the sailor and walked nonchalantly away.

The sailor's hand crept slyly to the butt of one of his revolvers; his wicked eyes glared vengefully at the retreating form of the young Englishman. The gaze of his fellows was upon him, but he hesitated. At heart he was even a greater coward than Mr. William Cecil Clayton had imagined.

What he would have done will never be known, for there was another factor abroad which none of the party had yet guessed would enter so largely into the problems of their life on this inhospitable African shore.

Two keen eyes had watched every move of the party from the foliage of a near-by tree. Tarzan had seen the surprise caused by his notice, and while he could understand nothing of the spoken language of these strange people their gestures and facial expressions told him much.

The act of the little rat-faced sailor in killing one of his comrades had aroused a strong dislike in Tarzan, and now that he saw him quarreling with the fine-looking young man his animosity was still further stirred.

Tarzan had never seen the effects of a firearm before, though his books had taught him something of them, but when he saw the rat-faced one fingering the butt of his revolver he thought of the scene he had witnessed so short a time before, and naturally expected to see the young man murdered as had been the huge sailor earlier in the day.

So Tarzan fitted a poisoned arrow to his bow and drew a bead upon the rat-faced sailor, but the foliage was so thick that he soon saw the arrow would be deflected by the leaves or some small branch, and instead he launched a heavy spear from his lofty perch.

Clayton had taken but a dozen steps, the rat-faced sailor had half drawn his revolver; the other sailors stood watching the scene intently.

Professor Porter had already disappeared into the jungle, whither he was being followed by the fussy Samuel T. Philander, his secretary and assistant.

Esmeralda, the negress, was busy

sorting her mistress's baggage from the pile of bales and boxes beside the cabin, and Miss Porter had turned away to follow Clayton—when something caused her to turn again toward the sailor.

And then three things happened almost simultaneously — the sailor jerked out his weapon and leveled it at Clayton's back, Miss Porter screamed a warning, and a long, metal-shod spear shot like a bolt from above and passed entirely through the right shoulder of the rat-faced man.

The revolver exploded harmlessly in the air, and the seaman crumpled up with a scream of pain and terror.

Clayton turned and rushed back toward the scene. The sailors stood in a frightened group, with drawn weapons, peering into the jungle. The wounded man writhed and shrieked upon the ground.

Clayton, unseen by any, picked up the fallen revolver, and slipped it inside his shirt, then he joined the sailors.

"Who could it have been?" whispered Jane Porter, and the young man turned to see her standing wide-eyed beside him.

"I dare say Tarzan of the apes is watching us," he answered. "I wonder, now, who that spear was intended for. If for Snipes — then our ape friend is a friend indeed.

"By Jove, where are your father and Mr. Philander? There's some one or something in that jungle, and it's armed, whatever it is. Ho! Professor! Mr. Philander!" young Clayton shouted. There was no response.

"What's to be done, Miss Porter? I can't leave you here alone with these cutthroats. You certainly can't venture into the jungle with me; yet some one must go in search of your father. He is more than apt at wandering off aimlessly, regardless of danger or direction, and Mr. Philander is only a trifle less impractical."

"I quite agree with you," said the girl. "Dear old papa would sacrifice his life for me without an instant's hesitation, provided one could keep his mind on so frivolous a matter for an entire instant. There is only one way to keep him in safety, and that is to chain him to a tree. The poor dear is so impractical."

"I have it!" suddenly exclaimed Clayton. "You can use a revolver, can't you?"

"Yes—why?"

"I have one. With it you and Esmeralda will be comparatively safe in this cabin while I am searching for your father and Mr. Philander. Come, call the woman and I will hurry on. They can't have gone far."

Jane Porter did as he suggested and, when he saw the door close safely behind them, Clayton turned toward the jungle.

Some of the sailors were drawing the spear from their wounded comrade and, as Clayton approached, he asked if he could borrow a revolver from one of them while he searched the jungle for the professor.

The rat-faced one, finding he was not dead, had regained his composure, and with a volley of oaths, refused.

This man, Snipes, had assumed the role of chief since he had killed their former leader, and so little time had elapsed that none of his companions had as yet questioned his authority.

Clayton's only response was a shrug of the shoulders, but as he left them he picked up the spear which had transfixed Snipes, and thus primitively armed — the son of the then Lord Greystoke strode into the dense jungle.

Every few moments he called aloud the names of the wanderers. The watchers in the cabin by the beach heard the sound of his voice growing ever fainter and fainter, until at last it was swallowed up by the myriad noises of the primeval wood.

When Professor Archimedes Q. Porter and his assistant, Samuel T. Philander, after much insistence on the part of the latter, had finally turned their steps toward camp, they were as

completely lost in the wild and tangled labyrinth of the jungle as two human beings could be, though they did not know it.

It was by the merest caprice of fortune that they headed toward the west coast of Africa, instead of toward Zanzibar on the opposite side of the dark continent.

When in a short time they reached the beach, only to find no camp in sight, Philander was positive that they were north of their proper destination, while, as a matter of fact, they were about two hundred yards south of it.

It never occurred to either of these impractical theorists to call aloud on the chance of attracting their friends' attention. Instead, with all the assurance that deductive reasoning from a wrong premise induces in one, Mr. Samuel T. Philander grasped Professor Archimedes Q. Porter firmly by the arm and hurried the weakly protesting old gentleman off in the direction of Cape Town, fifteen hundred miles to the south.

When Jane Porter and Esmeralda found themselves safely behind the cabin door the negress's first thought was to barricade the portal from the inside. With this idea in view she turned to search for some means of putting it into execution—but her first view of the interior of the cabin brought a shriek of terror to her lips, and like a frightened child the huge black ran to bury her face in her mistress's shoulders.

Jane Porter, turning at the cry, saw the cause of it lying prone upon the floor before them—the whitened skeleton of a man. A further glance revealed a second skeleton upon the bed.

"What horrible place are we in?" murmured the awestricken girl. But there was no panic in her fright.

At last disengaging herself from the frantic clutch of the still shrieking Esmeralda, Jane Porter crossed the room to look into the little cradle, knowing what she should see there before ever the tiny skeleton disclosed itself in all its pitiful and pathetic frailty.

What an awful tragedy these mute bones proclaimed! The girl shuddered at thought of the possibilities that might lie before herself and her friends in this ill-fated cabin.

Quickly, with an impatient stamp of her foot, she endeavored to shake off the gloomy forebodings, and turning to Esmeralda bade her cease her wailing.

"Stop, Esmeralda; stop it this minute!" she cried. "You are only making it worse. I never saw such a big baby."

She ended lamely, a little quiver in her own voice as she thought of the three men, upon whom she depended for protection, wandering in the depth of that awful forest.

Soon the girl found that the door was equipped with a heavy wooden bar upon the inside. After several efforts the combined strength of the two enabled them to slip it into place—the first time in twenty years.

Then they sat down upon a bench, with their arms about one another, and waited.

CHAPTER XIV.

AT THE MERCY OF THE JUNGLE.

AFTER Clayton had plunged into the jungle, the sailors—mutineers of the Arrow—fell into a discussion of their next step; but on one point all were agreed—that they should hasten to put off to the anchored Arrow, where they could at least be safe from the spears of their unseen foe. Thus, while Jane Porter and Esmeralda were barricading themselves within the cabin, the crew of cutthroats were pulling rapidly for their ship in the two boats that had brought them ashore.

So much had Tarzan seen that day that his head was in a whirl of wonder. But the most wonderful sight of all to him was the face of the beautiful white girl.

Here at last was one of his own kind; of that he was positive. And the young man and the two old men, they, too, were much as he had pictured his own people to be.

But doubtless they were as ferocious and cruel as other men he had seen. The fact that they of all the party were unarmed might account for the fact that they had killed no one. They might be very different if provided with weapons.

Tarzan had seen the young man pick up the fallen revolver of the wounded Snipes and hide it away in his breast; he had also seen him hand it cautiously to the girl as she entered the cabin door.

He did not understand anything of the motives behind all that he had seen; but, somehow, intuitively he liked the young man and the two old men, and for the girl he had a strange longing which he scarcely understood. As for the big black woman, she was evidently connected in some way to the girl, and so he liked her also.

For the sailors, however, and especially Snipes, he had developed a great hatred. He knew by their threatening gestures and by the expressions upon their evil faces that they were enemies of the others, and so he decided to watch them very closely.

Tarzan wondered why the men had gone into the jungle, nor did it ever occur to him that one could become lost in that maze of undergrowth which to him was as simple as the main street of your own home town.

When he saw the sailors row away toward the ship, and knew that the girl and her companion were safe in his cabin, he decided to follow the young man into the jungle and learn what his errand might be. He swung off rapidly in the direction taken by Clayton, and in a short time heard faintly in the distance the now only occasional calls of the Englishman to his friends.

Presently Tarzan came up with the white man, who, almost fagged, was leaning against a tree wiping the perspiration from his forehead. The ape-man, hiding safe behind a screen of foliage, sat watching this new specimen of his own race intently.

At intervals Clayton called aloud, and finally it came to Tarzan that he was searching for the old men.

Tarzan was on the point of going off to look for them himself, when he caught the yellow glint of a sleek hide moving cautiously through the jungle toward Clayton.

It was Sheeta, the leopard. He heard the soft bending of grasses, and wondered why the young white man was not warned. Could it be he had failed to note the loud warning? Never before had Tarzan known Sheeta to be so clumsy.

No, the white man did not hear. Sheeta was crouching for the spring, and then, shrill and horrible, there rose upon the stillness of the jungle the awful cry of the challenging ape, and Sheeta turned, crashing into the underbrush.

Clayton came to his feet with a start. His blood ran cold. Never had so fearful a sound smote upon his ears. He was no coward; but if ever man felt the icy fingers of fear upon his heart, Cecil Clayton, eldest son of Lord Greystoke of England, did that day in the fastness of the African jungle.

The noise of some great body crashing through the underbrush so close beside him, and the sound of that blood-curdling shriek from above, tested Clayton's courage to the limit; but he could not know that it was to that very voice he owed his life, nor that the creature who hurled it forth was his own cousin — the real Lord Greystoke.

The afternoon was drawing to a close, and Clayton, disheartened and discouraged, was in a terrible quandary as to the proper course to pursue, whether to keep on in search of Professor Porter, at the almost certain risk of his own death in the jungle by night,

or to return to the cabin where he might at least serve to protect Jane Porter from the perils which confronted her on all sides.

He disliked to return to camp without her father; still more he shrank from the thought of leaving her alone and unprotected in the hands of the mutineers of the Arrow, or the hundred unknown dangers of the jungle.

Possibly too, he thought, before this the professor and Philander had returned to camp. Yes, that was more than likely. At least he would return and see, before he continued, what bade fare to be a most fruitless quest. He started, stumbling back through the thick and matted underbrush in the direction that he thought the cabin lay.

To Tarzan's surprise, the young man was heading further into the jungle in the general direction of Mbonga's village, and the shrewd young ape-man was convinced that he was lost.

To Tarzan this was incomprehensible; but his judgment told him that no man would venture toward the village of the cruel blacks armed only with a spear which, from the awkward way he carried it, was evidently an unfamiliar weapon to this white man. Nor was he following the trail of the old men, that they had crossed and long since left, though it had been fresh and plain before Tarzan's eyes.

Tarzan was perplexed. The fierce jungle would make easy prey of this unprotected stranger in a very short time if he were not guided quickly to the beach.

Yes, there was Numa, the lion, even now, stalking the white man a dozen paces to the right.

Clayton heard the great body paralleling his course, and now there rose upon the evening air the great beast's thunderous roar. The man stopped with upraised spear and faced the brush from which issued the awful sound. The shadows were deepening, darkness was coming on.

To die here alone, torn by the fangs of wild beasts; to feel the hot breath of the brute on his face as the great paw crushed down upon his breast!

For a moment all was still. Clayton stood rigid with raised spear. Presently a faint rustling of the bush behind him apprised him of the stealthy creeping of the thing. It was gathering for a spring, when at last he saw it, not twenty feet away — the long, lithe, muscular body and tawny head of a huge black-maned lion.

The beast was on its belly, moving forward very slowly. As its eyes met Clayton's it stopped and deliberately, cautiously gathered its hind quarters beneath it.

In agony the man watched, fearful to launch his spear, powerless to fly.

He heard a noise in the tree above him. Some new danger, he thought, but he dared not take his eyes from the yellow-green orbs before him. There was a sharp twang, like the sound of a broken banjo-string, and at the same instant an arrow appeared in the yellow hide of the crouching lion.

With a roar of pain and anger the beast sprang; but Clayton stumbled to one side, and as he turned again to face the infuriated king of beasts, he was appalled at the sight which confronted him. Almost simultaneously with the lion's turning to renew the attack a naked giant had dropped from the tree above squarely on the brute's back.

With lightning speed an arm that was corded with layers of iron muscle encircled the huge neck, and the great beast was raised from behind, roaring and pawing the air—raised as easily as Clayton would have lifted a pet dog.

That scene he witnessed in the twilight depths of an African jungle was burned forever into the Englishman's brain.

The man before him was the embodiment of physical perfection and giant strength, yet it was not upon this he had depended in his battle with the great cat, for, mighty as were his muscles, they were as nothing by compari-

son with those possessed by Numa. To his agility, to his brain, and to his long, keen knife he owed his supremacy.

His right arm encircled the lion's neck, while the left hand plunged the knife time and time again into the unprotected side behind the left shoulder, while the infuriated beast, drawn upward and backward until he stood on his hind legs, struggled impotently in this unnatural position.

Had the battle continued a few seconds longer the outcome might have been different, but all was accomplished so quickly that the lion had scarce time to recover from its surprise before it sank lifeless to the ground.

Then the strange figure which had vanquished it stood erect upon the carcass, and, throwing back the wild, handsome head, gave the fearsome cry which a few moments earlier had so startled Clayton.

Before him he saw the figure of a young man, naked except for a loincloth and a few barbaric ornaments on arms and legs, and on the breast a priceless diamond locket gleaming against a smooth brown skin.

The hunting-knife had been returned to its homely sheath, and the man was gathering up his bow and quiver from where he had tossed them, when he leaped to attack the lion.

Clayton spoke to the man in English, thanking him for his brave rescue and complimenting him on his wondrous strength and dexterity.

The only answer was a steady stare and a faint shrug of the mighty shoulders, which may have betokened either disparagement of the service rendered or ignorance of the language.

The bow and quiver slung on his back, the wild man once more drew his knife and deftly carved a dozen large strips of meat from the lion's carcass. Then, squatting upon his haunches, he proceeded to eat, motioning Clayton to join him.

The strong white teeth sank into the raw and dripping flesh in apparent relish, but Clayton could not bring himself to share the uncooked meat with his strange host; instead he watched him, and presently there dawned upon him the conviction that this was Tarzan of the apes, whose notice he had seen posted upon the cabin door that morning.

If so, he must speak English.

Again Clayton essayed speech with the ape-man; but the replies were in a strange tongue, which resembled the chattering of monkeys mingled with the growling of some wild beast.

No, this could not be Tarzan of the apes, for it was very evident that he was an utter stranger to the English language.

When Tarzan had finished his repast he rose and, pointing in a very different direction from that which Clayton had been pursuing, started through the jungle toward the point he had indicated.

Clayton, bewildered and confused, hesitated to follow him, for he thought he was but being led more deeply into the mazes of the forest; but the ape-man returned, and, grasping him by the coat, dragged him along until he was convinced that Clayton understood what was required of him, and then left him to follow voluntarily.

The Englishman finally concluded that he was a prisoner, and saw no alternative but to accompany his captor, and thus they traveled slowly through the jungle while the sable mantle of the impenetrable night of the forest fell about them.

The stealthy footfalls of padded paws mingled with the breaking of twigs and the wild calls of the savage life, and Clayton felt all this closing in on him.

Suddenly Clayton heard the faint report of a firearm—a single shot, and then silence.

In the cabin by the beach two thoroughly terrified women clung to each other as they crouched upon the low bench in the gathering darkness.

The negress, sobbing hysterically, bemoaned the evil day that had witnessed her departure from her dear Maryland, while the white girl, dry-eyed and outwardly calm, was tortured by inward forebodings. She feared not more for herself than for the three men whom she knew to be wandering in the abysmal depths of the jungle, from which now issued the incessant shrieks and roars, barkings, and growlings of its terrifying and fearsome inmates.

Now came the sound of a heavy body brushing against the side of the cabin. She could hear the great padded paws upon the ground without. Then for an instant all was silence; even the bedlam of the forest died out to a faint murmur; then she distinctly heard the beast outside sniffing at the door, not two feet from where she crouched. Instinctively the girl shuddered and shrank closer to the black woman.

"Hush!" she whispered. "Hush, Esmeralda," for the woman's sobs and groans seemed to have attracted the thing that stalked there just beyond the thin wall.

A gentle scratching sound was heard on the door. The brute tried to force an entrance; but presently this ceased, and again she heard the great padded paws creep stealthily around the cabin. Again they stopped—beneath the window on which the terrified eyes of the girl now glued themselves.

"Heavens!" she murmured, for, silhouetted against the moonlit sky beyond, she saw framed in the tiny square of the latticed window the head of a huge tiger. The gleaming eyes were fixed upon her in tense ferocity.

"Look, Esmeralda!" she whispered. "What shall we do? Look! Quick! The window!"

Esmeralda cowered still closer to her mistress and glanced, affrighted, toward the little square of moonlight just as the tiger emitted a low, savage snarl.

The sight that met the poor black's eyes was too much for the already overstrung nerves.

"Oh, Gaberelle!" she shrieked and slid to the floor, an inert and senseless mass.

For what seemed an eternity the great brute stood with its forepaws upon the sill, glaring into the little room. Presently it tried the strength of the lattice with its great talons.

The girl had almost ceased to breathe, when to her relief the head disappeared and she heard the brute's footsteps leaving the window. But now they came to the door again, and once more the scratching commenced; but this time with increasing force until the great beast was tearing at the massive panels in a perfect frenzy of fury.

Could Jane Porter have known the immense strength of that door, builded piece by piece, she would have felt less fear of the tiger reaching her by this avenue. Little did John Clayton imagine when he fashioned that crude but mighty portal that one day, twenty years later, it would shield a fair American girl, then unborn, from the teeth and talons of the man-eater.

For fully twenty minutes the brute alternately sniffed and tore at the door, occasionally giving voice to a cry of baffled rage. At length, however, he gave up the attempt, and Jane Porter heard him returning toward the window, beneath which he paused for an instant, and then launched his great weight against the time-worn lattice.

The girl heard the wooden rods groan beneath the impact; but they held, and the huge body dropped back to the ground below.

Again and again the tiger repeated these tactics, until finally the horrified prisoner within saw a portion of the lattice give way, and in an instant one great paw and the head of the animal were thrust within the room.

Slowly the powerful neck and shoulders were spreading the bars apart, and the lithe body came further and further into the room.

As in a trance, the girl rose, her hand upon her breast, wide eyes staring horror-stricken into the snarling face of the beast scarce ten feet from her. At her feet lay the prostrate form of the negress. If she could but arouse her, their combined efforts might possibly avail to beat back the blood-thirsty intruder.

Jane Porter stooped to grasp the black woman by the shoulder. Roughly she shook her.

"Esmeralda! Esmeralda!" she cried. "Help me, or we are lost!"

Esmeralda slowly opened her eyes. The first object they encountered was the dripping fangs of Sabor.

With a horrified scream the poor woman rose to her hands and knees, and in this position scurried across the room, shrieking, "Oh, Gaberelle! Oh. Gaberelle!" at the top of her lungs.

Esmeralda weighed some two hundred and eighty pounds, which added nothing to the grace of her carriage when walking erect, and her extreme haste, added to her extreme corpulency, produced a most amazing result when Esmeralda elected to travel on all-fours.

For a moment the tiger remained quiet with intense gaze directed upon the flitting Esmeralda, whose goal appeared to be the cupboard, into which she attempted to propel her huge bulk; but, as the shelves were but nine or ten inches apart, she only succeeded in getting her head in, whereupon, with a final screech, which paled the jungle noises into insignificance, she fainted once again.

With the subsidence of Esmeralda the tiger renewed his efforts to wriggle his huge bulk through the weakening lattice.

The girl, standing pale and rigid against the farther wall, sought with increasing terror for some loophole of escape. Suddenly her hand, tight-pressed against her bosom, felt the hard outlines of the revolver that Clayton had left with her earlier in the day.

Quickly she snatched it from its hiding-place, and, leveling it full at the tiger's face, pulled the trigger.

There was a flash of flame, the roar of the discharge, and an answering roar of pain and anger from the beast.

Jane Porter saw the great form disappear from the window, and then she, too, fainted.

But the tiger was not killed. The bullet had but inflicted a painful wound in one of the great shoulders. It was the surprise at the blinding flash and the deafening roar that had caused his hasty, though but temporary, retreat.

In another instant he was back at the lattice, and with renewed fury was clawing at the aperture, but with lessened effect, since the wounded member was almost useless.

He saw his prey — two women — lying senseless upon the floor; there was no longer any resistance to be overcome. Sabor had only to worm his way through the lattice to claim it.

Slowly he forced his great bulk, inch by inch, through the opening. Now his head was through, now one great foreleg and shoulder.

Carefully he drew up the wounded member to insinuate it gently beyond the tight-pressing bars.

A moment more and both shoulders through, the long, sinuous body and the narrow hips would glide quickly after.

It was on this sight that Jane Porter again opened her eyes.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FOREST GOD.

WHEN Clayton heard the report of the firearm he fell into an agony of fear and apprehension. He knew that it might be one of the sailors; but the fact that he had left the revolver with Jane Porter, together with the overwrought condition of his nerves, made him morbidly positive that she was threatened with some great danger; perhaps even now was attempting to defend herself against man or beast.

What were the thoughts of his strange captor or guide Clayton could only vaguely conjecture; but that he had heard the shot, and was in some manner affected by it, was quite evident, for he quickened his pace so appreciably that Clayton, stumbling blindly in his wake, was down a dozen times in as many minutes in a vain effort to keep pace with him, and soon was left hopelessly behind.

Fearing that he would again be irretrievably lost, he called aloud to the wild man ahead of him, and in a moment had the satisfaction of seeing him drop lightly to his side from the branches above.

For a moment Tarzan looked at the young man closely, as though undecided as to just what was best to do; then, stooping before Clayton, he motioned him to grasp him about the neck, and, with the white man upon his back, Tarzan took to the trees.

The next few minutes were such as the young Englishman never forgot. High into bending and swaying branches he was borne with what seemed to him incredible swiftness, while Tarzan chafed at the slowness of his progress.

From one lofty branch the agile creature swung with Clayton through, a dizzy arc to a neighboring tree; then for a hundred yards maybe the sure feet threaded a maze of interwoven limbs, balancing like a tight-rope walker high above the black depths of verdure beneath.

From the first sensation of chilling fear Clayton passed to one of admiration and envy of those giant muscles and that wondrous instinct or knowledge which guided this forest god through the inky blackness of the night as easily and safely as Clayton could have strolled a London street at high noon.

Occasionally they would enter a spot where the foliage above was less dense, and the bright rays of the moon lit up before Clayton's wondering eyes the strange path they were traversing.

At such times the man fairly caught his breath at sight of the horrid depths below them, for Tarzan took the easiest way, which often led over a hundred feet above the earth.

With all his seeming speed, Tarzan was in reality feeling his way with comparative slowness, searching constantly for limbs of adequate strength for the maintenance of this double weight.

Presently they came to the clearing before the beach. Tarzan's quick ears had heard the strange sounds of Sabor's efforts to force his way through the lattice, and it seemed to Clayton that they dropped a straight hundred feet to earth, so quickly did Tarzan descend. Yet when they struck the ground it was with scarce a jar; and as Clayton released his hold on the ape-man he saw him dart like a squirrel for the opposite side of the cabin.

The Englishman sprang quickly after him just in time to see the hind quarters of some huge animal about to disappear within the cabin.

As Jane Porter opened her eyes to a realization of the again imminent peril which threatened her, her brave heart gave up its final vestige of hope, and she turned to grope for the fallen weapon that she might mete to herself a merciful death before the cruel fangs tore at her flesh.

The tiger was almost through the window before she found the weapon, and she raised it quickly to her temple to shut out forever the hideous jaws gaping for their prey.

An instant she hesitated, to breathe a short and silent prayer to her Maker, and as she did so her eyes fell upon the poor Esmeralda lying inert, but alive, beside the cupboard.

How could she leave the poor, faithful thing to those merciless yellow fangs? No, she must use one cartridge on the senseless woman ere she turned the cold muzzle toward herself again.

She shrank from the ordeal. But it would have been cruelty a thousand times less justifiable to have left the

loving black woman who had reared her from infancy, to regain consciousness beneath the rending claws of the tiger.

Quickly the girl sprang to her feet and ran to the side of the negress. She pressed the muzzle of the revolver tight against that devoted heart, closed her eyes, and—

The tiger emitted a frightful shriek.

Jane Porter, startled, pulled the trigger and turned to face the beast, and with the same movement raised the weapon against her own temple.

She did not fire a second time. Astounded, she saw the huge beast being slowly drawn back through the window, and in the moonlight beyond she saw the heads and shoulders of two men.

As Clayton rounded the corner of the cabin to behold the animal disappearing within, it was also to see the ape-man seize the long black-and-yellow tail in both hands, and, bracing himself with his feet against the side of the cabin, throw all his mighty strength into the effort to draw the beast out of the interior.

Clayton was quick to lend a hand, but the ape-man jabbered to him in a commanding and peremptory tone. Orders, Clayton knew, though he could not understand them.

At last, under their combined efforts, the great body commenced to appear farther and farther without the window, and then there came to Clayton's mind a dawning conception of the rash bravery of his companion's act.

For a naked man to drag a shrieking, clawing man-eater forth from a window by the tail to save a strange white girl, was indeed the last word in heroism.

In so far as Clayton was concerned it was a very different matter, since the girl was not only of his own kind, but was the woman whom he loved.

Though he knew that the tiger would make short work of both of them, he pulled with a will to keep it from Jane Porter. And then he recalled the battle between this man and the lion, which he had witnessed a short time before, and he commenced to feel more assurance.

Tarzan was still issuing orders which Clayton could not understand.

He was trying to tell the stupid white man to plunge his poisoned arrows into Sabor's back and sides, and to reach the savage heart with the long, thin hunting-knife that hung at Tarzan's hip; but the man would not understand, and Tarzan did not dare release his hold to do the things himself. He knew that the puny white man never could hold mighty Sabor alone for an instant.

Slowly the tiger was emerging from the window. At last his shoulders were out.

And then Clayton saw a thing done which not even the eternal heavens had ever seen before. Tarzan, racking his brains for some means to cope single-handed with the infuriated beast, had suddenly recalled his battle with Terkoz; and as the great shoulders came clear of the window, so that the tiger hung upon the sill only by his forepaws, Tarzan sudenly released his hold upon the brute.

With incredible quickness he launched himself full upon Sabor's back, his strong young arms seeking and gaining a full-Nelson upon the beast, as he had learned it that other day during his bloody victory over Terkoz.

With a shriek the tiger turned completely over upon his back, falling full upon his enemy. The black-haired giant only closed tighter his hold.

Pawing and tearing at earth and air, Sabor rolled and threw himself this way and that in an effort to dislodge his antagonist. Always tighter and tighter drew the iron bands that were forcing his head lower and lower upon his white breast.

Higher and higher crept the steel forearms of the ape-man about the back of Sabor's neck. Weaker and weaker became the tiger's efforts.

At last Clayton saw the immense muscles of Tarzan's shoulders and biceps leap into corded knots. There was a long-sustained and supreme effort on the ape-man's part — and the vertebræ of Sabor's neck parted with a sharp snap.

In an instant Tarzan was upon his feet, and for the second time that day Clayton heard the bull ape's savage roar of victory — and then he heard Jane Porter's agonized cry:

"Cecil!—Mr. Clayton! Oh, what is it? What is it?"

Running quickly to the cabin door, Clayton called out that all was right, and bade her open. As quickly as she could she raised the great bar and fairly dragged Clayton within.

"What was that awful noise?" she whispered, shrinking close to him.

"It was the cry of the kill from the throat of the man who has just saved your life, Miss Porter. Wait, I will fetch him that you may thank him."

The frightened girl would not be left alone, so she accompanied Clayton to the side of the cabin where lay the dead body of the tiger.

Tarzan of the apes was gone.

Clayton called several times, but there was no reply, and so the two returned to the greater safety of the interior.

"What a frightful sound!" cried Jane Porter. "Don't tell me that a human being made it!"

"But it did, Miss Porter," replied Clayton; "or at least if not a human throat, that of a forest god."

And he told her of his experiences with this creature—of how twice the wild man had saved his life—of his wondrous strength and agility and bravery—of the brown skin and the handsome face.

"I cannot make it out at all," he concluded. "At first I thought he might be Tarzan of the apes. But he neither speaks nor understands English, so that theory is untenable."

"Well, whatever he may be," cried the girl, "we owe him our lives. May Heaven bless him and keep him in safety in his jungle!"

"Amen," said Clayton fervently.

"Fo' de good Lawd's sake, ain' Ah daid?"

The two turned to see Esmeralda sitting upright upon the floor, her great eyes rolling from side to side, as though she could not believe their testimony as to her whereabouts.

The tiger's shriek, as Jane Porter had been about to put a bullet into poor Esmeralda, had saved the black's life, for the little start the girl gave had turned the muzzle of the revolver to one side, and the bullet had passed harmlessly into the floor.

And now, for Jane Porter, the reaction came, and she threw herself upon the bench, screaming with laughter.

CHAPTER XVI.

"MOST REMARKABLE."

SEVERAL miles south of the cabin, upon a strip of sandy beach, stood two old men, arguing.

Before them stretched the broad Atlantic; at their backs the Dark Continent; close around them loomed the impenetrable blackness of the jungle.

Savage beasts roared and growled; noises, hideous and weird, assailed their ears. They had wandered miles in search of their camp, but always in the wrong direction. They were as hopelessly lost as though they suddenly had been transported to another world.

At such a time indeed every fiber of their combined intellects should have been concentrated upon the vital question of the minute—the life-and-death question to them of retracing their steps to camp.

Samuel T. Philander was speaking.

"But, my dear professor," he was saying, "I still maintain that but for the victories of Ferdinand and Isabella over the fifteenth-century Moors in Spain the world would be to-day a

thousand years in advance of where we now find ourselves.

"The Moors were essentially a tolerant, broad-minded, liberal race of agriculturists, artisans, and merchants—the very type of people that has made possible such civilization as we find to-day in America and Europe—while the Spaniards—"

"Tut-tut, Mr. Philander," interrupted Professor Porter, "their religion positively precluded the possibilities you suggest. Moslemism was, is, and always will be a blight on that scientific progress which has marked—"

"Bless me! Professor," interjected Mr. Philander, who had turned his gaze toward the jungle, "there seems to be some one approaching."

Professor Archimedes Q. Porter turned in the direction indicated by the near-sighted Mr. Philander.

"Tut-tut, Mr. Philander!" he chided. "How often must I urge you to seek after that absolute concentration of your mental faculties which alone may permit you to bring to bear the highest powers of intellectuality upon the momentous problems which naturally fall to the lot of great minds? And now I find you guilty of a most flagrant breach of courtesy in interrupting my discourse to call attention to a mere quadruped of the genus *Felis*. As I was saying, Mr.—"

"Heavens, professor, a lion?" cried Mr. Philander, straining his weak eyes toward the dim figure outlined against the dark tropical underbrush.

"Yes, yes, Mr. Philander, if you insist upon employing slang in your discourse, a 'lion.' But, as I was saying—"

"Bless me, professor," again interrupted Mr. Philander, "permit me to suggest that doubtless the Moors who were conquered in the fifteenth century will continue in that most regrettable condition for the time being at least, even though we postpone discussion of that world calamity until we may attain the enchanting view of yon *Felis carnivora* which distance proverbially is credited with lending."

In the mean time the lion had approached with quiet dignity to within ten paces of the two men, where he stood curiously watching them.

The moonlight flooded the beach, and the strange group stood out in bold relief against the yellow sand.

"Most reprehensible, most reprehensible!" exclaimed Professor Porter, with a faint trace of irritation in his voice.

"Never, Mr. Philander, never before in my life have I known one of these animals to be permitted to roam at large from its cage. I shall most certainly report this most outrageous breach of ethics to the directors of the zoological garden."

"Quite right, professor," agreed Mr. Philander, "and the sooner it is done the better. Let us start now."

Seizing the professor by the arm, Mr. Philander set off in the direction that would put the greatest distance between themselves and the lion.

They had proceeded but a short distance when a backward glance revealed that the lion was following them. Mr. Philander tightened his grip upon the professor and increased his speed.

"As I was saying, Mr. Philander—" repeated Professor Porter.

Mr. Philander took another hasty glance rearward. The lion also had quickened his gait, and was doggedly maintaining an unvarying distance behind them.

"He is following us!" gasped Mr. Philander, breaking into a run.

"Tut-tut, Mr. Philander!" remonstrated the professor. "This unseemly haste is most unbecoming men of letters."

Mr. Philander stole another observation astern.

The lion was bounding along in easy leaps scarce five paces behind.

Mr. Philander dropped the professor's arm, and broke into a mad orgy of speed that would have done credit to any varsity track team.

"As I was saying, Mr. Philander—" screamed Professor Porter as, metaphorically speaking, he himself "threw her into high." He, too, had caught a fleeting backward glimpse of cruel yellow eyes and half-open mouth within startling proximity of his person.

With streaming coat-tails and shiny silk hat, Professor Archimedes Q. Porter fled through the moonlight close upon the heels of Mr. Samuel T. Philander.

Before them a point of the jungle ran out toward a narrow promontory, and it was for the haven of the trees he saw there that Mr. Samuel T. Philander directed his prodigious leaps and bounds; and from the shadows of this same spot peered two keen eyes in interested appreciation of the race.

It was Tarzan of the apes who watched, with face agrin, this odd game of follow-the-leader.

He knew the two men were safe enough from attack in so far as the lion was concerned. The very fact that Numa had foregone such easy prey at all convinced the wise forest craft of Tarzan that Numa had already dined.

The lion might stalk them until hungry again, but the chances were that if not angered he would soon tire of the sport and slink away to his jungle lair.

Really, the one great danger was that one of the men might stumble and fall, and then the yellow devil would be upon him in a moment and the joy of the kill would be too great a temptation to withstand.

So Tarzan swung quickly to a lower limb in line with the approaching fugitives; and as Mr. Samuel T. Philander came panting and blowing beneath him, already too spent to struggle up to the safety of the limb, Tarzan reached down and, grasping him by the collar of his coat, yanked him to the limb by his side.

Another moment brought the professor within the sphere of the friendly grip, and he, too, was drawn upward to safety just as the baffled Numa, with a roar, leaped to recover his vanishing quarry.

For a moment the two men clung, panting, to the great branch, while Tarzan squatted with his back to the stem of the tree, watching them with mingled curiosity and amusement.

It was the professor who first broke the silence.

"I am deeply pained, Mr. Philander, that you should have evinced such a paucity of manly courage in the presence of one of the lower orders, and by your crass timidity have caused me to exert myself to such an unaccustomed degree in order that I might resume my discourse. As I was saying, Mr. Philander, when you interrupted me, the Moors—"

"Professor Archimedes Q. Porter," broke in Mr. Philander in icy tones, "the time has arrived when patience becomes a crime and mayhem appears garbed in the mantle of virtue. You have accused me of cowardice. You have insinuated that you ran only to overtake me, not to escape the clutches of the lion.

"Have a care, Professor Archimedes Q. Porter; I am a desperate man. Goaded by long-suffering patience, the worm will turn."

"Tut-tut, Mr. Philander—tut-tut!" cautioned Professor Porter; "you forget yourself."

"I forget nothing as yet, Professor Archimedes Q. Porter; but, believe me, sir, I am tottering on the verge of forgetfulness as to your exalted position in the world of science and your gray hairs."

The professor sat in silence for a few minutes, and the darkness hid the grim smile that wreathed his wrinkled countenance. Presently he spoke.

"Look here, Skinny Philander," he said in belligerent tones, "if you are lookin' for a scrap, peel off your coat and come down on the ground, and I'll punch your head just as I did sixty years ago in the alley back of Porky Evans's barn."

"Ark!" gasped the astonished Mr. Philander. "Lordy, how good that sounds! When you're human, Ark, I love you. Somehow, it seems as though you had forgotten how to be human for the last twenty years."

The professor reached out a thin, trembling old hand through the darkness until it found his old friend's shoulder.

"Forgive me, Skinny," he said softly. "It hasn't been quite twenty years, and Heaven alone knows how hard I have tried to be 'human' for Jane's sake, and yours, too, since my other Jane was taken away."

Another old hand stole up from Mr. Philander's side to clasp the one that lay upon his shoulder, and no other message could better have translated the one heart to the other.

They did not speak for some minutes. The lion below them paced nervously back and forth. The third figure in the tree was hidden by the dense shadows near the stem. He, too, was silent—motionless as a graven image.

"You certainly pulled me up into this tree just in time," said the professor at last. "I want to thank you. You saved my life."

"But I didn't pull you up here, professor," said Mr. Philander. "Bless me! The excitement of the moment quite caused me to forget that I myself was drawn up here by some outside agency. There must be some one or something in this tree with us."

"Eh?" ejaculated Professor Porter. "Are you quite positive, Mr. Philander?"

"Most positive, professor," replied Mr. Philander. "And," he added, "I think we should thank the party. He may be sitting right next to you now, professor."

"Eh? What's that? Tut-tut, Mr. Philander, tut-tut!" said Professor Porter, edging cautiously nearer to Mr. Philander.

Just then it occurred to Tarzan of the apes that Numa had loitered beneath the tree for a sufficient length of time, so he raised his young head toward the heavens, and there rang out upon the terrified ears of the two old men the awful warning challenge of the anthropoid.

The two friends, huddled trembling in their precarious position on the limb, saw the great lion halt in his restless pacing as the blood-curdling cry smote his ears, and then slink quickly into the jungle, to be instantly lost to view.

"Even the lion trembles in fear," whispered Mr. Philander.

"Most remarkable, most remarkable," murmured Professor Porter, clutching frantically at Mr. Philander to regain the balance which the sudden fright had so perilously endangered. Unfortunately for them both, Mr. Philander's center of equilibrium was at that very moment hanging upon the ragged edge of nothing, so that it needed but the gentle impetus supplied by the additional weight of Professor Porter's body to topple the devoted secretary from the limb.

For a moment they swayed uncertainly, and then, with mingled and most unscholarly shrieks, they pitched headlong from the tree, locked in frenzied embrace.

It was quite some moments ere either moved, for both were positive that any such attempt would reveal so many breaks and fractures as to make further progress impossible.

At length Professor Porter essayed an attempt to move one leg. To his surprise, it responded to his will as in days gone by. He now drew up its mate and stretched it forth again.

"Most remarkable," he murmured.

"Thank Heaven, professor," whispered Mr. Philander fervently. "You're not dead, then?"

"Tut-tut, Mr. Philander, tut-tut!" cautioned Professor Porter. "I do not know as yet."

With infinite solicitude Professor Porter wiggled his right arm — joy! It was intact. Breathlessly he waved his left arm above his prostrate body —it waved!

"Most remarkable, most remarkable," he said.

"To whom are you signaling professor?" asked Mr. Philander in an excited tone.

Professor Porter deigned to make no response to this puerile inquiry. Instead, he raised his head gently from the ground, nodding it back and forth a half-dozen times.

"Most remarkable," he breathed. "It remains intact."

Mr. Philander had not moved from where he had fallen; he had not dared the attempt. How, indeed, could one move when one's arms and legs and back were broken?

One eye was buried in the soft loam; the other, rolling sidewise, was fixed in awe upon the strange gyrations of Professor Porter.

"How sad!" exclaimed Mr. Philander, half aloud. "Concussion of the brain, superinducing total mental aberration. How very sad indeed!"

Professor Porter rolled over upon his stomach. Gingerly he bowed his back until he resembled a huge tomcat in proximity to a yelping dog. Then he sat up and felt of various portions of his anatomy.

"They are all here," he ejaculated.

Whereupon he rose, and, bending a scathing glance upon the still prostrate form of Mr. Samuel T. Philander, he said:

"Tut-tut, Mr. Philander; this is no time to indulge in slothful ease. We must be up and doing."

Mr. Philander lifted his other eye out of the mud and gazed in speechless rage at Professor Porter. Then he attempted to rise; nor could there have been any one more surprised than he when his efforts were immediately crowned with marked success.

He was still bursting with rage, however, at the cruel injustice of Professor Porter's insinuation, and was on the point of rendering a tart rejoinder when his eyes fell upon a strange figure standing a few paces away, scrutinizing them intently.

Professor Porter had recovered his shiny silk hat, which he had brushed carefully upon the sleeve of his coat and replaced upon his head. When he saw Mr. Philander pointing to something behind him, he turned to behold a giant, naked but for a loin-cloth and a few metal ornaments, standing motionless before him.

"Good evening, sir!" said the professor, lifting his hat.

For reply, the giant motioned them to follow him, and set off up the beach in the direction from which they had recently come.

"I think it the part of discretion to follow him," said Mr. Philander.

"Tut-tut, Mr. Philander," returned the professor. "A short time since you were advancing most logical argument in substantiation of your theory that camp lay directly south of us. I was skeptical, but you finally convinced me; so now I am positive that toward the south we must travel to reach our friends. Therefore, I shall continue south."

"But, Professor Porter, this man may know better than either of us. He seems to be indigenous to this part of the world. Let us at least follow him for a short distance."

"Tut-tut, Mr. Philander," repeated the professor. "I am a difficult man to convince, but when once convinced my decision is unalterable. I shall continue in the proper direction, if I have to circumambulate the continent of Africa to reach my destination."

Further argument was interrupted by Tarzan, who, seeing that these strange men were not following him, had returned to their side.

Again he motioned them to follow him; but still they stood in argument.

Presently the ape-man lost patience with their stupid ignorance. He grasped the frightened Mr. Philander by the shoulder, and before that worthy gentleman knew whether he was being killed or merely maimed for life, Tarzan had tied one end of his rope securely about Mr. Philander's neck.

"Tut-tut, Mr. Philander," remonstrated Professor Porter; "it is most unbeseeming in you to submit to such indignities."

But scarcely were the words out of his mouth ere he, too, had been seized and securely bound by the neck with the same rope. Then Tarzan set off toward the north, leading the now thoroughly frightened professor and his secretary.

In deathly silence they proceeded for what seemed hours to the two tired and hopeless old men; but presently, as they topped a little rise of ground, they were overjoyed to see the cabin lying before them, not a hundred yards distant.

Here Tarzan released them and, pointing toward the little building, vanished into the jungle beside them.

"Most remarkable, most remarkable!" gasped the professor. "But you see, Mr. Philander, that I was quite right, as usual; and but for your stubborn wilfulness we should have escaped a series of most humiliating, not to say dangerous, accidents. Pray allow yourself to be guided by a more mature and practical mind in future."

Mr. Samuel T. Philander was too much relieved at the happy outcome of their adventure to take umbrage at the professor's cruel fling. Instead, he grasped his friend's arm and hastened him forward in the direction of the cabin.

It was a much-relieved party of castaways that found itself once more united. Dawn discovered them still recounting their various adventures, and speculating upon the identity of the strange guardian and protector they had found on this savage shore.

Esmeralda was positive that it was none other than an angel sent down especially to watch over them.

"Had you seen him devour the raw meat of the lion, Esmeralda," laughed Clayton, "you would have thought him a very material angel."

"Ah doan know nuffin' 'bout dat, Marse Clayton," rejoined Esmeralda; "but Ah 'specs de Lawd clean fergot to gib him any matches, He sent him down in sech a hurry to look after we-all. An' he suttinly cain't cook nuffin' 'thout matches—no, sah."

"There was nothing heavenly about his voice," said Jane Porter, with a little shudder at recollection of the awful roar which had followed the killing of the tiger.

"Nor did it precisely comport with my preconceived ideas of the dignity of divine messengers," remarked Professor Porter, "when the—ah—gentlemen tied two highly respectable and erudite scholars neck to neck and dragged them through the jungle as though they had been cows."

CHAPTER XVII.

BURIALS.

As it was now quite light, the party, none of whom had eaten or slept since the previous morning, began to bestir themselves to prepare food.

The mutineers of the Arrow had landed a small supply of dried meats, canned soups, and vegetables, crackers, flour, tea, and coffee for the five they had marooned, and these were hurriedly drawn upon to satisfy the cravings of long-famished appetites.

The next task was to make the cabin habitable, and to this end it was first decided to remove the gruesome relics of the tragedy which had taken place there on some bygone day.

Professor Porter and Mr. Philander were deeply interested in examining the skeletons. The two larger, they stated, to have belonged to a male and female of one of the higher white races.

The smallest skeleton was given but passing attention, as its location in the crib left no doubt as to its having been the infant offspring of this unhappy couple.

As they were preparing the skeleton of the man for burial, Clayton discovered a massive ring which had evidently encircled the man's finger at the time

of his death, for one of the slender bones of the hand still lay within the golden bauble.

Picking it up to examine it, Clayton gave a cry of astonishment, for the ring bore the crest of the house of Greystoke.

At the same time, Jane Porter discovered the books in the cupboard, and on opening to the fly-leaf of one of them saw the name "John Clayton, London." In a second book, which she hurriedly examined, was the single name "Greystoke."

"Why, Mr. Clayton," she cried, "what does this mean? Here are the names of some of your own people in these books."

"And here," he replied gravely, "is the great ring of the house of Greystoke which has been lost since my uncle, John Clayton, the former Lord Greystoke, disappeared, presumably lost at sea."

"But how do you account for these things being here in this savage African jungle?" exclaimed the girl.

"There is but one way to account for it, Miss Porter," said Clayton. "The late Lord Greystoke was not drowned. He died here in this cabin, and this poor thing upon the floor is all that is mortal of him.

"Then this must have been Lady Greystoke," said Jane Porter reverently, indicating the mass of bones upon the bed.

"The beautiful Lady Alice," replied Clayton, "of whose many virtues and charms I often have heard my mother and father speak."

With reverence and solemnity the bodies of the late Lord and Lady Greystoke were buried beside their little African cabin, and between them was placed the tiny skeleton of the baby of Kala, the ape.

As Mr. Philander was placing the frail bones of the infant in a bit of sail-cloth, he examined the skull minutely. Then he called Professor Porter to his side, and the two argued in low tones for several minutes.

"Most remarkable, most remarkable," said Professor Porter.

"Bless me," said Mr. Philander, "we must acquaint Mr. Clayton with our discovery at once."

"Tut-tut, Mr. Philander, tut-tut!" remonstrated Professor Archimedes Q. Porter. "Let the dead past bury its dead."

And so the white-haired old man repeated the burial service over this strange grave, while his four companions stood with bowed and uncovered heads about him.

From the trees Tarzan of the apes watched this strange ceremony; but, most of all, he watched the sweet face and graceful figure of Jane Porter.

In his savage, untutored breast new emotions were stirring. He could not fathom them. He wondered why he felt so great an interest in these people—why he had gone to such pains to save the three men. But he did not wonder why he had torn Sabor from the tender flesh of the strange girl.

Surely the men were stupid and ridiculous and cowardly. Even Manu, the monkey, was more intelligent than they. If these were creatures of his own kind, he was doubtful if his past pride in blood was warranted.

But the girl, ah!—that was a different matter. He did not reason here. He knew that she was created to be protected, and that he was created to protect her.

He wondered why they had dug a great hole in the ground merely to bury dry bones. Surely there was no sense in that; no one wanted to steal dry bones.

Had there been meat upon them he could have understood; for thus alone might one keep his meat from Dango, the hyena, and the other robbers of the jungle.

When the grave had been filled with earth the little party turned back toward the cabin, and Esmeralda, still weeping copiously for the two she had never heard of before, and who had been dead twenty years, chanced to

glance toward the harbor. Instantly her tears ceased.

"Look at dem low down white trash out dere!" she shrilled, pointing toward the Arrow. "They-all's a desecratin' us, right yere on dis yere perverted islan'."

Surely enough, the Arrow was being worked toward the open sea slowly through the harbor's entrance.

"They promised to leave us firearms and ammunition," said Clayton. "The merciless beasts!"

"It is the work of that fellow they call Snipes, I am sure," said Jane Porter. "King was a scoundrel, but he had a little sense of humanity. If they had not killed him I know that he would have seen that we were properly provided for before they left us to our fate."

"I regret that they did not visit us before sailing," said Professor Porter. "I had purposed requesting them to leave the treasure with us, as I shall be a ruined man if that is lost."

Jane looked at her father sadly.

"Never mind, dear," she said. "It wouldn't have done any good, because it is solely for the treasure that they killed their officers and landed us upon this awful shore."

"Tut-tut, child, tut-tut!" replied Professor Porter. "You are a good child, but inexperienced in practical matters."

Professor Porter turned and walked slowly away toward the jungle, his hands clasped beneath his long coat-tails and his eyes bent upon the ground.

His daughter watched him with a pathetic smile upon her lips, and then, turning to Mr. Philander, she whispered:

"Please don't let him wander off again as he did yesterday. We depend upon you, you know, to keep a close watch upon him."

"He becomes more difficult to handle each day," replied Mr. Philander, with a sigh and a shake of his head. "I presume he is now off to report to the directors of the Zoo that one of their lions was at large last night. Oh, Miss Jane, you don't know what I have to contend with."

"Yes, I do, Mr. Philander. But, while we all love him, you alone are best fitted to manage him; for, regardless of what he may say to you, he respects your learning, and, therefore, has immense confidence in your judgment. The poor dear cannot differentiate between erudition and wisdom."

Mr. Philander, with a mildly puzzled expression on his face, turned to pursue Professor Porter, and in his mind he was revolving the question of whether he should feel complimented or aggrieved at Miss Porter's rather back-handed compliment.

Tarzan had seen the consternation depicted upon the faces of the little group as they witnessed the departure of the Arrow; so, as the ship was a wonderful novelty to him in addition, he determined to hasten out to the point of land at the north of the harbor's mouth and obtain a nearer view of the great boat, as well as to learn, if possible, the direction of its flight.

Swinging through the trees with great speed, he reached the point but a moment after the ship had passed out of the harbor; so that he obtained an excellent view of the wonders of this strange floating house.

There were some twenty men running hither and thither about the deck, pulling and hauling on ropes.

A very light land breeze was blowing, and the ship had been worked through the harbor's mouth under flying jib, fore and main royals and mizzen spanker, but, now that they had cleared the point, every available shred of canvas was being spread that she might stand out to sea as handily as possible.

Tarzan watched the graceful movements of the ship in rapt admiration, and longed to be aboard her. Presently his keen eyes caught the faintest suspicion of smoke on the far northern horizon, and he wondered what the cause of it might be.

At about the same time the lookout on the Arrow must have discerned it, for in a few minutes Tarzan saw the sails being shifted. The ship came about, and presently he knew that she was coming back toward land.

A man at the bows was constantly heaving into the sea a rope, to the end of which a small object was fastened. Tarzan wondered what the purpose of this action might be.

At last the ship came up directly into the wind; the anchor was lowered: down came the sails. There was great scurrying about on deck.

A boat was lowered, and into the boat a great chest was placed. Then a dozen sailors bent to the oars and pulled rapidly toward the point where Tarzan crouched in the branches of a great tree.

In the stern of the boat, as it drew nearer, Tarzan saw the rat-faced man.

It was but a few minutes later that the boat touched the beach. The men jumped out and lifted the great chest to the sand. They were on the north side of the point so that their presence was concealed from those at the cabin.

The men argued angrily for a moment. Then the rat-faced one, with several companions, ascended the low bluff on which stood the tree that concealed Tarzan. They looked about for several minutes.

"Here is a good place," said the rat-faced sailor, indicating a spot beneath Tarzan's tree.

"It is as good as any," replied one of his companions. "If they catch us with the treasure aboard it will be confiscated anyway. We might as well bury it here on the chance that some of us will escape the gallows to enjoy it later."

The rat-faced one now called to the men who had remained at the boat, and they came slowly up the bank carrying picks and shovels.

"Hurry—you!" cried Snipes.

"Stow it!" retorted one of the men in a surly tone. "You're no admiral, you shrimp."

"I'm cap'n here, though, I'll have you to understand, you swab," shrieked Snipes with a volley of oaths.

"Steady, boys," cautioned one of the men who had not spoken before. "It ain't goin' to get us nothing by fightin' amongst ourselves."

"Right enough," replied the sailor who had resented Snipes's autocratic tones. "But by the same token it ain't a-goin' to get nobody nothin' to put on airs in this bloomin' company neither."

"You fellows dig here," said Snipes, indicating a spot beneath the tree. "And while you're diggin', Peter kin be a-makin' of a map of the location so's we kin find it again. You, Tom, and Bill, take a couple more down and fetch up the chest."

"Wot are you a-goin' to do?" asked he of the previous altercation. "Just boss?"

"Git busy there!" growled Snipes. "You didn't think your cap'n was a-goin' to dig with a shovel, did you?"

The men all looked up angrily. None of them liked Snipes, and his disagreeable show of authority since he had murdered King, the real head and ringleader of the mutineers, had only added fuel to the flames of their hatred.

"Do you mean to say that you don't intend to take a shovel and lend a hand with this work?" asked Tarrant, the sailor who had before spoken.

"No," replied Snipes simply, fingering the butt of his revolver.

"Then," shouted Tarrant, "if you won't take a shovel you'll take a pick-ax."

With the words he raised his pick above his head, and with a mighty blow buried the point in Snipes's brain.

For a moment the men stood silently looking at the result of their fellow's grim humor. Then one of them spoke.

"Served the rat jolly well right," he said.

One of the others commenced to ply his pick to the ground. The soil was soft and he threw aside the pick and grasped a shovel; then the others joined him. There was no further comment

on the killing, but the men worked in a better frame of mind than they had since Snipes had assumed command.

When they had a trench of ample size to bury the chest, Tarrant suggested that they enlarge it and inter Snipes's body on top of the chest.

"It might 'elp fool any as 'appened to be diggin' 'ereabouts," he explained.

The others saw the cunning of the suggestion, and so the trench was lengthened to accommodate the corpse, and in the center a deeper hole was excavated for the box, which was first wrapped in sail-cloth, and then lowered to its place, which brought its top about a foot below the bottom of the grave. Earth was shoveled in and tamped down about the chest until the bottom of the grave showed level and uniform.

Two of the men then rolled the rat-faced corpse unceremoniously into the grave, after first stripping it of its weapons and various other articles which the several members of the party coveted.

They then filled the grave with earth and tramped upon it until it would hold no more.

The balance of the loose earth was thrown far and wide, and a mass of dead undergrowth spread in as natural a manner as possible over the new-made grave to obliterate all signs of the ground having been disturbed.

Their work done, the sailors returned to the small boat, and pulled off rapidly toward the Arrow.

The breeze had increased considerably, and as the smoke upon the horizon was now plainly discernable in considerable volume, the mutineers lost no time in getting under full sail and bearing away toward the southwest.

Tarzan, an interested spectator of all that had taken place, sat speculating on the strange actions of these peculiar creatures.

Men were indeed more foolish and more cruel than the beasts of the jungle! How fortunate was he who lived in the peace and security of the great forest!

Tarzan wondered what the chest they had buried contained. If they did not wish it why did they not merely throw it into the water? That would have been much easier.

Ah, he thought, but they do wish it. They have hidden it here because they intend returning for it later.

He dropped to the ground and commenced to examine the earth about the excavation. He was looking to see if these creatures had dropped anything which he might like to own. Soon he discovered a spade hidden by the underbrush which they had laid upon the grave.

He seized it and attempted to use it as he had seen the sailors do. It was awkward work and hurt his bare feet, but he persevered until he had partially uncovered the body. This he dragged from the grave and laid to one side.

Then he continued digging until he had unearthed the chest. This also he dragged to the side of the corpse. Then he filled in the smaller hole below the grave, replaced the body and the earth around and above it, covered it over with underbrush and returned to the chest.

Four sailors had sweated beneath the burden of its weight—Tarzan of the apes picked it up as though it had been empty, and with the spade slung to his back by a piece of rope, carried it off into the densest part of the jungle.

He could not well negotiate the trees with this awkward burden, but he kept to the trails, and so made fairly good time.

For several hours he traveled until he came to an impenetrable wall of matted and tangled vegetation. Then he took to the lower branches, and in another fifteen minutes he emerged into the amphitheater of the apes, where they met in council or to celebrate the rites of the Dum-Dum.

Near the center of the clearing, and not far from the drum, or altar, he commenced to dig. This was harder work than turning up the freshly excavated earth at the grave, but Tarzan

of the apes was persevering, and so he kept at his labor until he was rewarded by seeing a hole sufficiently deep to receive the chest and effectually hide it from view. Why had he gone to all this labor without knowing the value of the contents of the chest?

Tarzan of the apes had a man's figure and a man's brain, but he was an ape by training and environment. His brain told him that the chest contained something valuable, or the men would not have hidden it; his training had taught him to imitate whatever was new and unusual, and now the natural curiosity, which is as common to men as to apes, prompted him to open the chest and examine its contents.

But the heavy lock and massive iron bands baffled both his cunning and his immense strength, so that he was compelled to bury the chest without having his curiosity satisfied.

By the time Tarzan had hunted his way back to the vicinity of the cabin, feeding as he went, it was quite dark.

Within the little building a light was burning, for Clayton had found an unopened tin of oil which had stood intact for twenty years. The lamps also were still usable, and thus the interior of the cabin appeared as bright as day to the astonished Tarzan.

He had often wondered at the exact purpose of the lamps. His reading and the pictures had told him what they were, but he had no idea of how they could be made to produce the wondrous sunlight that some of his pictures had portrayed them as diffusing upon all surrounding objects.

As he approached the window nearest the door he saw that the cabin had been divided into two rooms by a rough partition of boughs and sail-cloth.

In the front room were the three men; the two older deep in argument, while the younger, tilted back against the wall on an improvised stool, was deeply engrossed in reading one of Tarzan's books.

Tarzan was not particularly interested in the men, however, so he sought the other window. There was the girl. How beautiful her features! How delicate her snowy skin!

She was writing at Tarzan's own table beneath the window. Upon a pile of grasses at the far side of the room lay the negress, asleep.

For an hour Tarzan feasted his eyes upon her while she wrote. He longed to speak to her, but dared not attempt, for he was convinced that she would not understand him, and he feared, too, that he might frighten her away.

At length she arose, leaving her manuscript upon the table. She went to the bed upon which had been spread several layers of soft grasses. These she rearranged.

Then she loosened the soft mass of golden hair which crowned her head. Like a shimmering waterfall turned to burnished metal by a dying sun it fell about her oval face; in waving lines, below her waist, it tumbled.

Tarzan was spellbound. Then she extinguished the lamp and all within the cabin was wrapped in Cimmerian darkness.

Still Tarzan watched without. Creeping close beneath the window he waited, listening, for half an hour. At last he was rewarded by the sounds of the regular breathing within, which denotes sleep. Cautiously he intruded his hand between the meshes of the lattice until his whole arm was within the cabin. Carefully he felt upon the desk. At last he grasped the paper upon which Jane Porter had been writing, and withdrew his hand, holding the precious treasure.

Tarzan folded the sheets into a small parcel, which he tucked into the quiver with his arrows. Then he sped away into the jungle as softly and as noiselessly as a shadow.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE JUNGLE-TOLL.

EARLY the following morning Tarzan awoke, and the first thought of the

new day, as the last of yesterday, was of the wonderful writing which lay hidden in his quiver.

Hurriedly he brought it forth, hoping against hope that he could read what the beautiful white girl had written there the preceding evening.

At the first glance he suffered the bitterest disappointment of his whole life; never before had he so yearned for anything as now he did for the ability to interpret a message from the divinity who had come so suddenly and so unexpectedly into his life.

What if the message were not intended for him? It was an expression of her thoughts, and that was all sufficient for Tarzan of the apes.

And now to be baffled by strange, uncouth characters the like of which he had never seen before! Why, they even tipped in the opposite direction from all that he had ever examined either in printed books or the difficult script of the few letters he had found.

Even the little bugs of the black book were familiar friends, though their arrangement meant nothing to him; but these bugs were new and unheard of.

For twenty minutes he pored over them, when suddenly they commenced to take familiar though distorted shapes. Ah, they were his old friends, but badly crippled.

Then he began to make out a word here and a word there. His heart leaped for joy. He could read it, and he would.

In another half-hour he was progressing rapidly, and, but for an exceptional word now and again, he found it very plain sailing.

Here is what he read:

West coast of Africa, about 10 degrees south latitude. (So Mr. Clayton says).

February 3(?), 1909.

DEAREST HAZEL:

It seems foolish to write you a letter that you may never see, but I simply must tell somebody of our awful experiences since we sailed from Europe on the ill-fated Arrow.

If we never return to civilization, as now seems only too likely, this will at least prove a brief record of the events which led up to our fate, whatever it may be.

As you know, we were supposed to have set out upon a scientific expedition to the Congo. Papa was presumed to entertain some wondrous theory of an unthinkable ancient civilization, the remains of which lay buried somewhere in the Congo valley. But after we were well under sail the truth came out.

It seems that an old bookworm who has a book and curio shop in Baltimore discovered between the leaves of a very old Spanish manuscript a letter written in 1750, detailing the adventures of a crew of mutineers of a Spanish galleon bound from Spain to South America with a vast treasure of "doubloons" and "pieces of eight," I suppose, for they certainly sound weird and piraty.

The writer had been one of the crew, and the letter was to his son, who was, at the time the letter was written, master of a Spanish merchantman.

Many years had elapsed since the events the letter narrated had transpired, and the old man had become a respected citizen of an obscure Spanish town, but the love of gold was still so strong upon him that he risked all to acquaint his son with the means of attaining fabulous wealth for them both.

The writer told how when but a week out from Spain the crew had mutinied and murdered every officer and man who opposed them. They defeated their own ends by this very act, for there was none left competent to navigate a ship at sea.

They were blown hither and thither for two months, until sick and dying of scurvy, starvation, and thirst, they had been wrecked on a small islet.

The galleon was washed high upon the beach, where she went to pieces; but not before the survivors, who numbered but ten souls, had rescued one of the great chests of treasure.

This they buried well upon the island, and for three years they lived there in constant hope of being rescued.

One by one they sickened and died, until only one man was left, the writer of the letter.

The men had built a boat from the wreckage of the galleon, but having no idea where the island was located they had not dared to put to sea.

When all were dead except himself, however, the awful loneliness so weighed upon the mind of the sole survivor that he could endure it no longer.

and choosing to risk death upon the open sea rather than madness on the lonely isle, he set sail in his little boat after nearly a year of solitude.

Fortunately he sailed due north, and within a week was in the track of the Spanish merchantmen plying between the West Indies and Spain, and was picked up by one of these vessels homeward bound.

The story he told was merely one of shipwreck in which all but a few had perished, the balance, except himself, dying after they reached the island. He did not mention the mutiny or the chest of buried treasure.

The master of the merchantman assured him that from the position at which they picked him up, and the prevailing winds for the past week, he could have been on no other island than one of the Cape Verde group, which lie off the west coast of Africa in about 16 degrees or 17 degrees north latitude.

His letter described the island minutely, as well as the location of the treasure, and was accompanied by the crudest, funniest little old map you ever saw; with trees and rocks all marked by scrawly "X's" to show the exact spot where the treasure had been buried.

When papa explained the real nature of the expedition, my heart sank, for I know so well how visionary and impractical the poor dear has always been that I feared that he had again been duped; especially when he told me that he had paid a thousand dollars for the letter and map.

To add to my distress I learned that he had borrowed ten thousand dollars more from Robert Canler, and had given his notes for the amount.

Mr. Canler had asked for no security, and you know, dearie, what that will mean for me if papa cannot meet them. Oh, how I detest that man!

We all tried to look on the bright side of things, but Mr. Philander, and Mr. Clayton—he joined us in London just for the adventure—both felt as skeptical as I.

To make a long story short, we found the island and the treasure—a great iron-bound oak chest, wrapped in many layers of oiled sail-cloth, and as strong and firm as when it had been buried nearly two hundred years ago.

It was *simply filled* with gold coin, and was so heavy that four men bent beneath its weight.

The horrid thing seems to bring nothing but murder and misfortune to those who have to do with it, for three days after we sailed from the Cape Verde Islands our own crew mutinied and killed every one of their officers.

It was the most terrifying experience one could imagine—I cannot even write of it.

They were going to kill us too, but one of them, the leader, a man named King, would not let them, and so they sailed south along the coast to a lonely spot where they found a good harbor, and here they have landed and left us.

They sailed away with the treasure to-day, but Mr. Clayton says they will meet with a fate similar to the mutineers of the ancient galleon, because King, the only man aboard who knew aught of navigation, was murdered on the beach by one of the men the day we landed.

I wish you could know Mr. Clayton; he is the dearest fellow imaginable, and unless I am mistaken, he has fallen very much in love with poor little me.

He is the only son of Lord Greystoke, and some day will inherit the title and estates. In addition he is wealthy in his own right. But the fact that he is going to be an English lord makes me very sad—you know what my sentiments have always been relative to American girls who married titled foreigners. Oh, if he were only a plain American gentleman!

But it isn't his fault, poor fellow, and in everything except birth he would do credit to my darling old country, and that is the greatest compliment I know how to pay any man.

We have had the most weird experiences since we were landed here. Papa and Mr. Philander lost in the jungle and chased by a real lion.

Mr Clayton lost, and attacked twice by wild beasts. Esmeralda and I cornered in an old cabin by a perfectly awful man-eating tiger. Oh, it was simply "terrifical," as Esmeralda would say.

But the strangest part of it all is the wonderful creature who rescued us all. I have not seen him, but Mr. Clayton and papa and Mr. Philander have, and they say that he is a perfectly godlike white man tanned to a dusky brown, with the strength of a wild elephant, the agility of a monkey, and the bravery of a lion.

He speaks no English and vanishes as quickly and as mysteriously after he has performed some valorous deed, as though he were a disembodied spirit.

Then we have another weird neighbor, who printed a beautiful sign in English and tacked it on the door of his cabin, which we have preempted,

warning us to destroy none of his belongings, and signing himself "Tarzan of the Apes."

We have never seen him, though we think he is about, for one of the sailors who was going to shoot Mr. Clayton in the back received a spear in his shoulder from some unseen hand in the jungle.

The sailors left us but a meager supply of food, so, as we have only a single revolver with but three cartridges left in it, we do not know how we can procure meat, though Mr. Philander says that we can exist indefinitely on the wild fruit and nuts which abound in the jungle.

I am very tired now, so I shall go to my funny bed of grasses which Mr. Clayton gathered for me, but will add to this from day to day as things happen.

Lovingly,
JANE PORTER.

To HAZEL STRONG, Baltimore, Maryland.

Tarzan sat in a brown study for a long time after he finished reading the letter. It was filled with so many new and wonderful things that his brain was in a whirl as he attempted to digest them all.

So they did not know that he was Tarzan of the apes. He would tell them.

In his tree he had constructed a rude shelter of leaves and boughs, beneath which, protected from the rain, he had placed the few treasures brought from the cabin. Among these were some pencils.

He took one, and beneath Jane Porter's signature he wrote:

I am Tarzan of the apes.

He thought that would be sufficient. Later he would return the letter to the cabin.

In the matter of food, thought Tarzan, they had no need to worry—he would provide, and he did.

The next morning Jane Porter found her missing letter in the exact spot from which it had disappeared two nights before. She was mystified, but when she saw the printed words beneath her signature, she felt a chill run up her spine. She showed the letter, or rather the last sheet with the signature, to Clayton.

"To think," she said, "that uncanny thing was probably watching me all the time that I was writing—oo! It makes me shudder just to think of it."

"But he must be friendly," reassured Clayton, "for he has returned your letter, nor did he offer to harm you, and unless I am mistaken he left a very substantial memento of his friendship outside the cabin door last night, for I just found the carcass of a wild boar there as I came out."

From then on scarcely a day passed that did not bring its offering of game or other food. Sometimes it was a young deer, again a quantity of strange, cooked food, cassava cakes pilfered from the village of Mbonga, or a boar, or leopard, and once a lion.

Tarzan derived the greatest pleasure of his life in hunting meat for these strangers. It seemed to him that no pleasure on earth could compare with laboring for the welfare and protection of the beautiful white girl.

Some day he would venture into the camp in daylight and talk with these people through the medium of the little bugs which were familiar to them and to Tarzan.

But he found it difficult to overcome the timidity of the wild thing of the forest, and so day followed day without seeing a fulfilment of his good intentions.

The party in the camp, emboldened by familiarity, wandered further and further into the jungle in search of nuts and fruit.

Scarcely a day passed that did not find Professor Porter straying in his preoccupied indifference toward the jaws of death. Mr. Samuel T. Philander, never what one might call robust, was worn to the shadow of a shadow through the ceaseless worry and mental distraction resultant from his Herculean efforts to safeguard the professor.

A month passed. Tarzan had finally

determined to visit the camp by daylight.

It was early afternoon. Clayton had wandered to the point at the harbor's mouth to look for passing vessels. Here he kept a great mass of wood, high piled, ready to be ignited as a signal should a steamer or a sail top the far horizon.

Professor Porter was wandering along the beach south of the camp with Mr. Philander at his elbow, urging him to turn his steps back before the two became again the sport of some savage beast.

The others gone, Jane Porter and Esmeralda had wandered into the jungle to gather fruit, and in their search were led further and further from the cabin.

Tarzan waited in silence before the door of the little house until they should return.

His thoughts were of the beautiful white girl. They were always of her now. He wondered if she would fear him, and the thought all but caused him to relinquish his plan.

He was rapidly becoming impatient for her return, that he might feast his eyes upon her and be near her, perhaps touch her. The ape-man knew no God, but he was as near to worshiping his divinity as mortal man ever comes to worshiping.

While he waited he passed the time printing a message to her; whether he intended giving it to her he himself could not have told, but he took infinite pleasure in seeing his thoughts expressed in print—in which he was not so uncivilized after all.

I am Tarzan of the apes (he wrote). I am yours. You are mine. We will live here together always in my house. I will bring you the best fruits, the tenderest deer, the finest meats that roam the jungle.

I will hunt for you. I am the greatest of the jungle hunters.

I will fight for you. I am the mightiest of the jungle fighters.

You are Jane Porter, I saw it in your letter. When you see this you will know that it is for you and that Tarzan of the apes loves you.

As he stood, straight as a young Indian by the door, waiting after he had finished the message, there came to his keen ears a familiar sound. It was the passing of a great ape through the lower branches of the forest.

For an instant he listened intently, and then from the jungle came the agonized scream of a woman, and Tarzan of the apes, dropping his first love-letter upon the ground, shot like a panther into the forest.

Clayton, also, heard the scream, and Professor Porter and Mr. Philander, and in a few minutes they came panting to the cabin, calling out to each other as they approached, a volley of excited questions. A glance within confirmed their worst fears.

Jane Porter and Esmeralda were not there.

Instantly Clayton, followed by the two old men, plunged into the jungle, calling the girl's name aloud. For half an hour they stumbled on, until Clayton, by merest chance, came upon the prostrate form of Esmeralda.

He stooped beside her, feeling for her pulse and then listening for her heart-beats. She lived. He shook her.

"Esmeralda!" he shrieked in her ear. "Esmeralda! Where is Miss Porter? What has happened? Esmeralda!"

Slowly the black opened her eyes. She saw Clayton. She saw the jungle about her.

"Oh, Gaberelle!" she screamed, and fainted again.

By this time Professor Porter and Mr. Philander had come up.

"What shall we do, Mr. Clayton?" asked the old professor. "Where shall we look? Heaven could not have been so cruel as to take my little girl away from me now."

"We must rouse Esmeralda first," replied Clayton. "She can tell us what has happened. Esmeralda!" he cried

again, shaking the black woman roughly by the shoulder.

"Oh, Gaberelle, Ah wants to die!" cried the poor woman, but with eyes fast closed. "Lemme die, but doan lemme see dat awrful face again. Whafer de devil round after po' ole Esmeralda? She ain't done nuffin' to nobody."

"Come, Esmeralda!" cried Clayton. "Open your eyes!"

Esmeralda did as she was bade.

"Oh, Gaberelle! T'ank de Lawd," she said.

"Where's Miss Porter? What happened?" questioned Clayton.

"Ain' Miss Jane here?" cried Esmeralda, sitting up with wonderful celerity for one of her bulk. "Oh, Lawd, now Ah 'members! It done must have tooked her away." The negress commenced to sob and wail her lamentations.

"What took her away?" cried Professor Porter.

"A great big gi'nt all covered with hair."

"A gorilla, Esmeralda?" questioned Mr. Philander, and the three men scarcely breathed as he voiced the horrible thought.

"Ah done thought it was de devil; Ah guess it mus' 'a' been one of dem gorilephants. Oh, my po' baby, my po' li'l' honey!"

Clayton immediately began to look about for tracks, but he could find nothing save a confusion of trampled grasses in the close vicinity, and his woodcraft was too meager for the translation of what he did see.

All the balance of the day they sought through the jungle; but as night drew on they were forced to give up in despair and hopelessness, for they did not even know in what direction the thing had borne Jane Porter.

It was long after dark ere they reached the cabin, and a grief-stricken party it was that sat silently within the little structure.

Professor Porter finally broke the silence. His tones were no longer those of the erudite pedant theorizing upon the abstract and the unknowable, but those of the man of action—determined, but tinged by a note of indescribable hopelessness and grief which wrung an answering pang from Clayton's heart.

"I shall lie down now," said the old man, "and try to sleep. Early tomorrow, so soon as it is light, I shall take what food I can carry and continue the search until I have found Jane. I will not return without her."

His companions did not reply at once. Each was immersed in his own sorrowful thoughts, and each knew, as did the old professor, what the last words meant—Professor Porter would never return from the jungle.

At length Clayton rose and laid his hand gently upon Professor Porter's bent old shoulder.

"I shall go with you, of course," he said. "Do not tell me that I need even have said so."

"I knew that you would offer—that you would wish to go, Mr. Clayton; but you must not. Jane is beyond human assistance now. I simply go that I may face my Maker with her, and know, too, that what was once my dear girl does not lie all alone and friendless in the jungle.

"The same vines and leaves will cover us, the same rains beat upon us; and when the spirit of her mother is abroad, it will find us together in death, as it has always found us in life.

"No; it is I alone who may go, for she was my daughter—all that was left on earth for me to love."

"I shall go with you," said Clayton simply.

The old man looked up, regarding the strong, handsome face of William Cecil Clayton intently. Perhaps he read there the love that lay in the heart beneath—the love for his daughter.

He had been too preoccupied with his own scholarly thoughts in the past to consider the little occurrences, the chance words, which would have indicated to a more practical man that

these young people were being drawn more and more closely to one another. Now they came back to him.

"As you wish," he said.

"You may count on me, also," said Mr. Philander.

"No, my dear old friend," said Professor Porter. "We may not all go. It would be cruelly wicked to leave poor Esmeralda here alone, and three of us would be no more successful than one.

"There are enough dead things in the cruel forest as it is. Come—let us try to sleep a little."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CALL OF THE PRIMITIVE.

FROM the time Tarzan left the tribe of great anthropoids in which he had been raised, it was torn by continual strife and discord. Terkoz proved a cruel and capricious king, so that, one by one, many of the older and weaker apes, upon whom he was particularly prone to vent his brutish nature, took their families and sought the quiet and safety of the far interior.

But at last those who remained were driven to desperation by the continued truculence of Terkoz, and it so happened that one of them recalled the parting admonition of Tarzan.

"If you have a chief who is cruel, do not as the other apes do; and attempt, any one of you, to pit yourself against him alone. But, instead, let two or three or four of you attack him together. Then no chief will dare to be other than he should be, for four of you can kill any chief."

And the ape who recalled this wise counsel repeated it to several of his fellows, so that when Terkoz returned to the tribe that day he found a warm reception awaiting him.

There were no formalities. As Terkoz reached the group five huge, hairy beasts sprang upon him.

At heart he was an arrant coward, which is the way with bullies among apes as well as among men; so he did not remain to fight and die, but tore himself away from them as quickly as he could and fled into the sheltering boughs of the forest.

Two more attempts he made to rejoin the tribe, but on each occasion he was set upon and driven away. At last he gave it up and turned, foaming with rage and hatred, into the jungle.

For several days he wandered aimlessly, nursing his spite and looking for some weak thing on which to vent his pent anger.

It was in this state of mind that the horrible manlike beast, swinging from tree to tree, came suddenly upon two women in the jungle.

He was right above them when he discovered them. The first intimation Jane Porter had of his presence was when the great hairy body dropped to the earth beside her, and she saw the awful face and the snarling, hideous mouth thrust within a foot of her.

One piercing scream escaped her lips as the brute's hand clutched her arm. Then she was dragged toward those awful fangs which yawned at her throat. But ere they touched that fair skin another mood claimed the anthropoid.

The tribe had kept his women. He must find others to replace them. This hairless white ape would be the first of his new household.

He threw her roughly across his broad shoulders and leaped back into the trees, bearing Jane Porter away toward a fate a thousand times worse than death.

Esmeralda's scream had mingled with that of Jane Porter; then, as was Esmeralda's manner under stress of emergency which required presence of mind, she swooned.

But Jane Porter did not once lose consciousness. It is true that that awful face, pressing close to hers, and the foul breath beating upon her nostrils, paralyzed her with terror; but her brain was clear, and she comprehended all that transpired.

With what seemed to her marvelous rapidity the brute bore her through the forest, but still she did not cry out or struggle. The sudden advent of the ape had confused her to such an extent that she thought now that he was bearing her toward the beach.

For this reason she conserved her energies and her voice until she could see that they had approached near enough to the camp to attract the succor she craved.

Poor child! Could she but have known it, she was being borne farther and farther into the impenetrable jungle.

The scream that had brought Clayton and the two older men stumbling through the undergrowth had led Tarzan of the apes straight to where Esmeralda lay, but it was not Esmeralda in whom his interest centered.

For a moment he scrutinized the ground below and the trees above, until the ape that was in him by virtue of training and environment, combined with the intelligence that was his by right of birth, told his woodcraft the whole story as plainly as though he had seen the thing happen with his own eyes.

Instantly he was gone again into the swaying trees, following the high-flung spoor which no other human eye could have detected, much less translated.

At boughs' ends, where the anthropoid swings from one tree to another, there is most to mark the trail but least to point the direction of the quarry. The pressure is downward always, toward the small end of the branch, whether the ape be leaving or entering a tree; but nearer the center of the tree, where the signs of passage are fainter, the direction is plainly marked.

Here, on this branch, a caterpillar has been crushed by the fugitive's great foot, and Tarzan knows instinctively where that same foot would touch in the next stride. Here he looks to find a tiny particle of the demolished larva, ofttimes not more than a speck of moisture.

Again, a minute bit of bark has been upturned by the scraping hand, and the direction of the break indicates the direction of the passage. Or some great limb, or the stem of the tree itself, has been brushed by the hairy body, and a tiny shred of hair tells him by the direction from which it is wedged beneath the bark that he is on the right trail.

Nor does he need to check his speed to catch these seemingly faint records of the fleeing beast.

To Tarzan they stand out boldly against all the myriad other scars and bruises and signs upon the leafy way; but strongest of all is the scent, for Tarzan is pursuing up the wind, and his trained nostrils are as sensitive as a hound's.

Almost silently the ape-man sped on in the track of Terkoz and his prey, but the sound of his approach reached the ears of the fleeing beast and spurred it on to greater speed.

Three miles were covered before Tarzan overtook them, and then Terkoz, seeing that further flight were futile, dropped to the ground in a small open glade, that he might turn and fight for his prize, or be free to escape unhampered if he saw that the pursuer was more than a match for him.

He still grasped Jane Porter in one great arm as Tarzan bounded like a leopard into the arena which nature had provided for this primeval-like battle.

When Terkoz saw that it was Tarzan who pursued him, he jumped to the conclusion that this was Tarzan's woman, since they were of the same kind—white and hairless—and so he rejoiced at this opportunity for double revenge upon his hated enemy.

To Jane Porter the apparition of this godlike man was as wine to sick nerves.

From the description which Clayton and her father and Mr. Philander had given her, she knew that it must be the

same wonderful creature who had saved them, and she saw in him only a protector and a friend.

But as Terkoz pushed her roughly aside to meet Tarzan's charge, and she saw the great proportions of the ape and the mighty muscles and the fierce fangs, her heart quailed. How could any animal vanquish such a mighty antagonist?

Like two charging bulls they came together, and like two wolves sought each other's throat. Against the long canines of the ape was pitted the thin blade of the man's knife.

Jane Porter—her lithe form flattened against the trunk of a great tree, her hands tight pressed against her rising and falling bosom, and her eyes wide with mingled horror, fascination, fear, and admiration—watched the primordial ape battle with the primeval man for possession of a woman—for her.

As the great muscles of the man's back and shoulders knotted beneath the tension of his efforts, and the huge biceps and forearm held at bay those mighty tusks, the veil of centuries of civilization and culture was swept from the blurred vision of the Baltimore girl. When the thin knife drank deep a dozen times of Terkoz's heart's blood, and the great carcass rolled lifeless upon the ground, it was a primeval woman who sprang forward with outstretched arms toward the primeval man who had fought for her and won her.

And Tarzan?

He did what no red-blooded man needs lessons in doing. He took his woman in his arms and smothered her upturned, panting lips with kisses.

For a moment Jane Porter lay there with half-closed eyes. For a moment—the first in her young life—she knew the meaning of love.

But as suddenly as the veil had been withdrawn it dropped again, and an outraged conscience suffused her face with its scarlet mantle, and a mortified woman thrust Tarzan of the apes from her and buried her face in her hands.

Tarzan had been surprised when he had found the girl he had learned to love after a vague and abstract manner a willing prisoner in his arms. Now he was surprised that she repulsed him.

He came close to her once more and took hold of her arm. She turned upon him like a tigress, striking his great breast with her tiny hands.

Tarzan could not understand it.

A moment ago and it had been his intention to hasten Jane Porter back to her people, but that moment was lost in the dim and distant past of things which were but can never be again, and with it the good intention had gone to join the impossible.

Since then Tarzan of the apes had felt the warm form close pressed to his. The hot, sweet breath against his cheek and mouth had fanned a new flame to life within his breast. The perfect lips had clung to his in burning kisses that had seared deep into his soul.

Again he laid his hand upon her arm. Again she repulsed him. And then Tarzan of the apes did just what his first ancestor would have done.

He took his woman in his arms and carried her into the jungle.

Early the following morning the four within the little cabin by the beach were awakened by the booming of a cannon. Clayton was the first to rush out, and there, beyond the harbor's mouth, he saw two vessels lying at anchor.

One was the Arrow and the other a small French cruiser. The sides of the latter were crowded with men gazing shoreward, and it was evident to Clayton, as to the others who had now joined him, that the gun which they had heard had been fired to attract their attention if they still remained at the cabin.

Both vessels lay at a considerable distance from shore, and it was doubtful if their glasses would locate the waving hats of the little party far in between the harbor's points.

Esmeralda had removed her red

apron, and was waving it frantically above her head; but Clayton, still fearing that even this might not be seen, hurried off toward the northern point where lay his signal pyre ready for the match.

It seemed an age to him as to those who waited breathlessly behind ere he reached the great pile of dry branches and underbrush.

As he broke from the dense wood and came in sight of the vessels again, he was filled with consternation to see that the Arrow was making sail and that the cruiser was already under way.

Quickly lighting the pyre in a dozen places, he hurried on to the extreme point of the promontory, where he stripped off his shirt, and, tying it to a fallen branch, stood waving it back and forth above him.

But still the vessels continued to stand out; and he had given up all hope, when the great column of smoke rising above the forest in one dense, vertical shaft attracted the attention of a lookout aboard the cruiser, and instantly a dozen glasses were leveled on the beach.

Presently Clayton saw the two ships come about again; and while the Arrow lay drifting quietly on the ocean, the cruiser steamed slowly back toward shore. At some distance away she stopped, and a boat was lowered and despatched toward the beach.

As it was drawn up a young officer stepped out.

"M. Clayton, I presume?" he asked.

"Thank Heaven, you have come!" was Clayton's reply. "And it may be that it is not too late even now."

"What do you mean, *monsieur?*" asked the officer.

Clayton told of the abduction of Jane Porter and the need of armed men to aid in the search for her.

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed the officer sadly. "Yesterday and it would not have been too late. To-day and it may be better that the poor lady were never found. It is horrible, *monsieur*. It is too horrible."

Other boats had now put off from the cruiser, and Clayton, having pointed out the harbor's entrance to the officer, entered the boat with him, and its nose was turned toward the little landlocked bay, into which the other craft followed.

Soon the entire party had landed where stood Professor Porter, Mr. Philander, and Esmeralda.

Among the officers in the last boats to put off from the cruiser was the commander of the vessel; and when he had heard the story of Jane Porter's abduction, he generously called for volunteers to accompany Professor Porter and Clayton in their search.

Not an officer or a man of those brave Frenchmen who did not quickly beg leave to be one of the expedition.

The commander selected twenty men and two officers, Lieutenant d'Arnot and Lieutenant Charpentier. A boat was despatched to the cruiser for provisions, ammunition, and carbines. The men were already armed with revolvers.

Then, to Clayton's inquiries as to how they had happened to anchor offshore and fire a signal-gun, the commander, Captain Dufranne, explained that a month before they had sighted the Arrow bearing southwest under considerable canvas, and that when they had signaled her to come about she had but crowded on more sail.

They had kept her hull-up until sunset, firing several shots after her, but the next morning she was nowhere to be seen. They had then continued to cruise up and down the coast for several weeks, and had about forgotten the incident of the recent chase when, early one morning a few days before, the lookout had descried a vessel laboring in the trough of a heavy sea and evidently entirely from under control.

As they steamed nearer to the derelict they were surprised to note that it was the same vessel that had run from them a few weeks earlier. Her forestaysail and mizzen-spanker were set as though an effort had been made to hold

her nose up into the wind, but the sheets had parted and the sails were both tearing to ribbons in the wind.

In the high sea that was running it was a difficult and dangerous task to attempt to put a prize crew aboard her; and as no signs of life had been seen above deck, it was decided to stand by until the wind and sea abated; but just then a figure was seen clinging to the rail and feebly waving a mute signal of despair toward them.

Immediately a boat's crew was ordered out, and an attempt was successfully made to board the Arrow. The sight that met the Frenchmen's eyes as they clambered over the ship's side was appalling.

A dozen dead and dying men rolled hither and thither upon the pitching deck, the living intermingled with the dead. Two of the corpses appeared to have been partially devoured as though by wolves.

The prize crew soon had the vessel under proper sail once more and the living members of the ill-starred company carried below to their hammocks.

The dead were wrapped in tarpaulins and lashed on deck to be identified by their comrades before being consigned to the deep.

None of the living were conscious when the Frenchmen reached the Arrow's deck. Even the poor devil who had waved the single despairing signal of distress had lapsed into unconsciousness before he had learned whether it had availed or not.

It did not take the French officer long to learn what had caused the terrible condition aboard; for when water and brandy were sought to restore the men, it was found that not only was there none of either, but not a vestige of food of any description.

He immediately signaled to the cruiser to send water, medicine, and provisions, and another boat made the perilous trip to the Arrow.

When restoratives had been applied several of the men regained consciousness, and then the whole story was told. That part of it we know up to the sailing of the Arrow after the murder of Snipes and the burial of his body above the treasure-chest.

It seems that the pursuit by the cruiser had so terrorized the mutineers that they had continued out across the Atlantic for several days after losing her; but on discovering the meager supply of water and provisions aboard, they had turned back toward the east.

With no one on board who understood navigation, discussions soon rose as to their whereabouts; and as three days' sailing did not raise land, they bore off to the north, fearing that the high north winds that had prevailed had driven them south of the southern extremity of Africa.

They kept on a north-northeasterly course for two days, when they were overtaken by a calm which lasted for nearly a week. Their water was gone, and in another day they would be without food.

Conditions changed rapidly from bad to worse. One man went mad and leaped overboard. Soon another opened his veins and drank his own blood.

When he died they threw him overboard also, though there were those among them who wanted to keep the corpse on board. Hunger was changing them from human beasts to wild beasts.

Two days before they had been picked up by the cruiser they had become too weak to handle the vessel, and that same day three men died. On the following morning it was seen that one of the corpses had been partially devoured.

All that day the men lay glaring at each other like beasts of prey, and the following morning two of the corpses lay almost entirely stripped of flesh.

The men were but little stronger for their ghoulish repast, for the want of water was by far the greatest agony with which they had to contend. And then the cruiser had come.

When those who could had recov-

ered, the entire story had been told to the French commander, but the men were too ignorant to be able to tell him at just at what point on the coast the professor and his party had been marooned, so the cruiser had steamed slowly along within sight of land, firing occasional signal-guns and scanning every inch of the beach with glasses.

They had anchored at night so as not to neglect a particle of the shore-line, and it had happened that the preceding night had brought them off the very beach where lay the little camp they sought.

The signal-guns of the afternoon before had not been heard by those on shore, it was presumed, because they had doubtless been in the thick of the jungle searching for Jane Porter, where the noise of their own crashing through the underbrush would have drowned the report of a far distant gun.

By the time the two parties had narrated their several adventures, the cruiser's boat had returned with supplies and arms for the expedition.

Within a few minutes the little body of sailors and the two French officers, together with Professor Porter and Clayton, set off upon their quest into the untracked jungle.

CHAPTER XX.

HEREDITY.

WHEN Jane Porter realized that she was being borne away a captive by the strange forest creature who had rescued her from the clutches of the ape she struggled desperately to escape, but the strong arms held her as easily as though she had been but a day-old babe.

Presently she gave up the futile effort and lay quietly, looking through half-closed lids at the face of the man who strode easily through the tangled undergrowth with her.

The face above her was one of extraordinary beauty.

A perfect type of the strongly masculine, unmarred by dissipation or degrading passions. For, though Tarzan of the apes was a killer of men and of beasts, he killed as the hunter kills, for pleasure, except on those rare occasions when he had killed for hate—though not the brooding, malevolent hate which marks the features of its own with hideous lines.

When Tarzan killed he more often smiled than scowled, and smiles are the foundation of beauty.

One thing the girl had noticed particularly when she had seen Tarzan rushing upon Terkoz—the vivid scarlet band upon his forehead, from above the left eye to the scalp; but now as she scanned his features she noticed that it was gone, and only a thin white line marked the spot where it had been.

As she lay more quietly in his arms Tarzan slightly relaxed his grip upon her.

Once he looked down into her eyes and smiled. The girl had to close her own to shut out the vision of that handsome, winning face.

Presently Tarzan took to the trees, and Jane Porter, wondering that she felt no fear, began to realize that in many respects she had never felt more secure in her whole life than now as she lay in the arms of this wild creature, being borne, Heaven knew where or to what fate, deeper and deeper into the untamed forest.

When with closed eyes she commenced to speculate upon the future, and terrifying fears were conjured by a vivid imagination, she had but to raise her lids and look upon that face so close to hers to dissipate the last remnant of apprehension.

No, he could never harm her; of that she was convinced when she translated the fine features and the frank, brave eyes above her into the chivalry which they proclaimed.

On and on they went through what seemed a solid mass of verdure, yet ever there appeared to open before this forest god a passage, as by magic,

which closed behind them as they passed.

Scarce a branch scraped against her, yet above and below, before and behind, the view presented only a solid mass of interwoven branches and creepers.

As Tarzan moved steadily onward his mind was occupied with many strange and new thoughts. Here was a problem the like of which he had never encountered, and he felt rather than reasoned that he must meet it as a man and not as an ape.

The free movement through the middle terrace, which was the route he had followed for the most part, had helped to cool the ardor of the first fierce passion of his love.

Now he discovered himself speculating upon the fate which would have fallen to the girl had he not rescued her from Terkoz.

He knew why the ape had not killed her, and he commenced to compare his intentions with those of Terkoz.

True, it was the order of the jungle for the male to take his mate by force; but could Tarzan be guided by the laws of the beasts? Was not Tarzan a man? But how did men do? He was puzzled; he did not know.

He wished that he might ask the girl, and then it came to him that she had already answered him in the futile struggle she had made to escape and to repulse him.

But now they had come to their destination, and Tarzan of the apes, with Jane Porter in his strong arms, swung lightly to the turf of the arena where the great apes held their councils and danced the wild orgy of the Dum-Dum.

Though they had come many miles, it was still but midafternoon, and the amphitheater was bathed in the half light which filtered through the maze of encircling foliage.

The green turf looked cool and inviting. The myriad noises of the jungle seemed distant and hushed to a mere echo of blurred sounds, rising and falling like the surf upon a remote shore.

A feeling of dreamy peacefulness stole over Jane Porter as she sank down upon the grass where Tarzan had placed her. She looked up at his great figure towering above her, and there was added a strange sense of perfect security.

As she watched him, Tarzan crossed the clearing toward the trees upon the farther side. She noted the graceful majesty of his carriage, the symmetry of his figure, and the poise of his head upon his broad shoulders.

What a perfect creature! There could be naught of cruelty or baseness beneath the godlike exterior.

With a bound Tarzan sprang into the trees and disappeared. Jane Porter wondered where he had gone. Had he left her there to her fate in the lonely jungle?

She glanced nervously about. Every vine and bush seemed but the lurking-place of some huge and horrible beast waiting to bury gleaming fangs in her soft flesh. Every sound she magnified into the stealthy creeping of a sinuous and malignant body.

How different now that he had left her!

For a few minutes that seemed hours to the frightened girl she sat with tense nerves waiting for the spring of the crouching thing that was to end her misery of apprehension.

She almost prayed for the cruel teeth that would give her unconsciousness and surcease from the agony of fear.

She heard a sudden, slight sound behind her. With a shriek she sprang to her feet and turned to face her end.

There stood Tarzan, his arms filled with ripe and luscious fruit.

Jane Porter reeled and would have fallen, but Tarzan, dropping his burden, caught her in his arms. She did not lose consciousness, but clung to him, shuddering and trembling.

Tarzan of the apes stroked her soft hair, and tried to comfort and quiet

her as Kala had him when, as a little ape, he had been frightened by Sabor, the tiger, or Histah, the snake.

Once he pressed his lips lightly upon her forehead, and she did not move, but closed her eyes and sighed.

She could not analyze her feelings, nor did she wish to attempt it. She was satisfied to feel the safety of those strong arms, and to leave her future to fate.

As she thought of the strangeness of it, there commenced to dawn upon her the realization that she had, possibly, learned something she had never known before—love. She wondered and then she smiled.

Still smiling, she pushed Tarzan gently away; and looking at him with a half-quizzical expression that made her face wholly entrancing, she pointed to the fruit upon the ground, and seated herself upon the edge of the earthen drum of the anthropoids.

Tarzan quickly gathered up the fruit and, bringing it, laid it at her feet; and then he, too, sat upon the drum beside her, and with his knife proceeded to open and prepare the various viands for her meal.

Together and in silence they ate, occasionally stealing sly glances at one another, until finally Jane Porter broke into a merry laugh in which Tarzan joined.

"I wish you spoke English," said the girl.

Tarzan shook his head and an expression of wistful and pathetic longing sobered his laughing eyes.

Then Jane Porter tried speaking to him in French, and then in German, but she had to laugh at her own blundering attempt at the latter tongue.

"Anyway," she said to him in English, "you understand my German as well as they did in Berlin."

Tarzan had long since reached a decision as to what his future procedure should be. He had had time to recollect all that he had read of the ways of men and women in the books at the cabin. He would act as he imagined the men in the books would have acted were they in his place.

Again he rose and went into the trees, but first he tried to explain by means of signs that he would return shortly, and he did so well that Jane Porter understood and was not afraid when he had gone.

Only a feeling of loneliness came over her and she watched the point where he had disappeared, with longing eyes, awaiting his return. As before she was apprised of his presence by a soft sound behind her, and turned to see him coming across the turf with a great armful of branches.

Then he went back again into the jungle and in a few minutes reappeared with a quantity of soft grasses and ferns. Two more trips he made until he had quite a pile of material at hand.

Then he spread the ferns and grasses upon the ground in a soft, flat bed, and above it he leaned many branches together so that they met a few feet over its center. Upon these he spread layers of huge leaves of the great elephant's-ear, and with more branches and more leaves he closed one end of the little shelter he had built.

Then they sat down together again upon the edge of the drum and tried to talk by signs.

The magnificent diamond locket which hung about Tarzan's neck had been a source of much wonderment to Jane Porter. She pointed to it now, and Tarzan removed it and handed it to her.

She saw that it was the work of a skilled artizan and that the diamonds were of great brilliancy and superbly set, but the cutting of them denoted that they were of a former day.

She noticed that the locket opened, and, pressing the hidden clasp, she saw the two halves spring apart to reveal in either section an ivory miniature.

One was of a beautiful woman and the other might have been the likeness of the man who sat beside her, except for a difference of expression that was scarcely definable.

She looked up at Tarzan to find him leaning toward her gazing on the miniatures with an expression of astonishment. He reached out his hand for the locket and took it away from her, examining the likenesses within with unmistakable signs of surprise and new interest.

His manner clearly denoted that he had never before seen them, nor imagined that the locket opened.

This fact caused Jane Porter to indulge in still more speculation, and it taxed her imagination to picture how this beautiful ornament came into the possession of a wild and savage creature of the unexplored jungles of Africa.

Still more wonderful, how did it contain the likeness of one who might be a brother, or, more likely, the father of this woodland demigod who was even ignorant of the fact that the locket opened.

Tarzan was still gazing with fixity at the two faces. Presently he removed the quiver from his shoulder, and emptying the arrows upon the ground reached into the bottom of the baglike receptacle and drew forth a flat object wrapped in many soft leaves and tied with bits of long grass.

Carefully he unwrapped it, removing layer after layer of leaves until at length he held a photograph in his hand.

Pointing to the minature of the man within the locket he handed the photograph to Jane Porter, holding the open locket beside it.

The photograph only served to puzzle the girl still more, for it was evidently another likeness of the same man whose picture rested in the locket beside that of the beautiful young woman.

Tarzan was looking at her with an expression of puzzled bewilderment in his eyes as she glanced up at him. He seemed to be framing a question with his lips.

The girl pointed to the photograph and then to the miniature and then to him, as though to indicate that she thought the likenesses were of him, but he only shook his head, and then shrugging his great shoulders, he took the photograph from her and having carefully rewrapped it, placed it again in the bottom of his quiver.

For a few moments he sat in silence, his eyes bent upon the ground, while Jane Porter held the little locket in her hand, turning it over and over in an endeavor to find some further clue that might lead to the identity of its original owner.

At length a simple explanation occurred to her.

The locket had belonged to Lord Greystoke. The likenesses were those of he and Lady Alice. This wild creature had simply found it in the cabin by the beach. How stupid of her not to have thought of that solution before.

But to account for the strange likeness between Lord Greystoke and this forest god—that was quite beyond her, and it is not strange that she did not imagine that this naked savage was indeed an English nobleman.

At length Tarzan looked up to watch the girl as she examined the locket. He could not fathom the meaning of the faces within, but he could read the interest and fascination upon the face of the live young creature by his side.

She noticed that he was watching her and thinking that he wished his ornament again, she held it out to him. He took it from her and taking the chain in his two hands he placed it about her neck, smiling at her expression of surprise.

Jane Porter shook her head vehemently and would have removed the golden links from about her throat, but Tarzan would not let her. Taking her hands in his he held them tightly to prevent her.

At last she desisted and with a little laugh raised the locket to her lips, and, rising, dropped him a little curtsy.

Tarzan did not know precisely what she meant, but he guessed correctly

that it was her way of acknowledging the gift, and so he rose, too, and taking the locket in his hand, stooped gravely like some courtier of old, and pressed his lips upon it where hers had rested.

It was a stately and gallant little compliment performed with the grace and dignity of utter unconsciousness of self. It was the hall-mark of his aristocratic birth, the natural outcropping of many generations of fine breeding. A hereditary instinct of graciousness which a lifetime of savage environment could not eradicate.

It was growing dark now, and so they ate again of the fruit which was both food and drink for them, and then Tarzan rose and leading Jane Porter to the little bower he had erected, motioned her to go within.

For the first time in hours a feeling of fear swept over her, and Tarzan felt her draw away as though shrinking from him.

Contact with this girl for half a day had left a very different Tarzan from he whom the morning's sun had risen upon.

Now, in every fiber of his being, heredity spoke louder than training.

He was not in one swift transition become a polished gentleman from a savage ape-man, but at last the instincts of the former predominated, and over all was the desire to please the woman he loved, to appear well in her eyes.

So Tarzan of the apes did the only thing he knew to assure Jane Porter of her safety. He removed his hunting knife from its sheath and handed it to her hilt first, again motioning her into the bower.

The girl understood, and taking the long knife she entered and lay down upon the soft grasses while Tarzan of the apes stretched himself upon the ground across the entrance.

And thus the rising sun found them in the morning.

When Jane Porter awoke, she did not at first recall the strange events of the preceding day, and so she wondered at her odd surroundings—the little leafy bower, the soft grasses of her bed, the unfamiliar prospect from the opening at her feet.

Slowly the circumstances of her position crept one by one into her mind. Then a great wonderment rose in her heart—a mighty wave of thankfulness and gratitude that though she had been in such terrible danger, yet she was unharmed.

She moved to the entrance of the shelter to look for Tarzan. He was gone; but this time no fear assailed her for she knew that he would return.

In the grass at the entrance to her bower she saw the imprint of his body, where he had lain all night to guard her. She knew that the fact that he had been there was all that had permitted her to sleep in such peaceful security.

With him near, who could entertain fear? She wondered if there was another man on earth with whom a girl could feel so safe in the heart of this savage African jungle. Why even the lions and tigers had no terrors for her now.

She looked up to see his lithe form drop softly from a near-by tree. As he caught her eyes upon him his face lighted with that frank and radiant smile that had won her confidence the day before.

As he approached her Jane Porter's heart beat faster and her eyes brightened as they had never done before at the approach of any man.

He had again been gathering fruit which he laid at the entrance of her bower. Once more they sat down together to eat.

Jane Porter commenced to wonder what his plans were. Would he take her back to the beach or would he keep her here? Suddenly she realized that the matter did not seem to give her much concern. Could it be that she did not care!

She began to comprehend, also, that she was contented sitting here by the side of this smiling giant, eating delicious fruit in a sylvan paradise far

within the remote depths of an African jungle—that she was contented and happy.

She could not understand it. Her reason told her that she should be torn by wild anxieties, weighted by dread fears, cast down by gloomy forebodings. Instead, her heart was singing and she was smiling into the answering face of the man beside her.

When they had finished their breakfast Tarzan went to her bower and recovered his knife. The girl had entirely forgotten it. She realized that it was because she had forgotten the fear that prompted her to accept it.

Motioning her to follow, Tarzan walked toward the trees at the edge of the arena, and taking her in one strong arm swung to the branches above.

The girl knew that he was taking her back to her people, and she could not understand the sudden feeling of sorrow which crept over her.

For hours they swung slowly along.

Tarzan of the apes did not hurry. He tried to draw out the sweet pleasure of that journey with those dear arms about his neck as long as possible, and so he went far south of the direct route to the beach.

Several times they halted for brief rests, which Tarzan did not need, and at noon they stopped for an hour at a little brook where they quenched their thirst and ate.

It was nearly sunset when they came to the clearing, and Tarzan, dropping to the ground beside a great tree, parted the tall jungle-grass and pointed out the little cabin to her.

She took him by the hand to lead him to it, that she might tell her father that this man had saved her from worse than death; that he had watched over her as carefully as a mother.

But again the timidity of the wild thing in the face of human habitation swept over Tarzan of the apes. He drew back, shaking his head.

The girl came close to him, looking up with pleading eyes. Somehow she could not bear the thought of his going back into the jungle alone.

Still he shook his head, and finally he drew her to him very gently and stooped to kiss her, but first he looked into her eyes and waited to learn if she were pleased, or if she would repulse him.

Just an instant the girl hesitated, and then she realized the truth, and throwing her arms about his neck she drew his face to hers and kissed him—unashamed.

"I love you—I love you," she murmured.

From far in the distance came the faint sound of many guns.

Tarzan and Jane Porter raised their heads.

From the cabin came Mr. Philander and Esmeralda. From where Tarzan and the girl stood they could not see the two vessels lying in the harbor.

Tarzan pointed toward the sounds, touched his breast and pointed again. She understood. He was going, and something told her that it was because he thought her people were in danger.

Again he kissed her.

"Come back to me," she whispered. "I shall wait for you—always."

He was gone—and Jane Porter turned to walk across the clearing to the cabin.

Mr. Philander was the first to see her. It was dusk and Mr. Philander was very near-sighted.

"Quickly, Esmeralda!" he cried. "Let us seek safety within. It is a tiger. Bless me!"

Esmeralda did not bother to verify Mr. Philander's vision. His tone was enough. She was within the cabin and had slammed and bolted the door before he had finished pronouncing her name.

The "Bless me" was started out of Mr. Philander by the discovery that Esmeralda, in the exuberance of her haste, had fastened him upon the same side of the door as was the tiger.

He beat ferociously upon the heavy portal.

"Esmeralda! Esmeralda!" he shrieked. "Let me in. I am being devoured by a lion."

Esmeralda thought that the noise upon the door was made by the tiger in his attempts to pursue her, so, after her custom, she fainted.

Mr. Philander cast a frightened glance behind him.

"Horrors! The thing was quite close now. He tried to scramble up the side of the cabin, and succeeded in catching a fleeting hold upon the thatched roof.

For a moment he hung there, clawing with his feet like a cat on a clothesline, but presently a piece of the thatch came away, and Mr. Philander, preceding it, was precipitated upon his back.

At the instant he fell a remarkable item of natural history leaped to his mind. If one feigns death lions and tigers are supposed to ignore one, according to Mr. Philander's faulty memory.

So Mr. Philander lay as he had fallen, frozen into the horrid semblance of death. As his arms and legs had been extended stiffly upward as he came to earth upon his back the attitude of death was anything but impressive.

Jane Porter had been watching his antics in mild-eyed surprise. Now she laughed—a little choking, gurgle of a laugh; but it was enough. Mr. Philander rolled over upon his side and peered about. At length he discovered her.

"Jane!" he cried. "Jane Porter. Bless me!"

He scrambled to his feet and rushed toward her. He could not believe that it was she, and alive.

"Bless me! Where did you come from? Where in the world have you been? How—"

"Mercy, Mr. Philander," interrupted the girl, "I never can remember so many questions."

"Well, well," said Mr. Philander. "Bless me! I am so filled with surprise and exuberant delight at seeing you safe and well again that I scarcely know what I am saying, really. But come, tell me all that has happened to you."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE VILLAGE OF TORTURE.

As the little expedition of sailors toiled through the dense jungle searching for signs of Jane Porter, the futility of their venture became more and more apparent, but the grief of the old man and the hopeless eyes of the young Englishman prevented the kind-hearted D'Arnot from turning back.

He thought that there might be a bare possibility of finding her body, or the remains of it, for he was positive that she had been devoured by some beast of prey. He deployed his men into a skirmish line from the point where Esmeralda had been found, and in this extended formation they rushed their way, sweating and panting.

It was slow work. Noon found them but a few miles inland. They halted for a brief rest then, and after pushing on for a short distance further one of the men discovered a well-marked trail.

It was an old elephant track, and D'Arnot after consulting with Professor Porter and Clayton, decided to follow it.

The path wound through the jungle in a northeasterly direction, and along it the column moved in single file.

Lieutenant d'Arnot was in the lead and moving at a quick pace, for the trail was comparatively open. Immediately behind him came Professor Porter, but as he could not keep pace with the younger man D'Arnot was a hundred yards in advance when suddenly a half-dozen black warriors rose about him.

D'Arnot gave a warning shout to his column as the blacks closed on him, but before he could draw his revolver he had been pinioned and dragged into the jungle.

His cry had alarmed the sailors, and a dozen of them sprang forward past

Professor Porter, running up the trail to their officer's aid.

They did not know the cause of his outcry, only that it was a warning of danger ahead.

They had rushed past the spot where D'Arnot had been seized when a spear hurled from the jungle transfixed one of the men, and then a volley of arrows fell among them.

Raising their carbines they fired into the underbrush in the direction from which the missiles had come.

By this time the balance of the party had come up, and volley after volley was fired toward the concealed foe. It was these shots that Tarzan and Jane Porter had heard.

Lieutenant Charpentier, who had been bringing up the rear of the column, now came running to the scene, and on hearing the details of the ambuscade ordered the men to follow him, and plunged into the tangled vegetation.

In an instant they were in a hand-to-hand fight with some fifty black warriors of Mbonga's village. Arrows and bullets flew thick and fast.

Queer African knives and French gun-butts mingled for a moment in savage and bloody duels, but soon the natives fled into the jungle, leaving the Frenchmen to count their losses.

Four of the twenty were dead, a dozen others were wounded and Lieutenant d'Arnot was missing. Night was falling rapidly, and their predicament was rendered doubly worse through the fact that they could not even find the elephant trail which they had been following.

There was but one thing to do, make camp where they were until daylight. Lieutenant Charpentier ordered a clearing made and an abatis of underbrush constructed in circular form about the camp.

This work was not completed until long after dark, the men building a huge fire in the center of the clearing to give them light to work by.

When all was as safe as could be made from the attack of wild beasts and savage men, Lieutenant Charpentier placed sentries about the little camp, and the tired and hungry men threw themselves upon the ground to sleep.

The groans of the wounded, mingled with the roaring and growling of the great beasts kept sleep except in its most fitful form from the tired eyes. It was a sad and hungry party that lay through the long night praying for dawn.

The blacks, who had seized D'Arnot, had not waited to participate in the fight which followed, but instead had dragged their prisoner a little way through the jungle and then struck the trail further on beyond the scene of the fighting.

They hurried him along, the sounds of battle growing fainter and fainter as they drew away from the contestants until there suddenly broke upon D'Arnot's vision a good-sized clearing at one end of which stood a thatched and palisaded village.

It was now dusk, but the watchers at the gate saw the approaching trio and distinguished one as a prisoner ere they reached the portals.

A cry went up within the palisade. A great throng of women and children rushed out to meet the party.

And then began for the French officer the most terrifying experience which man can encounter upon earth—the reception of a white prisoner into a village of African cannibals.

They fell upon D'Arnot tooth and nail, beating him with sticks and stones and tearing at him with clawlike hands. Every vestige of clothing was torn from him, and the merciless blows fell upon his bare and quivering flesh.

But not once did the Frenchman cry out in pain. A silent prayer rose that he be quickly delivered from his torture.

The death he prayed for was not to be so easily had. Soon the warriors beat the women away from their prisoner.

He was to be saved for nobler sport than this; and the first wave of their

passion having subsided they contented themselves with crying out taunts and insults, and spitting upon him.

Presently they gained the center of the village. There D'Arnot was bound securely to the great post from which no live man had ever been released.

A number of the women scattered to their several huts to fetch pots and water, while others built a row of fires on which portions of the feast were to be boiled.

The festivities were delayed awaiting the return of the warriors who had remained to engage in the skirmish with the white men, so that it was quite late when all were in the village, and the dance of death commenced to circle round the doomed officer.

Half fainting from pain and exhaustion, D'Arnot watched what seemed but a vagary of delirium, or some horrid nightmare from which he must soon awake.

The bestial faces, daubed with color—the huge mouths and hanging lips—the yellow teeth, sharp filed—the rolling, demon eyes; the shining naked bodies—the cruel spears. Surely no such creatures really existed—he must indeed be dreaming.

The savage, whirling bodies circled nearer. Now a spear sprang forth and touched his arm. The sharp pain and the feel of hot, trickling blood assured him of the awful reality of his position.

Another spear and then another touched him.

He closed his eyes and held his teeth firm set—he would not cry out.

He was a soldier of France, and he would teach these beasts how an officer and a gentleman died.

Tarzan of the apes needed no interpreter to translate the story of those distant shots. With Jane Porter's kisses still warm upon his lips he was swinging with incredible rapidity through the forest trees straight toward the village of Mbonga.

He was not interested in the location of the encounter, for he judged that that would soon be over. Those who were killed he could not aid, those who escaped would not need his assistance.

It was to those who had neither been killed or escaped that he hastened. And he knew that he would find them by the great post in the center of Mbonga's village.

Many times had Tarzan seen Mbonga's black raiding parties return from the northward with prisoners, and always were the same scenes enacted about that grim stake, beneath the flaring light of many fires.

He knew, too, that they seldom lost much time before consummating the fiendish purpose of their captures. He doubted that he would arrive in time to do more than avenge.

Tarzan had looked with complacency upon their former orgies, only occasionally interfering for the pleasure of baiting the blacks; but heretofore their victims had been men of their own color.

To-night it was different—white men, men of Tarzan's own race—might be even now suffering the agonies of torture.

On he sped. Night had fallen, and he traveled high along the upper terrace where the gorgeous tropic moon lighted his dizzy pathway.

Presently he caught the reflection of a distant blaze. It lay to the right of his path.

So sure was Tarzan of his jungle knowledge that he did not turn from his course, but passed the glare at a distance of a half mile. It was the campfire of the Frenchmen.

In a few minutes more Tarzan swung into the trees above Mbonga's village. Ah, he was not quite too late! Or, was he? He could not tell. The figure at the stake was very still, yet the black warriors were not pricking it.

Tarzan knew their customs. The death blow had not been struck. He could tell almost to a minute how far the dance had gone.

In another instant Mbonga's knife

would sever one of the victims' ears—that would mark the beginning of the end, for very shortly after only a writhing mass of mutilated flesh would remain.

There would still be life in it, but death then would be the only charity it craved.

The stake stood forty feet from the nearest tree. Tarzan coiled his rope. Then there rose suddenly above the fiendish cries of the dancing demons the awful challenge of the ape-man.

The dancers halted as though turned to stone. The rope sped with a singing whir high above the heads of the blacks. It was quite invisible in the flaring lights of the camp-fires.

D'Arnot opened his eyes.

A huge black, standing directly before him, lunged backward as though felled by an invisible hand.

Struggling and shrieking, his body rolling from side to side, moved quickly toward the shadows beneath the trees. The blacks, their eyes protruding in horror, watched spellbound.

Once beneath the trees the body rose straight into the air, and as it disappeared into the foliage above, the terrified negroes, screaming with fright, broke into a mad race for the village gate.

D'Arnot was left alone.

He was a brave man, but he had felt the short hairs bristle upon the nape of his neck when that uncanny cry rose upon the air.

As the writhing body of the black soared, as though by unearthly power, into the foliage of the forest, D'Arnot felt an icy shiver run along his spine, as though death had risen from a dank grave and laid a clammy finger on his flesh.

As D'Arnot watched the spot where the body had entered the tree he heard the sounds of movement there.

The branches swayed as though under the weight of a man's body—there was a crash and the black came sprawling to earth again—to lie very quietly where he had fallen.

Immediately after him came a white body, but this one alighted erect.

D'Arnot saw a clean-limbed young giant emerge from the shadows into the firelight and come quickly toward him.

What could it mean? Who could it be? Some new creature of torture and destruction, doubtless.

D'Arnot waited. His eyes never left the face of the advancing man. The frank, clear eyes did not waver beneath his fixed gaze.

D'Arnot was reassured, but still without much hope, though he felt that that face could not mask a cruel heart.

Without a word Tarzan of the apes cut the bonds which held the Frenchman. Weak from suffering and loss of blood, he would have fallen but for the strong arm that caught him.

He felt himself lifted from the ground.

There was a sensation as of flying, and then he lost consciousness.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SEARCH PARTY.

WHEN dawn broke upon the little camp of Frenchmen in the heart of the jungle it found a sad and disheartened group.

As soon as it was light enough to see their surroundings, Lieutenant Charpentier sent men in groups of three in several directions to locate the trail, and in ten minutes it was found and the expedition was hurrying back toward the beach.

It was slow work, for they bore the bodies of six dead men, two more having succumbed during the night, and several of those who were wounded required support to move even very slowly.

Charpentier had decided to return to camp for reenforcements, and then make an attempt to track down the natives and rescue D'Arnot.

It was late in the afternoon when the exhausted men reached the clearing by the beach, but for two of them the re-

turn brought so great a happiness that all their suffering and heart-breaking grief was forgotten on the instant.

As the little party emerged from the jungle the first person that Professor Porter and Cecil Clayton saw was Jane Porter, standing by the cabin door.

With a little cry of joy and relief she ran forward to greet them, throwing her arms about her father's neck and bursting into tears for the first time since they had been cast upon this hideous and adventurous shore.

Professor Porter strove manfully to suppress his own emotions, but the strain upon his nerves and weakened vitality were too much for him. At length, burying his old face in the girl's shoulder, he sobbed like a tired child.

Jane Porter led him toward the cabin, and the Frenchmen turned toward the beach from which several of their fellows were advancing to meet them.

Clayton, wishing to leave father and daughter alone, joined the sailors and remained talking with the officers until their boat pulled away toward the cruiser whither Lieutenant Charpentier was bound to report the unhappy outcome of his adventure.

Then Clayton turned back slowly toward the cabin. His heart was filled with happiness. The woman he loved was safe.

He wondered by what manner of miracle she had been spared. It seemed almost unbelievable.

As he approached the cabin he saw her coming out. When she saw him she hurried forward to meet him.

"Jane!" he cried. "Heaven has been good to us, indeed. Tell me how you escaped—what form Providence took to save you for—us."

He had never before called her by her given name. Forty-eight hours before it would have suffused Jane Porter with a soft glow of pleasure to have heard that name from Clayton's lips—now it frightened her.

"Mr. Clayton," she said quietly, extending her hand, "first let me thank you for your loyalty to my father. He has told me how noble and self-sacrificing you have been. How can we ever repay you!"

Clayton noticed that she did not return his familiar salutation, but he felt no misgivings on that score. She had been through so much. This was no time to force his love upon her, he quickly realized.

"I am already repaid," he laughed. "Just to see you and Professor Porter both safe, well, and together again."

The girl bowed her head. There was a question she wanted to ask, but it seemed almost sacrilegious in the face of the love of these two men, and the terrible suffering they had endured while she sat laughing and happy beside a godlike creature of the forest, eating delicious fruits and looking with eyes of love into answering eyes.

But love is a strange master, and human nature is still stranger, so she asked her question, though she was not coward enough to attempt to justify herself to her own conscience. She felt self-hate, but she asked her question nevertheless.

"Where is the forest man who went to rescue you? Why did he not return?"

"I do not understand," said Clayton. "Whom do you mean?"

"He who has saved each of us—who saved me from the gorilla."

"Oh," cried Clayton in surprise. "It was he who rescued you? You have not told me anything of your adventure, don't you know; tell me, do."

"But the woodman," she urged. "Have you not seen him? When we heard the shots in the jungle, very faint and far away, he left me. We had just reached the clearing, and he hurried off in the direction of the fighting. I know he went to aid you."

Her tone was almost pleading—her manner tense with suppressed emotion. Clayton could not but notice it, and he wondered, vaguely, why she was so deeply moved—so anxious to know the whereabouts of this strange creature.

He did not suspect the truth, for how could he?

Yet a feeling of apprehension of some impending sorrow haunted him, and in his breast, unknown to himself, was implanted the first germ of jealousy and suspicion of the ape-man to whom he owed his life.

"We did not see him," he replied quietly. "He did not join us." And then after a moment of thoughtful pause: "Possibly he joined his own tribe—the men who attacked us."

He did not know why he had said it, for he did not believe it; but love is a strange master.

The girl looked at him wide-eyed for a moment.

"No!" she exclaimed vehemently, much too vehemently, he thought. "It could not be. They were negroes—he is a white man—and a gentleman."

Clayton looked puzzled. The little green-eyed devil taunted him.

"He is a strange, half-savage creature of the jungle, Miss Porter. We know nothing of him. He neither speaks nor understands any European tongue—and his ornaments and weapons are those of the west coast savages."

Clayton was speaking rapidly.

"There are no other human beings than savages within hundreds of miles, Miss Porter, he must belong to the tribe which attacked us, or to some other equally savage. He may even be a cannibal."

Jane Porter blanched.

"I will not believe it," she half-whispered. "It is not true. You shall see," she said, addressing Clayton, "that he will come back and that he will prove you are wrong. You do not know him as I do. I tell you that he is a gentleman."

Clayton was a generous and chivalrous man, but something in the girl's defense of the forest man stirred him to unreasoning jealousy, so that for the instant he forgot all that they owed to this wild demigod, and he answered her with a half-sneer upon his lip.

"Possibly you are right, Miss Porter," he said, "but I do not think that any of us need worry about our carrion-eating acquaintance. The chances are that he is some half-demented castaway who will forget us more quickly, but no more surely, than we shall forget him. He is only a beast of the jungle, Miss Porter."

The girl did not answer, but she felt her heart shrivel within her. Anger and hate against one we love steels our hearts, but contempt or pity leaves us silent and ashamed.

She knew that Clayton spoke merely what he thought, and for the first time she began to analyze the structure which supported her new found love, and to subject its object to a critical examination.

Slowly she turned and walked back to the cabin. She tried to imagine her wood-god by her side in the saloon of an ocean liner. She saw him eating with his hands, tearing his food like a beast of prey, and wiping his greasy fingers upon his thighs. She shuddered.

She saw him as she introduced him to her friends—uncouth, illiterate—a boor; and she winced.

She had reached her room now, and as she sat upon the edge of her bed of ferns and grasses, with one hand resting upon her rising and falling bosom, she felt the hard outlines of the man's locket beneath her waist.

She drew it out, holding it in the palm of her hand for a moment with tear-blurred eyes bent upon it. Then she raised it to her lips, and crushing it there buried her face in the soft ferns, sobbing.

"Beast?" she murmured. "Then Heaven make me a beast; for, man or beast, I am yours."

She did not see Clayton again that day. Esmeralda brought her supper to her, and she sent word to her father that she was suffering from the reaction following her adventure.

The next morning Clayton left early with the relief expedition in search

of Lieutenant d'Arnot. There were two hundred armed men this time, with ten officers and two surgeons, and provisions for a week.

They carried bedding and hammocks, the latter for transporting their sick and wounded.

It was a determined and angry company—a punitive expedition as well as one of relief. They reached the sight of the skirmish of the previous expedition shortly after noon, for they were now traveling a known trail and no time was lost in exploring.

From there on the elephant-trail led straight to Mbonga's village. It was but two o'clock when the head of the column halted upon the edge of the clearing.

Lieutenant Charpentier, who was in command, immediately sent a portion of his force through the jungle to the opposite side of the village. Another detachment was despatched to a point before the village gate, while he remained with the balance upon the south side of the clearing.

It was arranged that the party which was to take position to the north, and which would be the last to gain its station, should commence the assault, and that their opening volley should be the signal for a concerted rush from all sides in an attempt to carry the village by storm at the first charge.

For half an hour the men with Lieutenant Charpentier crouched in the dense foliage of the jungle, waiting the signal. To them it seemed like hours. They could see natives in the fields, and others moving in and out of the village gate.

At length the signal came—a sharp rattle of musketry, and, like one man, an answering volley tore from the jungle to the west and to the south.

The natives of the field dropped their implements and broke madly for the palisade. The French bullets mowed them down, and the French sailors bounded over their prostrate bodies straight for the village gate.

So sudden and unexpected the assault had been that the whites reached the gates before the frightened natives could bar them, and in another minute the village street was filled with armed men fighting hand-to-hand in an inextricable tangle.

For a few moments the blacks held their ground within the entrance to the street, but the revolvers, carbines, and cutlases of the Frenchmen crumpled the native spearmen and struck down the black archers with their bolts half-drawn.

Soon the battle turned to a wild rout, and then to grim massacre; for the French sailors had seen bits of D'Arnot's uniform upon several of the black warriors who opposed them.

They spared the children and those of the women whom they were not forced to kill in self-defense, but when at length they stopped, panting, blood-covered, and sweating, it was because there lived to oppose them no single warrior of all the savage village of Mbonga.

Carefully they ransacked every hut and corner of the village, but no sign of D'Arnot could they find. They questioned the prisoners by signs, and finally one of the sailors who had served in the French Congo found that he could make them understand the hybrid tongue that passes for language between the whites and the more degraded tribes of the coast, but even then they could learn nothing of the fate of D'Arnot.

Only excited gestures and expressions of fear could they obtain in response to their inquiries concerning their fellows, and at last they became convinced that these were but evidences of the guilt of these demons who had slaughtered and eaten their comrade two nights before.

At length all hope left them, and they prepared to camp for the night within the village.

The prisoners were herded into three huts where they were heavily guarded.

Sentries were posted at the barred gates, and finally the village was

wrapped in the silence of slumber, except for the wailing of the native women for their dead.

The next morning they set out upon the return march. Their original intention had been to burn the village, but this idea was abandoned and the prisoners were left behind, weeping and moaning, but with roofs to cover them and a palisade for refuge from the beasts of the jungle.

Slowly the expedition retraced its steps of the preceding day. Ten loaded hammocks retarded its pace. In eight of them lay the more seriously wounded, while two swung beneath the weight of the dead.

Clayton and Lieutenant Charpentier brought up the rear of the column, the Englishman silent in respect for the other's grief, for D'Arnot and Charpentier had been inseparable since boyhood.

Clayton could not but realize that the Frenchman felt his grief the more keenly because D'Arnot's sacrifice had been so futile, since Jane Porter had been rescued before D'Arnot had fallen into the hands of the savages, and again because the service in which he had lost his life had been outside his duty and for strangers.

When he spoke of it to Lieutenant Charpentier, the latter shook his head.

"No, *monsieur*," he said, "D'Arnot would have chosen to die thus. I only grieve that I could not have died for him, or at least with him. I wish that you could have known him better, *monsieur*. He was indeed an officer and a gentleman—a title conferred on many, but deserved by so few.

"He did not die futilely, for his death in the cause of a strange American girl will make us, his comrades, face our ends the more bravely, however they may come to us."

Clayton did not reply, but within him there arose a new respect for Frenchmen which remained undimmed ever after.

It was quite late when they reached the cabin by the beach. A single shot before they emerged from the jungle had announced to those in camp as well as on the ship that the expedition had been too late—for it had been prearranged that when they came within a mile or two of camp one shot was to be fired to denote failure, or three for success, while two would have indicated that they had found no sign of either D'Arnot or the blacks.

So it was a solemn party that awaited their coming, and few words were spoken as the dead and wounded men were tenderly placed in boats and rowed silently toward the cruiser.

Clayton, exhausted from his five days of laborious marching through the jungle and from the effects of his two battles with the blacks, turned toward the cabin to seek a mouthful of food and then the comparative ease of his bed of grasses, after two nights in the jungle.

By the cabin door stood Jane Porter.

"The poor lieutenant?" she asked. "Did you find no trace of him?"

"We were too late, Miss Porter," he replied sadly.

"Tell me. What had happened?" she asked.

"I cannot, Miss Porter. It is too horrible."

"You do not mean that they had tortured him?" she whispered.

"We do not know what they did to him before they killed him," he answered, his face drawn with fatigue and the sorrow he felt for poor D'Arnot—and he emphasized the word before.

"Before they killed him! What do you mean? They are not—they are not—"

She was thinking of what Clayton had said of the forest man's probable relationship to this tribe, and she could not frame the awful word.

"Yes, Miss Porter, they were—cannibals," he said, almost bitterly.

To him, too, had suddenly come the thought of the forest man. The strange jealousy he had felt two days before swept over him once more.

In sudden brutality that was unlike him, he blurted out:

"When your forest god left you he was doubtless hurrying to the feast."

He was sorry ere the words were spoken, though he did not know how cruelly they had cut the girl. His regret was for his baseless disloyalty to one who had saved the lives of every member of his party, nor ever offered harm to one.

The girl's head went high.

"There could be but one suitable reply to your assertion," she said icily, "and I regret that I am not a man, that I might make it."

She turned quickly and entered the cabin.

Clayton was an Englishman, so the girl had passed quite out of sight before he deduced what reply a man would have made.

"Upon my word," he said ruefully, "she called me a liar. And I fancy I deserved it. I'd better go to bed."

But before he did so he called gently to Jane Porter upon the opposite side of the sail-cloth partition, for he wished to apologize, but he might as well have addressed the Sphinx. Then he wrote upon a piece of paper and shoved it beneath the partition.

Jane Porter saw the little note and ignored it, for she was very angry and hurt and mortified, but—she was a woman, and so eventually she picked it up and read it. It said:

> My dear Miss Porter: I had no reason to insinuate what I did. My only excuse is that my nerves must be unstrung—which is no excuse at all.
>
> Please try and think that I did not say it. I am very sorry. I would not have hurt you, above all others in the world. Say that you forgive me.
>
> Wm. Cecil Clayton.

"He did think it or he never would have said it," reasoned the girl. "But it cannot be true—I know it is not true!"

One sentence in the letter frightened her: "I would not have hurt you above all others in the world."

A week ago that sentence would have filled her with delight, now it depressed her.

She wished she had never met Clayton. She was sorry that she had ever seen the forest god—no, she was glad. And there was that other note she had found in the grass before the cabin the day after her return from the jungle, the love-note signed by Tarzan of the apes.

Who could be this new suitor? If he were another of the wild denizens of this terrible forest, what might he not do to claim her?

"Esmeralda! Wake up," she cried. "You make me so irritable, sleeping there peacefully when you know perfectly well that the world is filled with sorrow."

"Gaberelle!" screamed Esmeralda, sitting up. "What is it now? A hipponocerous?"

"Nonsense, Esmeralda, there is nothing. Go back to sleep. You are bad enough asleep, but you are infinitely worse awake."

"Yas, honey, but what's de matter wif you, precious? You acks sorter kinder disgranulated dis ebenin'."

"Oh, Esmeralda, I'm just plain ugly to-night," said the girl. "Don't pay any attention to me—that's a dear."

"Yas, honey; now you go right to sleep. Yo' nerves am all on aidge. What wif all dese ripotamuses an' maneatin' geniuses dat Marse Philander been a tellin' about— Lawd, it ain't no wonder we all get nervous prosecution."

Jane Porter crossed the little room laughing, and, kissing the faithful old black cheek, bade her good night.

CHAPTER XXIII.

BROTHER MEN.

When D'Arnot regained consciousness, he found himself lying upon a bed of soft ferns and grasses beneath a little A-shaped shelter of boughs.

At his feet an opening looked out

upon a greensward, and at a little distance beyond was the dense wall of jungle and forest.

He was very lame and sore and weak, and as full consciousness returned he felt the sharp torture of many cruel wounds, and the dull aching of every bone and muscle in his body as a result of the hideous beating he had received.

Even the turning of his head caused him such agony that he lay still with closed eyes for a long time.

He tried to piece out the details of his adventures prior to the time he lost consciousness. He wondered if he were among friends or foes.

At length he recollected the hideous scene at the stake, and finally recalled the strange white figure in whose arms he had sunk into oblivion.

D'Arnot wondered what fate lay in store for him now. He could neither see nor hear any signs of life about him.

The incessant hum of the jungle—the rustling of millions of leaves—the buzz of insects—the voices of the birds and monkeys seemed blended into a strangely soothing purr, as though he lay apart, far from the myriad life that surrounded him and whose sounds came to him only faintly.

At length he fell into slumber, nor did he awake again until afternoon.

Once more he experienced the strange sense of bewilderment that had marked his earlier awakening, but soon he recalled the recent past, and looking through the opening at his feet he saw the figure of a man squatting on his haunches.

The broad, muscular back was turned toward him, but, tanned though it was, D'Arnot saw that it was the back of a white man, and he thanked Heaven.

The Frenchman called faintly. The man turned, and, rising, came toward the shelter. His face was very handsome—the handsomest, thought D'Arnot, that he had ever seen.

Stooping, he crawled into the shelter beside the wounded officer, and placed a cool hand upon his forehead.

D'Arnot spoke to him in French, but the man only shook his head—sadly, it seemed to the Frenchman.

Then D'Arnot tried English, but still the man shook his head. Italian, Spanish, and German brought similar discouragement.

D'Arnot knew a few words of Norwegian, Russian, Greek, and also had a smattering of the language of one of the west coast negro tribes—the man denied them all.

After examining D'Arnot's wounds, the man left the shelter and disappeared. In half an hour he was back with fruit and a hollow gourdlike vegetable filled with water.

D'Arnot drank and ate a little. He was surprised that he had no fever. Again he tried to converse with his strange nurse, but the attempt was useless.

Suddenly the man hastened from the shelter only to return a few minutes later with several pieces of bark and—wonder of wonders—a lead-pencil.

Squatting beside D'Arnot, he wrote for a minute on the smooth inner surface of the bark; then he handed it to the Frenchman.

D'Arnot was astonished to see, in plain printlike characters, a message in English.

> I am Tarzan of the apes. Who are you? Can you read this language?

D'Arnot eagerly seized the pencil—then he stopped. This strange man wrote English — evidently he was an Englishman.

"Yes," said D'Arnot, "I read English. I speak it also. Now we may talk. First let me thank you for all that you have done for me."

The man only shook his head and pointed to the pencil and the bark.

"*Mon Dieu!*" cried D'Arnot. "If you are English, why is it then that you cannot speak English?"

And then in a flash it came to him—

the man was a mute, possibly a deaf mute.

So D'Arnot wrote a message on the bark, in English.

I am Paul d'Arnot, lieutenant in the navy of France. I thank you for what you have done for me. You have saved my life, and all that I have is yours. May I ask how it is that one who writes English does not speak it?

Tarzan's reply filled D'Arnot with still greater wonder.

I speak only the language of my tribe —the great apes who were Kerchak's; and a little of the languages of Tantor, the elephant, and Numa, the lion, and of the other folks of the jungle I understand. With a human being I have never spoken, except once with Jane Porter, by signs. This is the first time I have spoken with another of my kind through written words.

D'Arnot was mystified. It seemed incredible that there lived upon the earth a full-grown man who had never spoken with a fellow man, and still more preposterous that such a one could read and write.

He looked again at Tarzan's message—"except once, with Jane Porter." That was the American girl who had been carried into the jungle by a gorilla.

A sudden light commenced to dawn on D'Arnot — this, then, was the "gorilla." He seized the pencil and wrote.

Where is Jane Porter?

And Tarzan replied, below:

Back with her people in the cabin of Tarzan of the apes.

She is not dead, then? Where was she? What happened to her?

She is not dead. She was taken by Terkoz to be his wife. Tarzan of the apes took her away from Terkoz and killed him before he could harm her.

None in all the jungle may face Tarzan of the apes in battle, and live. I am Tarzan of the apes—mighty fighter.

D'Arnot wrote:

I am glad she is safe. It pains me to write. I will rest a while.

And then Tarzan:

Yes, rest. When you are well I shall take you back to your people.

For many days D'Arnot lay upon his bed of soft ferns. The second day a fever had come, and D'Arnot thought that it meant infection and he knew that he would die.

An idea came to him. He wondered why he had not thought of it before.

He called Tarzan and indicated by signs that he would write, and when Tarzan had fetched the bark and pencil, D'Arnot wrote:

Can you go to my people and lead them here? I will write a message that you may take to them, and they will follow you.

Tarzan shook his head and taking the bark wrote:

I thought of that—the first day. I dared not. The great apes come often to this spot. If they found you here, wounded and alone, they would kill you.

D'Arnot turned on his side and closed his eyes. He did not wish to die; but he felt that he was going, for the fever was mounting higher and higher. That night he lost consciousness.

For three days he was in delirium, and Tarzan sat beside him and bathed his head and hands and washed his wounds.

On the fourth day the fever broke as suddenly as it had come, but it left D'Arnot a shadow of his former self, and very weak. Tarzan had to lift him that he might drink from the gourd.

The fever had not been the result of infection, as D'Arnot had thought, but

one of those that commonly attack whites in the jungles of Africa, and either kill or leave them as suddenly as D'Arnot's had left him.

Two days after, D'Arnot was tottering about the amphitheater, Tarzan's strong arm about him to keep him from falling.

They sat beneath the shade of a great tree, and Tarzan found some smooth bark that they might converse.

D'Arnot wrote:

> What can I do to repay you for all that you have done for me?
> Teach me to speak the language of men,

wrote Tarzan in reply.

And so D'Arnot commenced at once, pointing out familiar objects and repeating their names in French, for he thought that it would be easier to teach this man his own language, since he understood it himself best of all.

It meant nothing to Tarzan, of course, for he could not tell one language from another, so when he pointed to the word "man" which he had printed upon a piece of bark he learned from D'Arnot that it was pronounced "*homme*," and in the same way he was taught to pronounce ape, "*singe*," and tree, "*arbre*."

He was a most eager student and in two more days had mastered so much French that he could speak little sentences such as: "That is a tree." "This is grass." "I am hungry," and the like, but D'Arnot found that it was difficult to teach him the French construction upon a foundation of English.

The Frenchman wrote little lessons for him in English and had Tarzan repeat them in French, but as a literal translation was usually very poor French, Tarzan was often confused.

D'Arnot realized now that he had made a mistake, but it seemed too late to go back and do it all over again and force Tarzan to unlearn all that he had learned, especially as they were rapidly approaching a point where they would be able to converse.

On the third day after the fever broke, Tarzan wrote a message asking D'Arnot if he felt strong enough to be carried back to the cabin. Tarzan was as anxious to go as D'Arnot, for he longed to see Jane Porter again.

It had been hard for him to remain with the Frenchman all these days. That he had done so spoke more glowingly for his nobility of character than even did his rescuing of the French officer from Mbonga's clutches.

D'Arnot was only too willing to attempt the journey.

> But you cannot carry me all the distance through this tangled forest,

he wrote.

Tarzan laughed.

"*Mais oui*," he said, and D'Arnot laughed aloud to hear the phrase that he used so often glide from Tarzan's tongue.

So they set out, D'Arnot marveling as had Clayton and Jane Porter at the wondrous strength and agility of the ape-man.

Mid-afternoon brought them to the clearing, and as Tarzan dropped to earth from the branches of the last tree his heart leaped and bounded against his ribs in anticipation of seeing Jane Porter so soon again.

No one was in sight without the cabin. D'Arnot was perplexed to note that neither the cruiser nor the Arrow was at anchor in the bay.

An atmosphere of loneliness pervaded the spot, which caught suddenly at both men as they strode toward the cabin.

Neither spoke, yet both knew before they opened the closed door what they would find beyond.

Tarzan lifted the latch and pushed the great door in upon its wooden hinges. It was as they had feared. The cabin was deserted.

The men turned and looked at one

another. D'Arnot knew that his people thought him dead; but Tarzan thought only of the woman who had kissed him in love and now had fled from him while he was serving one of her people.

A great bitterness rose in his heart. He would go away, far into the jungle and join his tribe. Never would he see one of his own kind again; nor could he bear the thought of returning to the cabin. He would leave that forever behind him with the great hopes he had nursed there of finding his own race and becoming a man among men.

And the Frenchman? D'Arnot? What of him? He could get along as Tarzan had. Tarzan did not want to see him more. He wanted to get away from everything that might remind him of Jane Porter.

As Tarzan stood upon the threshold, brooding, D'Arnot had entered the cabin. Many comforts he saw that had been left behind.

He recognized numerous articles from the cruiser—a camp oven, some kitchen utensils, a carbine and many rounds of ammunition, canned foods, blankets, two chairs, and a cot—and several books and periodicals, mostly American. "They must intend returning," thought D'Arnot.

He walked over to the table that John Clayton had built so many years before to serve as a desk, and on it he saw two notes addressed to Tarzan of the apes.

One was in a strong masculine hand and was unsealed. The other, in a woman's hand, was sealed.

"Here are two messages for you, Tarzan of the apes," cried D'Arnot, turning toward the door, but his companion was not there.

D'Arnot walked to the door and looked out. Tarzan was nowhere in sight. He called aloud but there was no response.

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed D'Arnot. "He has left me. I feel it. He has gone back to his jungle and left me here alone."

And then he remembered the look on Tarzan's face when they had discovered that the cabin was empty—such a look as the hunter sees in the eyes of the deer he has brought down. The man had been hard hit—D'Arnot realized it now—but why? He could not understand.

The Frenchman looked about him. The loneliness and the horror of the place commenced to get on his nerves—already weakened by the ordeal of suffering and sickness he had passed through.

To be left here alone beside this awful jungle—never to hear a human voice or see a human face—in constant dread of savage beasts and more terribly savage men—a prey to solitude and hopelessness. It was awful.

And far to the east Tarzan of the apes was speeding through the middle terrace back to his tribe. Never had he traveled with such reckless speed.

He felt that he was running away from himself — that by hurtling through the forest like a frightened squirrel he was escaping from his own thoughts. But no matter how fast he went he found them always with him.

He passed above the sinuous, striped body of Sabor, the tiger, going in the opposite direction; toward the cabin, thought Tarzan.

What could D'Arnot do against Sabor—or if Bolgani, the gorilla, should come upon him—or Numa, the lion, or cruel Sheeta.

Tarzan paused in his flight.

"What are you, Tarzan?" he asked aloud. "An ape or a man?

"If you are an ape you will do as the apes would do—leave one of your kind to die in the jungle, if it suited your whim to go elsewhere.

"If you are a man, you will return to protect your kind. You will not run away from one of your own people, because one of them has run away from you."

D'Arnot closed the cabin door. He was very nervous. Even brave men,

and D'Arnot was a brave man, are sometimes frightened by solitude.

He loaded one of the carbines and placed it within easy reach. Then he went to the desk and took up the unsealed letter addressed to Tarzan.

Possibly it contained word that his people had but left the beach temporarily. He felt that it would be no breach of ethics to read this letter, so he took the enclosure from the envelope and read:

To Tarzan of the Apes:

We thank you for the use of your cabin, and are sorry that you did not permit us the pleasure of seeing and thanking you in person.

We have harmed nothing, but have left many things for you which may add to your comfort and safety here in your lonely home.

If you know the strange white man who saved our lives so many times, and brought us food, and if you can converse with him, thank him also for his kindness.

We sail within the hour, never to return, but we wish you and that other jungle friend to know that we shall always thank you for what you did for strangers on your shore, and that we should have done infinitely more to reward you both had you given us the opportunity.

Very respectfully,
Wm. Cecil Clayton.

"'Never to return,'" muttered D'Arnot, and threw himself face downward upon the cot.

An hour later he started up, listening.

Something was at the door trying to enter.

D'Arnot reached for the loaded carbine and placed it to his shoulder, ready for any emergency that might arise.

Dusk was falling, and the interior of the cabin was very dark; but the man could see the latch rising from its seat.

He felt his hair rising upon his scalp.

Gently the door opened until a thin crack showed something standing just without.

D'Arnot sighted along the blue barrel at the crack of the door—and then he pulled the trigger.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LOST TREASURE.

When the expedition returned, following their fruitless endeavor to succor D'Arnot, Captain Dufranne was anxious to steam away as quickly as possible, and all save Jane Porter had acquiesced.

"No," she said determinedly, "I shall not go, nor should you, for there are two friends in that jungle who will come out of it some day, expecting to find us awaiting them.

"Your officer, Captain Dufranne, is one of them, and the forest man who has saved the lives of every member of my father's party is the other.

"He left me at the edge of the jungle two days ago to hasten to the aid of my father and Clayton, as he thought, and he has stayed to rescue Lieutenant d'Arnot; of that you may be sure.

"Had he been too late to be of service to the lieutenant he would have been back before now—the fact that he is not back is sufficient proof to me that he is delayed because Lieutenant d'Arnot is wounded, or he has had to follow his captors farther than the village which your sailors attacked."

"But poor D'Arnot's uniform and all his belongings were found in that village, Miss Porter," argued the captain. "The natives showed great excitement when questioned as to the white man's fate."

"But they did not admit that he was dead. As for his clothes and accouterments being in their possession—more civilized peoples than these poor savage negroes strip their prisoners of every article of value whether they intend killing them or not."

"Possibly your forest man was captured or killed by the savages," suggested Captain Dufranne.

The girl laughed.

"You do not know him," she replied, a little thrill of pride setting her nerves a tingle at the thought that she spoke of her own.

"I admit that he would be worth waiting for, this superman of yours," laughed the captain. "I most certainly should like to see him."

"Then wait for him, my dear captain," urged the girl, "for I intend doing so."

The Frenchman would have been a very much surprised man could he have interpreted the true meaning of the girl's words.

They had been walking from the beach toward the cabin as they talked, and now they joined a little group sitting on camp-stools in the shade of a great tree beside the cabin.

Professor Porter was there, and Mr. Philander and Clayton, with Lieutenant Charpentier and two of his brother officers, while Esmeralda hovered in the background, ever and anon venturing opinions and comments with the freedom of an old and much-indulged family servant.

The officers rose and saluted as their superior approached, and Clayton surrendered his camp-stool to Jane Porter.

"We were just discussing poor Paul's fate," said Captain Dufranne. "Miss Porter insists that we have no proof of his death—nor have we.

"On the other hand, she maintains that the continued absence of your omnipotent jungle friend indicates that D'Arnot is still in need of his services, either because he is wounded, or still is a prisoner in a more distant native village."

"It has been suggested," ventured Lieutenant Charpentier, "that the wild man may have been a member of the tribe of blacks who attacked our party—that he was hastening to aid them—his own people."

Jane Porter shot a quick glance at Clayton.

"It seems vastly more reasonable," said Professor Porter.

"I do not agree with you," objected Mr. Philander. "He had ample opportunity to harm us himself, or to lead his people against us. Instead, during all our residence here, he has been uniformly consistent in his rôle of protector and provider."

"That is true," interjected Clayton, "yet we must not overlook the fact that except for himself the only human beings within hundreds of miles are savage cannibals.

"He was armed precisely as are they, which indicates that he has maintained relations of some nature with them, and the fact that he is but one against possibly thousands suggests that these relations could scarcely have been other than friendly."

"It seems improbable, then, that he is not connected with them," remarked the captain, "possibly a member of this tribe."

"Or," added another of the officers, "that he could even have lived a sufficient length of time among the savage denizens of the jungle, brute and human, to have become proficient in woodcraft, or in the use of African weapons."

"You are judging him according to your own standards, gentlemen," said Jane Porter. "An ordinary white man such as any of you—pardon me, I did not mean just that—rather, a white man above the ordinary in physique and intelligence could never, I grant you, have lived a year alone and naked in this tropical jungle.

"But this man not only surpasses the average white man in strength and agility, but as far transcends our trained athletes and 'strong men' as they surpass a day-old baby; and his courage and ferocity in battle is that of the wild beast."

"He has certainly won a loyal champion, Miss Porter," said Captain Dufranne, laughing. "I am sure that there be none of us here but would willingly face death in its most terrifying forms to deserve the tributes of one even half so loyal—or so beautiful."

"You would not wonder that I defend him," said the girl, "could you have seen him as I saw him, battling in my behalf with that huge, hairy brute.

"Could you have seen him charge the monster as a bull might charge a grizzly—absolutely without sign of fear or hesitation — you would have believed him more than human.

"Could you have seen those mighty muscles knotting under the brown skin —could you have seen them force back those awful fangs—you, too, would have thought him invincible.

"And could you have seen the chivalrous treatment which he accorded a strange girl of a strange race, you would feel the same absolute confidence in him that I feel."

"You have won your suit," cried the captain. "The cruiser shall wait a few days longer."

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, honey," cried Esmeralda. "You doan' mean to tell me dat youse a goin' to stay right yere in dis yere lan' of carnivable animals when you all done got de oppahtunity to escapade on dat crosier? Doan' tell me dat, honey."

"Why, Esmeralda! You should be ashamed of yourself," cried Jane Porter. "Is this any way to show your gratitude to the man who saved your life twice?"

"Well, Miss Jane, das all jes' as yo' say; but dat dere fores' lawd never did save us to stay yere. He done save us so we all could get away from yere. Ah expec' he be mighty peevish when he fin' we ain't got no mo' sense'n to stay right yere after he done give us de chanct to get away.

"Ah hoped Ah'd never have to sleep in dis yere geological garden another night and listen to all dem lonesome noises dat come out of dat jumble after dark."

"I don't blame you a bit, Esmeralda," said Clayton.

"You and Esmeralda had better go and live on the cruiser," said Jane Porter, in fine scorn. "What would you think if you had to live all of your life in that jungle as our forest man has done?"

"Tut, tut, child," said Professor Porter. "Captain Dufranne is willing to remain, and for my part I am perfectly willing, perfectly willing—as I always have been to humor your childish whims."

"We can utilize the morrow in recovering the chest, professor," suggested Mr. Philander.

"Quite so, quite so, Mr. Philander. I had almost forgotten the treasure," exclaimed Professor Porter. "Possibly we can borrow some men to assist us, and some of the prisoners to point out the location of the chest."

"Most assuredly, my dear professor, we are all yours to command," said the captain.

It was arranged that on the next day Lieutenant Charpentier was to take a detail of ten men, and one of the mutineers of the Arrow as a guide, and unearth the treasure; also that the cruiser would remain for a full week in the little harbor. At the end of that time it was to be assumed that D'Arnot was truly dead, and that the forest man would not return while they remained. Then the two vessels were to leave with all the party.

Professor Porter did not accompany the treasure-seekers on the following day, but when he saw them returning empty-handed toward noon, he hastened forward to meet them — his usual preoccupied indifference entirely vanished, and in its place a nervous and excited manner.

"Where is the treasure?" he cried to Clayton, while yet a hundred feet separated them.

Clayton shook his head.

"Gone," he said, as he neared the professor.

"Gone! It cannot be. Who could have taken it?" cried Professor Porter.

"Heaven only knows, professor," replied Clayton. "We might have thought the fellow who guided us was

lying about the location, but his surprise and consternation on finding no chest beneath the body of Snipes were too real to be feigned.

"And then our spades showed us that something had been buried beneath the corpse, for a hole had been there and it had been filled with loose earth."

"But who could have taken it?" repeated Professor Porter.

"Suspicion might naturally fall on the men of the cruiser," said Lieutenant Charpentier, "but for the fact that Sub-lieutenant Janviers here assures me that no men have had shore leave—that none has been on shore since we anchored here except under command of an officer.

"I do not know that you would suspect our men, but I am glad that there is now no chance for suspicion to fall on them," he concluded.

"It would never have occurred to me to suspect the men to whom we owe so much," replied Professor Porter. "I would as soon suspect my dear Clayton here, or Mr. Philander."

The Frenchmen smiled, both officers and sailors. It was plain to see that a burden had been lifted from their minds.

"The treasure has been gone some time," continued Clayton. "In fact the body fell apart as we lifted it, which indicates that whoever removed the treasure did so while the corpse was still fresh, for it was intact when we first uncovered it."

"There must have been several in the party," said Jane Porter, who had joined them. "You remember that it took four men to carry it."

"By jove!" cried Clayton. "That's right. It must have been done by a party of blacks. Probably one of them saw the men bury the chest and then returned immediately after with a party of his friends, and carried it off."

"Speculation is futile," said Professor Porter sadly. "The chest is gone. We shall never see it more, nor the treasure that was in it."

Only Jane Porter knew what the loss meant to her father, and none there knew what it meant to her.

Six days later Captain Dufranne announced that they would sail early on the morrow.

Jane Porter would have begged for a further reprieve, had it not been that she, too, had begun to believe that her forest lover would return no more.

In spite of herself she began to entertain doubts and fears. The reasonableness of the arguments of these disinterested French officers commenced to convince her against her will.

That he was a cannibal she would not believe but that he was an adopted member of some savage tribe at length seemed possible to her.

She would not admit that he could be dead. It was impossible to believe that that perfect body, so filled with triumphant life, could ever cease to harbor the vital spark—as soon believe that immortality were dust.

As Jane Porter permitted herself to harbor these thoughts, others equally unwelcome forced themselves upon her.

If he belonged to some savage tribe he had a savage wife—a dozen of them perhaps—and wild, half-caste children. The girl shuddered, and when they told her that the cruiser would sail on the morrow she was almost glad.

It was she, though, who suggested that arms, ammunition, supplies and comforts be left behind in the cabin, ostensibly for that intangible personality who had signed himself Tarzan of the apes, and for D'Arnot, should he still be living, but really, she hoped, for her forest god—even though his feet should prove of clay.

And at the last minute she left a message for him, to be transmitted by Tarzan of the apes.

Jane Porter was the last to leave the cabin, returning on some trivial pretext, after the others had started for the boat.

She kneeled down beside the bed in which she had spent so many nights,

and offered up a prayer for the safety of her primeval man, and crushing his locket to her lips she murmured:

"I love you, and because I love you, I believe in you. But if I did not believe, still should I love. May Heaven have pity on my soul that I should acknowledge it. Had you come back for me, and there had been no other way, I would have gone into the jungle with you—forever."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OUTPOST OF THE WORLD.

WITH the report of his gun D'Arnot saw the door fly open and the figure of a man pitch headlong within onto the cabin floor.

The Frenchman in his panic raised his gun to fire again into the prostrate form, but suddenly in the half dusk of the open door he saw that the man was white and in another instant realized that he had shot his friend and protector, Tarzan of the apes.

With a cry of anguish D'Arnot sprang to the ape-man's side, and kneeling, lifted the black head in his arms—calling Tarzan's name aloud.

There was no response, and then D'Arnot placed his ear above the man's heart. To his joy he heard its steady beating beneath.

Carefully he lifted Tarzan to the cot, and then, after closing and bolting the door, he lighted one of the lamps and examined the wound.

The bullet had struck a glancing blow upon the skull, there was an ugly flesh wound, but no signs of a fracture of the skull beneath.

D'Arnot breathed a sigh of relief, and went about bathing the blood from Tarzan's face.

Soon the cool water revived him, and presently he opened his eyes to look in questioning surprise at D'Arnot.

The latter had bound the wound with pieces of cloth, and as he saw that Tarzan had regained consciousness he rose and going to the table wrote a message, which he handed to the ape-man, explaining the terrible mistake he had made and how thankful he was that the wound was not more serious.

Tarzan, after reading the message, sat on the edge of the couch and laughed.

"It is nothing," he said in French, and then, his vocabulary failing him, he wrote:

> You should have seen what Bolgani did to me, and Kerchak, and Terkoz, before I killed them—then you would laugh at a little scratch.

D'Arnot handed Tarzan the two messages that had been left for him.

Tarzan read the first one through with a look of sorrow on his face. The second one he turned over and over, searching for an opening—he had never seen a sealed envelope before. At length he handed it to D'Arnot.

The Frenchman had been watching him, and knew that Tarzan was puzzled over the envelope. How strange it seemed that to a full-grown white man an envelope was a mystery. D'Arnot opened it and handed the letter back to Tarzan.

Sitting on a camp-stool, the ape-man spread the written sheet before him and read:

> TO TARZAN OF THE APES:—
>
> Before I leave let me add my thanks to those of Mr. Clayton for the kindness you have shown in permitting us the use of your cabin.
>
> That you never came to make friends with us has been a great regret to us. We should have liked so much to have seen and thanked our host.
>
> There is another I should like to thank also, but he did not come back, though I cannot believe that he is dead.
>
> I do not know his name. He is the great white giant who wore the diamond locket upon his breast.
>
> If you know him and can speak his language, carry my thanks to him, and tell him that I waited seven days for him to return.
>
> Tell him, also, that in my home in America, in the city of Baltimore, there will always be a welcome for him if he cares to come.
>
> I found a note you wrote me lying

among the leaves beneath a tree near the cabin. I do not know how you learned to love me, who have never spoken to me, and I am very sorry if it is true, for I have already given my heart to another.

But I know that I am always your friend, JANE PORTER.

Tarzan sat with gaze upon the floor for nearly an hour. It was evident to him from the notes that they did not know that he and Tarzan of the apes were one and the same.

"I have given my heart to another," he repeated over and over again to himself.

Then she did not love him! How could she have pretended love and raised him to such a pinnacle of hope only to cast him down to such utter depths of despair!

Maybe her kisses were only signs of friendship. How did he know, who knew nothing of the customs of human beings?

Suddenly he rose, and, bidding D'Arnot good night as he had learned to do, threw himself upon the couch of ferns that had been Jane Porter's.

D'Arnot extinguished the lamp, and lay down upon the cot.

For a week they did little but rest, meanwhile D'Arnot coached Tarzan in French. At the end of that time the two men could converse quite easily.

One night, as they were sitting within the cabin before retiring, Tarzan turned to D'Arnot.

"Where is America?" he said.

D'Arnot pointed toward the northwest.

"Many thousands of miles across the ocean," he replied. "Why?"

"I am going there."

D'Arnot shook his head.

"It is impossible, my friend," he said.

Tarzan rose and, going to one of the cupboards, returned with a well-thumbed geography.

Turning to a map of the world, he said:

"I have never quite understood all this; explain it to me, please."

When D'Arnot had done so, showing him that the blue represented all the water on the earth, and the bits of other colors the continents and islands, Tarzan asked him to point out the spot where they now were.

D'Arnot did so.

"Now point out America," said Tarzan.

And as D'Arnot placed his finger upon North America, Tarzan smiled and placed his palm upon the page, spanning the great ocean that lay between the two continents.

"You see, it is not so very far," he said. "Scarce the width of my hand."

D'Arnot laughed. How could he make the man understand?

Then he took a pencil and made a tiny point upon the shore of Africa.

"This little mark," he said, "is many times larger upon this map than your cabin is upon the earth. Do you see now how very far it is?"

Tarzan thought for a long time.

"Do any white men live in Africa?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Where are the nearest?"

D'Arnot pointed out a spot on the shore just north of them.

"So close?" asked Tarzan in surprise.

"Yes," said D'Arnot. "But it is not close."

"Have they big boats to cross the ocean?"

"Yes."

"We shall go there to-morrow," announced Tarzan.

Again D'Arnot smiled and shook his head.

"It is too far. We should die long before we reached them."

"Do you wish to stay here then forever?" asked Tarzan.

"No," said D'Arnot.

"Then we shall start to-morrow. I do not like it here longer. I should rather die than remain here."

"Well," answered D'Arnot with a shrug, "I do not know, my friend, but that I also would rather die than re-

main here. If you go, I shall go with you."

"It is settled then," said Tarzan. "I shall start for America to-morrow."

"How will you get to America without money?" asked D'Arnot.

"What is money?" inquired Tarzan.

It took a long time to make him understand.

"How do men get money?" he asked at last.

"They work for it."

"Very well. I will work for it."

"No, my friend," returned D'Arnot, "you need not worry about money, nor need you work for it. I have enough for two — enough for twenty. Much more than is good for one man, and you shall have all you need if ever we reach civilization."

So on the following day they started north along the shore. Each man carried a carbine and ammunition, beside bedding and some food and cooking utensils.

The latter seemed to Tarzan a most useless encumbrance, so he threw his away.

"But you must learn to eat cooked food, my friend," remonstrated D'Arnot. "No civilized men eat raw flesh."

"There will be time enough when I reach civilization," said Tarzan. "I do not like the things, and they only spoil the taste of good meat."

For days they traveled north, sometimes finding food in plenty, and again going hungry for days.

They saw no signs of natives, nor were they molested by wild beasts. Their journey was a miracle of ease.

Tarzan asked questions and learned rapidly. D'Arnot taught him many of the refinements of civilization — even to the use of knife and fork; but sometimes Tarzan would drop them in disgust and grasp his food in his strong brown hands, tearing it with his molars like a wild beast.

Then D'Arnot would expostulate with him, saying:

"You must not eat like a brute, Tarzan, while I am trying to make a gentleman of you. *Mon Dieu!* Gentlemen do not thus—it is terrible."

Tarzan would grin sheepishly and pick up his knife and fork again, but at heart he hated them.

On the journey he told D'Arnot about the great chest he had seen the sailors bury, and how he had dug it up and carried it to the gathering-place of the apes and buried it there.

"It must be the treasure-chest of Professor Porter," said D'Arnot. "It is too bad, but of course you did not know."

Then Tarzan recalled the letter written by Jane Porter to her friend—the one he had stolen when they first came to his cabin, and now he knew what was in the chest and what it meant to Jane Porter.

"To-morrow we shall go back after it," he announced to D'Arnot.

"Go back?" exclaimed D'Arnot. "But, my dear fellow, we have now been three weeks upon the march. It would require three more to return to the treasure, and then, with that enormous weight which required, you say, four sailors to carry, it would be months before we had again reached this spot."

"It must be done, my friend," insisted Tarzan. "You may go on toward civilization, and I will return for the treasure. I can go very much faster alone."

"I have a better plan, Tarzan," exclaimed D'Arnot. "We shall go on together to the nearest settlement, and there we will charter a boat and sail back down the coast for the treasure.

"That will be safer and quicker, and also not require us to be separated. What do you think of that plan?"

"Very well," said Tarzan. "The treasure will be there whenever we go for it; and while I could fetch it now, and catch up with you in a moon or two, I shall feel safer for you to know that you are not alone on the trail.

"When I see how helpless you are, D'Arnot, I often wonder how the

human race has escaped annihilation all these ages which you tell me about. Why, Sabor, single-handed, could exterminate a thousand of you."

D'Arnot laughed.

"You will think more highly of your genus when you have seen its armies and navies, its great cities, and its mighty engineering works. Then you will realize that it is mind, and not muscle, that makes the human animal greater than the mighty beasts of your jungle.

"Alone and unarmed, a single man is no match for any of the larger beasts; but if ten men were together, they would combine their wits and their muscles against their savage enemies, while the beasts, being unable to reason, would never think of combining against the men.

"Otherwise, Tarzan of the apes, how long would you have lasted in the savage wilderness?"

"You are right, D'Arnot," replied Tarzan. "For if Kerchak had come to Tublat's aid that night at the Dum-Dum, there would have been an end of me. But Kerchak could never think far enough ahead to take advantage of any such opportunity."

"Even Kala, my mother, could never plan ahead. She simply ate what she needed when she needed it, and if the supply was very scarce, even though she found plenty for several meals, she would never gather any ahead.

"I remember that she used to think it very silly of me to burden myself with extra food upon the march, though she was quite glad to eat it with me, if the way chanced to be barren of sustenance."

"Then you knew your mother, Tarzan?" asked D'Arnot, in surprise.

"Yes. She was a great, fine ape, larger than I, and weighing twice as much."

"And you also knew your father?" asked D'Arnot.

"I did not know him. Kala told me he was a white ape, and hairless like myself. I know now that he must have been a white man."

D'Arnot looked long and earnestly at his companion.

"Tarzan," he said at length, "it is impossible that the ape, Kala, was your mother. If such a thing can be, which I doubt, you would have inherited some of the characteristics of the ape, but you have not. You are pure man, and, I should say, the offspring of highly bred and intelligent parents.

"Have you not the slightest clue to your past?"

"Not the slightest," replied Tarzan.

"No writing in the cabin that might have told something of the lives of its original inmates?"

"I have read everything that was in the cabin with the exception of one book, which I know now to be written in a language other than English. Possibly you can read it."

Tarzan fished the little black diary from the bottom of his quiver and handed it to his companion.

D'Arnot glanced at the title-page.

"It is the diary of John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, an English nobleman, and it is written in French," he said.

Then D'Arnot proceeded to read the diary that had been written over twenty years before, and which recorded the details of the story which we already know—the story of adventure, hardships, and sorrow of John Clayton and his wife Alice, from the day they left England until an hour before he was struck down by Kerchak.

D'Arnot read aloud. Occasionally his voice broke, and he was forced to stop reading for the hopelessness that spoke between the lines.

Often he glanced at Tarzan; but the ape-man sat upon his haunches, like a carven image, his eyes fixed upon the ground.

Only when the little babe was mentioned did the tone of the diary alter from the habitual note of despair which had crept into it by degrees after the first two months upon the shore.

Then the passages were tinged with

a subdued happiness that was even sadder than the rest.

One entry showed an almost hopeful spirit.

> To-day our little boy is six months old. He is sitting in Alice's lap beside the table where I am writing—a happy, healthy, perfect child.
>
> Somehow, even against all reason, I seem to see him a grown man, taking his father's place in the world — the second John Clayton—and bringing added honors to the house of Greystoke.
>
> There—as though to give my prophecy the weight of his endorsement—he has grabbed my pen in his chubby fist and with his ink-begrimed little fingers has placed the seal of his tiny fingerprints upon the page.

Upon the margin of the page were the partially blurred imprints of four wee fingers and the outer half of the thumb.

When D'Arnot had finished the diary the two men sat in silence for some minutes.

"Well! Tarzan of the apes, what think you?" asked D'Arnot. "Does not this little book clear up the mystery of your parentage? You are Lord Greystoke."

Tarzan shook his head.

"The book speaks of but one child," he replied. "Its skeleton lay in the crib, where it died crying for nourishment, from the first time I entered the cabin until Professor Porter's party buried it, with its father and mother, beside the cabin.

"No, that was the babe the book speaks of—and the mystery of my origin is deeper than before, for I have thought much of late of the possibility of that cabin having been my birthplace.

"I am afraid that Kala spoke the truth," he concluded sadly.

D'Arnot shook his head. He was unconvinced, and in his mind had sprung the determination to prove the correctness of his theory, for he had discovered the key which alone could unlock the mystery.

A week later the two men came suddenly upon a clearing in the forest.

In the distance were several buildings surrounded by a strong palisade. Between them and the enclosure stretched a cultivated field in which a number of negroes were working.

The two halted at the edge of the jungle.

Tarzan fitted his bow with a poisoned arrow, but D'Arnot placed a hand upon his arm.

"What would you do, Tarzan?" he asked.

"They will try to kill us, if they see us," replied Tarzan. "I prefer to be the killer."

"Maybe they are friends," suggested D'Arnot.

"They are black," was Tarzan's only reply.

Again he drew back his shaft.

"You must not, Tarzan!" cried D'Arnot. "White men do not kill wantonly. *Mon Dieu!* but you have much to learn.

"I pity the ruffler who crosses you, my wild man, when I take you to Paris. I will have my hands full keeping your neck from beneath the guillotine."

Tarzan lowered his bow and smiled.

"I do not know why I should kill the blacks back there in my jungle, yet not kill them here. Suppose Numa, the lion, should spring out upon us, I should say then, I presume: 'Good morning, M. Numa, how is Mme. Numa?' Eh?"

"Wait until the blacks spring upon you," replied D'Arnot, "then you may kill them. Do not assume that men are your enemies until they prove it."

"Come," said Tarzan, "let us go and present ourselves to be killed."

He started straight across the field, his head high held and the tropical sun beating upon his smooth, brown skin.

Behind him came D'Arnot, clothed in some garments which had been discarded at the cabin by Clayton when the officers of the French cruiser had fitted him out in more presentable fashion.

Presently one of the blacks looked up, and beholding Tarzan striding toward him, turned, shrieking, and made for the palisade.

In an instant the air was filled with cries of terror from the fleeing gardeners, but before any had reached the palisade a white man emerged from the enclosure, rifle in hand, to discover the cause of the commotion.

What he saw brought his rifle to his shoulder, and Tarzan of the apes would have felt cold lead once again had not D'Arnot cried loudly to the man with the leveled gun:

"Do not fire! We are friends!"

"Halt, then!" was the reply.

"Stop, Tarzan!" cried D'Arnot, halting the ape-man in his tracks. "He thinks we are enemies."

Tarzan dropped into a walk, and, together, he and D'Arnot advanced toward the white man by the gate.

The latter eyed them in puzzled bewilderment.

"What manner of men are you?" he asked in French.

"White men," replied D'Arnot. "We have been lost in the jungle for a long time."

The man had lowered his rifle and now advanced toward them with outstretched hand.

"I am Father Constantin, of the French mission here," he said. "I am glad to welcome you."

"This is M. Tarzan, Father Constantin," replied D'Arnot, indicating the ape-man; and as the priest extended his hand to Tarzan, D'Arnot added: "And I am Paul d'Arnot, of the French navy."

Father Constantin took the hand which Tarzan extended in imitation of the priest's act, while the latter took in the superb physique and handsome face in one quick, keen glance.

Thus came Tarzan of the apes to the first outpost of civilization.

For a week they remained there, and the ape-man, keenly observant, learned much of the ways of men, while black women sewed upon white duck garments for himself and D'Arnot that they might continue their journey properly clothed.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LIGHT OF CIVILIZATION.

ANOTHER month brought them to a little group of buildings at the mouth of a wide river, and there Tarzan saw many boats, and was filled with the old timidity by the sight of many men.

Gradually he became accustomed to the strange noises and the odd ways of civilization, so that presently none might know that two short months before, this handsome Frenchman in immaculate white ducks, who laughed and chatted with the gayest of them, had been swinging naked through primeval forests to pounce upon some unwary victim, which, raw, was to appease his savage appetite.

The knife and fork, so contemptuously flung aside a month before, Tarzan now manipulated as exquisitely as did the polished D'Arnot.

So apt a pupil had he been that the young Frenchman had labored assiduously to make of Tarzan a polished gentleman in so far as nicety of manners and speech were concerned.

"Heaven made you a gentleman at heart, my friend," D'Arnot had said; "but we want its work to show upon the exterior also."

As soon as they had reached the little port D'Arnot had cabled his government of his safety, and requested a three-months' leave, which had been granted.

He had also cabled his bankers for funds, and the enforced wait of a month, under which both chafed, was due to their inability to charter a vessel for the return to Tarzan's jungle after the treasure.

During their stay at the coast town "M. Tarzan" became the wonder of both whites and blacks because of several occurrences which to Tarzan seemed the merest of nothings.

Once a huge black, crazed by drink, had run amuck and terrorized the town, until his evil star had led him to where the black-haired French giant lolled upon the veranda of the hotel.

Mounting the broad steps with brandishing knife the negro made straight for a party of four men sitting at a table.

Shouting in alarm, the four took to their heels, and then the black spied Tarzan.

With a roar he charged the ape-man, while half a hundred heads peered from sheltering windows and doorways to witness the butchering of the poor Frenchman by the giant black.

Tarzan met the rush with the fighting smile that the joy of battle always brought to his lips.

As the negro closed, steel muscles gripped the black wrist of the uplifted knife-hand, and a single swift wrench left the hand dangling below a broken bone.

With the pain and surprise, the madness left the black man, and as Tarzan dropped back into his chair the fellow turned, crying with agony, and dashed wildly toward the native village.

On another occasion, as Tarzan and D'Arnot sat at dinner with a number of other whites, the talk fell upon lions and lion-hunting.

Opinion was divided as to the bravery of the king of beasts, some maintaining that he was an arrant coward, but all asserting that it was with a feeling of greater security that they gripped their express rifles when the monarch of the jungle roared about a camp at night.

D'Arnot and Tarzan had agreed that his past be kept secret, and so none other than the French officer knew of the ape-man's familiarity with the beasts of the jungle.

"M. Tarzan has not expressed himself," said one of the party. "A man of his prowess who has spent some time in Africa, as I understand M. Tarzan has, must have had experiences with lions—yes?"

"Some," replied Tarzan dryly. "Enough to know that each of you are right in your judgment of the characteristics of the lions—you have met. But one might as well judge all blacks by the fellow who ran amuck last week, or decide that all whites are cowards because one has met a cowardly white.

"There is as much individuality among the lower orders, gentlemen, as there is among ourselves.

"To-day we may go out and stumble upon a lion which is overtimid—he runs away from us. To-morrow we may meet his uncle or his twin brother, and our friends wonder why we do not return from the jungle.

"For myself, I always assume that a lion is ferocious, and so I am never caught off my guard."

"There would be little pleasure in hunting," retorted the first speaker, "if one is afraid of the thing he hunts."

D'Arnot smiled. Tarzan afraid!

"I do not exactly understand what you mean by fear," said Tarzan. "Like lions, fear is a different thing in different men, but to me the only pleasure of the hunt is the knowledge that the hunted thing has power to harm me as much as I have to harm him.

"If I went out with a couple of rifles and a gun-bearer and twenty or thirty beaters to hunt a lion, I should not feel that the lion had much chance, and so the pleasure of the hunt would be lessened in proportion to the increased safety which I felt."

"Then I am to take it that M. Tarzan would prefer to go naked into the jungle, armed only with a jack-knife, to kill the king of beasts," laughed the other good-naturedly, but with the merest touch of sarcasm in his tone.

"And a piece of rope," added Tarzan.

Just then the deep roar of a lion sounded from the distant jungle, as though to challenge whoever dared enter the lists with him.

"There is your opportunity, M. Tarzan," bantered the Frenchman good-naturedly.

"I am not hungry," said Tarzan simply.

The men laughed, all but D'Arnot. He alone knew that a savage beast had spoken its simple reason through the lips of the ape-man.

"But you are afraid, just as any of us would be, to go out there naked, armed only with a knife and a piece of rope," said the banterer. "Is it not so, M. Tarzan?"

"No," replied Tarzan. "Only a fool performs any act without reason."

"Five thousand francs is a reason," said the other. "I wager you that amount you cannot bring back a lion from the jungle under the conditions we have named—naked and armed only with a knife and a piece of rope."

Tarzan glanced toward D'Arnot and nodded his head.

"Make it ten thousand," said D'Arnot.

"Done," replied the other.

Tarzan rose.

"I shall have to leave my clothes at the edge of the settlement, so that if I do not return before daylight I shall have something to wear through the streets."

"You are not going now," exclaimed the wagerer—"at night?"

"Why not?" asked Tarzan. "Numa walks abroad at night. It will be easier to find him."

"No," said the other, "I do not want your blood upon my hands. It will be foolhardy enough if you go forth by day."

"I shall go now," replied Tarzan, and went to his room for his knife and rope.

The men accompanied him to the edge of the jungle, where he left his clothes in a small storehouse.

But when he would have entered the blackness of the undergrowth they tried to dissuade him; and the wagerer was most insistent of all that he abandon his foolhardy venture.

"I will accede that you have won," he said. "The ten thousand francs are yours, if you will but give up this foolish attempt, which can only end in your death."

Tarzan laughed. In another moment the jungle had swallowed him.

The men stood silent for some moments and then slowly turned and walked back to the hotel veranda.

Tarzan had no sooner entered the jungle than he took to the trees, and it was with a feeling of exultant freedom that he swung once more through the forest branches.

This was life! Ah, how he loved it! Civilization held nothing like this in its narrow and circumscribed sphere, hemmed in by restrictions and conventionalities. Even clothes were a hindrance and a nuisance.

At last he was free. He had not realized what a prisoner he had been.

How easy it would be to circle back to the coast, and then make toward the south and his own jungle and cabin.

Now he caught the scent of Numa, for he was traveling up the wind. Presently his quick ears detected the familiar sound of padded feet and the brushing of a huge, fur-clad body through the undergrowth.

Tarzan came quietly above the unsuspecting beast and silently stalked him until he came into a little patch of moonlight.

Then the quick noose settled and tightened about the tawny throat and, as he had done it a hundred times in the past, Tarzan made fast the end to a strong branch and, while the beast fought and clawed for freedom, dropped to the ground behind him, and, leaping upon the great back, plunged his long, thin blade a dozen times into the fierce heart.

Then with his foot upon the carcass of Numa he raised his voice in the awesome victory cry of his savage tribe.

For a moment Tarzan stood irresolute, swayed by conflicting emotions of loyalty to D'Arnot and a mighty lust for the freedom of his own jungle. At

last the vision of a beautiful face, and the memory of warm lips crushed to his dissolved the fascinating picture he had been drawing of his old life.

The ape-man threw the warm carcass of Numa across his shoulders and took to the trees once more.

The men upon the veranda had sat for an hour, almost in silence.

They had tried ineffectually to converse on various subjects, and always the thing uppermost in the mind of each had caused the conversation to lapse.

"*Mon Dieu,*" said the wagerer at length, "I can endure it no longer! I am going into the jungle with my express and bring back that madman."

"I will go with you," said one.

"And I—and I—and I," chorused the others.

So they hastened to their various quarters, and presently they were headed toward the jungle, each man heavily armed.

"What was that?" suddenly cried one of the party, an Englishman, as Tarzan's savage cry came faintly to their ears.

"I heard the same thing once before," said a Belgian, "when I was in the gorilla country. My carriers said it was the cry of a great bull-ape who has made a kill."

D'Arnot remembered Clayton's description of the awful roar with which Tarzan had announced his kills, and he half smiled in spite of the horror which filled him to think that the uncanny sound could have issued from a human throat—from the lips of his friend.

As the party stood finally near the edge of the jungle, debating as to the best distribution of their forces, they were startled by a low laugh near them, and turning, beheld advancing toward them a giant figure bearing a dead lion upon its broad shoulders.

Even D'Arnot was thunderstruck, for it seemed impossible that the man could have so quickly despatched a lion with the pitiful weapons he had taken, or that alone he could have borne the huge carcass through the tangled jungle.

The men crowded about Tarzan with many questions, but his only answer was a laughing depreciation of his feat.

To Tarzan it was as though one should eulogize a butcher for his heroism in killing a cow, for Tarzan had killed so often for food and for self-preservation that the act seemed anything but remarkable to him. But he was indeed a hero in the eyes of these men, accustomed to hunting big game.

Incidentally he had won ten thousand francs, for D'Arnot insisted that he keep it all.

This was a very important item to Tarzan, who was just commencing to realize the power which lay behind the little pieces of metal and paper which always changed hands when human beings rode, or ate, or slept, or clothed themselves, or drank, or worked, or played, or sheltered themselves from the rain, or cold, or sun.

It had become evident to Tarzan that without money one must die. D'Arnot had told him not to worry, since he had more than enough for both, but the ape-man was learning many things, and one of them was that people looked down upon one who accepted money from another without giving something of equal value in exchange.

Shortly after the episode of the lion hunt, D'Arnot succeeded in chartering an ancient tub for the coastwise trip to Tarzan's land-locked harbor.

It was a happy morning for them both when the little vessel weighed anchor and made for the open sea.

The trip to the beach was uneventful, and the morning after they dropped anchor before the cabin, Tarzan, garbed once more in his jungle regalia, and carrying a spade, set out alone for the amphitheater of the apes where lay the treasure.

Late the next day he returned, bearing the great chest upon his shoulders, and at sunrise the little vessel was worked through the harbor's mouth and took up her northward journey.

Three weeks later Tarzan and D'Arnot were passengers on board a French

steamer bound for Lyons, and after a few days in that city D'Arnot took Tarzan to Paris.

The ape-man was anxious to proceed to America, but D'Arnot insisted that he must accompany him to Paris first, nor would be divulge the nature of the urgent necessity upon which he based his demand.

One of the first things which D'Arnot accomplished after their arrival was to arrange to visit a high official of the police department, an old friend of D'Arnot's. He took Tarzan with him.

Adroitly D'Arnot led the conversation from point to point until the policeman had explained to the interested Tarzan many of the methods in vogue for apprehending and identifying criminals.

Not the least interesting to Tarzan was the part played by finger-prints in this fascinating science.

"But of what value are these imprints," asked Tarzan, "when after a few years the lines upon the fingers are entirely changed by the wearing out of the old tissue and the growth of new?"

"The lines never change," replied the official. "From infancy to senility the finger-prints of an individual change only in size, except as injuries alter the loops and whorls. If imprints have been taken of the thumb and four fingers of both hands one must needs lose all entirely to escape identification."

"It is marvelous," exclaimed D'Arnot. "I wonder what the lines upon my fingers resemble."

"We can soon see," replied the police officer, and ringing a bell he summoned an assistant to whom he issued a few directions.

The man left the room to return presently with a little hardwood box, which he placed on his superior's desk.

"Now," said the officer, "you shall have your finger-prints in a second."

He drew from the little case a square of plate-glass, a little tube of thick ink, a rubber roller, and a few snowy white cards.

Squeezing a drop of ink on to the glass, he spread it back and forth with the rubber roller until the entire surface of the glass was covered with a very thin and uniform layer of ink.

"Place the four fingers of your right hand upon the glass, thus," he said to D'Arnot. "Now the thumb. That's right. Now place them in just the same position upon this card here. No—a little to the right. We must leave room for the thumb and the fingers of the left hand. There, that's it. Now the same with the left."

"Come, Tarzan," cried D'Arnot. "Let's see what your whorls look like."

Tarzan complied readily, asking many questions of the officer during the operation.

"Do finger-prints show racial characteristics?" he asked. "Could you determine, for example, solely from finger-prints, whether the subject was negro or Caucasion?"

"I think not," replied the officer. Though some claim that those of the negro are less complex."

"Could the finger-prints of an ape be detected from those of a man?"

"Probably, because the ape's would be far simpler than those of the higher organism."

"But a cross between an ape and a man might show the characteristics of either progenitor?" continued Tarzan.

"I should think likely," responded the official. "But the science has not progressed sufficiently to render it exact enough in such matters. I should hate to trust its findings further than to differentiate between individuals.

"There it is, absolutely definite. No two people born into the world probably have ever had identical lines upon all their digits. And it is very doubtful if any single finger-print will ever be exactly duplicated by any finger other than the one which originally made it."

"Does the comparison require much time or labor?" asked D'Arnot.

"Ordinarily but a few moments, if the impressions are distinct."

D'Arnot drew a little black book

from his pocket and commenced turning the pages.

Tarzan looked at the book in surprise. How did D'Arnot come to have his book?

Presently D'Arnot stopped at a page on which were five tiny little smudges.

He handed the open book to the policeman.

"Are these imprints similar to mine or M. Tarzan's. Can you say that they are identical with either?"

The officer drew a powerful glass from his desk and examined all three specimens carefully, making notations meanwhile upon a pad of paper.

Tarzan realized now what was the meaning of their visit to the police officer.

The answer to his life's riddle lay in these tiny marks.

With tense nerves he sat leaning forward in his chair, but suddenly he relaxed and dropped back, smiling.

D'Arnot looked at him in surprise.

"You forget that for twenty years the dead body of the child who made those finger-prints lay in the cabin of his father, and that all my life I have seen it lying there," said Tarzan bitterly.

The policeman looked up in astonishment.

"Go ahead, captain, with your examination," said D'Arnot. "We will tell you the story later—provided M. Tarzan is agreeable."

Tarzan nodded his head.

"But you are mad, my dear D'Arnot," he insisted. "Those little fingers are buried on the west coast of Africa."

"I do not know as to that, Tarzan," replied D'Arnot. "It is possible, but if you are not the son of John Clayton, then how in Heaven's name did you come into that jungle where no white man other than John Clayton had ever set foot?"

"You forget—Kala," said Tarzan.

"I do not even consider her," replied D'Arnot.

The friends had walked to the broad window overlooking the boulevard as they talked. For some time they stood there gazing out upon the busy throng beneath, each wrapped in his own thoughts.

"It takes some time to compare finger-prints," thought D'Arnot, turning to look at the police officer.

To his astonishment he saw the official leaning back in his chair hastily scanning the contents of the little black diary.

D'Arnot coughed. The policeman looked up, and catching his eye, raised his finger to admonish silence.

D'Arnot turned back to the window, and presently the police officer spoke.

"Gentlemen," he said.

Both turned toward him.

"There is evidently a great deal at stake which must hinge to a greater or lesser extent upon the absolute correctness of this comparison. I therefore ask that you leave the entire matter in my hands until our expert returns."

"I had hoped to know at once," said D'Arnot. "M. Tarzan sails for America to-morrow."

"I will promise that you can cable him a report within two weeks," replied the officer. "What it will be I dare not say. There are resemblances, yet—well, we had better leave it for M. Leblanc to solve."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE GIANT AGAIN.

A TAXICAB drew up before an old-fashioned residence upon the outskirts of Baltimore.

A man of about forty, well-built and with strong, regular features, stepped out, and paying the chauffeur, dismissed him.

A moment later the passenger was entering the library of the old home.

"Ah, Mr. Canler!" exclaimed an old man, rising to greet him.

"Good evening, my dear professor," cried the man, extending a cordial hand.

"Who admitted you?" asked the professor.

"Esmeralda."

"Then she will acquaint Jane with the fact that you are here," said the old man.

"No, professor," replied Canler, "for I came primarily to see you."

"Ah, I am honored," said Professor Porter.

"Professor," continued Robert Canler with great deliberation, as though carefully weighing his words, "I have come this evening to speak with you about Jane.

"You know my aspirations, and you have been generous enough to approve my suit."

Professor Archimedes Q. Porter fidgeted in his armchair. The subject always made him uncomfortable. He could not understand why. Canler was a splendid match.

"But Jane," continued Canler, "I cannot understand her. She puts me off first on one ground and then another. I always have the feeling that she breathes a sigh of relief every time I bid her good-by."

"Tut-tut," said Professor Porter. "Tut-tut, Mr. Canler. Jane is a most obedient daughter. She will do precisely as I tell her."

"Then I can still count on your support?" asked Canler, a tone of relief marking his voice.

"Certainly, sir, certainly," exclaimed Professor Porter. "How could you doubt it?"

"There is young Clayton, you know," suggested Canler. "He has been hanging about for months.

"I don't know that Jane cares for him. But besides his title they say he has inherited a very considerable estate from his father. It might not be strange, if he finally won her, unless—"

Canler paused.

"Tut-tut, Mr. Canler. Unless — what?"

"Unless, you see fit to request that Jane and I be married at once," said Canler slowly and distinctly.

"I have already suggested to Jane that it would be desirable," said Professor Porter sadly, "for we can no longer afford to keep up this house, and live as her associations demand."

"What was her reply?"

"She said she was not ready to marry any one yet," replied Professor Porter. "That we could go and live upon the farm in northern Wisconsin which her mother left her.

"It is a little more than self-supporting. The tenants have always made a living from it, and been able to send Jane a trifle each year.

"She is planning our going up there the first of the week. Philander and Mr. Clayton have already gone to get things in readiness for us."

"Clayton has gone there!" exclaimed Canler, visibly chagrined. "Why was not I told? I would gladly have gone and seen that every comfort was provided."

"Jane feels that we are already too much in your debt, Mr. Canler," said Professor Porter.

Canler was about to reply when the sound of footsteps came from the hall without, and Jane Porter entered the room.

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" she exclaimed, pausing on the threshold. "I thought you were alone, papa."

"It is only I, Jane," said Canler, who had risen. "Won't you come in and join the group? We were just speaking of you."

"Thank you," said Jane, entering and taking the chair Canler placed for her. "I only wanted to tell papa that Tobey is coming down from the college to-morrow to pack his books. I want you to be sure, papa, to indicate all that you can do without until fall. Please don't carry this entire library to Wisconsin, as you would have carried it to Africa, if I had not put my foot down."

"Was Tobey here?" asked Professor Porter.

"Yes, I just left him. He and Esmeralda are exchanging religious experiences on the back porch now."

"Tut-tut, I must see him at once!" cried the professor. "Excuse me just a moment."

And the old man hastened from the room.

As soon as he was out of ear-shot Canler turned to Jane Porter.

"See here, Jane," he said bluntly. "How long is this thing to go on like this? You haven't refused to marry me, but you haven't promised either.

"I want to get the license to-morrow, so that we can be married quietly before you leave for Wisconsin. I don't care for any fuss or feathers, and I'm sure you don't either."

The girl turned cold, but she held her head bravely.

"Your father wishes it, you know," added Canler.

"Yes, I know."

She spoke scarcely above a whisper.

"Do you realize that you are buying me, Mr. Canler?" she asked finally, and in a cold, level voice. "Buying me for a few paltry dollars? Of course you do. And the hope of just such a contingency was in your mind when you loaned papa the money for that hare-brained escapade, which but for a most mysterious circumstance would have been successful.

"But you, Mr. Canler, would have been the most surprised. You had no idea that the venture would succeed. You are too good a business man for that. And you are too good a business man to loan money for buried treasure seeking, or to loan money without security—unless you had some special object in view.

"You knew that without security you had a greater hold on the honor of the Porters than with it. You knew the one best way to force me to marry you, without seeming to force me.

"You have never mentioned the loan. In any other man I should have thought that the prompting of a magnanimous and noble character. But you are deep.

"I know you better than you think I know you. I shall certainly marry you if there is no other way, but let us understand each other once and for all."

While she spoke, Canler had alternately flushed and paled, and when she ceased he rose, and with a cynical smile upon his strong face, said:

"You surprise me, Jane. I thought you had more self-control—more pride. Of course you are right. I am buying you, and I knew that you knew it. But I thought you would prefer to pretend that it was otherwise. I should have thought your self-respect and your Porter pride would have shrunk from admitting, even to yourself, that you were a bought woman.

"But have it your own way," he added lightly. "I am going to have you, and that is all that interests me."

Without a word the girl turned and left the room.

Jane Porter was not married before she left with her father and Esmeralda for her little Wisconsin farm, and as she coldly bade Robert Canler good-by while the train pulled out, he called to her that he would join them in a week or two.

At their destination they were met by Clayton and Mr. Philander in a huge touring-car belonging to the former, and quickly whirled away through the dense northern woods toward the little farm which the girl had not visited before since childhood.

The farmhouse, which stood on a little elevation some hundred yards from the tenant's house, had undergone a complete transformation during the three weeks that Clayton and Mr. Philander had been there.

The former had imported a small army of carpenters and plasterers, plumbers and painters from a distant city, and what had been but a dilapidated shell was now a cozy little two-story house, filled with every modern convenience procurable in so short a time.

"Why, Mr. Clayton, what have you done?" cried Jane, her heart sinking within her as she realized the probable

size of the expenditure that had been made.

"S-sh," cautioned Clayton. "Don't let your father guess. If you don't tell him, he will never notice. I simply couldn't think of him living in the terrible squalor and sordidness which Mr. Philander and I found. It was so little when I would do so much, Jane. For his sake, please never mention it."

"But you know that we can't repay you," cried the girl. "Why do you want to put me under such terrible obligations?"

"Don't, Jane," said Clayton sadly. "If it had been just now, believe me, I wouldn't have done it, for I knew from the start that it would only hurt me in your eyes. But I couldn't think of that dear old man living in the hole we found here.

"Won't you please believe that I did it just for him and give me that little crumb of pleasure at least."

"I do believe you," said the girl, "because I know you are big enough to have done it just for him—and, oh, Cecil, I wish I might repay you as you deserve—as you would wish."

"Why can't you, Jane?"

"Because I love some one else."

"Canler?"

"No."

"But you are going to marry him. He told me as much before I left Baltimore."

The girl winced.

"I do not love him," she said almost proudly.

"Is it because of the money, Jane?"

She nodded.

"Then am I so much less desirable than Canler? I have money enough," he said bitterly.

"I don't love you, Cecil," she said, "but I respect you. If I must disgrace myself by such a bargain with any man, I prefer that it be one I already despise. I should loathe the man to whom I sold myself without love, whomsoever he might be.

"You will he happier," she concluded, "alone—with my respect and friendship, than with me and my contempt."

He did not press the matter further, but if ever a man had murder in his heart it was William Cecil Clayton, Lord Greystoke, when, a week later, Robert Canler drew up before the farmhouse in his purring six cylinder.

A week passed—a tense though uneventful week for all.

Canler was insistent that Jane marry him at once.

At length she gave in from sheer loathing of the continued and hateful importuning.

It was agreed that on the morrow Canler was to drive to town and bring back the license and a clergyman.

Clayton had wanted to leave as soon as the plan was announced, but the girl's tired, hopeless look kept him. He could not desert her.

Something might happen yet, he tried to console himself by thinking. In his heart, he knew that it would require but a tiny spark to turn his hatred for Canler into the bloodlust of the killer.

Early the next morning Canler set out for town.

In the east smoke could be seen lying low over the forest, for a fire had been raging for a week not far from them, but the wind still lay in the west and no danger threatened them.

About noon Jane Porter started off for a walk. She would not let Clayton accompany her. She wanted to be alone, she said, and he respected her wishes.

In the house Professor Porter and Mr. Philander were immersed in an absorbing discussion of some weighty scientific problem. Esmeralda dozed in the kitchen, and Clayton, heavy-eyed after a sleepless night, threw himself down upon the couch in the living-room and soon dropped into a fitful slumber.

To the east the black smoke clouds rose higher into the heavens, suddenly they eddied, and then commenced to drift rapidly toward the west.

On and on they came. The inmates of the tenant-house were gone, for it was market day, and none there was to see the rapid approach of the fire.

Soon the flames had spanned the road to the south and cut off Canler's return. A little fluctuation of the wind now carried the path of the forest fire to the north a little, then blew back and the flames nearly stood still as though held in leash by some master hand.

Suddenly, out of the northeast, a great black car came careening down the road.

With a jolt it stopped before the cottage and a black-haired giant leaped out and ran up onto the porch. Without a pause he rushed into the house. On the couch lay Clayton. The man started in surprise, but with a bound was at the side of the sleeping man.

Shaking him roughly by the shoulder, he cried:

"Are you all mad here? Don't you know you are nearly surrounded by fire? Where is Miss Porter?"

Clayton sprang to his feet. He did not recognize the man, but he understood the words, and was upon the veranda in a bound.

He cried out in consternation, then, dashing back into the house, called: "Jane! Jane Where are you!?"

In an instant Esmeralda, Professor Porter, and Mr. Philander had joined the two men.

"Where is Miss Jane?" demanded Clayton, seizing Esmeralda by the shoulders and shaking her roughly.

"Oh, Gaberelle, Marse Clayton, she done gone for a walk."

"Hasn't she come back yet?"

And, without waiting for a reply, Clayton dashed out into the yard, followed by the others.

"Which way did she go?" cried the black-haired giant of Esmeralda.

"Down dat road," cried the frightened black, pointing toward the south where a mighty wall of roaring flames shut out the view.

"Put these people in the other car," shouted the stranger to Clayton. "I saw one as I drove up. Get them out of here by the north road.

"Leave my car here. If I find Miss Porter, we shall need it. If I don't, no one will need it. Do as I say," as Clayton hesitated.

They saw the lithe figure bound away across the clearing toward the northwest, where the forest still stood, untouched by flame.

In each rose the unaccountable feeling that a great responsibility had been raised from their shoulders—a kind of implicit confidence in the power of the stranger to save the girl if she could be saved.

"Who was that?" asked Professor Porter.

"I don't know," replied Clayton. "He called me by name and he knew Jane, for he asked for her. And he called Esmeralda by name."

"There was something most startlingly familiar about him," exclaimed Mr. Philander. "Yet, bless me, I know I never saw him before."

"Tut-tut," cried Professor Porter. "Most remarkable. Who could it have been, and why do I feel that Jane is safe, now that he has set out in search of her?"

"I can't tell you, professor," said Clayton soberly, "but I know I have the same uncanny feeling."

"But come," he cried, "we must get out of here ourselves, or we shall be shut off." And the party hastened toward Clayton's machine.

When Jane Porter turned to retrace her steps homeward, she was alarmed to note how near the smoke of the forest fire seemed, and, as she hastened onward, her alarm became almost a panic when she perceived that the rushing flames were rapidly forcing their way between herself and the cottage.

At length she was compelled to turn into the dense thicket and attempt to force her way to the west in an effort to circle around the flames and regain her home.

In a short time the futility of her

attempt became apparent, and then her one hope lay in retracing her steps to the road and flying for her life to the south toward the town.

The twenty minutes that it took her to regain the road was all that had been needed to cut off her retreat as effectually as her advance had been cut off before.

A short run down the road brought her to a horrified stand, for there before her was another wall of flame. An arm of the parent conflagration had shot out a half-mile south to embrace this tiny strip of road in its clutches.

Jane Porter knew that it was useless to attempt to force her way again through the undergrowth.

She had tried it once and failed. Now she realized that it would be but a matter of minutes ere the whole space between the enemy on the north and the enemy on the south would be a seething mass of flames.

Calmly the girl kneeled down in the dust of the roadway and prayed for strength to meet her fate bravely, and to deliver her father and her friends from death. She did not think to pray for deliverance for herself; she knew there was no hope.

Suddenly she heard her name being called aloud through the forest:

"Jane! Jane Porter!" it rang strong and clear, but in a strange voice.

"Here!" she called in reply. "Here! In the roadway!"

Then through the branches of the trees she saw a figure swinging.

A veering of the wind blew a cloud of smoke about them and she could no longer see the man who was speeding toward her, but suddenly she felt a great arm about her. Then she was lifted up, and she felt the rushing of the wind and the occasional brush of a branch as she was borne along.

She opened her eyes.

Far below her lay the undergrowth and the hard earth.

About her was the waving foliage of the forest.

From tree to tree swung the giant figure which bore her, and it seemed to Jane Porter that she was living over in a dream the experience that had been hers in that far African jungle.

She stole a sudden glance at the face close to hers, and then she gave a little frightened gasp—it was he!

"My man!" she murmured. "No, it is the delirium which precedes death."

She must have spoken aloud, for the eyes that bent occasionally to hers lighted with a smile.

"Yes, your man, Jane Porter. Your savage, primeval man come out of the jungle to claim his mate—the woman who ran away from him," he added almost fiercely.

"I did not run away," she whispered. "I would only consent to leave when they had waited a week for you to return."

They had come to a point beyond the fire now, and he had turned back to the clearing.

Side by side they were walking toward the cottage. The wind had changed once more and the fire was burning back upon itself — another hour like that and it would be burned out.

"Why did you not return?" she asked.

"I was nursing D'Arnot. He was badly wounded."

"Ah, I knew it!" she exclaimed.

"They said you had gone to join the blacks — that they were your people."

He laughed.

"But you did not believe them?"

"No—what shall I call you?" she asked. "What is your name?"

"I was Tarzan of the apes when you first knew me," he said.

"Tarzan of the apes!" she cried. "And that was your note I answered when I left?"

"Yes; whose did you think it was?"

"I did not know. Only that it could not be yours, for Tarzan of the apes had written in English, and you could

not understand a word of any language."

Again he laughed.

"It is a long story, but it was I who wrote what I could not speak. And now D'Arnot has made matters worse by teaching me to speak French instead of English.

"Come," he added, "jump into my car; we must overtake your father. They are only a little way ahead."

As they drove along, he said:

"Then when you said in your note to Tarzan of the apes that you loved another—you might have meant me?"

"I might have," she said simply.

"But in Baltimore—oh, how I have searched for you—they told me you would possibly be married by now. That a man named Canler had come up here to wed you. Is that true?"

"Yes."

"Do you love him?"

"No."

"Do you love me?"

She buried her face in her hands.

"I am promised to another. I cannot answer you, Tarzan of the apes," she cried.

"You have answered. Now, tell me why you would marry one you do not love."

"My father owes him money."

Suddenly there came back to Tarzan the memory of the letter he had read—and the name of Robert Canler and the hinted trouble which he had been unable to understand then.

He smiled.

"If your father had not lost the treasure you would not feel forced to keep your promise to this man Canler?"

"I could ask him to release me."

"And if he refused?"

"I have given my promise."

He was silent for a moment. The car was plunging along the uneven road at a reckless pace, for the fire showed threateningly at their right, and another change of the wind might sweep it on with raging fury across this one avenue of escape.

Finally they passed the danger-point, and Tarzan reduced their speed.

"Suppose I should ask him?" ventured Tarzan.

"He would scarcely accede to the demand of a stranger," said the girl. "Especially one who wanted me himself."

"Terkoz did," said Tarzan grimly.

Jane Porter shuddered and looked fearfully up at the giant figure beside her, for she knew he meant the great anthropoid he had killed in her defense.

"This is not an African jungle," she said. "You are no longer a savage beast. You are a gentleman, and gentlemen do not kill in cold blood."

"I am still a wild beast at heart," he said in a low voice, as though to himself.

Again they were silent for a time.

"Jane Porter," said the man at length, "if you were free, would you marry me?"

She did not reply at once, but he waited patiently.

The girl was trying to collect her thoughts.

What did she know of this strange creature at her side? What did he know of himself? Who was he? Who were his parents?

Why his very name echoed his mysterious origin and his savage life.

He had no name. Could she be happy with this jungle waif? Could she find anything in common with a husband whose life had been spent in the tree-tops of an African wilderness, frolicking and fighting with fierce authropoids; tearing his food from the quivering flanks of fresh-killed prey, sinking his strong teeth into the raw flesh, and tearing away his portion, while his mates growled and fought about him for their share?

Could he ever rise to her social sphere? Could she bear to think of sinking to his? Would either of them be happy?"

"You do not answer," he said. "Do you shrink from wounding me?"

"I do not know what answer to

make," said Jane Porter sadly. "I do not know my own mind."

"You do not love me, then?" he asked in a level tone.

"Do not ask me. You will be happier without me. You were never meant for the restrictions and conventionalities of civilization. It would become irksome to you. In a little while you would long for the freedom of your old life — to which I am as totally unfitted as you to mine."

"I think I understand you," he replied quietly. "I shall not urge you, for I would rather see you happy than to be happy myself. And I see now that you could not be happy with— an ape."

There was the faintest tinge of bitterness in his voice.

"Don't," she remonstrated. "Don't say that. You don't understand."

But ere she could go on, a sudden turn in the road brought them into the midst of a little hamlet.

Before them stood Clayton's car surrounded by the party he had brought from the cottage.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LORD APE-MAN.

At the sight of Jane, cries of relief and delight broke from every lip, and, as Tarzan's car stopped beside the other, Professor Porter caught his daughter in his arms.

For a moment no one noticed Tarzan, sitting silently in his seat.

Clayton was the first to remember, and, turning, held out his hand.

"How can we ever thank you?" he exclaimed. "You have saved us all. You called me by name at the cottage, but I do not seem to recall yours, though there is something very familiar about you.

"It is as though I had known you well under very different conditions a long time ago."

Tarzan smiled as he took the proffered hand.

"You are quite right, M. Clayton," he said in French. "You will pardon me if I do not speak to you in English. I am just learning it, and while I understand it fairly well, I speak it very poorly."

"But who are you?" insisted Clayton, speaking in French this time himself.

"Tarzan of the apes."

Clayton started back in surprise.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "It is true."

Professor Porter and Mr. Philander pressed forward to add their thanks to Clayton's, and to voice their surprise and pleasure at seeing this jungle-friend so far from his savage home.

The party now entered the modest little hostelry, where Clayton soon made arrangements for their entertainment.

They were sitting in the little, stuffy parlor when the distant chugging of an approaching automobile caught their attention.

Mr. Philander, who was sitting near the window, looked out as the machine drew in sight, finally stopping beside the other cars.

"Bless me!" said Mr. Philander, a shade of annoyance in his tone. "It is Mr. Canler. I had hoped — er — I had thought or—er—how very happy we should be that he was not caught in the fire," he ended lamely.

"Tut-tut, Mr. Philander," said Professor Porter, "Tut-tut. I have often admonished my pupils to count ten before speaking. Were I you, Mr. Philander, I should count at least a thousand, and then maintain a discreet silence."

"Bless me, yes!" acquiesced Mr. Philander. "But who is the clerical-appearing gentleman with him?"

Jane Porter blanched.

Clayton moved uneasily in his chair.

Professor Porter removed his spectacles nervously, and breathed upon them, but replaced them on his nose without wiping.

The ubiquitous Esmeralda grunted.

Only Tarzan did not comprehend.

Presently Robert Canler burst into the room.

"Thank Heaven!" he cried. "I feared the worst until I saw your car, Clayton. I was cut off on the south road and had to go away back to town, and then strike east to this road. I thought we'd never reach the cottage."

No one seemed very enthusiastic. Tarzan eyed Robert Canler as Sabor eyed his prey.

Jane Porter glanced at him and coughed nervously.

"Mr. Canler," she said, "this is M. Tarzan, an old friend."

Canler turned and extended his hand. Tarzan rose and bowed as only D'Arnot could have taught a gentleman to do it, but he did not seem to see Canler's hand.

Nor did Canler appear to notice the oversight.

"This is the Rev. Mr. Tousley, Jane," said Canler turning to the clerical party behind him. "Mr. Tousley, Miss Porter."

Mr. Tousley bowed and beamed.

Canler introduced him to the others.

"We can have the ceremony at once, Jane," said Canler. "Then you and I can catch the midnight train in town."

Tarzan understood the plan instantly. He glanced out of half-closed eyes at Jane Porter, but he did not move.

The girl hesitated. The room was tense with the silence of taut nerves.

All eyes turned toward Jane Porter, awaiting her reply.

"Can't we wait a few days?" she asked. "I am all unstrung. I have been through so much to-day."

Canler felt the hostility that emanated from each member of the party. It made him angry.

"We have waited as long as I intend to wait," he said roughly. "You have promised to marry me. I shall be played with no longer. I have the license and here is the clergyman.

"Come, Mr. Tousley; come Jane. There are witnesses aplenty — more than enough," he added with a disagreeable inflection, and taking Jane by the arm, he started to lead her toward the waiting minister.

But scarcely had he taken a single step ere a heavy hand closed upon his arm with a grip of steel.

Another hand shot to his throat, and in a moment he was being shaken high above the floor, as a cat might shake a mouse.

Jane Porter turned in horrified surprise toward Tarzan.

And, as she looked into his face, she saw the crimson band upon his forehead that she had seen that other day in far distant Africa, when Tarzan of the apes had closed in mortal combat with the great anthropoid—Terkoz.

She knew that murder lay in that savage heart, and with a little cry of horror she sprang forward to plead with the ape-man. But her fears were more for Tarzan than for Canler. She realized the stern retribution which justice metes to the murderer.

Before she could reach them, though, Clayton had jumped to Tarzan's side and attempted to drag Canler from his grasp.

With a single sweep of one mighty arm the Englishman was hurled across the room, and then Jane Porter laid a firm white hand upon Tarzan's wrist and looked up into his eyes.

"For my sake," she said.

The grasp upon Canler's throat relaxed.

Tarzan looked into the face before him.

"Do you wish this to live?" he asked in surprise.

"I do not wish him to die at your hands, my friend," she replied. "I do not wish you to become a murderer."

Tarzan removed his hand from Canler's throat.

"Do you release her from her promise?" he asked. "It is the price of your life."

Canler, gasping for breath, nodded.

"Will you go away and never molest her further?"

Again the man nodded his head, his

face distorted by fear of the death that had been so close.

Tarzan released him, and Canler staggered toward the door. In another moment he was gone, and the terror-stricken preacher with him.

Tarzan turned toward Jane Porter.

"May I speak with you for a moment alone?" he asked.

The girl nodded and started toward the door leading to the narrow veranda of the little hotel. She passed out to await Tarzan, and so did not hear the conversation which followed.

"Wait!" cried Professor Porter, as Tarzan was about to follow.

The professor had been stricken dumb with surprise by the rapid developments of the past few minutes.

"Before we go further, sir, I should like an explanation of the events which have just transpired.

"By what right, sir, did you interfere between my daughter and Mr. Canler? I had promised him her hand, sir, and regardless of our personal likes or dislikes, sir, that promise must be kept."

"I interfered, Professor Porter," replied Tarzan, "because your daughter does not love Mr. Canler. She does not wish to marry him. That is enough for me to know."

"You do not know what you have done," said Professor Porter. "Now he will doubtless refuse to marry her."

"He most certainly will," said Tarzan emphatically.

"And further," added Tarzan, "you need not fear that your pride will suffer, Professor Porter, for you will be able to pay Canler what you owe him the moment you reach home."

"Tut-tut, sir!" exclaimed Professor Porter. "What do you mean?"

"Your treasure has been found," said Tarzan.

"What—what is that you are saying?" cried the professor. "You are mad. It cannot be."

"It is, though. It was I who stole it, not knowing either its value or to whom it belonged. I saw the sailors bury it, and apelike, I had to dig it up and bury it again elsewhere.

"When D'Arnot told me what it was and what it meant to you, I returned to the jungle and recovered it. It had caused so much crime and suffering and sorrow that D'Arnot thought it best not to attempt to bring the treasure itself on here, as had been my intention, so I have brought a letter of credit instead.

"Here it is, Professor Porter." Tarzan drew an envelope from his pocket and handed it to the astonished professor. "Two hundred and forty-one thousand dollars.

"The treasure was most carefully appraised by experts, but lest there should be any question in your mind, D'Arnot himself bought it and is holding it for you, should you prefer the treasure to the credit."

"To the already great burden of the obligations we owe you, sir," said Professor Porter, with trembling voice, "is now added this greatest of all services. You have given me the means to save my honor."

Clayton, who had left the room after Canler, now returned.

"Pardon me," he said. "I think we had better try to reach town before dark and take the first train out of this forest. A native just rode by from the north, who reports that the fire is moving slowly in this direction."

This announcement broke up further conversation, and the entire party went out to the waiting machines.

Clayton, with Jane Porter, the professor, and Esmeralda, occupied Clayton's car, while Tarzan took Mr. Philander in with him.

"Bless me!" exclaimed Mr. Philander, as the car moved off after Clayton's machine. "Who would ever have thought it possible? The last time I saw you you were a veritable wild-man, skipping about among the branches of a tropical African forest, and now you are driving me along a Wisconsin road in a French automobile. Bless me! But it is most remarkable."

"Yes," assented Tarzan, and then, after a pause: "Mr. Philander, do you recall the details of the finding and burying of three skeletons found in my cabin beside that African jungle?"

"Very distinctly, sir; very distinctly," replied Mr. Philander.

"Was there anything peculiar about any of those skeletons?"

Mr. Philander eyed Tarzan narrowly.

"Why do you ask?"

"It means a great deal to me to know," replied Tarzan. "Your answer may clear up a mystery. It can do no worse, at any rate, than to leave it still a mystery.

"I have been entertaining a theory concerning those skeletons for the past two months, and I want you to answer my question to the best of your knowledge — were the three skeletons you buried all human skeletons?"

"No," said Mr. Philander, "the smallest one, the one found in the crib, was the skeleton of an anthropoid ape."

"Thank you," said Tarzan.

In the car ahead, Jane Porter was thinking fast and furiously. She had felt the purpose for which Tarzan had asked a few words with her, and she knew that she must be prepared to give him an answer in the very near future.

He was not the sort of person one could put off, and somehow that very thought made her wonder if she did not really fear him.

Could she love where she feared?

She realized the spell that had been upon her in the depths of that far-off jungle, but there was no spell of enchantment now in prosaic Wisconsin.

Nor did the immaculate young Frenchman appeal to the primal woman in her, as had the stalwart forest-god.

Did she love him? She did not know—now.

She glanced at Clayton out of the corner of her eye. Was not here a man trained in the same school of environment in which she had been trained — with position and culture such as she had been taught to consider as the essentials to congenial association?

Did not her best judgment point to this young English nobleman whose love she knew to be of the sort a civilized woman should crave as the logical mate for such as she?

Could she love Clayton? She could see no reason why she could not. She was not calculating by nature, but training, environment, and heredity had all combined to teach her to reason even in matters of the heart.

That she had been carried off her feet by the strength of the young giant when his great arms were about her in the distant African forest, and again to-day, in the Wisconsin woods, seemed to her only attributable to a temporary mental reversion to type on her part— to the appeal of the primeval man to the primeval woman in her nature.

If he should never touch her again, she reasoned, she would never feel attracted toward him. She had not loved him, then. It had been nothing more than a hallucination, induced by excitement and by personal contact.

Excitement would not always mark their future relations, should she marry him, and the power of personal contact would be dulled by familiarity.

Again she glanced at Clayton. He was very handsome and every inch a gentleman. She should be very proud of such a husband.

And then he spoke—a minute sooner or a minute later might have made all the difference in the world to three lives. But chance stepped in and pointed out to Clayton the psychological moment.

"You are free now, Jane," he said. "Won't you say 'yes'? I will devote my life to making you very happy."

"Yes," she whispered.

That evening, in the little waiting-room at the station, Tarzan caught Jane Porter alone for a moment.

"You are free now, Jane," he said;

"and I have come across the ages out of the past from the lair of the primeval man to claim you—for your sake I have become civilized—for your sake I have crossed oceans and continents—for your sake I will be whatever you will me to be. I can make you happy, Jane, in the life you know and love best. Will you marry me?"

For the first time she realized the depths of the man's love—all that he had accomplished in so short a time solely for love of her.

Turning her head, she buried her face in her arms.

What had she done? Because she had been afraid she might succumb to the pleas of this giant, she had burned her bridges behind her—in her groundless apprehension that she might make a terrible mistake, she had made a worse one.

And then she told him the truth, word by word, without attempting to shield herself or condone her error.

"What can we do?" he asked. "You have admitted that you love me. You know that I love you; but I do not know the ethics of society by which you are governed. I shall leave the decision to you, for you know best what will be for your eventual welfare."

"I cannot tell him, Tarzan," she said. "He, too, loves me, and he is a good man. I could never face you nor any other honest person if I repudiated my promise.

"I shall have to keep it. And you must help me bear the burden, though we may not see each other again after to-night."

The others were entering the room, and Tarzan turned toward the little window.

But he saw nothing without, though within he saw a patch of greensward surrounded by a matted mass of gorgeous tropical plants and flowers, and, above, the waving foliage of mighty trees, and, over all, the blue of an equatorial sky.

In the center of the greensward a young woman sat upon a little mound of earth, and beside her sat a young giant. And they ate pleasant fruit and looked into each other's eyes and smiled. They were very happy, and they were all alone.

His thoughts were broken in upon by the station-agent, who entered asking if there was a gentleman by the name of Tarzan in the party.

"I am Tarzan," said the ape-man.

"Here is a message for you, forwarded from Baltimore. It is a cablegram from Paris."

Tarzan took the envelope and tore it open. The message was from D'Arnot. It read:

Finger-prints prove you Greystoke.
Congratulations. D'Arnot.

As Tarzan finished reading, Clayton entered, and came toward him with extended hand.

Here was the man who had Tarzan's title and Tarzan's estates, and was going to marry the woman whom Tarzan loved — the woman who loved Tarzan.

A single word would make a great difference in this man's life.

It would take away his title and his lands and his castles, and—it would take them away from Jane Porter also.

"I say, old man," cried Clayton, "I haven't had a chance to thank you for all you've done for us. It seems as though you had your hands full saving our lives in Africa and here.

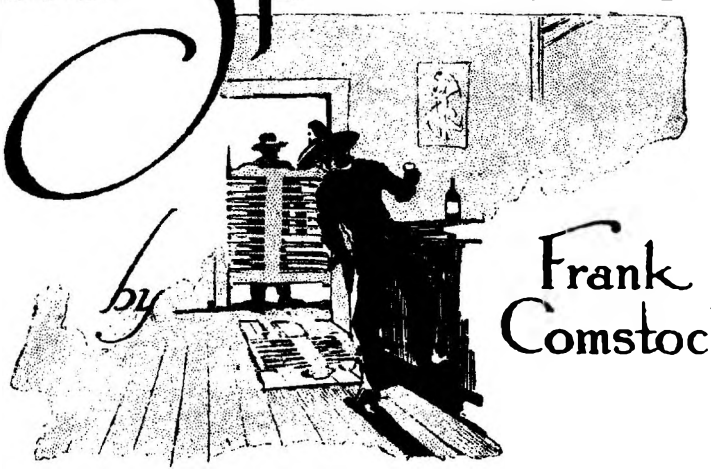
"I'm awfully glad you came on. We must get better acquainted. I often thought about you, you know, and the remarkable circumstances of your environment.

"If it's any of my business, how the deuce did you ever get into that bally jungle?"

"I don't know," said Tarzan quietly. "I was born there. My mother was an ape, and, of course, she couldn't tell me anything about it. I never knew who my father was."

(The End.)

The Spaniard



by Frank Comstock

MY train drew swiftly into the distance. I looked about for a moment, then perceived the wagon that had been sent down from the house to meet me.

The driver slouched on the single wide seat, apparently dozing in the heat, and did not appear to notice me until I called to him.

I climbed aboard, deposited my bag at his feet, and we creaked forward.

It was hot, with the tremendous heat of Arizona sunshine. At every step the sweating horse that drew the crazy vehicle sent up a cloud of choking dust from the roadway that stretched interminably ahead, as white hot to my imagination, as a long snakelike strip of steel run from the throat of a tapped furnace.

The dense growth on either hand afforded us no shade; the sun seemed straight overhead.

Neither of us spoke, my driver not even chirruping to the horse, who seemed to know the way too surely to need attention. I was busy thinking of the comforts of the nearest stopping-place, shifting occasionally to avoid the lances of sunlight that came through the rents in the umbrella that went by the name of carriage-top, and keeping off the flies with my hat.

Our vehicle listed suddenly, and I noticed that there was a depression in the roadway, that was the beginning of a narrow path leading downward among the trees. At that point we were at the apex of a little hill.

Just below, my eyes following what glimpse I had of the path, was a sort of rock-bound blind alley—a freak of nature—and in a similar whim some one had built a cabin in its enclosure.

The cabin looked deserted. I should have seen a similar place a thousand times without having my curiosity roused, but now I questioned the driver.

This is what he told me:

The whole town knew Nita—personally, so far as her first name—impersonally by virtue of long association. Her history was not a thing to take up space.

She first attracted attention by crying, having burned her fingers playing with the hot, empty cartridges that rolled under the tables the time the social room of the Palatial Rendezvous

had been suddenly preempted of seven human souls in fewer seconds. Then somebody recollected she had been left behind by the Spanish woman who took up and departed with one Molloy.

They had been married all straight enough by Father O'Gorman, and so Nita had a name and mixture of blood in her that forecasted trouble and didn't disappoint any one. The father kept her out of real trouble though, and finally got steady work for her in the eating-room of the Rendezvous.

" Steady as might be," qualified my driver, in afterthought.

He slapped the slack reins, disturbing a swarm of flies, and the horse laid back its ears, then set them again, apathetically.

Of course all this time Nita Molloy was growing up. Regulation story-book fashion—the Spanish and Irish in her laying the foundation of all that was wonderful in the beauty of both races. Father O'Gorman noticed it and kept quiet and prayed that it wouldn't lead to trouble.

No one else paid much attention, Nita being identified in the public mind with coffee, hash, and temper.

A satisfied appetite begets reflection.

One day Marden, who sometimes worked on the Dot-Bar-Dot ranch, lingered longer over his meal at the Rendezvous and later in the afternoon proposed.

Nita accepted him.

Father O'Gorman couldn't very well say anything; but everybody knew what he thought, and nobody cared to risk having Marden know what they thought.

Nita seemed satisfied with what she'd done. She had heard, like everybody else, all about Marden. Whether it was the Spanish or the Irish in her was a matter of conjecture. Marden took her away from the town.

My driver jerked the butt of his whip back over his shoulder.

" That was the cabin you asked me about, back a ways."

I nodded.

After a while it got to be known that Marden wasn't treating the girl right.

He never did have a reputation for kindness. She must have been fascinated by the big good looks of him. Marden had been a man living mostly by himself, and after he was married he did not grow any more sociable.

Nita stayed down in the gully most of the time. She seemed determined to stick it out, seeing how people had talked of her foolishness. Besides, Marden kept an eye on her.

Of course it couldn't go on like that forever.

There was Perez. He was as unlike Marden as a cat is unlike a mastiff.

Almost like a woman, soft-eyed and pleasant and slow—except with his gun and knife, like all Spaniards. He came in with a string of cattle from across the Wind River Range.

Somehow he got to know about Marden's wife, and was told all about Marden, as a matter of precaution. He was too young to be let do anything foolish.

If Nita cared about Perez, she didn't give any outward sign; but the boy took to drinking more than was necessary, and finally went to see the father and asked him a question.

" She married him of her own consent," said the father, " and she won't leave him —"

And he stopped there. Even a clergyman can only go so far in such matters.

Perez smiled and helped put the cattle through, and the night they were shipped and the money paid out went into the Palatial Rendezvous looking for trouble. But when the thing did happen, it wasn't he that started the quarrel.

They both fired pretty much together. Perez was badly hurt, and was got out of town by his friends. Nita came up from the gully and helped

her husband home and nursed him. She had nothing to say.

A little venomous-looking lizard scuttled across the white road, suddenly, just beneath the horse's hoofs.

A month or more after the shooting, Perez returned. He went to the bar-room of the Palatial Rendezvous and ordered a drink.

As he reached for the glass men crouched low over their tables and slunk away into corners.

Marden stood in the doorway.

Perez did not fire.

He perceived that Marden had gone blind. He slid his gun back into its holster, but did not move from the bar.

Marden came slowly forward, feeling his way between the tables. He reached the bar. Perez looked into his face.

"Whisky," said Marden.

As he drank, Perez lifted his own glass and drained it, but his hand shook so that a portion of the liquor was spilled.

Marden turned and slowly left the room.

"Well?" said I. The cabin I had seen through the trees was tenantless and falling to pieces.

Perez reached the cabin first. He flung open the door and Nita stood up and faced him.

"I thought he had killed you," she said.

He spoke softly and rapidly in Spanish, which the girl knew.

"Will you come with me now, *señora?*"

"He will kill you if he finds you here," she said.

"He is blind," answered Perez.

"He will kill you," Nita repeated. "I have seen him shoot a rabbit that rustled through the leaves."

"You do not love him—I love you. Will you come with me?"

She stepped past him swiftly, and he followed her out into the sunlight. His low voice pleaded with her.

A shadow fell across the little path. They looked up.

Marden stood in the narrow entrance to the gully, a gun in each hand. He must have heard the voices.

"Nita," said Marden.

Neither moved.

The girl was ankle-deep in the dead leaves.

"Nita," said Marden, and swore at the girl.

The Spaniard's hand dropped to his revolver-butt; and then suddenly Nita stretched out her arms toward the man she loved and stepped forward in the leaves and at the sound, Marden fired twice.

The racket of the shots echoed deafeningly in the rocky enclosure. A spasm of pain crossed the girl's face. She swayed and stumbled.

"Got the darned Spaniard," muttered Marden presently.

Perez looked down at the body. It lay motionless. For a moment he hesitated, watching the other advance slowly down the slope. Then, as Marden reached the bottom, and left the path clear, he made his way swiftly and silently from the gully.

It was the most terrible thing he could have done.

We reached a bend in the road and just beyond, I saw my friend's house among the trees.

Our horse sidled toward a half-empty trough and burying his muzzle in the warm water, drank eagerly.

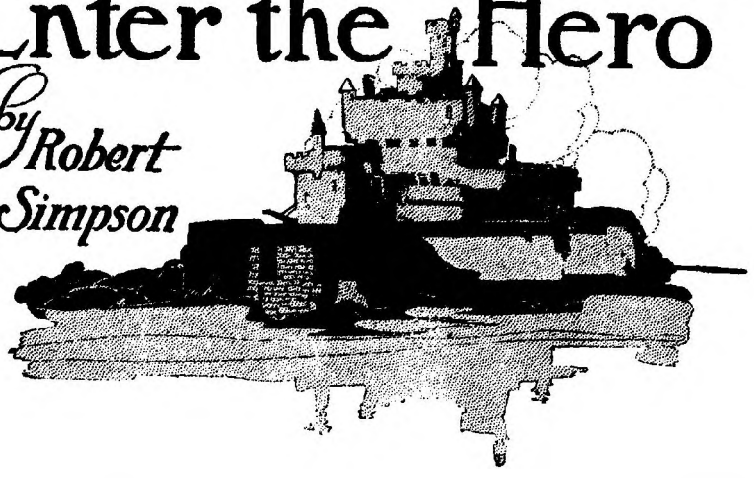
I swung from the dusty wagon, reached for my grip and held a bill toward my driver. He made no move to take it.

"You had better put it into his hand," whispered my friend. "He is blind. The horse knows the road so well that it really needs no driver to guide it.

"Let us get into the house and have a drink. The heat is terrible."

"Enter the Hero"

by Robert Simpson



CHAPTER I.

TOLEDO — ZEBRO — AND BEYOND.

DANIEL McKESSON McKIRDY—that is it in full—was somewhat of a genius without the proper incentive.

Necessity compelled him to work—and he worked—but he did not want to; at least helping to build pipe-cutters in a Toledo machine-shop was not his idea of life as it should be, not even though it was a reasonably sure way of making Florence N. M. Dane possible within his scheme of things.

What the "N. M." meant he did not know or care. He called her Floss and Fluff and sometimes Childie, because he felt that way toward her, and she pretended very strenuously not to like it. The thought of her being strenuous about anything made Dan laugh and get himself into trouble.

She was a fluffy, brown little thing, of wonderful smiles and depths of eyes, so that when she looked up at Dan, as she did sometimes, he felt that half of him was quite unnecessary. His great hands, his arms, and his feet would not fit into the picture at all, no matter how he tried to get them there; and he had a broad, comfortable face that bore no resemblance whatever to that of Adonis.

He did not know where he stood in the lady's regard. Sometimes he felt that building pipe-cutters was worth it—and sometimes he didn't. The strike came coincident with one of the latter occasions.

Dan struck—and was glad to.

She had no sympathy with the strikers. Her education had been much better than Dan's. French and German were not unknown to her, and, as governess to the pampered child of Dan's employer, her attitude upon the strike was very pronounced.

She did not believe that Dan knew why he was striking and told him that he was "a great big sheep" to follow the crowd.

Perhaps that was why Dan did not care what happened. There was a fight with the police, and he was caught with a murderous-looking club in his hand—and with no idea in the world of how it came there. Political influence reduced the sentence to two long weeks in Toledo jail.

When he got out he discovered that the girl was—gone.

She had accepted a position as governess to the young incorrigible of a

Cleveland magnate's family, which had gone to Europe and elsewhere.

That settled it.

Dan simply did not care what happened to him, and he was glad to feel that way about it.

He was certain that whatever became of him would not occur in Toledo, Ohio.

And it didn't.

He had saved a little with Floss in mind, and after a year's journeying, wandering somewhat aimlessly along the banks of the river Croatia, he still had it and something over, despite the fact that London, Paris, and Monte Carlo had insinuated themselves into his itinerary. How he did it only Dan himself knows, and perhaps he could not have told in a manner that would be lucid enough for others to follow his example. It is certain that his reason for walking along the banks of the Croatia was decidedly hazy.

When not building pipe-cutters or discovering what Miss Dane thought of him, he had read, and reading, had learned that there was always trouble in the Balkans.

When he found himself in Cetinje, Montenegro, he remembered what he had read and began a subconscious search for the principal product of those turbulent states, with a deep and lasting contempt for the "whole picayune bunch of them."

One other thing Dan encountered in the course of his reading was a wonderful variety of heroes.

Ever since he had followed the fortunes of *Robinson Crusoe*, the conviction had grown upon him that no matter what manner of difficulty a hero got himself into, he always got out of it alive and with much honor, despite the fact that the odds were all against him ever doing so.

Villainy, on the other hand, always reaped a horrible reward. From Scott to *Nick Carter* the result was the same.

Obviously, Dan conjectured, though he would never openly admit the existence of the thought, the safest thing in the world was to be a hero.

The railroad, but newly constructed, carried him as far as he wanted to go into Sanjak of Novizabar. He traveled forty-five kilometers on that road in fourteen hours. Dan thought he had better walk.

Frankly, he was dubious about trusting himself in the care of an engineer that looked like a first cousin to a mountain bandit, and suggested to himself with fine sarcasm that he would see the country better if he did not rush through it at such speed.

He had observed that they were following the trail of a winding river—or that the river was following them, he did not know which. Sometimes the river, an inconsequential stream, was quite close, then it would vanish in the midst of mountain grandeur, gurgle on for a space unseen, and make another appearance when one least expected.

It interested Dan mightily. Water always had done so. He felt that he would like to follow that river and see what happened to it.

The railroad and the river met at Zebro, a small town a few miles across the Novizabar border. Dan left the train there, but first took the opportunity to tell a stocky-built man with a fierce mustache and a goatee beard what he thought of the "road."

"This is sure enough some railroad. We've got a road home that we figure is about the limit for speed but, believe me—you've got it beat a mile."

The man to whom he addressed his remarks scowled. He had interested Dan principally because of his propensity to scowl at everything, and because he appeared to be in nervous dread of something that might happen any moment.

Despite the warm weather he had persisted in wearing his long military coat with the collar turned up about his ears obscuring half of his face, and his eyes, incessantly moving about him, suggested fear of recognition. He had

ignored Dan's several previous overtures completely.

"Huh! You're a cheerful heathen," the Ohioan remarked as he stepped stiffly down on to Zebro's quiet platform.

The stocky man muttered something that by the sound of it suggested an imprecation. He fidgeted and searched the platform with anxious eyes, becoming almost choleric as the train threatened to leave without the person he so plainly expected.

Dan regarded him with quiet interest—his excited gesticulations particularly—and imprinted the face upon his memory.

The gesticulations ceased suddenly. They were replaced by an apology for a smile and a furtive look of fear. Dan felt himself being forcibly thrust aside from behind.

A tall man, all black coat and wide-brimmed, black-plumed hat, pushed past him and boarded the train just as it began to pull out of the station. The man with the goatee beard looked intensely relieved.

"You got a nerve!" Dan growled after him, but his voice was lost in the rattle of wheels.

He stood for a little while watching the waving black plume in the late-comer's hat, and made a mental note to remember its owner for his discourtesy should they ever meet again; then stooped and picking up a much-battered suit-case, to which was strapped a traveling rug he had purchased in London, he mumbled, referring to the train:

"You may know where you're goin' to, but you sure ain't particular when you get there."

Passing out of the low-built, red-roofed depot, he found his way through the labyrinth of narrow streets to the riverside.

He followed it east.

The time of the year was midsummer, and with nothing particularly pressing upon his mind, Dan found walking ideal.

His gait was leisurely. He was led through the heart of mountains, along narrow defiles out into flat and open country, the river gurgling in the sunlight or protesting against the darkness of the ravine.

The river, as has been said, is called the Croatia, but Dan did not know that. He called it the McKesson. It was a stream of many curves and twists, rising in Montenegro, flowing on into Novizabar and, apparently dissatisfied with the "going" in the latter state, turns back and joins the Yara.

One of its curves intrudes upon Bragadia.

Dan's progress for the first two days was almost without incident.

Shortly after he had replenished his supplies at a farmhouse at noon upon the third day, and had struck up a path that led him into the mountains again, a haggling and wandering pedler attempted to "stick" him both in a financial and antagonistic sense in a very lonely spot upon a narrow path that barely permitted the passage of two persons abreast.

Dan knew, when it was all over, that the pedler had fallen into the river, probably a hundred feet below—and had forgotten to take his pack and his long, curve-pointed knife with him.

He felt queer as he stood looking down at them; queer and a little chilly. Then—because the sight of the things irritated strangely—he kicked them over the edge of the path after their owner, and went right on breathing somewhat heavily and feeling very uncertain about the stability of his knees.

He did not sleep very well that night.

The thing had been justifiable—as a rent in his coat testified—but he had seen the face of the would-be murderer as he had gone over, particularly the eyes. The man had also screamed—just once.

It awoke Dan several times throughout the night.

Next day he felt better.

The sun's light had never been so good before, and the path, dipping

slowly and broadening, gave him the river again just a little way below, and then—walking by its chattering side between two great rocky walls—he followed it round a sweeping curve and came suddenly upon two small boys fighting.

CHAPTER II.

IVAN MARKOFF.

DAN stopped, drew his breath, and watched.

His first sensation, judging by the aimlessness of the blows and the method of combat, was that any boy half their size in a Toledo back lot could have licked them both together, but he admitted, after a few moments' reflection, that "the little guy with the buttons" was shaping better than his larger antagonist.

"Soak him, kid!" Dan whispered, more to himself than to his choice. "Cross your right, why don't you?"

The bigger boy, quite apparently of a lower order than his diminutive opponent, began at this juncture to use his feet.

"Hey! Cut that out!" Dan thundered, making his presence known and moving toward the combatants rapidly, but too late to prevent the smaller of the two from receiving a heavy kick about the ankles. The boy slipped to his knees, and the cowardly culprit, casting one fleeting glance at the oncoming Nemesis—turned tail and fled.

Dan did not try to catch him. He bent over the "little guy with the buttons."

"Hurt bad, kid?" he questioned sympathetically.

The boy looked up through his tears—studied Dan from head to foot—smiled—and answered:

"Not—very—badly—thank you."

English!

Dan stared at him. He had not heard the language for a week.

He looked into the boy's deep, black eyes, studied his clear complexion and the brown of his long, wavy hair, and saw that his clothes were torn in places—about the knees particularly. The white blouse beneath the black velvet coat, with its rows of pearl buttons, was crying out for the wash-tub and for a needle and thread to repair a rent that began at the neck and ended below the armpit.

But the clothes undoubtedly had been clean quite recently. Their accumulation of Balkan mud had been in spots—and their quality was unquestionable.

Dan picked the boy up in his arms—and was kicked on the "funny bone" for his pains, so that he quickly lowered him to earth again.

"Say—what's the matter?" he growled, as he felt the sensitive spot tenderly.

The boy limped to the waterside and sat down.

"You—must—not—touch me," he said slowly and with considerable emphasis.

"I wasn't going to hurt you," Dan protested and apologized, sitting down beside him.

"Very well," the boy conceded, picking up a pebble and throwing it into the river. "What are you doing here?"

"I don't know," Dan answered truthfully. "What were you fighting about?"

"These."

The boy indicated the buttons and dismissed the subject with the question:

"You are—English?"

"No—siree!" Dan protested with emphasis. "I was born and raised in Toledo, Ohio, U. S. A.—and let me tell you, kid—that's some town. Ever been there?"

The boy shook his head, bent over, and rubbed his ankle tenderly.

"What's your name?" Dan asked after a pause. "And where did you learn to talk United States?"

His companion looked up at him.

"Do you know that you have a funny face?"

Dan was conscious of the fact every

time he faced a mirror, but he did not like to be reminded of it more often than that.

You got a nerve," he half-growled. "I didn't ask you about my face. I asked you what your name was."

"Ivan—Markoff," the boy replied slowly.

"Mark off what?" Dan punned without difficulty and grinned.

Ivan, to his surprise, caught his meaning and did not appreciate the liberty taken with his name. He jumped up suddenly, put his hand behind him, drew it forth again and, pointing his index finger at Dan, made a loud *boom!* with his mouth, and told him he was dead. Dan flopped.

The next moment Ivan's small shoe pressed uncomfortably upon his windpipe, and while Dan was trying to breathe and understand the meaning of the pantomime, the boy struck an attitude, his hand over his heart.

"My—honor—has—been — pre — served!" he declared slowly, and pressed his foot down a little harder.

Dan gurgled and wriggled free, as the boy with a little ripple of mischievous laughter, snatched his hat from his head and ran.

When Dan caught him both were out of breath—Dan more so.

"Say — you're — some kid — all right," he gasped.

The boy accepted the compliment with a subtle smile.

"We—will—sit—down," he declared, and it sounded like a command.

They sat down upon the river bank, and the boy dug up stones and pebbles and threw them in. Dan joined him and tried not to throw farther than his small companion.

He discovered that the boy's father had taught him English from infancy, but who or what the father was, he could not learn. He gave the boy his own name in full, and Ivan said frankly that it was a funny name, forgot most of it, and remembered "Dan."

They lunched upon some sandwiches Dan had bought at the last farmhouse he had passed. The boy liked them and ate quite as much as Dan, after which he waded out into the river with his shoes on.

"Say, you Ivan Markoff—come right back here. Do you want to drown?"

The boy turned his head and grinned. He went out a little further. Dan got upon his feet, and not being familiar with the psychology of the child, made a step as if to go after him—and the boy took another step, too.

He was then up to his knees; the round stone his foot encountered was green and slimy, and his foot slipped. With a scream of terror, he went forward upon his face, out of sight, and the treacherous undercurrent carried him yards away ere Dan realized what had happened.

The gurgling river suddenly became a monster with wide-open jaws. Dan had not seen its swirling eddies before or how black it was in midstream. He saw all that now—and the brown hair and pearl buttons floating away from him.

Though Dan loved water, he was not a good swimmer. A few lengths of the Toledo Y. M. C. A. pool had been the limit of his endeavors in that direction. But he could not see the boy drown before his eyes.

He floundered after him, over the slippery round stones till the water was up to his knees—then to his waist—then under the armpits. He felt his feet slide from under him—just as he grabbed at the thick brown hair.

The boy and he went down and came up together.

Dan struck out for shore.

Not once, since the first cry of fear, had the boy made any sound, and when Dan clambered up the bank bedraggled but victorious, he saw that there was a round blue lump upon his left temple.

He shook him and the water out of him, rubbed his hands, and worked his little arms up and down as he had seen the swimming instructor do in the Toledo Y. M. C. A., and called his

name in a voice that was strained with anxiety. Then he divested him of his wet clothing, rubbed his little body till it glowed, and the boy opened his eyes.

Dan drew a long breath. He did not know that his own face was quite as white as the boy's. He only saw the deep black of Ivan's eyes upon him, staring wonderingly, as he rolled him up in the traveling rug.

Some little time passed, then the boy said something in a tongue Dan could not understand.

"What is it, kid? Feel better?"

"I want—to—go—home."

"All right, you'll go. Where is it?"

"I — don't — know. That—boy—knew."

"Who was he?"

Ivan shook his head.

"He said he knew where we could find a shark, and I have never seen one. Can we go home now, please?"

"We could if—say—what are you trying to do?" Dan asked, as Ivan suddenly attempted to struggle out of the rug. "You stay right there. Want to roam round like a savage? Ain't you got no shame?"

The boy's struggles ceased momentarily and he regarded Dan with interest.

"Your—clothes—are—wet. Why?"

"Because the river ain't dry," Dan answered laconically. And after a moment's pause: "Say, I got to get you home somehow. You'll have pneumonia the first thing you know. Stay right inside that rug till I get your clothes strapped to this suit-case. Got me?"

Evidently Ivan understood, and he lay for fully thirty seconds watching Dan collect his clothes and roll them up—then he and the rug parted company. He fled down the road, clothed in chastity and nothing more.

Dan turned his head.

"You little—" he began, and, grabbing up the rug, squdged and slopped with his water-filled shoes in pursuit. The boy could not run very fast or very far. He was too weak for that. Dan soon caught him, wound the rug about him, and carried him under protest back to the base of supplies. Ere he let him down he said severely:

"See here, Ivan Markoff, you've got to cut this out. If you don't, you'll get licked. Take that from me—solid. Get out of that rug before I give the word, and you'll get all that's coming to you."

He sat him down again, and Ivan smiled in a superior manner, watched Dan pull the suit-case strap tight—waited till it was all ready—till Dan was on the point of lifting him in his arms — then struck him a small but violent blow on the nose.

"Ouch!" Dan exclaimed, blinked—and the boy was gone.

This time the chase was longer, but it ended as before.

The boy laughed. Dan was very stern. When they got back to the suit-case he said slowly:

"Now—you're going to get licked. I said you would — and I ain't a quitter."

"What is licked?" Ivan asked without a sign of fear as Dan took a firmer hold upon him.

"You'll know—in a minute. And you'll be warmer, too."

With a deft twist Ivan Markoff was laid face downward across Dan's expansive knees, over which he had thrown the blanket. The boy yelled, and Dan administered his promise, not in passion, but deliberately with intent to emphasize the value of obedience.

And there was no barrier to a perfect understanding.

Ivan objected with all his lungs.

Suddenly a loud shout and a clatter of hoofs answered him. The chastisement ceased. Dan looked up, loosened his hold, and the boy, wriggling free, sped yelling toward the curve.

Ere Dan knew what to do about it there were small, shaggy horses and large, fierce, mustached men all about him, and he was looking along the black barrels of carbines into faces that were cloudy with rage and eyes

that told him, if their tongues were not understood, that resistance would be painfully fatal.

They looked like *gendarmes* to Dan, and, damp and unpleasant as he felt, he shrugged his shoulders in contempt of them.

"Go as far as you like," he invited, as he took his place in the procession round the curve.

CHAPTER III.

THE "LION-TAMERS."

To walk in water-filled shoes and clothes that are heavy and wet and sticky and flop with irritating indecision about one's knees is not a particularly alluring pastime. To walk in those clothes with the hard muzzle of a carbine jerking backward and forward in the region of one's spine is decidedly worse.

Dan did not like it. He glowered upon his emblazoned guards in their wonderfully conceived uniforms—and wondered what circus they belonged to.

"You look like a bunch of lion-tamers," he told the tallest and most fierce of them. "Might give a man a chance to change, anyway."

They gave him no chance. The tall "lion-tamer" on Dan's right appeared utterly oblivious of his existence; the man on his left and those in front followed his example. The only thing that knew Dan was alive was the muzzle of that carbine; it kicked and scraped and dug in and round the same spot in the middle of his back till it ceased to be at all funny.

Dan tried to draw away from it, and the result was always a prod that each time became more and more painful. He looked at the man on his right.

"Say—is there any need for that guy back of me digging a hole through me?"

The person merely scowled.

Dan set his teeth.

"Mighty lucky thing for you I ain't a hero," he mumbled surlily, more to himself than the object of his displeasure. "If I was, I'd soak you on the jaw and kill that guy back of me. Mebbe I will before long."

The scowl upon Dan's face deepened and became blacker as the spot in his back became more raw.

"I guess I ain't a hero," he muttered savagely after a while—and thought it over.

Then the shaggy little beast upon which the man behind was mounted suddenly reared. The jerk sent the muzzle of the carbine deeper into Dan's back, scraping upward and striking the back of his head.

Dan swung round.

"Say—cut that out! I ain't goin' to stand for it! Get me?"

Ere the astonished guard, then busy with his fractious mount, was aware of Dan's intention, he had grabbed hold of the barrel of the carbine and was endeavoring to wrench it from his grasp. There was a loud report that echoed and reechoed upward out of the ravine, and the bullet flew harmlessly heavenward in pursuit of the echo.

Dan got the carbine.

Simultaneously he heard a child's cry of terror and felt a sharp pain in the back of his head; a pain that filled his eyes with water and stole over him slowly as a world of brilliant uniforms swirled round and round about him.

The gold and the silver faded to gray, and became black. The last thing he heard was the shrill voice of a child crying: "Dan!"

When he woke it was still dark. Several minutes passed ere he believed that he was really alive. There was something constantly passing before him in a jerky fashion, so that he could not make out what it was.

Then, feeling with his hands, encountered a hairy surface that jumped up and down and particularly affected the center of his anatomy. He felt himself slipping—a horrible sensation—then a hand gripped his shoulder and held him back.

He closed his eyes to think. That incessant panorama of indistinct objects would not let him be master of his thoughts.

After a while he was conscious of a pain in the back of his head. Somewhere, some time, he had felt that pain before—and there struck upon his mentality the sound of a child's cry.

He started, and the hand gripped his shoulder. A voice spoke something unintelligible close to his ear. Dan lay still, and, feeling the hairy surface again, and being aware of the pressure across his middle, realized after a long while that he was lying face downward upon a horse, and that some one—he of the hand—was riding with him.

The incessant panorama was the roadway speedily retreating under the horse's hoofs. A little later he realized that the day had gone; and the river, too. There was no sound of it.

Suddenly the clatter of hoofs stopped. There was loud shouting of many voices, but nothing intelligible to him. He looked about him and saw fantomlike forms drawn up in a circle, and beyond them something larger and blacker than any of them.

Then the circle broke suddenly. The hand gripped his shoulder again more firmly than ever, pressing him down, and with the *clip-clap-clop* of galloping hoofs sounding in his ears the road below his eyes began to race away from under him.

Watching it made him dizzy, and the awful jolting, swaying movement, which he thought would never end, made him very sick indeed. His clothes were still wet, his head ached and swam, and the hoof-beats close to his ears sounded like reverberant thunder.

It was his first ride upon horseback. Dimly he vowed it would be his last, and there was no more thankful soul on earth than he when it ended.

The sharp contact of the hoofs with cobbles told him that they had arrived —somewhere; and in a little while he was dragged from his uncomfortable perch, hurried across a dark and cobbled space, through a doorway, along a passage, and thrust, without a moment's ceremony, into a dark hole in the wall.

A gate or a door clanged thunderously; voices sounded loudly for a little while, then died away. Some one grunted outside the door, stayed there a few minutes, then shuffled off.

After that came silence — complete and undisturbed.

Dan stood up straight, felt about him cautiously, and his hands touched bars, round and thick and coarse and close together; one, two, three, four, five—that was all. There was not enough space between them for him to thrust his hand through.

He found the walls of the place easily. They were also close together —rough stone walls, damp and musty. His shin-bone found the thing he was supposed to lie down upon; found it with an unpleasantly sharp crack that drew lurid comment.

Careful examination proved that the couch was a low-built iron affair standing about a foot from the ground, covered over with a matting of straw, a little thicker at one end—presumably the pillow.

Dan was tired and sore — in body and in mind. He sat down upon the edge of his hard bed and shivered, and said things about the "lion-tamers" that were far, far from being complimentary. After which he rose and paced up — and, coming into sudden and painful contact with the wall in that direction, did not pace down. He limped a step or two back to his bed, found it just as before, despite experience, repeated several of his previous remarks with variations — and lay down. To accomplish the latter, he had to draw up his knees a little.

He knew that to sleep in his wet clothes was to court pneumonia—and he tried to keep awake. It was a difficult matter, particularly when sleep would have allowed him to forget the awful throb, throbbing in his head.

He felt the spot, and found a lump

that, to the touch, seemed about the size of an egg. There had been a little blood spilled, too, and had caked about the wound. Once or twice he caught himself dozing off, and literally shook himself awake. The last time he did not act as his own guard against Morpheus.

Something ran across his chest and tickled his nose. He started up with a guttural of alarm—and the thing, accompanied by others of its kind, scurried away.

Dan shuddered from head to foot. He had a horror of rats—and the one that had run across his chest left an impression of having been of more than ordinary proportions. He felt cold—colder than before, and damp and sticky and—afraid.

There was no doubt about the latter sensation. Every sound, real and imaginary, made him start and then sit up perfectly still, scarcely breathing, awaiting results.

It was a healthy fear. It kept him awake, and staved off a multitude of ills; and his exertions with feet and hands to keep away the rats kept the blood in active circulation.

He knew that he was in a cell—in prison; but whose prison it was he did not know.

It was not a good prison. Toledo jail had been much more comfortable. There were no rats there, and a man was not so deliberately given the opportunity to die of pneumonia. But, as Dan reflected: "What do you expect from a bunch o' lion-tamers?"

He expected nothing—that is, nothing pleasant.

Exercising his imagination, he saw himself trailing through Siberian snows—though they have no connection whatever with the Balkan states.

He had seen a moving-picture once of men and women, more dead than alive, crawling to oblivion, assisted by several bearded brutes wielding the knout. The picture came back to him—very vividly—so vividly that, after a while, he muttered between his teeth:

"If one of those guys hit me—I'd kill him sure!"

Then he reflected upon the consequences of such an act. He would most certainly be shot or hanged.

"Well"—he shrugged his shoulders in contempt of his fate—"the good old United States wouldn't stand for that. She'd lick the hide off them. She'd send the Connecticut — just the Connecticut—that would be all and enough. All over but the burial— Huh! what show would a bunch o' gazebos like them have? A Hudson River ferryboat would scare 'em to death!"

A pause for further reflection—"Gee, that would be great! My name would be in all the papers, an' old Toledo would get on the map for fair!"

For a little while the prospect pleased immensely. He saw himself famous, fêted, dined — a hero. Then came the jar.

"But—I'd be dead!" he muttered—and did not think so much of the ideas, after all.

Other pictures spread themselves out before him.

He saw the boy, and heard him call his name. Who was he? What had they done with him?

There was no answer save the filtering gray of the morning, struggling to dispel the night.

He thought of Floss, too. She was a sort of punctuation to all his other thoughts, and would have been a great deal more than that—but for the dull heaviness of the ache the memory of her brown eyes and her smile always brought in its train.

He tried not to think of her, and hoped she would not dim the sparkle of her eyes with tears for him when she heard of his untimely end; with a decided conviction that he had no intention of dying just then—and a sort of sneaking hope in the back of his mind that she would dedicate a few tears to the memory of the man—

"But—I ain't going to die!" he declared emphatically, and shook himself and looked the situation over.

He remembered with a shudder that he had killed a man, and strove to forget the incident immediately. He recalled his timely meeting with the boy whom he had saved from drowning—and spanked. The spanking did not follow in most cases—but—

"Gee! This is life. This ain't a book!" he exclaimed to further assure himself.

He paused a moment— then passed on to the coming of the horsemen, the prodding of the carbine, and his objection to it. The result of that objection had been in accordance with several precedents he had known of.

He had been hit over the head, knocked unconscious, carried through the night—Heaven knew where—and dumped in splendid misery in a musty, rat-infested prison—far from help and the sound of his own tongue.

There was no hope.

Dan felt the lump on the back of his head and the blood caked over the cut, and he felt the influence of its assurance.

"If—you ain't the hero of this yarn —who is?" he questioned, as if annoyed that he should have thought differently. But still a doubt lurked.

There was a long pause.

"Mebbe," he suggested very slowly —"mebbe you're the guy that is killed early in the plot—in 'the cold, gray dawn of the morning.'"

He looked quickly and furtively out through the bars of his cell window and saw the dawn approaching.

CHAPTER IV.

PRISON.

He did not care for the thought at all—principally because it was just possible. He watched the light broaden and strengthen; listening, he started at every sound.

There was no way of escape; none that he could see. The walls were of solid masonry; the bars in the little window firmly set and of heavy, thick iron. He had nothing resembling a file, and could not have squeezed through the narrow space even though he had succeeded in removing the bars.

The door presented a solid surface, save for a small, square hole cut in it at the height of the average man's head. There was no sign of a lock.

A wagon trundled over cobbles near at hand, came nearer, and stopped. Dan stood quite still and listened. Sleepy voices mingled in conversation for a little while; then a shuffling step sounded in the passage, came up to his cell—and passed on.

He heard a door open not very far away and a squeaky voice speak sharply. There was a deal of shuffling about, a low whine now and then, with the thin voice providing a constant accompaniment.

They came down the passage after a while, and, looking through the hole in the door, Dan saw a ragged, unkempt peasant with manacled hands pass in the custody of a wizened little man armed with a carbine. They disappeared from view very quickly; the sound of voices came again, and the wagon trundled ominously away.

Dan did not like the sound of it. For a while he could not tell why—and then he knew it was because he was recalling to mind the tumbrels of the French Revolution. He felt sure their wheels had rattled in the selfsame way.

It was not a pleasant thought, and he reflected, while pondering what a ride in the tumbrels had meant, that he would rather be shot than decapitated.

It was then he remembered his "very latest pattern automatic revolver," and his hand went to his hip at once. To his complete surprise, it was still there.

He drew it forth, gingerly examined it, and found its water-tight guarantee to be fairly truthful. Drying it off with some of the straw that had formed his couch, he laid it carefully down, looked at it a long while, and wondered if there would be a great deal of satisfaction in shooting nine

"lion-tamers" before he ended his own career.

His principal objection to all these thoughts was that he could not live to enjoy them. Being manfully shot instead of disagreeably beheaded—shooting nine men in a last valiant stand before he turned the final bullet upon himself—were good stories to tell one's children's children in the autumn of one's life; but Dan wanted to be alive to tell them, and he could not see very well how it could be managed.

He was studying the revolver and listening to the imaginary sound of wheels, when a real sound, that of shuffling feet in the passage, came to him.

He rose and went to the door. A wizened face shot up before him an inch or two from his own. Both started back in surprise.

"Hey!" Dan growled when he had recovered. "Cut out that jumpin'-jack business! My nerves ain't what they used to be."

The little puckered face of his jailer expanded as far as it could in further surprise—and began to move up and down very rapidly, presumably expressing its owner's opinion of Dan, who listened patiently till the tirade ceased.

"Got anything to eat?" he asked, as if the jailer were a waiter.

The little man quite apparently did not understand.

"Eat! You grasshopper! Eat!" Dan yelled at him and illustrated his meaning. "And bring my suit-case, too, so's I can get a change—or I'll lambast the hide off you."

How he proposed to carry out his threat with the door in the way is not known; but the jailer did not appear to remember the barrier, either. He understood from the light in Dan's eyes that he had meant nothing pleasant, and, with his own opening wide in fear, he retreated slowly until he was gone from sight.

Dan waited for his return patiently, and listened to the world awakening as the day advanced. Apparently he was not to be shot in the gray dawn of that morning, but there was still time to be guillotined at high noon.

Voices came and went; carts rattled in the distance; the faint hum of some one calling wares through the streets struck upon the waiting prisoner's ears. But he listened principally for the sound of shuffling feet, and they came.

A bowl was placed on the little ledge by two bony hands that vanished instantly.

"Hey, you! Where's that suit-case?" Dan shouted after the retreating footsteps.

There was no answer. The shuffling sound scraped off into silence. Dan said what he thought of his jailer, then examined the contents of the bowl.

Whatever it was it did not look healthy. Dan tried one spoonful, and never forgot the taste of it. He placed the bowl back upon the shelf and yelled for the jailer.

While he yelled he searched his pockets—and found two river-sodden sandwiches, one of which he ate there and then; the other he placed between the bars of his window to dry. While his back was toward the door the little jailer returned, and when Dan looked round he found his bleary eyes upon him, looking over the edge of the bowl, which hid the rest of his face.

Dan started in surprise. Little things were beginning to irritate him.

"I told you to cut that out, didn't I?" he growled, and one stride took him to the door. "And when I say a thing I mean it—see?"

The jailer retreated a step, his lips moving convulsively.

Dan regarded him a moment steadily, and felt sorry for him.

"It's all right," he said, half apologetically. "I didn't mean to scare you. That face of yours just hit me queer for a minute." A moment's pause. "Want me to eat that stuff?"

Dan indicated the bowl and its contents. The jailer nodded his head, whether he understood or not.

"Not on your life!" Dan told him. "You've got to feed me on something better than that if you want me to stay here. It don't have to be anything extra, you know; just plain grub. Coffee and rolls would go high just this minute. Take that away before I throw it at you."

The jailer did not understand in the least what he meant, and backed against the opposite wall.

"Take it away!" Dan shouted. "It's punk, and I don't like the smell of it."

He edged the bowl over toward the jailer—to the rim of the ledge. There was no mistaking his meaning then, but the wizened little man did not act upon it.

"Where's that suit-case?" Dan asked suddenly.

No answer.

"Get it, will you?"

Still no answer. The little eyes were blinking, and the jaws appeared ready to be set in motion; but their owner said nothing. His silence and inaction were exasperating.

"Suit-case," Dan repeated. "A leather bag for clothes. Brown leather with two straps."

His eyes and his tone questioned the other's understanding, and saw that he gave no sign.

"I — want — to — change — my — *clothes!*" Dan yelled the final word. "Clothes—clothes." He tugged at his coat.

The jailer muttered something incoherent, moved his jaws at a great rate, but he did not move.

"Oh — you make me tired!" Dan shouted in disgust. "Beat it!"

And he thrust the bowl at him violently.

It struck the little man full in the chest, and its contents splashed up into his face, so that he blinked and sputtered and cut a very undignified figure, finally fleeing in squeaking terror.

"The little mutt!" Dan commented savagely, and sat down upon the edge of his bed, to start up immediately at the sound of hoof-beats upon the nearby cobbles.

There was a great commotion about something or other—a commotion that came nearer and nearer along the passage.

He heard his name called.

"Dan! Dan!"

The guillotine faded away. He snatched up his revolver and thrust it in his pocket.

When he turned a mustached face appeared at the hole in the door. Some one was working at the lock—and a moment or two later the boy strode majestically in, followed by the leading "lion-tamer" of the day before.

"Good morning," Ivan said calmly.

"Good—morning," Dan said in an empty tone, staring fixedly over the boy's head, his mouth opened.

Just behind the uniformed individual, looking round his arm, Dan saw a face.

It was framed in brown hair; and the eyes were brown, too—brown and deep. They were meeting his very sternly.

"Why — why — childie!" he exclaimed in a whisper that she barely heard.

CHAPTER V.

THE INSULT.

MISS DANE'S little red mouth twitched in the corners, but that was all. Her eyes remained perfectly steady and cold.

"In jail — again?" she questioned calmly, emphasizing the final word.

Dan looked sheepish, glanced at the boy, at the uniformed escort—at the floor. There was no denying her accusation. His surroundings spoke for themselves.

"How many times is this?" the girl asked after a pause and without a smile.

Dan started, glanced furtively up at her, then back to the boy.

"Hello—hello, kid!" he stammered,

trying to evade the issue Miss Dane was thrusting upon him. "You — er — you've got on a new suit?"

Ivan shook his head.

"It is not a new suit. It's an old one."

Dan was baffled. There was nothing else he could think of, and he kept his eyes on the floor.

"Do you suppose you could keep out of these sort of places if I used my influence to get you let off — this time?" The tone was irritatingly condescending, and Dan jerked up his head.

"Say—Floss—who—what—do you think I am, anyway?" he stammered, with a fair show of indignation.

"Rather a desperate sort of a character, I imagine — from your record. The last time I heard of you—well—you know where you were, and now—you're here. One can't help drawing a very natural conclusion." She called the boy to her side quietly. "Ivan—I think you had better come over here."

Dan resented that with all of his seventy-two inches.

"Leave the kid alone," he said heavily. "I won't hurt him, and he knows it. I licked him yesterday because he needed a licking—but—"

"You—what?"

Miss Dane's surprise was evident in every line of her face.

"I licked him—spanked him," Dan repeated. "And this guy, and a bunch more like him, came along and collared me."

He indicated the chief "lion-tamer," who had remained all the while very erect and very stern, apparently not understanding a word of the conversation.

"One of the crowd kept digging his gun into my back," Dan went on. "I was wet to the skin—but I wouldn't have stood for it, anyway. I copped the gink's gun, and somebody clumped me over the head."

He felt the lump tenderly.

"Say—is there no way I can get a change?"

The girl looked at him, and he thought her eyes softened a little. Her hand went up and covered her mouth. The boy was watching them both very closely. Suddenly he moved to Dan's side and gripped one of his hands in both of his.

"We—will—go—home—now," he said distinctly, and tugged at the hand.

Dan did not move. He looked at the officer—then at Floss. She nodded.

He obeyed the tugging upon his hand, and the boy led him out of the cell, along the passage, past a little cubby-hole of a place in which the wizened old jailer sat.

"By-by, old top!" Dan called out to him. "Hope you liked the soup."

They passed out into a courtyard, and Dan saw that there were four shaggy little horses there; one for the "lion-tamer," one for the boy, one for Floss, and one for—him.

There was no doubt about it. The "lion-tamer" assisted Floss and the boy to mount—and looked toward him.

"Nothing doing," Dan declared at once. "I've had some."

Of course, the officer did not understand. He caught the little beast's bridle and literally thrust him at Dan.

"I tell you there's nothing doing," he repeated, side-stepping the animal. "I ain't going to join no circus."

The officer appeared at a loss. He turned to Miss Dane and the boy. The former's face was turned away, and the latter seemed to wonder at the delay. Finally he said to Dan, very slowly and precisely:

"You — will — ride that horse, please."

Dan started and stared at him.

"What the— Say, you little— Who—who do you think you're talking to, anyway?"

The boy's expression became distinctly cloudy. He said something very sharp and quick to the man in uniform, and he, in turn, blew a single sharp blast upon a silvered whistle that hung at the end of a gold cord.

Instantly, through the courtyard

gate there rushed more "lion-tamers" than Dan could count. They bore down upon him in a swarm.

"Don't fight!"

The girl's sharp warning rang above the din. Dan dropped his hands, and the oncoming attack met with no resistance—not even when it forced him to mount the shaggy little animal apportioned to him.

He cut a ridiculous figure — and knew it. His bedraggled appearance and his expression of grim determination mingled with one of hopeless uncertainty—all that, added to the fact that his feet almost touched the ground, made him appear very unhappy.

And he was. It was no sort of showing to make before the lady of his dreams. He was sure she was laughing at him. The men round about him were. He scowled upon them, and threatened them one and all with dire rewards for their mirth; but neither his threats nor the prospect of making them good lessened or shortened the agony of that ride in the least.

At first, as the little cavalcade made its way out of the misshapen, tumbledown little town, their mounts were kept at a walk; afterward, with the open road ahead, the chief "lion-tamer" shouted an order—and off they went at a gallop.

Dan, being wedged in the center of the whole, had to go, too. There was no way out of it, else he would surely have found it.

He rocked from side to side—swayed and hung on with a desperation born of the knowledge that they were hard iron hoofs behind him. He did not see Floss or the boy; only a dancing myriad of colors, the ground, and sparks flung from the clattering hoofs. He was being shaken to pieces, and wondered how it was he held together. Every bone in his body was broken, but he set his teeth, and felt rather heroic because he uttered no cry of protest.

But neither had Floss, so far as he had heard; nor the boy. The extent of his heroism dwindled to nothingness —and left him feeling more uncomfortable and foolish than before.

Suddenly the cavalcade wheeled, and by the merest chance he held his seat. When he felt that he safely could, he looked about him, and saw that they were galloping up a road between fields toward a great barrack of a place, all whitewash and red-tiled roofs.

In an immense courtyard the ride ended.

Every one immediately dismounted when the officer in command blew his whistle, and the horses were led away; that is, every horse but Dan's, because Dan did not appear anxious to part company with it. He remained firmly lodged upon its back while it pirouetted about and did everything in its power to unseat him, probably anxious to join its fellow horses in the stable.

Dan found himself the center of attraction in a very few moments. He could not get off the way he wanted to, and the rearing, kicking, uncomfortable little beast beneath him would not let him stay comfortably on. There was no bond of sympathy between them. The horse knew its rider was a stranger to equestrianism—and, though the rider knew "blamed well" he was, that did not constitute an amicable relationship.

Dan's feet bumped the cobbles several times. He might almost have walked off, but he did not attempt the experiment.

Then somebody laughed. It was a low, irritating titter that sent the blood of wrath to Dan's head. He turned in the direction of the sound, and saw the smile as it faded from a well-trained face, momentarily forgetful. It was the man who had prodded him with the carbine.

The next moment Dan was off that horse, somehow. He slipped and almost fell as it slid away from under him, but managed to keep his feet; and striding over to the man who had laughed, towered over him.

"You cracked your face — didn't

you?" he questioned, and his great hands clenched.

The "lion-tamer" made no response in words, but he knew what Dan's expression meant, and his hand flew to his sword-hilt in a flash.

Then came to Dan's ears a little scream from behind. His left hand, flat open, was thrust into the other man's face very suddenly, and the force of the push, aided by his right foot being thrust behind his adversary's heel, sent him sprawling back upon the cobbles.

"Fight like a man!" Dan advised contemptuously, and looked defiantly about him.

None of the other "lion-tamers" had moved. The chief of them—standing aloof from the others beside the boy and Floss, whose cheeks were very white—looked embarrassed. Dan did not understand it.

He heard a sound behind him—the tinkling of clear metal upon the cobbles—and, swinging round, saw the man who had laughed struggling to his feet.

There was blood dripping from his nose upon the beautiful gold braid on his tunic, and, undoubtedly, there was blood in his eye.

"Had enough?" Dan asked solicitously. "I'm satisfied, if you are. If you ain't, just say the word—and your boss can be referee."

The other man made no reply. He produced a handkerchief, with which he dabbed his nose, and, turning to the man nearest him, mumbled something and stalked majestically away.

Instantly, as with one accord, the uniforms scattered. Dan found himself alone with the chief "lion-tamer," Floss, and the boy. When he turned toward them he saw that the girl's cheeks were even whiter than before, and that the boy was regarding him with open-eyed wonder, while their escort's expression indicated that he did not know what to think.

Ivan met his advance half-way, moving hesitatingly toward him and seizing hold of his hand.

"Don't you—want—to—change—your—clothes—now?" he asked in a very low tone.

Dan laughed and literally shook himself and a peculiar lethargy from him.

"Sure thing, kid. Got my suitcase handy?"

"You mean that bag you tied my clothes to yesterday?"

"Right, first time. You've got a great head on your shoulders. Lead me to it."

And the boy, still gripping his hand, led him into the house. Floss and the "lion-tamer" followed.

Their expressions were the essence of gloom.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHALLENGE AND THE "GUN."

THE place was a farmhouse of spacious size, of great raftered halls and rooms. The stairs, wide enough for an army to camp upon, were made still more interesting because the possibility of falling down them was greatly increased in the shroud of darkness that enveloped them.

"Got no lights in this dump?" Dan questioned the boy, as he followed him up the single flight to the second and top floor.

Ivan did not apparently consider a reply necessary. Some one, whom Dan declared when he saw him first, was a "sure enough ad for somebody's metal polish," preceded them, and led the way to a room the size of which made Dan reflect that "real estate can't be expensive round here."

He looked the room over, and guessed it was about the size of a city lot.

There was a huge "four-poster" at one end of it, draped in ancient hangings of dark red that threw shadows far across the floor. A wonderful old wardrobe stood in the center of the right wall, and a long, heavily framed mirror occupied a place directly opposite.

There was a monstrous piece of furniture, with heavy brass-handled drawers in it, that looked like a chiffonier, but was three sizes larger than any Dan had ever seen. It was undoubtedly a depository for clothes. Dan saw his suit-case upon the floor beside it—and grinned.

There were large chairs of a pattern ages old, and a table with thick, black, grotesquely curved legs. The carpet, of a dull, unhealthy looking red, worn threadbare in spots and discolored in others, was as old as everything else in the room.

The curtains about the windows were of heavy and stifling red velvet, hung loosely and trailing extravagantly upon the floor.

The atmosphere was chokingly oppressive. Dan looked about him—at all the faded grandeur—and then at the resplendent personage who had led them there.

"Your glad rags don't fit into this picture," he told him candidly. "Better git. I'm going to change."

The personage, quite as tall as Dan, raised his eyebrows in surprise, but did not move.

"Say, kid—tell that gink to get out, will you?—and you'd better hop along too."

The boy studied Dan a moment intently.

"This is to be your room, and Olaf will be your servant. Don't you like him?"

Dan's eyes opened wide.

"My servant!" he exclaimed incredulously.

"Yes," Ivan said, and nodded his head slowly. "He is a good servant."

Dan looked Olaf over from his head to his toes.

"All right, kid," he said after a while. "I'll take your word for it. Mebbe I'll wake up in a minute. He looks a dream, sure enough.

"Take him away and teach him English while I change, an' then you can come back with Floss—I mean Miss Dane—an' tell me the whole story. Go on now, there's a good kid—hop along."

He piloted the protesting Ivan to the door, and Olaf with him.

"But—Dan—" the boy tried to explain.

"Later, kid, later," Dan advised, pushing them both into the hall. "I'll be ready to talk in five minutes—if I don't go to sleep."

He was very tired and a little sick and dizzy as a result of the night he had spent, and the tempestuous ride that had followed it.

He closed the door upon them, and held it shut as Ivan yelled and hammered upon it with his fists.

"Dan! Dan!" he called loudly, and brought the sound of near-by footsteps scurrying in his direction.

"Oh, quit for five minutes, will you?" Dan shouted, keeping the door closed. "What d'ye bring me up here for, if ye ain't goin' to let me change. Beat it, the bunch of you, or I'll lick you good."

Little feet thudded upon the thick panels in accompaniment and in answer to Dan's threat. He opened the door suddenly.

"See here, you Ivan Markoff," he began—and stopped as he saw Miss Dane's eyes upon him.

"What's the matter?" he questioned sheepishly and in some alarm.

Floss had not lost her white cheeks or her look of anxiety. Her eyes were a little red now—as if she had been crying. She did not answer his question, which she knew referred to the cause for her tears, hastily wiped away, but explained instead why Ivan had been kicking the door.

"He is trying to tell you that Olaf is your valet and thinks he ought to dress you."

Dan laughed uproariously — looked at Olaf and roared again.

"Floss—you're kiddin' me," he accused finally.

"Very well," the girl returned frigidly, because otherwise she would have cried.

"No—but honest—childie—is that straight?"

"I said so."

And Dan laughed again.

"Gee whiz! What's he goin' to dress me in? I've only got one suit besides this one, and I'd get into it while he was wondering what went on first. I don't want no servant all dolled up like him round me.

"Tell the kid I'm much obliged—but there's nothing doing. Hear that, youngster?"

He looked down at Ivan questioningly, and saw that his face was all puckered up, as if he were ready to cry.

"That's all right," Dan said soothingly. "There's some class to Olaf. He's got more real money on his back right now than I've had all my life, and I've no kick coming at all except that the gink wouldn't know a word I said to him.

"Take him away—there's a good kid—an' forget it. See you later, Floss. I want to talk to you real serious."

He looked at her, at her red-rimmed eyes particularly, and his own voiced a question which she avoided by taking Ivan by the hand and leading him forcibly away.

Dan closed his door, leaving Olaf outside—a disconsolate figure—and proceeded instantly to make the long-desired change. He could hear the boy yelling at the top of his voice and using his feet with a tattoo effect upon the steps of the stairs.

"Some kid, all right," Dan commented as he struggled into his trousers. "Wonder where he got old Metal Polish and the circus men from?"

There were a number of other questions assailing him, principal among them the matter of Floss's presence and the cause for her tears. The incident in the courtyard was too insignificant to bother about.

He was making his way into a collar when there came a tap upon the door.

"What is it?" he yelled—and the door opened.

A "lion tamer" entered briskly. Dan looked at him and went on fastening his collar and adjusting his tie; then he asked pleasantly:

"Well, old sport, what can I do for you?"

The visitor bowed and handed Dan a note. He opened it, but could not read a word, and returned it.

"Sorry—but you've got the wrong party. Mebbe the guy you're lookin' for lives across the hall. It's so dark out there one's liable to make mistakes. It ain't for me."

The other man took the note because Dan thrust it into his hand, but he made no move to go. He muttered something unintelligible behind his mustache and bit upon it nervously.

"If you want to talk to me," Dan informed him, "bring an interpreter. Olaf—put this guy out."

At sound of his name the flunky stood erect.

Dan heard the flutter of skirts and saw Floss in the doorway, her eyes strained and afraid.

"Don't—don't fight him!" she whispered fearfully. "He—he'll kill—you!"

Dan stared at her.

"Who? That little shrimp?"

"No, no—that other one you struck in the courtyard. Wait."

She came forward and spoke in French to the uniformed visitor, whose face was the personification of bewilderment. He bowed, stepped aside and waited.

Floss turned toward Dan.

"That man you struck in the courtyard is the son of the chief minister of the diet—and one of the best swordsmen in Europe. If you fight him, he'll kill you—if you don't—oh, Dan, why did you do it?"

Dan's eyes opened wider.

"Who said I was going to fight with swords? Nix on that stuff for mine. Twenty rounds with five-ounce gloves any time he feels like it—but no duels—

no, ma'am! They're barred from our club."

Floss smiled wanly.

"But—you don't understand," she told him. "They don't fight with gloves here—and—and if you refuse to fight with swords you will be sent up to the mountains to prison—for insulting an officer—and—and — you'll never—come back!"

"I won't — hey?" Dan demanded. "I'm an American citizen—ain't I?"

"Yes—but—but they don't know anything about that here. They'd ride you off to the mountains—and—perhaps you never would reach their horrible prison."

Dan whistled low and long.

"I—see," he said slowly. "And it would be easy, too. One clump on the head — and over she goes. Well — looks pretty bad, doesn't it?"

Floss's expression admitted the fact.

"Tell that gazebo that a McKirdy never fights duels without forty-eight hours notice," Dan suggested brilliantly, after a thoughtful pause. "Better make it a week. That'll give me time to make a clear getaway."

Floss laughed in spite of the seriousness of the situation, but it was a feeble effort. She turned to the waiting second and spoke to him quietly. He smiled a little contemptuously, bowed elaborately, and took his departure.

"Well — what's the news?" Dan asked.

"I told him that—that you would fight his principal in—forty-eight hours."

"Bully! That'll give me time enough to get behind a rock and kill a bunch of them before they get me. See that?"

He showed her his automatic revolver—and she screamed.

"Put it away!"

Dan fondled it lovingly with the hand of a novice—his left.

"Please put it away," Floss pleaded. "It might go off and—" She made a sudden excited grab to take the weapon away from him.

A sudden flash; a report; a shrill scream; a smothered oath, and something heavy thudded to the floor.

When the smoke cleared away, Floss looked wild-eyed into Dan's white face and he looked into hers—then both looked at his limp right hand and at the blood that was dripping from it.

Dan's right thumb was a shattered, jagged wreck, bones and flesh and blood mangled together.

Floss looked at it again, gasped, swayed, and would have fallen had Dan not held her upon her feet.

"St-steady—little—woman—'s all ri'."

He felt her shudder and take a firmer grip upon his arm; and he licked his lips and set his teeth.

"There, childie—there—'s all ri'. Go—go an' tell that guy who wants to fight—that I'll fight when this—this hand gets better. That'll be about—a month."

He grinned—looked at his thumb, or what was left of it, and still grinning, hid it behind his back.

Floss looked up at him and met his grin with a wan smile and then turned and fled. Dan's gaze followed her as he lurched toward a chair.

"Poor—old—thumb," he muttered sorrowfully — and the world swirled about him and went black.

Floss had gone for the doctor.

(To be continued.)

TIME.

Thomas Stephens Collier.

TIME has no flight—'tis we who speed along;
The days and nights are but the same as when
The earth awoke with the first rush of song,
And felt the swiftly passing feet of men.

Doorway Forty-nine

By Frank Condon

WHEN, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for Gregory and me to procure a delicately flavored drink of the proper timbre and proportions, we invariably toddle along up to the Club of the Three Virtuous Dolphins, where we sit before a genuine, blazing, wooden log with real bark on it, and after we have had several consoling beakers, Gregory tells me all over again the story of his perfect first wife and I unbosom myself to Gregory about the girl from Chicago, whom I met the year of the World's Fair.

We do this frequently.

Gregory is a pastel man and I sell paving material, so we get on famously. I never interrupt him when he sinks into his chair and starts on the first wife story, and he is equally tolerant when I wipe away a furtive tear and recall the Chicago affair.

The other day we had barely seated ourselves comfortably and communed with James about our inward needs, when Solaire sauntered up and nodded.

I've known Solaire for ten years, but Gregory had never before met him, so I introduced them and bade Solaire to the feast.

Solaire is tall, thin, dark, and wears a pointed beard. He carries a white stick and thinks people look upon him as a French count or a foreign dignitary. He is interesting in appearance and his conversation is usually more meaningful than the drip of a waste-pipe. I had a notion Gregory would like Solaire and I was not mistaken.

The morning newspapers had related the details of a fascinating sort of murder case and we pawed these over with casual curiosity, Solaire giving us an interesting theory concerning the motive and Gregory arguing with his usual perversity.

Gregory will argue with St. Peter some day.

"It brings to mind," Solaire said musingly, "another murder case you boys may recall. I think I've never told you this," turning to me. "Perhaps Mr. Gregory and you would like to hear it. It concerned me rather intimately."

"Delighted," Gregory encouraged.

"Well," continued Solaire thoughtfully, "there's a man buried somewhere over in Brooklyn—where a cemetery sprouts every block or two—and over his grave is no slab of stone

to inform the living of the dead man's identity. That is because no one ever discovered who he was. This is how I came into the case.

"My wife and I were living, at the time, in New York, in an apartment of seven rooms. Naturally we employed a colored woman who came to the place twice a week and relieved my wife of the harder kinds of work. She generally polished up things on Monday and Thursday. We were to have friends in on a certain Monday evening, and the house needed a thorough going over.

"Following a quaint and time-honored custom of the colored race the world over, our Mandy notified my wife on Sunday afternon that she would be unable to work the next day, but she gave us the name and address of another colored woman who would, she said, be glad to act as her substitute.

"Consequently, it became my duty on Monday morning, to hunt up the relief colored worker and have her hurry up to my place, and I started from home, leaving my wife the cheerful assurance that she would be colored helpless but a brief hour or two.

"On a slip of paper was written in my wife's hand the address I sought, and I knew at once that it was situated in a very poor part of the city. I rode on a number of surface-car lines and transferred twice, coming at length to the street written on the slip.

"Never before had I been in that part of New York. Everything was unfamiliar to me. The buildings were old and ramshackle. The fire-escapes were coated with the rust of years and each of them seemed about to topple into the street. Doorways were battered and windows were thick with a coating of dirt.

"A very unkempt, unpleasant sort of population wallowed about the section, though I couldn't name its nationality if I tried. The streets were crowded with pushcarts and dirty children.

"Entrances to the buildings were small, dark, and fear-inspiring. I began to wish, as I walked slowly on, that we had written a letter or sent a telegram to the dusky workwoman.

"Coming finally to a block even dingier and more dilapidated than the rest, I felt that I was nearing the end of the quest. The numbers were placed over doorways with total disregard for the odd-and-even system that prevails elsewhere throughout the city, and though I had found the block I was at a loss to determine the right entrance.

"I started to traverse the square, going it blind, as it were, and then I came to my number. The building was a huge pile of age-whitened brick, very dirty and threatening to fall apart.

"I stared at the numbers above a doorway which led into a narrow, dark court, and then I suddenly became aware of a man's presence. He was standing beside the doorway through which I must pass and there were two remarkable things about him.

"The first was his costume or uniform. It was entirely of dark blue, with a red belt running about the waist. A red band also passed about the collar of his coat, and his blue cap was similarly encircled with red. It was a very striking suit.

"His second characteristic was the fearful pallor of his countenance, and as I looked at him he pressed his hand against his side as though in great pain. Then he turned sharply and walked away and I, somewhat puzzled about it, entered the doorway under the number forty-nine.

"A rough walk led between high brick walls and the darkness inside was almost that of night. I stumbled forward, observing that my path led into a larger corridor, in which I could dimly see a figure moving.

"I concluded to ask this person, whoever he might be, about the colored woman, and as I increased my stride over the uneven boards I suddenly

tripped up and fell forward, saving myself from a serious accident by throwing my hands out before me.

"As I picked myself up, muttering maledictions upon all dark passages, I noticed that my hands were covered with a soft, sticky substance, which I vainly tried to rub off. The man in the corridor, attracted by the noise of my fall or by my grunts of displeasure, came forward.

"'Who's that?' he asked, not very pleasantly.

"'It's me,' I answered forcefully and ignoring nicety of speech, 'and I've stumbled down in your blank double blanked alleyway and got something on my hands.'

"'Were you standing out there for some time or have you just come?' he inquired still with suspicion.

"'I've just come,' I retorted with heat, 'and you can bet I'll never come again. What I want to know is where Mrs. Martha White lives in this cursed building. Who are you?'

"'I'm the janitor,' the man said. 'The colored woman lives on the sixth floor rear. That's probably tar on your hands. They've been fixing the roof. You can wash it off in my rooms if you want to.'

"I had been rubbing my palms vigorously together, but the tar still adhered.

"'Thank you,' I replied ungraciously. 'I'll go up-stairs. Mrs. White will let me wash my hands, I presume.'

"I didn't like that janitor in the least.

"The man growled something at me and I picked my way ahead over cans, buckets, piles of refuse, bricks, and other impedimenta, and still rubbing my sticky hands, I started to climb the shaky stairway.

"You know," said Solaire, grimacing, "tar on one's hands gives one a horribly disagreeable sensation."

Gregory and I nodded sympathetically.

"I climbed eternal and unnumbered stairs," Solaire went on, "passing dirty groups of children and smelling many odors I had never smelled before. I thought I should never reach the floor I sought. At length I halted on a landing, gasping for breath and fuming at the darkness of the hall.

"Surely this must be the right floor, I reflected, and then I began to look about for the right door. There were no names or numbers to guide me, and, after thinking again of the janitor's directions, I selected a likely looking door and rapped vigorously.

"There was no reply. Again I knocked, and, after waiting a moment more in silence, I tried the knob. It turned, and the door gave before my gentle push.

"The same hall in which I stood was uncarpeted. The place was evidently a vacant suite, because I could see into a portion of the next room, which was unfurnished and devoid of carpet or rug.

"I took two steps forward, propelled by a mild curiosity, and then I gave vent to a yell that must have been heard clear down to the ground floor, for I was standing almost directly over a body that lay stretched out, face down, upon the bare boards, fully clad, and through the back of the body, penetrating it and sticking into the floor beneath, was a monster steel knife with a white horn handle.

"Gentlemen, I was frightened stiff.

"I gazed at the murdered man in fascination, and I suppose I must have continued shouting, because I could hear people coming clamorously up the stairs. The body was of medium height and it lay in a pool of dark blood.

"And the most remarkable thing of all was that it was clad precisely as the man I had seen at the entrance to the building—a dark-blue suit, with a red band around the waist and another about the collar. The victim's cap, which lay on the floor beside the body, also had the red band round it.

"People began to crowd into the little hall, white-faced and shivering.

When they saw the corpse, some of them groaned and ran wailing down the steps.

"A few moments later, two policemen shouldered their way into the room and looked first at the dead man and then at me.

"I explained rapidly what had happened, so far as I knew, but as I talked, a sudden cold fear came over me, and this was intensified by the steely glitter of unbelief which I could read very plainly in the eyes of the two officers.

"When I had finished my brief story, they scoffed at it. Was I not there, standing over the dead body, when the occupants of the building came? I was.

"Had any one else been about the place? No one. I told them of the man I had passed in the street, dressed as the corpse was dressed, and they grunted sarcastically.

"I was in for it. A cold sweat started on my forehead. I felt a sudden sinking sensation in the pit of my stomach. For a few seconds, my senses were numbed at the horror of the predicament. The people in the hallway were growling ominously and looking at me with venegeful eyes.

"I was afraid for a moment that I should break down under the strain, and then, all of a sudden, my eyes rested, first, upon my tar-soiled hands, and again, upon the clean, white-enameled buck-horn handle of the murderous knife. This handle, six inches long at least, was as clean and spotless as though it had been newly scoured.

"I leaped at the saving thought. Quickly, emphatically, simply, I explained to the officers that I could not possibly have killed the blue-clad figure, and that if I had done so, the white handle of the knife would inevitably have been soiled.

"Even the mind of a policeman could readily understand that a powerful grasp had been needed to drive the weapon through the victim and into the floor.

"The policemen were taken aback at once. They wavered. They held a whispered conference. One of them suggested roughly that I could have tarred my hands after committing the crime.

"At that instant, the janitor of the building pushed into the room. He corroborated my account of my stumble in the passage rather begrudgingly, I thought, but still in a manner convincing.

"The whole thing was as plain as day. I was innocent of the crime. In ten minutes, I, again a free man, was washing the life-saving tar from my palms in the rooms of a friendly laundress."

Solaire paused and looked at his watch.

"By Jove," he said, "I had no idea the hour was so late. I'm afraid I'll have to tear myself away if I'm to keep a certain appointment up-town. Rather a narrow escape for me, eh, Mr. Gregory?"

"Narrow!" Gregory exploded; "why, it was miraculous—it was positively a miracle of good luck. Did they ever find the actual murderer?" he inquired.

"Not so far as I know," Solaire replied. He produced a match, lighted it, and rose.

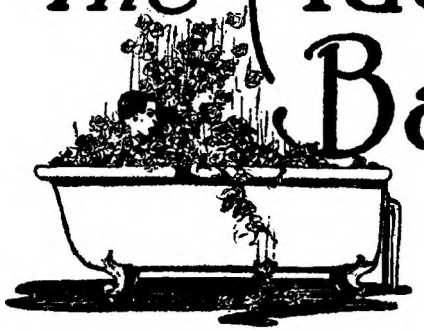
"Well, good luck, boys," he said. "I'm on my way."

We watched him saunter to the door of the club and disappear in the hallway.

"By gad, that's a remarkable thing to happen to a man," Gregory said to me. "Isn't it wonderful to think of the trifle that saved him from being accused of that horrible crime? And with the circumstantial evidence all against him! Who is this Solaire, anyhow?"

"Now you know Solaire," I replied, lighting my cigar and grinning amiably across the table at Gregory. "Solaire is the most persistent, audacious, and fantastic liar in the great and growing city of New York. Shall we have another sparkle or not?"

The Magical Bath-tub



by J. Earl Clausen

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

SAM TUPPER, of Oxville, by the death of his uncle is left $10,000. He comes to New York to get the money, and stopping at an expensive hotel, is overwhelmed with the luxury of a porcelain tub with fixings, the like of which he has never known in his little village home. Immediately he invests his inheritance in the most expensive bath-tub that he can find, builds a mysterious "L" on his house, and keeps the entire village in the dark. A washer gets out of order, and Sam is forced to call in the village tinker, who trying all the washers he has, finally succeeds in fixing the break by means of an odd ring he has picked up in the yard of Miss Huldah Bell, the orphan daughter of an old sea-dog, who had recently come home and died. After the washer is put on the tub, most mysterious things occur. It is clear the affair is enchanted, and Sam has various experiences pleasant and ludicrous. Meanwhile Huldah Bell is visited by a peculiar stranger, who is followed about by a dark foreigner.

CHAPTER VI *(Continued).*

HULDAH BELL HAS A CALLER.

"WON'T he come in, too?" asked Huldah, hospitably referring to the olive-skinned stranger standing in the hall.

"Lord, no, miss," the visitor said, following her into the hall. "He don't understand our kind of talk."

After needlessly dusting off the seat of the easiest chair with her apron and motioning her caller to occupy it, Huldah found a place for herself, and, sitting up very straight and prim, asked:

"To what am I indebted for the honor of this call?"

She had read the phrase in a book, and knew it was correct. Its pointedness, however, seemed to afford the man temporary embarrassment. After an instant's hesitation he said:

"Well, the fact is, I wasn't expecting to see no young woman. I came to visit Captain Bell."

"Captain Bell was my father."

"Was your father? Well, ain't he your father now?"

"He's dead," the girl replied abruptly. "He died the night he reached Oxville."

The news seemed to strike the man queerly. He gasped a couple of times, his opening mouth showing a streak of scarlet in the tangle of foliage, and then was silent. Huldah saw that it was her duty to reopen the conversation.

"You knew my father?" she asked.

"No—that is—er—we were shipmates once, and I thought I'd like to see him again."

Though there was nothing singular in the statement that an old shipmate

should have decided to look her father up, something about the stranger's manner impressed Huldah as being not quite frank. So, without replying, she waited to let him continue with his story.

"Yes, we was shipmates on the Thomas H. Schuyler," the stranger went on. "Great friends, we was. That was one reason why I come up here from Boston to see him after I heard that his ship was in."

He halted to see whether his hostess had any comment to offer on the statement. Not having known anything about her father's shipmates, she had none, so he proceeded:

"'Twould have been like a full meal to a starving man for me to see him again. 'Harry,' he used to say—Enoch Harris is my name, but he always used to call me Harry—'Harry,' says he, 'we've been good shipmates,' says he. 'Yes,' says I, 'that we have, Bill.'"

The girl interrupted him.

"But his name wasn't Bill. His name was Ephraim."

"That's so," said the stranger—"of course. But, you see, I always called him Bill, just as he always called me Harry. My name ain't Harry, though; it's Enoch.

"Says he: 'Harry, after I'm dead I want you to have this here little keepsake of me—that is, supposin' I die before you do.' It was a kind of flat ring he'd picked up somewheres in his travel. Not much value to it, I suppose, but I'd treasure it on account of him havin' owned it, and spoke of it so. Don't happen to run across it in his ditty-bag, did you?"

In a flash of memory Huldah's mind reverted to the story her father told her on their last evening together. The ring about which he had spun so strange a yarn would answer the stranger's description. It occurred to her now that she had not noticed it since the night of his death, and she began to wonder what had become of it.

She was not immediately satisfied, however, with the stranger's claim to the trinket, even though she were able to find it.

"When did you see my father last?" she asked.

"Why, let's see." The stranger hesitated in the face of an unforeseen question. "Him and me was together on the Thomas H. Schuyler four years ago, I guess. Might have been more, and then again it might have been less. You see," and he brightened up, "I shipped on another vessel after that and was wrecked, so I kind of lost account of time."

Captain Bell's latest command, Huldah remembered, had been the Albert Firkins. It was on that vessel, while she was loading with guano for Boston, that the stowaway in whose possession the ring was had come aboard. Clearly, then, the stranger was falsifying.

"I don't know anything about any ring Captain Bell had when he was on the Thomas H. Schuyler," she declared.

The stranger looked confused.

"Well, now, perhaps it wasn't the Schuyler," he said. "You'd know the ring, anyway. It was about so big through"—he measured with his fingers—"and looked like it might have been gold or brass. Wasn't worth much, anyway. If you've got it, I'd pay a fair price for it so's to have a keepsake of my old shipmate."

His whiskers bristled with eagerness as he spoke, pointing to every quarter of the compass.

Huldah reflected a moment. It was possible he was lying. Yet there had been a ring, which had appeared of so little value to her that she could not now recall where it had been put when the captain's possessions had been sorted out.

If she could find it, she saw no real reason for denying the man's request. The very fact that his kind of whiskers was distasteful to her inclined her toward generosity. At last she said:

"There was a ring."

The whiskered individual jumped from his chair in delight.

"I knew he had it!" he exclaimed. "I was sure of it!"

"But," remarked Huldah perplexedly, "I don't know where it is."

The stranger sank back into his chair with the flabbiness of a punctured balloon.

"You—don't—know — where — it is?" he repeated.

"No. Perhaps it isn't the ring you mean, anyway. You see, father got this ring on his last cruise. He told me how, but never mind that now. He died so suddenly that everything was in a mess, and I haven't thought of the ring since. Wait a moment—seems to me I left that ring on the kitchen shelf."

She vanished for a moment, reentering the sitting-room just in time to see the stranger resuming his chair. She did not need to be told that he had availed himself of the opportunity to take a swift inventory of the contents of the place. But of this she said nothing.

"It isn't there," she remarked, "and I don't know where it is. If you will leave your address and I find it, I can mail it to you. I'm fall housecleaning this week, and probably I'll run across it."

The whiskered man looked at her with unbelieving eyes. Huldah felt perfectly certain that he thought she knew where the ring was all of the time, and did not desire to surrender it. But he said merely:

"Never mind about sending it. I might be in Oxville again in a week or so, and can drop round. I'm awful sorry to hear of Bill's death—I mean Captain Bell."

Huldah ushered him out politely. Then she followed an Oxville custom she had always hitherto deplored.

She ran to the front window and, peeking through a crack beneath the lowered curtain, saw the tawny man who had lingered without join her caller; watched them gesticulate furiously for a moment, and followed them with her gaze until they were out of sight up the road.

CHAPTER VII.

A FEW EXPERIMENTS.

SAM TUPPER, stretched at full length in his porcelain tub, embarked upon an adventure in the realm of the supernatural.

"I've heard tell of fairies and charms," he reflected, "but I never heard tell before of a wishing bathtub. Yet it stands to reason that that's what I've got here.

"Now, let's see. The first time was when I wished that the piping and all was pure gold—and look at it. If it ain't gold, it looks enough like it to be. Cricky! there would be enough, if it was gold, to buy any ten farms in Oxville.

"Then Wes comes in here and gets to wishing Mrs. Jackson'd fall in love. And darned if she didn't. Only he forgot to wish she'd fall in love with somebody else than him. That's why he has me carrying his meals out to the barn. I don't know what he'll do come winter.

"Now, if this is a wishing bathtub, I want to know about it. Let's see—what'll I wish for?"

He gazed up at the ceiling a moment meditatively. Then he smiled.

"I have it," he murmured. "I wish I had a colored man to give me an alcohol rub."

He looked round expectantly. Nothing had happened. The kerosene lamp still flickered hazily through its steaming chimney. The rustic crash towel hung limp on the shining rack. Through the high window Sam caught a glimpse of the North Star winking humorously at him.

"Darn it!" he muttered, half aloud. Then, suddenly remembering: "Oh, it was the handle of the waste-pipe! That's what ails the thing. Now, here goes again."

Bending forward, he reached the handle which controlled the waste and gave it a twitch.

"I wish—hum—I wish I had a music-box to play while I'm taking a bath."

He put his head on one side and listened intently.

Mrs. Jackson could be heard walking round the kitchen, busy as always about household duties. Wes Smithers's hoarse voice yelling at the cattle broke the stillness of the night outside, and in the silence that followed the chorus of crickets bewailing the approach of winter rose mournfully. But of the sweet strains on which Sam's imagination had dwelt there was no least echo.

"Humph!" he grunted. "Fooled again. I'll give her one more chance, and that's all. I wish—I wish—I wish we'd have some nice roast chicken for supper."

As if in answer to his thought, he heard Mrs. Jackson open the kitchen door and call to the hired man:

"Wessy! Wes-s-sy! Come right along into supper. I've got some cold corned beef that you'll like. Come right along in, Wessy."

There rose a clamor from the barn which Sam interpreted as Wessy's answer that he wasn't coming into supper until he got good and ready, if then. Receiving no verbal response, Mrs. Jackson slammed the kitchen door shut with some signs of heat and resumed her tasks.

"Cold corned beef!" Sam groaned, his castles of fancy suddenly dashed to pieces. "Merciful woodpeckers, what ails the tub? I don't understand it—I vum I don't.

"There's them pipes all turned yellow after Otto put the washer on, and there's Mrs. Jackson providing all the delicacies of the season for Wes after him wishing she'd fall in love. Darn it, she is in love with him! That's plain enough. I snum two times, it's more than I can understand."

But even cold corned beef is not to be scorned after a hard day's work in the fields, even though a man has his mouth made up for roast chicken, so Sam dragged himself out of the tub, bitterly disappointed, and proceeded to get as dry as he could on the crash towel. Ever since the previous evening, when he thought he had been granted an inspired glance into the mystery of the bath-tub, he had been looking forward to this hour when he should put it to the test preparatory to embarking upon a series of demonstrations calculated to furnish Oxville with something to talk about.

Now to have all of his benevolent plans set at naught was almost more than flesh and blood could bear.

He worked off his spleen in the drying process, rubbing his lean flesh until it glowed. By the time the rite was ended his volatile mind had turned to other matters.

"This ain't the kind of towel they had at the Blauvelt," he reflected. "They were thick and soft and didn't scratch like this one. That there soap, neither."

He looked with scorn on the yellow bar with which from time immemorial Oxville had been content to perform its ablutions. His irritation at the failure of his wishes rose again as he bent forward to drain the tub.

"'Tain't like the city bath-rooms after all the money I spent," he growled. "Old crash towels and old yellow soap. Wish I didn't have any bath-tub."

When he began speaking he had been stooping over looking into a waste of soapy water, his left hand on the rim of the tub, his right on the drain-pipe governor. When he finished he was in the same attitude, but his moody eyes were on hard, white tiling instead of on the clouded water. The tub had vanished.

His left hand was still bent as though clutching the edge of the porcelain vessel, but it was empty. The fingers of his right were curved to the shape of the governor he had been turning, but

they, too, were — no, they were not empty. Instead of the little golden wheel they grasped a golden ring, which might readily have served as a washer.

Sam's eyes popped. His mouth opened. He hesitated to straighten up. Words failed him.

For a full minute he stood bent over where the tub had been, staring at nothingness. Then he turned his head hastily to the left, the right, the ceiling. The tub was in none of these directions. He staggered limply back against the set bowl and propped himself there, waiting for his mind to get a grip on this wholly unprecedented situation.

His fingers worked convulsively. He muttered aloud:

"I wish that tub was back."

No sooner were the words out of his mouth than the tub took shape again under his eyes, quite unchanged.

Sam looked at his right hand curiously. It was empty. With an effort, he stepped to the side of the bath-tub and examined the waste-pipe governor. Sure enough, there was the washer in its former position.

In that instant the bright light of understanding flooded the confused recesses of the tub-owner's mind.

"I've got it! I've got it! I've got it!" he caroled. "'Tain't the tub at all. It's the washer. An enchanted washer, by gravy, and the first that ever come to Oxville, or my name ain't Sam Tupper."

He continued his study of the metal ring for a couple of minutes.

It was unchanged from the day Otto had put it in place, but to Sam it seemed wholly different, for while then it had represented only a necessary adjustment of the expensive machinery his visit to New York had encouraged him in purchasing, it now stood for—what? Something so alien to the ordinary uses of washers, so fraught with possibilities, that the very thought of it made his head swim.

"It's an enchanted washer sure enough," he said to himself at last as he straightened up, "and you have to rub it to make it work," with a recollection of the manner in which this knowledge had come to him. "Now let's see how far the old thing'll carry. I wish I had a Turkish towel."

He gave the ring a rub, and a soft mass struck him between the shoulders. Looking down, he saw on the tiled floor a towel of such thick softness as not even the Hotel Blauvelt had offered.

"Gee, that's fine!" he exclaimed with a fresh access of courage.

He picked up the towel and again went through the process of drying himself. The fleecy touch of the wonderful fabric was soothing beyond description.

"Might as well go the whole hog," he thought, and, bending again to the enchanted washer, ran his finger across it gingerly and murmured:

"I wish I had half a ton of perfumed soap."

This time he was rewarded with, first of all, a hard crack on the head, which caused him to jump with pained surprise. It was an oval of well-seasoned soap.

Another struck him on the shoulder. Then there was a perfect deluge of soap, dropping apparently from the ceiling. He looked up to catch the source of the shower, and was struck in the eye. The lamp chimney fell to the floor with a jingle of broken glass, and the light went out. Sam tried to escape through the door.

At first he could not budge it, so heavy was the mass of soap piled up in its rear, but, rendered desperate by pain and fear, Sam gave a mighty tug, and the door swung ajar wide enough to permit him to escape into the little hall.

It swung shut behind him, and he stood there shivering, listening to the downpour of soap.

It was not until that had ceased that Sam realized he had snared himself in an awkward predicament. It was that his clothes were on one side of a

door which was held by a spring-lock, and he was on the other.

The key to that lock was in his trousers-pocket. And on the other side of the kitchen door, which fortunately she could not open, was Mrs. Jackson, still moving about, but not too busy to wonder why the man failed to come in to supper.

At the thought of how thin a partition separated him from his housekeeper Sam blushed. It was dark in the hall, but he could feel the blood mantling his cheeks, and realized that he must find some way of extricating himself from his predicament soon or Mrs. Jackson would start a search-party out for him. He opened the door which gave upon the yard, and called in a hoarse whisper for Wesley.

That person, however, was not in a mood for hearing hoarse whispers, even if he were expecting them. He was wondering whether he should go in to supper or have Sam bring the meal out to him. The evening was chilly enough to incline him toward the former alternative, even though it involved subjecting himself to Mrs. Jackson's distasteful advances. While debating the subject he busied himself with feeding the stock.

Receiving no response to his call, Sam stuck his head out a little farther, but drew back with a shiver as he thought he heard some one coming. He left the door open a crack, and presently realized that he had been mistaken. With a return of confidence he poked his head a little farther out and softly called:

"Wes! Wes! Come here!"

Again only the chorus of the crickets answered him. Then the discoverer of the enchanted ring began to realize that it was a cold evening.

"Great cats, I can't stay here!" he shivered. "This hall's like a cold-storage plant."

It was easily said, but escaping was a different matter. Sam debated it earnestly from every side. Assuredly he could not enter the kitchen until Mrs. Jackson had left, which might not be before nine or ten o'clock. The way to the bath-room was effectually barred.

There was but one thing to do — make a dash for the cover of the barn, where at least there were horse blankets to cover one's nakedness, and enlist the help of Smithers in getting to his clothes. The chattering of his teeth decided him. After listening closely for a moment to make certain nobody was close at hand, he threw open the door and raced like a frightened rabbit through the back-yard and into the wide-flung portals of the barn, where Wes nearly fell from the hay-loft ladder with fright at the apparition.

Sam explained the situation in few words.

"Locked out of the bath-room, Wes," he said. "Door slammed to suddenly. All my clothes inside—and the key. Get me some overalls right away, and then you've got to help me to get in where my clothes are."

Wes obediently followed instructions. A pair of overalls and an old coat served to keep Sam temporarily from freezing to death, and then, under the proprietor's directions, the pair unearthed a ladder and began an assault on the bath-room window.

It proved a less difficult avenue of access than Sam had feared, though so small, in truth, that he was forced again to shed what little clothing he wore before he was able to squeeze through it.

At last, head first, he was successful, and with a sigh of relief, dropped on his hands and shoulders into the midst of a great pile of sweet-scented soap.

CHAPTER VIII.

SAM HAS AN INSPIRATION.

THE owner of the magical bath-tub dressed and went in to his supper that evening in a thick mental fog, having first, with considerable labor, thrown

the soap into a heap against the end of the room.

When, following Wes Smithers's experience, the thought of magic properties inherent in his tub had occurred to him, it had been in the guise of an interestingly whimsical idea rather than an actuality. But now there was no longer any room for doubt.

Aside from the intangible testimony afforded by the affection Mrs. Jackson had suddenly, and from the employer's view-point unreasonably, conceived for the hired man, there were three material bits of evidence.

First there was the transformation of the metal attachments of the tub. If the pipes, faucets, and the rest were not gold, they resembled the precious metal closely enough to pass muster in Oxville, and Sam was convinced in the depths of his heart that they were the eighteen-carat stuff.

Then there was the Turkish towel. He could produce that in a court of law, should any question rise as to the potency of his charm.

And third, and most compelling, was the shower of soap, which had so nearly placed him in an embarrassing position. As he reflected on this phenomenon, recollecting that he had uttered aloud a wish for half a ton, and remembered the crack on the head the first cake had given him, he winced and muttered:

"Gosh, I must be careful!"

"What's the matter, Sam?" asked Mrs. Jackson, who happened to be in a gracious mood.

"Eh? Oh, I—I just bit on my sore tooth," replied the lord of the manor, lending realism to his reply by running his tongue up into the hollow molar and sucking vigorously.

He was spared the necessity of further explanation by the appearance at that moment of Wes, who, as between eating a cold meal in the barn and submitting to the caressing glances and solicitude of Mrs. Jackson, had chosen the latter alternative. The hired man cast a curious glance at his employer, and then sat down and reached for the platter of corned beef.

"I called you, Wessy," remarked Mrs. Jackson tenderly. "Sam ought not to keep you working so hard. Why, you don't hardly ever get in to meals nowadays."

Sam looked slyly out of the corners of his eyes at his factotum, and Wes muttered something inaudible with his mouth full of hot biscuit. Mrs. Jackson beamed affectionately at him through her spectacles, and stepped to the sewing-machine, out of the drawer of which she took a bundle of knitting.

"See what I'm making for you," she exclaimed, holding it out toward Wes. "Some nice red socks for cold weather."

Wes mumbled again and looked appealingly toward Sam. The latter interpreted the glance.

"Hurry up, Wes," he remarked. "As Mrs. Jackson says, I'm working you pretty hard, but we've got to swingle them oats a while this evening or we'll get way behind. Most through?"

"Why, Wessy ain't had none of the preserves yet," interposed the housekeeper. "Don't you let him hurry you, Wessy." And, turning to Sam again, she added: "I'll send him out as soon as he's eaten his supper."

"Oats has to be swingled, Mrs. Jackson," remarked Wes, quick to respond to the call of duty. "I can eat when there ain't any work to do."

He rose and followed Sam out in the direction of the barn.

"Sorry to break up your supper, Wessy," remarked his employer, as the hired man joined him. "Tell you what you do—you go in and sit with Mrs. Jackson this evening and I'll undertake to swingle all the oats there are inside of two hours. Won't you, Wessy?"

"Wessy be—hanged," retorted the other heatedly. "I been thinking, Sam, that I'd go West farming. They say hands out there get good pay, and there's a chance to take up some land for yourself."

"Just because Mrs. Jackson's stuck on you, Wes? Pshaw, I wouldn't let a little thing like that worry me."

"Well, it don't seem right she should pester me the way she does," responded Wes fretfully. "Sometimes I think the old lady wants to marry me."

"She ain't so very old. Besides, you're no chicken yourself. You're old enough to get married."

"Yes, I suppose I be. I'll be fifty-one come December."

"Mrs. Jackson's only fifty. I ought to know, her first husband—I mean her husband—being my father's half-brother."

"Do tell!" exclaimed Wes in great surprise. "Only fifty, hey? She's the best cook in Oxville, too."

"Yes, and she's got a snug little farm waiting for a man to run it and give her a home to live in," said Sam encouragingly. "Better think it over, Wes."

"By 'Mighty, I dunno but I will! I always said Mrs. Jackson was a good-looking woman. And kind-hearted as they make 'em. Say, Sam, you think Jackson's really dead, don't you?"

"Of course," replied the other. "It's ten—yes, it's most eleven years since he started for the Klondike to get rich. There was some talk in town that he and Mrs. Jackson had a quarrel, but I never took stock in that."

"And he never come back?" persisted Wes.

"Nobody ever saw him again. They couldn't, and I'll tell you why. First off Mrs. Jackson got some letters from him, so my mother told me. Then she didn't hear anything. After a good many months there came a letter saying a man named Jackson had been froze to death on Chilkoot Pass—a pass in the Klondike is the same as a notch round here—and had been et up by dogs. Mrs. Jackson's never been able to bear the sight of a dog since."

"She must have thought a heap of him."

"No, 'twasn't that so much. But she was used to him. Better marry her, Wes. You'd soon get wonted. Besides, as you know, she's an almighty good cook, and then, there's the farm."

The hired man fell silent, and the other was not sufficiently interested in the subject to pursue it further. As the flails beat upon the bursting heads of oats, and the dust, rising in thick clouds, dimmed the glow of the stable lantern, his thoughts returned to the magic bath-tub.

In what way could he best turn it to advantage? That was the burden of his meditations. He had promised Wes, as a condition of silence concerning his investment, that the village should have a surprise, and the enchanted washer, as he still continued to think of it, opened the door to glittering possibilities in the surprise line.

First of all, however, there were two uncertainties to dissolve. One was the limitations of the bath-tub, if it possessed any, and the other the nature of the surprise.

There were many things which would surprise Oxville, it was true, such for instance as seeing the Baptist clergyman under the influence of liquor, or Bill McKeeler, the village drunkard, sober. But, after all, these would not prove the spectacular phenomena he sought.

Or he might influence Orlando Squires, the miser, to make a donation to the poor. Yet while that would be unprecedented, the incredulous populace would merely suspect that Orlando's mind had decayed. Something more hair-raising must be undertaken.

Suppose he should have the stone watering-trough transferred to the top of the Baptist church tower—the tower which had started to be a steeple, but because of lack of funds had become only a truncated cone. Such an occurrence would be droll, but would it prove side-splitting? Sam decided that it would not.

As the task of swinging the oats neared its end he brought his flails down with vicious cracks and cogitated bitterly on the narrow possibilities of an enchanted washer. It rather surprised him to find so little really worth doing.

At first blush one would say that, given unlimited chances for prankishness, it would be as simple as breathing to achieve something that would never be forgotten. Yet here he was stumped for a channel of activity.

Was there any way in which he could turn the washer to his own betterment? He remembered to have read that Solomon was offered his choice, and expressed an overwhelming desire for wisdom, with the result that everything else the heart of man could want was added.

Sam felt, however, that he was wise enough for all the simple purposes of farm-life. Moreover, if he were going to wish for judgment which would enable him to meet intelligently the various problems he encountered, why not, better still, wish for their solutions as they arose, which would entail less labor?

His mind wandered meditatively over his farm. Even before the accident of the magic bath-tub he had felt himself happily placed. There was practically nothing in the rolling meadow and pasture land he would like changed. His cattle were fat, his corn cribs full, his barns were choked with hay.

To be sure, he had always wanted to keep a dog, but Mrs. Jackson's antipathy to canine pets made it inadvisable for him to attempt to acquire one until he had obtained release from his housekeeper. Otherwise there would unfailingly be a repetition of the forty days' flood.

His house, he had always thought, would suit him just a little better if it faced south instead of north. Yet here again Mrs. Jackson interfered. She would inevitably give voice to bitter complaints if her daily routine were altered by any such revolution. That, too, must wait.

"Wes, if you had a wish, what would you wish for most?" he asked at last, stopping his work with his flail in the air.

"Gosh, I don't know," answered the hired man unimaginatively. "I'm awful fond of mince-pie, but like enough if I had all I wanted it would make me sick. I need a suit of clothes this winter or next spring, but I've got money enough saved up to buy it. I dunno, Sam. Why?"

"Oh, nothing. I was just thinking."

To himself he remarked:

"A man must be either pretty rich or pretty stupid when he can't think of anything worth while to wish for."

The problem continued to worry him after he had finished his work and gone into the house. It was with him when at nine he went to bed. It kept him awake beyond his wonted hour, and he was still pondering it when finally he passed into an uneasy sleep. His subconsciousness kept chewing away on that singular situation, a wishing ring at hand and nothing to wish for.

Some time after midnight he half awakened with the solution clear in his mind.

"It worked once," he said to himself. "It'll work again. That's the best idea I've had since I went to New York. By gravy, that's the best idea I ever had!"

The untroubled slumber into which he then passed was not broken until at dawn Wes Smithers burst into his employer's bedroom breathless and excited.

"Wake up, Sam, wake up!" he cried. "Somebody's been stealing our hens."

"What's that?" demanded the sleeper, awake on the instant and sitting up. "Stealing our hens?"

"Three of the fattest pullets on the place gone," replied Wes in tones which carried conviction. "There ain't hide nor hair of them left."

Sam threw on his clothes hastily, and, rushing out to the poultry-yard, confirmed his hired man's announcement. Whoever or whatever had selected them had exercised commendable discernment. Nothing in the whole flock possessed better table qualities than the three missing fowls.

"That's the funniest thing I ever heard tell of, Wes," he remarked after a careful examination of the premises. "How do you figure it happened. Nobody ever stole any hens in Oxville before."

"That's the queer part of it," explained Wes. "Everybody here keeps his own hens."

"Couldn't have been a fox or a polecat, you think?"

"No, because then there would have been some feathers left. And a weasel would have killed the whole flock and left them here. I told you the hen-house door was open when I came out this morning. I left it bolted last night."

Sam inspected the bolt again, hoping to discover some clue, but found none.

"I swear, Wes, I don't like it," he said at last. "'Taint that I begrudge anybody a hen or two. They can have a dozen and welcome for all I care. But Oxville's always been honest, and I hate like poison to think of anybody in this town taking what don't belong to him without asking for it."

"That's so," acquiesced Smithers.

"Well, there's nothing to do but go in and start the kitchen fire. But I'd give a good deal to know who stole them hens."

CHAPTER IX.

MRS. JACKSON HAS A SHOCK.

It was with a considerable effort of the will that Sam held himself that day to the discharge of his simple farm duties. Autumn was well under way, and in the hills where Oxville lies winter often arrives with no forewarning. October, therefore, brings days of feverish haste and hard labor in making everything snug in anticipation of the first snowfall.

Too good a farmer to neglect any of the time-honored precautions, Sam nevertheless found it difficult to keep from breaking loose at an early hour to try again the powers of the magic tub.

"What's the matter with you, Sam?" asked Wes at last, irked by his employer's silence.

The latter did not answer, being at that moment in a brow study on the outcome of the great experiment he had decided to institute. After waiting as long as politeness demanded, Wes said again, in his best ox-driving tones:

"Say, Sam!"

"Well, what is it?"

"I asked what's the matter with you? You been as glum all day as though your best cow had run dry. Mrs. Jackson ain't been making love to you, too, has she?"

Sam's face broke into a cheerful grin.

"Now, there ain't no need to be jealous, Wessy," he remarked. "It's you she's after. You don't take her for a Mormon, do you?"

"I dunno," Wes replied reflectively. "I always heard she was a Methodist. But if it ain't that, what is it?"

"There's nothing the matter with me. I don't know what should make you think so."

"When a man like you goes round with a face as long as a horse's, it looks as though something was wrong," answered Wes logically. "You ain't worrying about them hens, are you?"

"Nope. But you might as well hunt up a padlock and put it on the chicken-coop door to-night. And take this stuff into the barn before you go after the cows. I've got something in the house to attend to."

He sauntered off, followed by the hired man's curious gaze. Wes felt

that complications had been developing in his employer's simple nature of late.

Though Sam was not given to undue thoughtfulness, it seemed to be a growing habit with him to propound purely academic questions having no bearing on the agricultural situation, as for instance what Wes would wish for if he knew his wish would be granted. Moreover, there was something not quite explained about Sam's escapade of the previous evening. Wes Smithers had not yet recovered from the shock of surprise he experienced upon seeing his employer enter the barn in nature's garb.

"Looks to me as though he was getting soft in the understanding," he muttered to himself. "Too many baths. It wouldn't astonish me if he got water on the brain, and that'll be the end of him. A bath on Saturday night was always good enough for the Smitherses, and I guess it's a safe rule."

It was quite dark when Sam entered the bath-room. He lighted the oil-lamp and looked round with the feeling that he had stepped into a sort of Aladdin's palace.

Nothing was changed from the previous evening. Against the end of the room was the great pile of toilet soap, its artificial sweetness filling Sam's nostrils and appealing to him as the most refined odor it had ever been his good fortune to encounter.

Over the rack hung a thick, soft Turkish towel, slightly crumpled, where he had placed it. The polished yellow piping and faucets reflected back the dim rays of the lamp.

The proprietor's gaze, after taking in general conditions, wandered to the enchanted washer, and he addressed it as though it were a sentient being.

"You're a darned cute little trick," he remarked, "and I'm going to make you earn your board and keep. But gosh to goodness, I've got to be careful."

The first item on his evening program was a bath, which he took with greater enjoyment than he had ever felt in his tub since the first time he had occupied it.

"Perhaps them city bath-rooms have got some things I haven't," he thought, "but I'll bet none of them have got an enchanted washer on the waste-pipe. 'T least, I didn't find any that had. Now let's touch her off easy once just to see if she's working."

It happened to have been an Indian-summerlike day of high temperature. Though the air outside had cooled with the falling of darkness, the bath-room, with the supplemental aid of the hot-water pipe conducted through it from the kitchen stove, was sweltering.

It recalled to Sam's memory the steam-room of the Turkish bath establishment he had patronized in New York. He realized suddenly that he was actually suffering.

"Seems as though I never had been cool enough," he meditated. "I'd just like to try being real cold once."

He leaned forward and scratched the washer thoughtfully. Then his temperamental recklessness seized him.

"I wish this tub was full of ice," he said.

The wish was effectual. The owner of the tub felt a stiffening of his limbs and body, and a shiver shot up his spinal column. Looking down, he saw to his horror that he was encased in a solid mass of soap-streaked ice.

The cold and the peril of his situation numbed his senses for a moment. His teeth chattered, and his hair seemed standing on end, both from fright and from cold.

If his situation on the previous evening, when he had been shut out of the bath-room devoid of clothing, had been embarrassing, it was nothing to the actual danger which confronted him now. Then, though unconventionally bare of draperies, he had been a free agent with the possibility of seeking succor under cover of darkness, but now he was as helpless as though paralyzed, condemned, it appeared, to sit where he

was until he froze to death, thus to be found rigid and ridiculous by those who missed him. The thought almost made him blush in spite of his discomfort.

But after a moment, when the first panic of fright had abated, he saw one loophole of escape.

He hardly dared try it for fear it would not prove effective, but at last, urged to haste by an ominous numbness stealing through his system, stretched forth his arm, once more rubbed the washer on the waste-pipe control, and ejaculated through chattering teeth and with purple lips:

"I wish this ice would melt."

The next instant he sprang from the tub and proceeded to leap wildly round the narrow limits of the bathroom, threshing his arms against his chest vigorously to restore circulation. It was several minutes ere he felt insured against an immediate attack of pneumonia.

But as the blood began to course through his veins, and under the vigorous manipulation of the Turkish towel, a comforting glow succeeded the stiffening chill he had suffered, he was able to take a saner view of the predicament into which he had thrust himself. Catching a glimpse of his face in the medicine-cabinet's mirror, he scowled fiercely at it, and exclaimed:

"Sam Tupper, you're a fool! Can't you ever learn to do things moderately? Haven't you got any sense at all? You're a pretty fellow to have an enchanted washer. First thing you know you'll be getting into jail with your foolishness."

The outburst helped to restore his equanimity to more nearly normal, and he started to dress. From time to time he shivered slightly, as he recollected the horror of the brief period when he had been incased in ice, like a straddle-bug in a drop of amber. Then he burst into a laugh at the thought of what searchers would have said who found him thus preserved.

"Talk about your Dr. Cook and his purple snow," he chuckled. "What would they say to Sam Tupper and his bathing ice? I guess Sir John Franklin hasn't much on me, even if Oxville is a little behind the times."

He adjusted his overalls straps to his shoulders, pulled on his cowhide boots, and stood a moment pondering.

"Wonder whether I'd better try it to-night?" he murmured half aloud. "Perhaps I'd better, and then again maybe I'd better not. There's something to be said both ways."

It was the big experiment on which he was reflecting—the experiment which was likely to change the current of his whole life.

"And that's a long time," thought Sam. "Gosh, I wish somebody'd tell me what to do. It doesn't seem as though my nerve was just right for me to try it to-night. Morning, right after breakfast, would be better, perhaps. That's when they hang men, because their nerves are stronger then."

He held out a tanned and sinewy hand, studying it as to its steadiness. It did not waver so much as a fraction of an inch. Plainly there was nothing the matter with Sam's nerves. Nevertheless he was still disinclined to embark upon the great adventure.

"There'll be plenty of time," he muttered. "Let's wait and see what the weather is like to-morrow — or next Sunday. I'll have a lot of time to think it over between now and then."

By now he had argued himself out of the idea of the big undertaking for the evening, yet was loath to leave his fascinating plaything. He turned to the washer and fondled it lovingly.

"A cute little trick," he repeated. "Thought you had me that time, didn't you? But Sam Tupper's too smart to get caught that way—leastways a second time.

"I've just got to try you again. Now let's see what we'll wish for."

He removed his hand from the washer to scratch his head, sucking his hollow tooth studiously the while. After a couple of minutes of blankness there

returned to him an idea which had flashed through his mind in the afternoon.

"I've always wished father had built this house facing the south instead of the north," he ruminated. "'Twould be a darn sight handier. We wouldn't feel the wind so much in winter, and in summer we could sit on the piazzy and keep an eye on the stables at the same time.

"What's the odds if the back door is on the road? Makes it all the better, in fact. Most folks that call here come to the back door, and it saves them walking all the way round the house. It would be so much better that I wonder I've never changed it before, by gum! Here goes for a whirl before supper."

He rubbed the ring and uttered the wish which was in his mind.

So far as he could tell, nothing happened. He had been fully prepared to feel a convulsion of the solid building, perhaps to hear a rending of the hewn timbers upon which it was laid, and was nerved even to a spasm of seasickness as the old Tupper home swung on its axis.

But no such phenomena manifested themselves. Everything about him was unchanged.

"Guess she didn't work that time," he remarked with a sense of disappointment. To have the enchanted washer betray him now was like being betrayed by a trusted friend. Sam felt he would almost have his steadiest workhorse turn into a runaway.

"Mighty queer, though," he added. "She never missed fire before."

He stepped to the small, square window by which the bath-room was ventilated, and looked out. Everything was just the same—no, by 'Mighty, it wasn't, either.

Hitherto the window had given on the stables; now in the dim light of the young moon he perceived that the barns were missing, and their place had been taken by an avenue of elms, along which a farmer's wagon, with a lantern swinging from its axle, was passing slowly.

The wonder-worker became greatly elated.

"She did work! She did work!" he whispered huskily. "She can move houses. By scratch, I'll get all the house-moving business in Oxville. I'll get all there is anywhere. It'll make me a millionaire."

Golden visions of the fortune to be amassed in the house-moving industry shook his simple soul to its foundations. With so slight an effort and no expense, what fortune and fame might he not acquire!

He would become known not only in Oxville, but throughout the civilized world, as Sam Tupper, the—

Piercing screams in Mrs. Jackson's well-known accents interrupted the current of his reverie. If volume of noise and intensity went for anything, she was being murdered.

"What in thunder's happened now?" Sam wondered. "Guess I'd better put things back where they were or she'll make it hot for me."

He gave the ring another hasty rub and expressed the wish that the house should face once more as his father had built it. Again glancing out of the window he observed with satisfaction that external objects had regained their former relations to the old home.

The housekeeper's screams did not abate, however, and Sam went out quickly to see what had happened.

He found her sitting in the kitchen rocker alternately weeping and laughing, clearly hysterical. From time to time, as breath permitted, she gave voice to incoherent lamentations.

"What in tunket is the matter?" demanded Sam, amazed.

Mrs. Jackson was unable to reply. She simply glanced up, went into a fit of laughter, followed it with a flood of tears, and rocked to and fro wildly.

"Wes! Quick! Run for the doctor!" shouted her employer; but the hired man was still in the barn, out of hearing.

Sam bailed a dipper full of water out of the pail in the sink, threw it into her face, and stood aside to watch results. The lady gasped, sputtered a couple of times, and presently regained her senses sufficiently to explain her condition, although brokenly.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" she moaned. "I threw the slops in the minister's face."

"In the minister's face?" Sam repeated aghast.

"Whatever was he doing at the back door? He always called at the front door before. Oh, dear! Oh, dear!"

"The minister was coming up to the back door?"

"Just as I was throwing out a pan of dishwater," wailed Mrs. Jackson. "He oughtn't to have been at the back door. I threw it right into his face. He never came there before."

A light began to break in upon Sam. He began to suspect that he knew more about the accident to the clergyman than he would care to divulge. Perhaps house-moving was not as harmless an occupation as he had thought.

"There, there, Mrs. Jackson," he said soothingly, "never mind. He hadn't ought to have come to the back door. Served him right. He won't do it again."

He could not resist the chance to improve the accident.

"But I wouldn't be throwing slops out like that if I was you. It might catch Wes or me some time."

Mrs. Jackson refused, however, to be comforted.

She threw her apron over her head and broke into a fresh deluge of tears.

In the midst of her lamentations Sam seized the makings of a few sandwiches from the table and sauntered out to the barn to enjoy a quiet meal in the congenial society of his hired man.

CHAPTER X.

SAM GETS INTO TROUBLE.

"'Lo, fellers!"

At the unexpectedness of the voice, Sam and Wes looked up quickly from the meager collation of cold veal and dry bread they were enjoying in the warm fragrance of the cow-barn. The rays of the lantern fell on a short, square figure outlined in the doorway.

"If it ain't Eph Hewlett!" exclaimed Sam, the first to find his voice. "Come right in and sit down, Eph. You can take this bucket, or you can use that meal-bag over there. Help yourself. Have a bite to eat?"

"Nope. Et," replied Eph succinctly, without raising his eyes to meet the glance of his hospitable host.

He did not accept the offer of a seat, but moved a couple of steps farther into the barn and leaned against the wall, where he appeared to derive a certain gratification from scratching his back against a roughly hewn upright.

Eph being "no hand to make visits," in Oxville parlance, Sam wondered what errand had brought him thither this evening. He forebore to ask questions, however, knowing that in the fulness of time and at the teamster's own good pleasure the message, whatever it was, would be forthcoming. He sought, therefore, to invite sociability with rustic witticism.

"Say, Eph, I heard you were going to take part in the debate at the lyceum next week," he remarked inquiringly.

Eph grinned acknowledgment of the feeble effort at humor, but without lifting his gaze.

"Didn't you hear so, Wes?" pursued Sam.

"Yes, and I heard Eph was talking so much down to the store the other night that nobody else could get in a word edgewise. How about it, Eph?"

"Aw, you fellers," replied the one addressed. "Say, Sam."

"Well?"

"Mrs. Jackson—with you yet?"

"Was the last I knew, bless her soul. That was this evening. That's why Wes and I are eating our supper out here. She was crying, and we got afraid of wet feet. Why?"

The visitor glanced suspiciously around, as though apprehensive of being overheard. Then, leaning toward Sam, he whispered hoarsely:

"Something queer."

"What? Suffering cats, Eph, what in time are you driving at? Anything happened to Mrs. Jackson?"

He was unable to escape a passing tremor of apprehension that some murmur of odd doings at the Tupper homestead had reached the public, and was relieved at Eph's explanation.

"Up to her house. Lights there."

"Her farmhouse, you mean?"

"Yep."

"Well, that is funny. When did you see lights there?"

"Last night. Driving home from Winston. Lights up-stairs. About ten."

By ten o'clock, except on extraordinary occasions, everybody in Oxville is in bed and asleep. Knowledge of this fact made it apparent to the recipient of Eph's information that whoever had taken possession of the dwelling Mrs. Jackson had left unoccupied since the departure of her late husband for the gold-fields was a stranger to local habits, and clearly an unauthorized intruder. He turned to his assistant.

"Hear that, Wes? Somebody's in Mrs. Jackson's house. Might be tramps, I suppose."

"Like enough," replied the hired man. "Somebody'd ought to look into it."

"You're right. Guess I'll stroll over there now."

"Want me to go along?" asked Wes.

"No need. You lock up here when you get through. I'll be back pretty soon. Come along, Eph."

But, having executed his mission, Mr. Hewlett had already dissolved into the darkness without a word of good night.

He was even at that moment strolling toward Gray's store and post-office, murmuring in his heavy-witted way:

"Sam and Wes—funny fellers."

As Sam sauntered across the fields the peace of a warm October night entered his soul, disturbed by recent exciting events. He felt like congratulating himself that fate had made him a farmer.

There was something distinctly healing in the lazy blink of the stars overhead, the heavy sweetness of decaying leaves and dying vegetation, and the glimpse he caught through the trees of a light in Huldah Bell's kitchen. Again there came to his mind the thought of the great plan.

Though Oxville conventions permitted any woman under the compulsion of circumstances to keep house by herself if she saw fit to do so, the spot in which the late Mr. Jackson had left his consort solitary was somewhat too isolated for a nature so dependent upon soul companionship as hers.

It sat well back from an infrequented highway sometimes used as a short cut to or from Winston, and was screened from the road by a row of somber elms. The black trunks of these trees struck Sam as rather forbidding in the autumnal night.

Immediately after Jackson had departed on his quest of Eldorado his wife had shut up the house and begun a round of indefinite visits with relatives. Sam Tupper's need of a housekeeper after the death of his mother having offered an opening, she had suggested herself in the capacity and been accepted.

This engagement was now some years in the historic past. Meantime had been received news of Jackson's death in Chilkoot Pass and of the voracity of his dogs, and it now appeared likely that, unless something of a miraculous nature supervened, Sam would be able to count on the services of the worthy woman for the remainder of her active life.

She now looked upon Sam as her personal property, to guard and to guide. If at times he entertained himself with dreams of a younger, more

winsome figure around the place, the certainty that Mrs. Jackson would interpose every possible objection to a transfer of authority had forbidden him to draw definite plans. It was only very recently that a path to the realization of his desires had appeared to open before him.

As he drew near the Jackson place he cast his glance ahead, and jumped to the conclusion that he had sped on a fool's errand.

"There ain't nobody there," he said to himself. "Eph Hewlett's such a chucklehead he can't see any straighter'n he can talk."

He halted at the picket-gate and tried to pierce the gloom which surrounded the premises. The house, shrouded in darkness, bore every evidence of long disuse.

The gate hung loosely on rusty hinges, the grass was long and tangled in the yard, and the building itself was as silent and unresponsive as a forgotten tomb.

"If I was a tramp I wouldn't like to stay there," thought Sam. "Looks mighty lonesome and unpleasant."

Having come thus far, however, he felt that he would do well to make certain of conditions, so he entered through the sagging gate, picked his way across the matted grass to the front door, and tried it.

"Locked, of course," he added.

At the side door as well entrance was barred. The blinds of the lower floor were tightly closed. So, as far as he could observe, were those above.

"I hope Eph ain't been trying that three-per-cent beer over to Winston," he thought. "How he could see a light in the house with the blinds all closed is more than I can figure."

By this time he had made a complete circuit of the dwelling and was at the front again. As he glanced upward he gave a start.

"That's mighty queer," he muttered. "I thought those shutters were all closed, but there's one open. It can't be that it was opened when I went round to the back. Must have overlooked it.

"That's Mrs. Jackson's best bedroom, too. Guess I'd better fix that—if I can get in."

Getting in proved no easy matter. He rattled all of the down-stairs shutters vainly in the hope of finding one which would respond to his touch. Whoever had locked them had put conscience into the task.

Again he made the circuit of the house, seeking an avenue of entrance, and then looked at the second story to see whether there were any way of climbing to it. It was while studying this problem that he received another jolt of amazement.

"By smoke, that's the oddest thing I ever heard of!" he exclaimed to himself. "That shutter was open five minutes ago, and now it's closed. But, pshaw!" he added, to reassure himself, "it must have been the wind that did it."

Sam was no coward; but, though he hated to admit the fact, there had really been no air stirring all day, nor was there at the moment. He thought for a minute of going back after Wes; between them, they could bring a ladder, or could get the keys from Mrs. Jackson. Then he gave a deprecating little laugh.

"Sam, I think you're getting chicken-hearted," he said to himself. "It's up to you to go in there now, just to show you're not afraid, or else you won't be able to look yourself in the face. Come, now, don't go for help until you know you must have it."

Thus encouraged, he recollected that there was one means of entrance he had not put to the test. This was the cellar hatchway.

"I'll just give it a try," he thought, "though she would not be so careless as to leave that unlocked."

To his astonishment he found that it yielded. He laid it back and looked down into the black cave below.

"Must be she thought it was enough to lock the kitchen-door," he reflected.

Cautiously he picked his way down the stone steps, slippery with moss, and met at their bottom the second surprise of an unlocked door. As he flung it open the dank odors of an unused vegetable cellar greeted him.

Boyhood familiarity with the premises, through the relationship of his family and the Jacksons, enabled him to find his way now through the velvety darkness to the cellar stairs. He fumbled in his pockets for a match, and was rejoiced to discover that he possessed one.

"I'll save that for up-stairs," he thought. "That is, if the stair door ain't locked."

Not only was it unlocked, but it was ajar. He stopped on the threshold of the kitchen and listened. Not a sound greeted his ears. The house seemed re-echoing with that uncanny silence which infests dwellings long abandoned.

"Hello, there!" said Sam in a throaty growl, thinking to bolster up his courage with the sound of his own voice.

No answer came back. He debated a moment whether he should light his match now or save it for up-stairs, finally deciding on the latter as the wiser course, since he knew his way perfectly through the unfurnished chambers. He made a step forward into the kitchen, halted again, and then started confidently for the hall door when, of a sudden, he gave voice to a loud yell of startled surprise.

"Consarn it! What you doing?" he shouted.

Soundlessly, out of the blackness, a mesh of cords had descended upon him. It draped itself from his head to his legs, binding his arms tightly to his sides and preventing him from taking a step. He was as helpless as a noosed partridge.

The terrifying thing was that there was still no noise about him, no reply to his exclamations, although Sam knew he was the victim of some unknown human agency. There was neither voice nor shuffling of feet. Yet unseen hands tightened the cords which encircled him, and his sturdiest struggles availed nothing against the superior tactical position of his assailants.

For half a minute the binding process continued. Then Sam heard the sputter of a match, and the blue glow of sulfur was succeeded by the brighter blaze of a splint of pine, revealing to him his predicament.

He was in the center of the kitchen. In front of him stood a man he had never seen before—more than that, of a kind he had never seen.

He was a smooth-faced, copper-tinted individual, with snapping black eyes and straight black hair, dressed in a cheap suit of clothes which set uncomfortably on him, as though he had been accustomed to more generous raiment.

Glancing down, Sam discovered that what had entangled him was a stoutly woven fish-net. It held him as tightly as he could have been clasped by a strait-jacket.

The match was behind him, so that he knew the singular-appearing person who stood looking at him silently had a confederate. But who it was he could not see.

Then the match flickered and went out, and on the instant Sam felt his heels lifted into the air, and with a bump he landed on the floor, a rope around his ankles.

At this latest indignity speech burst from him.

"What in Tophet are you trying to do?" he gasped angrily. "Wait till I get loose. You'll see."

There was no immediate response from the surrounding darkness. After another exasperating minute of silence, however, during which Sam sputtered and gasped in an unsuccessful effort to put his wrath into fitting words, human speech broke the stillness.

But for all Sam could glean from it, his captors might as well have continued wordless.

Evidently they were conversing with

one another, but in no tongue the farmer had ever imagined.

It sounded more like the crackling of dry twigs beneath the heel than like language. Sam realized only that there was an interchange of thought.

Then silence dropped its mantle once more over the pocket-dark kitchen, and the captive, after listening intently for a while in momentary expectation of another attack, realized that he had been left alone.

CHAPTER XI.

HULDAH BELL TO THE RESCUE.

THE mellow sunshine of a warm October morning, flooding Huldah Bell's spotless kitchen, caught her singing at her daily tasks.

The girl was a pleasant sight as she busied herself filling the lamps, polishing her milk-can, and setting the house to rights generally. Her well-filled but girlish figure was alive with youth and contentment, although the words of the song she sang suggested that it was not part of her scheme of life to rest permanently in a state of single blessedness. The song ran:

When we are married, why, what will you do?
I'll be as sweet as I can be to you;
I will be tender and I will be true
When I am married, sweetheart, to you.

Having polished the tin milk-can until it shone like refined silver, Huldah glanced at the kitchen clock, observed that it marked the hour of eleven, and concluded it was time to go out and gather the eggs.

In Oxville not to keep hens is a confession of improvidence. Huldah was little inclined to disregard local conventions, and though her flock of poultry was small, she took pride in keeping it to the highest attainable state of efficiency.

The morning's harvest, however, was a disappointing one. When she had been able to find in the nests only five eggs, she concluded that some of the layers must have been stealing their nests.

But a minute examination of all corners of the poultry-yard was unsuccessful in discovering any additions to the original quintet in her little basket.

"That's three mornings this week that I've found only five eggs," she remarked to herself. "What's the matter with the hens?"

Suspecting that the young son of one of her neighbors, who assisted Huldah in her homekeeping by attending to a few outside duties, among them that of feeding and watering the fowls, had been remiss in attention to her pets, she entered upon an investigation of their condition.

So far as she could tell, they were well fed and contented. Presently, however, it struck her that the number of those present was not what she had reason to expect. She started to take a census.

When she had finished counting she gave an exclamation of surprise.

"Why, there are only nineteen," she remarked. "I must have missed some."

A recount proved that she had not overlooked any the first time. The conclusion was inevitable that some thief, in feathers, fur or human clothing had been depriving her of her property, and a wave of indignation rolled over her.

As she stood pondering on the situation, a shadow darkened the hen-house door, and, looking up, she saw that the bulky figure of her nearest neighbor, Mrs. Prine, was shutting off the light.

"Good morning, Huldah," was the greeting of the worthy dame. "I come over to see if you could let me have half a dozen eggs. I've got to make a pound of cake for the Ladies' Aid Sociable to-morrow night, and our hens have struck."

"I can let you have five," replied Huldah. "Will that do?"

"Well, the recipe says six, but maybe I can make out to skimp it a

little. I thought your hens always laid?"

"They did when they were here. I've just been counting them and there are three missing."

"Why Huldah Bell, what do you mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Prine, aghast at the sensational declaration.

"Somebody or something's taken three of my hens. Bessie and Blanche and Terese are gone. I just found it out."

Mrs. Prine was all but dumb with horror. When at last she recovered control of her organs of speech she said:

"You don't suppose anybody's taken them, do you?"

"Somebody or something has," said Huldah firmly. "They couldn't get out themselves. If they did get out, they would stay round where they are fed."

"If that don't beat all! Well, I must be running back. You ought to have a man round the place, Huldah. It's a shame a good-looking young woman like you isn't married."

With this parting shot Mrs. Prine departed, and Huldah, carefully latching the chicken-coop door, went back to the house.

She was troubled, as Sam Tupper had been, by the theft of her hens, not so much because of the intrinsic value of Bessie and Blanche and Terese, as because their disappearance pointed to the presence in Oxville of some one whose standards of honesty fell below those to which the village as a whole adhered.

The warmth seemed strangely to have gone out of the sunshine when she entered the kitchen again. After a few minutes' reflection she decided to take a man into her confidence in the matter of hen stealing, and, throwing a shawl over her head, started for Sam Tupper's house.

"Good morning, Mrs. Jackson. Where's Sam?" she asked the housekeeper.

"I ain't seen him this morning," replied that lady lugubriously. "He's the uncertainest thing I ever knew. Seems as though he was getting worse lately. Jackson was bad enough, but he couldn't hold a candle to Sam Tupper for uncertainness."

Mrs. Jackson had not recovered from the nervous shock of the preceding evening, when she had subjected her minister to indignity, and her natural plaintiveness was even more marked than usual.

"Do you mean to say that you didn't see Sam at breakfast this morning?" demanded Huldah.

"No, nor his bed wa'n't slept in last night," Mrs. Jackson replied. "He didn't say nothing to me about going away, and I don't know where he is. Nobody has any consideration for a lone woman, Huldah. But perhaps Wessy can tell you. Wessy's out to the barn."

"Wessy?" repeated the girl.

"Wessy—Wessy Smithers. He ain't any stranger round these parts, is he?"

"Oh!" said Huldah. "I'll go right out and see him."

The hired man scratched his head.

"Why, now you speak of it," he drawled, "I ain't seen Sam since last night. I reckoned he was sleeping late. Don't Mis' Jackson know where he is?"

"She says he didn't sleep here last night."

"Didn't sleep here!" exclaimed Wes. "That's funny. I recollect now, the last time I saw him was after supper. Eph Hewlett come over and said he saw a light at Mrs. Jackson's farmhouse night before last, and Sam went over to find out what was going on. Probably he thought he'd sleep there and learn what it meant."

"If he had slept there for that purpose he would have come back before now," replied the practical Huldah.

"That's so," the hired man admitted. "I'll run over there and look him up as soon as I've finished sorting these apples and had my dinner."

Huldah bade him good morning and started homeward.

Meditating on her friend's disappearance it struck her that if, as seemed possible, something really serious had happened to Sam, the sooner he received aid the better it would be.

Possibly, she thought, he had fallen and sprained his ankle, or even broken a leg. Even at the moment he might be suffering.

The thought led her to turn aside from the homeward path and strike into a woodland path leading to Mrs. Jackson's abandoned farmhouse.

Nothing about the place when she came in sight of it suggested human occupancy. The shutters and blinds were tightly closed, as on the night before. Then the open cellar hatchway caught her eye.

"Somebody's been in here," she reflected. "If Sam had gone in and come out again he would have closed that."

As she stood looking into the dark cellar she thought she caught the sound of a human voice, a sort of muffled shout. She listened again, her ears strained to receive the slightest noise.

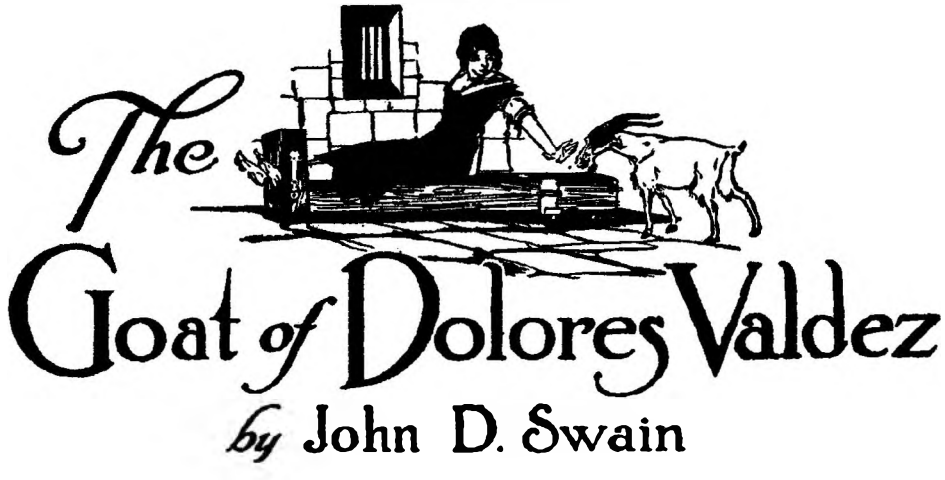
Presently she heard a mumbling as of a man talking to himself.

"There's somebody here," she concluded quickly. "I'm going to see who it is. Either it's Sam or it's some one who hasn't any business in the house."

The thought of fear did not suggest itself as she picked her way down the slippery steps into the cellar and toward the stairs leading up to the kitchen.

She paused half-way to the landing, her ears having registered again, and more distinctly, the rumble of a man's bass.

(To be continued.)



The Goat of Dolores Valdez

by John D. Swain

TO the chief inquisitor, Don Rafael, came the fat little assistant, with trouble in his twinkling eyes.

"Illustrious," he said, "the milk girl will not reveal anything!"

Don Rafael sighed, and laid aside the thick roll of parchment on which he was laboriously transcribing his "Life of St. Francis of Assisi," the dearest project of his latter years.

He was a kindly, handsome old man, with a pink skin and snow-white hair.

To his assistant's remarks he replied simply: "She must!"

He opened a drawer in his ebony and tortoise-shell cabinet, and removed from it a formidable-looking document, adangle with awkward red seals the size of Spanish dollars. Spreading it before him, he refreshed his memory of Dolores Valdez.

She was, it appeared from the document, a simple peasant girl, of less than twenty years; poor, her only possession being a goat, which she daily drove to the houses of her customers, and milked into the pitchers and jugs they brought to her.

She was an orphan, and was not known to have any living relative.

In some curious fashion she had become entangled with a body of dangerous conspirators, who used her as a messenger, her poverty and obscurity causing her to be ignored by the secret police. That she received from her fees as messenger more than from the sale of her goat's milk, was known; also, that she had bound herself by terrible oaths not to betray the names of her employers.

Their plans were unknown to her; but she was in possession of the names and descriptions of many criminals, several of whom had taken part in a recent unsuccessful attempt upon the life of the queen mother.

For the past two weeks Dolores Valdez had resisted every effort to force her to reveal the names of the conspirators.

It was with a full realization of the importance of the affair that the chief inquisitor had replied to his worried assistant's statement with the words: "She must!"

He finished reading the document, replaced it carefully in the table-drawer, glanced with a parting sigh at his "Life of St. Francis," and asked: "Is she pretty?"

The assisant coughed. "She—was," he replied.

"Well, what has been done with her? What has she said?"

"Everything and nothing," the assistant answered both queries. "First, an effort was made to discover some relative, and failing that, some friend, that they might be tortured before her eyes, so that she would reveal the desired information rather than see her own flesh and blood suffer. The utmost efforts of the secret police did not avail to find one relative, and stranger yet, one intimate."

Don Rafael shook his head incredulously.

"You say she is—was—pretty; the document mentions her as having, for a peasant, unusual intelligence; and yet there was no young man, no young girl, beloved of her?"

The assistant answered: "Pallacio himself took up the search, and could find no one."

"Well, what next was done?"

"She was made intoxicated with strong wine of Xeres, in the hope that under its influence she might forget herself. I regret to say that, although she at last became quite ill, she never lost her head. Illustrious, I would give my farm in Andalusia for her capacity!"

"Well—and then?"

"Then she was kept continuously awake for a week. But though she became so exhausted that she would fall asleep with her eyes wide open and the hot iron on her flesh, her nerves never gave way. She would answer nothing."

"Was this all?"

"At last she was subjected to the question by water; first, of course, the question ordinary; but later, the question extraordinary. She defied us, and, when she was able to speak, she cursed us.

"So you see that everything possible has been done. Yet she is the only one who can give the police the information needed, and each day renders the escape of the conspirators more probable."

"Did you come here, my son, to explain these things to me, or to seek my assistance?" Don Rafael asked, with gentle irony.

The assistant was properly abashed.

"Unless you help us, we shall kill her without getting a word!" he declared.

"That would be a pity, for two reasons: no one wishes to see a little peasant girl who delivered messages

she could not read, abused or killed; and certainly she must be made to speak. I fear I shall have to induce her myself. I had hoped that my servants might save me this trouble, but it would seem that they are singularly lacking in intelligence."

If lacking in intelligence, however, the chief inquisitor's servants were not lacking in industry, or in equipment.

At this very moment, Pedro, the tormentor, was pouring out to his wife in their snug cabin near the city gate, his troubles with the refractory dairymaid. The honest fellow sat by the fire with his youngest girl on his knee, while the wife prepared his simple but wholesome dinner.

As a good wife, she sympathized with him, consoled him, suggested expedients; interlarding her advice with curses on the thick-headed peasant girl who was causing her beloved so much grief and disappointment.

Poor peasant girl! Lying on a rough pallet in the chamber of torture beneath the municipal palace, thankful for a brief respite, she longed to be in the sunshine again, followed by her little goat, and pausing to fill the stone crock of some customer and receive therefor a tiny copper coin.

Of a hardy race, and in splendid health, she had borne stoically the pains inflicted upon her by Pedro. For these she had prepared herself before the ordeal, and steeled her soul.

Intensely superstitious, she thoroughly believed that her soul was lost forever were she to break the dreadful oaths she had been forced to take, and reveal her employers; and she was determined to die by inches if so it must be, and save her soul alive. She had tried to imagine every possible horror, every frightful and subtle wrench of nerve and muscle; if possible the reality was less terrible than her fancies, and it had not been too hard to hold her peace, though her sufferings under the question extraordinary had been frightful and prolonged, so that she had fainted.

Probably no member of Dolores's tough-fibered family had fainted prior to this for several centuries.

When it came to the waking test, however, resistance had been harder; indeed, had Pedro but known it, there was a period when she was near yielding; when she was almost prepared to barter her immortal soul for an hour's sleep.

Not once during the entire unforgettable week was she allowed a moment's sleep; there was always a patient watcher to jog her elbow, shake her, apply smelling salts beneath her nose if necessary—as it was toward the end of the third day—to pinch her flesh in one of the devilishly refined instruments of Pedro's armory.

At the end, it had been hell; she was nearly insane, and she knew that mere physical pain could never compare with prolonged insomnia. There is a a point, long in coming to be sure, where nerves cease to react to stimuli of pain; but the hideous exhaustion, mental and physical, that follows sleeplessness of long duration, can neither be described nor imagined.

It was because she began to babble incoherently that Pedro gave up the test; he felt that a little longer, and she would become deranged, and unable to tell them what they must know.

Lying there on her pallet, grateful for a brief respite while the assistant consulted with the mighty chief inquisitor, she wondered what fresh ingenuity would be devised to loose her tongue.

That she was doomed to die, she never doubted; that no bodily pain should force her to deliver her immortal soul over to the grinning fiends who inspired the cruel Pedro, she was determined. She was glad that none of her family were left.

Were they to torture her father, years now in heaven, or her little lame brother, whom she could barely remember, or her sainted mother, she knew that she should tell them all they asked, and give her soul for the loved one; this would be simple duty. But

not for her own ease and comfort would she do so!

She knew why the assistant had gone; as she lay exhausted, and with closed eyes, she had heard him tell Pedro go to his dinner, and that when he returned the chief inquisitor, who had never failed to extort a confession, would be brought to deal with the refractory creature their own cunning had failed to shake.

Little Dolores Valdez came near to smiling.

Well, she thought, here was one time the wonderful man was going to fail; doubtless he could give her nerves a severer twinge, a more unspeakable agony, than these others; else he would not be chief of them; but she was prepared for any degree of pain.

Had she not fainted away when it became unbearable? Well, she would bear it again, and in silence, up to this point; and she would faint as many times as they chose. She hoped it would kill her soon; and she hoped above all that they would not try again the waking test.

If they did, she feared for her soul; but probably they would not, as she had withstood it once, and it took many days, and time was precious to them; this she knew from their impatience.

They were not unnecessarily harsh with her, outside of the tortures; they regarded her, in fact, as a subject, as material to weld to their uses and purposes.

Pedro, it is true, felt hurt and humiliated at his non-success, but he had for Dolores herself no feeling whatever, whether of anger or admiration or sympathy.

While she was steeling her soul anew and summoning all her fortitude, Don Rafael was sadly putting away his beloved manuscript, with thoughts dwelling more on the blessed St. Francis than on the little dairymaid.

"They found nothing in her effects?" he asked absent-mindedly, as he rose to accompany his assistant.

"She owns nothing in the world beyond a few coins she has saved up, and which are now in the police archives, and the clothes on her back. Nothing, that is," he added, "but the goat. They took her while she was milking it, and it is shut up in the palace stable."

A sudden gleam illuminated Don Rafael's face, and then died out, as if a ray of sunshine had fallen across his sweet and benevolent features. He gathered his crimson robe in his hand, and said:

"Well, let us see little Dolores, and induce her to find her tongue."

Thorough and searching as had been the methods of the assistant and his faithful Pedro, indomitable and unshaken as Dolores remained, there existed in his mind not the slightest shadow of a doubt but that Don Rafael, their beloved chief inquisitor, would succeed where they had failed.

All who knew him gave him equally of their love and their confidence. For sheer intellect, he had no peer in Spain; beneath a nature gentle and unspoiled as a little child's, he had garnered a marvelous knowledge of human nature.

Singularly enough, his profound knowledge of mankind, and his official position as chief inquisitor, had neither rendered him cynical nor suspicious. Now, as he reluctantly turned from the gentle transcription which delighted his old age, he bent upon the problem before him all the powers of his remarkable mind.

So softly did he enter the chamber of torture that Dolores, who had fallen asleep, did not at once awaken; and he bent over her with the rare smile that was in itself almost a blessing.

For a long time he examined her curiously; noted where her firm, wholesome young flesh had been torn; glanced casually at the great funnel used in the torture by water, and which had been carelessly tossed to one side; gazed understandingly at the deep circles beneath her closed eyes, reminiscent of her terrible and prolonged

sleeplessness; studied the firm, brave young mouth, unrelaxed even in sleep, noted the strong jaw, the broad, low forehead; and finally he touched her shoulder gently.

Dolores Valdez awakened instantly, and without any start! This also he noted.

Their eyes met; and, though she had never seen the chief inquisitor, she knew him at once, and feared his wonderfully sweet smile more than the scowling brows of the brutal Pedro, who entered at this moment, brushing from his doublet the crumbs of black bread and cheese which remained from his dinner.

"My daughter," began Don Rafael, "I wish to save you from further pain, as I would gladly have saved you from any. I wish to send you forth into the sunshine and the streets, with your little goat. You need never work again, however, and you can deck yourself with fine clothes for the rest of your life. Tell us the things we must know, and go in peace."

Dolores Valdez shook her head, and smiled back at him, yet fearfully.

"It is because of your oath?" he asked her gently, patting her brown hand. "It is because of this, and not because these men are friends of yours?"

She nodded her head.

"Then that is all settled!" cried Don Rafael, with a confidence he was far from feeling. "Father Bonifazio shall absolve you from this oath; the Cardinal Perez, if you prefer—yes, the Holy Father himself shall send you his full absolution."

Again Dolores shook her head.

"It was such an oath, your excellency," she said, "as God Himself could not absolve me from were I to break it."

"But that is blasphemy, my daughter!"

Dolores sighed, and closed her eyes.

The chief inquisitor recognized the uselessness of further effort along this line. The clever conspirators had so framed their oaths, and so adapted them to her ignorant, obstinate little peasant's mind, that no form of absolution could convince her.

Don Rafael asked for a stool, and sat by her side. Drawing from his years and years of experience as chief inquisitor, he described to her the most terrible and excruciating tortures which it was in their power to inflict upon her.

She was shaken, despite her indomitable will, because Don Rafael was a persuasive man, as well as an imaginative and fluent conversationalist; but it was her flesh which quivered, not her spirit. That rose and defied him from her steadfast eyes.

Finally, when he felt that his purpose had been as well achieved as might be, Don Rafael called for the two recording secretaries. They came instantly, black-gowned figures, with huge inkpots and quill pens, and leaves of rustling parchment. One on each side of Dolores, they sat themselves down.

"Dip your pens in ink," Don Rafael commanded them. "Have all ready. You will need to write at top speed to take down the names and addresses Dolores Valdez will shortly give you.

Despite herself, the victim shuddered at his tone of confidence, and at the matter-of-fact expectancy of the two secretaries.

Standing beneath his array of instruments, Pedro waited inquiringly. The chief inquisitor did not so much as glance at him.

"Place the Señorita Dolores in the stocks," continued Don Rafael.

It was done in a few seconds. Her strong, well-formed feet were held firmly out. Her arms were left free.

The two secretaries nibbled reflectively at their quill pens. The assistant followed the preparations with unconcealed eagerness and curiosity. Pedro waited, silent and prepared.

"Have some one bring in a pail of strong brine," was the next command; and, when it appeared, the chief in-

quisitor bade Pedro, with a stiff brush, apply a coating to the soles of Dolores Valdez's feet.

When it had somewhat dried, he added another, and yet another.

Dolores gazed steadfastly upon Don Rafael, who, as often as he glanced at her, smiled benevolently; once he patted her hand encouragingly.

At last he beckoned to Pedro, and whispered something in his ear; and Pedro, with astonished eyes, backed from the room.

Leisurely Don Rafael paced up and down, his mind straying back longingly to his pleasant study, and his half-finished "Life of St. Francis."

He had nearly forgotten the case in hand; he regarded it as already finished. But the whispered message, the departure of Pedro, the long delay, were agony for Dolores, and were even painful to the assistant. The two recording secretaries might have been mere manikins, for any emotion they displayed.

Presently there came a curious sound from the corridor outside the chamber of torture. The wooden shoes of Pedro, the hoarse voice of Pedro, were heard, but with them, another sound less easy to identify; a series of mincing, tapping little steps, as of two or three children walking on wooden stilts.

A moment later Pedro entered the room, leading a small, white goat.

A little cry escaped Dolores's lips. She feared anything; that they might be going to abuse the poor little creature that had served her so long and faithfully, that pity might wrench from her lips the secrets that pain had not been able to loose.

The goat saw her at once, and knew her; it bleated its pleasure, and came to where she was lying, wagging its tail and licking her hand with its tongue.

Tears flowed from Dolores's eyes; she feared to betray any affection for it, and, to dissemble her real feelings, she pushed it rudely away, with a harsh word.

The chief inquisitor saw, and understood. He smiled benignantly.

Then, gently urging the goat, he led it to the foot of Dolores's pallet, and allowed it to touch her bare brown feet, firmly held in the stocks. In a few seconds, the goat discovered that these feet were covered with delicious salt; and, with every evidence of satisfaction, he began to lick them with his rough tongue.

A spasm passed over Dolores's face.

Prepared for torture, she was thrown off her guard; her toes curled convulsively. She tried to wrench her feet through the stocks; rose up and tried to beat the goat away with her hands; called to him; writhed frantically from side to side, and suddenly—a horrible sound to be heard in that chamber of torture — she burst into peals of laughter, which rapidly became hysterical.

She frothed at the lips, and her eyes seemed to be bursting from her head; the veins in her neck swelled under the pressure of blood.

Just as she seemed to be passing into a convulsion, Don Rafael drew back the goat, which struggled to get at the salt again.

The chief inquisitor made a furtive sign to the two secretaries; they dipped their quill-pens afresh.

Then, when Dolores had quieted down, and her sobbing breath was nearly normal. Don Rafael led the goat once more to her feet.

It was, perhaps, a surprise to everyone present except Don Rafael himself, that without warning, Dolores began to shriek and cry, and to babble forth names and addresses at such a rate that the recording secretaries wrote for dear life; once, as she hesitated, Don Rafael made as if to release the goat, and the confession recommenced.

At last it was ended; for, "there is nothing more," Dolores sobbed; and, "I know it, my daughter!" Don Rafael replied, and instantly released her from the stocks, and lifted her tenderly to her feet.

After all, the wisest of men do not know all there is to be known of the simplest of women; and even the good chief inquisitor was surprised when, after a momentary silence, Dolores burst into frenzied screams and imprecations, cursing the day she was born, cursing the conspirators who made her take the oath, cursing Don Rafael, who made her break it.

"You have ruined me!" she wailed, when she had fairly worn herself out.

"Instead, my child, I have saved you," he replied.

"You have destroyed my soul!"

"Nay, my daughter, I have but tickled your soles!"

In vain he sought to console her; to assure her that her confession was not voluntary; that whatever form of absolution she wished should be hers.

She wept and stormed, outburst after outburst sweeping over her like waves; and far down the corridor, when she was set free with the white goat, her cries drowned the sound of its little tapping steps.

The lower jaw of Pedro was yet agape; the two secretaries were already sanding their manuscripts, ere the astonished assistant found his voice.

"Illustrious, you are marvelous!" he cried in genuine admiration. "None save you could have extorted the confession, and she would have died under our hands in silence and obstinacy of heart!"

"There is nothing marvelous about this affair," replied the chief inquisitor gently, "save that a tired old man must leave his beloved task because his servants lack a little imagination, and go through the world with their eyes closed, and force him to do their work after them.

"In fact," he concluded, as the rare smile illuminated his face, "in the case of the Señorita Dolores Valdez, it was simply a question of—getting her goat!"

Sleepy Sweeny

by Jack Brant

WHEN Sleepy Sweeny left the Three-Bar outfit, as a result of punching the foreman's face to a pulp because of an undeserved kick on Mex, Mex went with him.

It took all the money Sleepy had saved in three years, which was all he had saved in his life, but he didn't care.

The meanest servant will resent a kick at his dog. It was Sweeny's code, a man's horse came in the same class with his dog and his wife. He had felt

that he owned Mex ever since the bad time when the dam burst, and looked on the passing of the legal title as a mere formality.

Mex was little short of human. His good points were so apparent that Sleepy Sweeny wasn't surprised that the first man he met, when he was still ten miles from Silver City, should want to swap horses.

"That's a good beast you're ridin'," the stranger said, "and I'll trade even."

Praise of Mex was the kind of talk Sweeny could listen to all night.

"He is a good horse," he drawled, "and knows more than most men, let alone foremen. He's seen some life, and, believe me, he hasn't quit yet.

"I don't want to be rude, stranger, but you might as well try to swap that wind-broken beaut' of yours, even if he didn't limp with three legs, for the Santa Fé Railroad."

The stranger, who was long and stringy, grinned, and the lines of his smooth, leathery face creased in a way that showed he was used to grinning, and liked it.

"You may be right," he said, "but I've seen times when I wouldn't have let this poor critter go for the whole Union. And ain't that a bunch comin' just above your left hind shoe?"

Sleepy was off in a second, examining the hinted defect.

When he looked up the angry protest died half-way down his throat. The lower part of the stranger's face was eclipsed by the muzzle of a forty-five.

Sweeny half closed his eyes. It was his habit of thinking with his eyes half closed, and not any slowness of action, that had earned him his nickname of "Sleepy."

It seemed hard to lose Mex, after he had cost him all he owned in the world, beside a good place. But he knew it wasn't much use to try to work the sympathy game. The kind of man who insists on a swap with a six-shooter isn't apt to be strong on sentiment.

So he studied the face of the stranger to make sure he would know him when he met him again. His time was his own, and he knew he would meet him somewhere, and if he didn't get Mex—he would get him!

"I'm not sure that I wasn't a little hasty in declinin' that offer," he said, "now that I perceive the persuasiveness of your argument." Sweeny always thought in big words. "Still, I'd hate to tell the boys I let Mex go for just a horse. Don't you think you could throw in a couple of those mountains?"

"You're on. Two of the biggest. Now, get that saddle off."

The exchange was made without further delay.

"And now," said the stranger, "how about swappin' clothes? Do you think mine would fit you?"

"Like a glove," said Sleepy. "I was about to suggest it myself."

Shortly after the stranger mounted Mex in Sweeny's chaps and flannel shirt. Sweeny was admiring the strange sight of his legs neatly encased in khaki riding-breeches and leather puttees. He noticed that there was something heavy in the hip-pocket.

"I say," he said, "you have forgotten your flask."

"I'll be blowed! So I did. Have a drink?"

It was a handsome silver flask, with the initials "S. S." engraved on it. Sweeny admired it before he passed it over.

"That's sure a pretty flask," he said. "I own them initials myself. Sleepy Sweeny's my name. What's yours, stranger?"

"Samuel Short, the same as my father and my grandfather, and then some. Have you got the makings, Sleepy?"

"You'll find 'em in the shirt-pocket. Sam Short! I don't just recollect any bad men round these parts by that name. You can't have worked round here much."

"Bad men be blowed! I own a

thousand acres down near El Toro, and hope to all my life, if the Rio Grande doesn't jump my claim. This is just a local disturbance, as you might say.

"Drop round in two weeks, if you want a good time, and you'll save me the trouble of looking you up and makin' that return swap, or drawing the deed to those mountains."

"Shorty," said Sweeny, as he took the bag of tobacco and the cigarette-papers, "it sure came hard with me to part with Mex just now. If you ain't in no great rush, I'd certainly like to hear the reasons for your mania for swappin'."

"I guess I've got the time," said Shorty, looking over his shoulder at the trail he had just traveled, "seein' how obligin' you've been and willin' to listen to reason. I don't reckon the judge will be up for half an hour, with the jury stringin' out behind, and they won't be any too fresh after a twenty-mile ride but what I can keep far enough ahead to avoid hurting anybody.

"But Lord! It ain't nothin' but what will blow right over. If it wasn't for the fact that I have a prejudice against jails I'd stay and see it out.

"We haven't had a jail in El Toro before this year. There was a feller come out from the East — a nice, straight-spoked kind of a chap, too — and he talked a lot about progress and civilization, and how the Chinee never got beyond the laundry stage because they were contented with what they had.

"Now, we ain't hankering for no outside influence in El Toro; we kind of pride ourselves that there ain't no outside papers get by the stakes. But what he said about the Chinee and the laundry sort of got us, and we asked him how was the best way to begin.

"It seems that law and order are the first elements. So, after some opposition, we elected Jake Smally judge, he bein' the oldest man in the town. Then we caught a greaser who had stolen a mule, and had a trial in true Eastern style in the back of the Palace bar.

"There was some dispute as to the verdict; but after the foreman, who happened to be me, offered to stand for the drinks, we brought in a verdict of guilty, with a plea for leniency on the ground that the mule was stolen in self-defense. The only leniency the judge could think of was to lock him up instead of hanging him. The sentence was two months in jail.

"As there wasn't any jail, we had to build one. But before the job was finished the greaser had broken out of the old bear-cage, which had been used temporarily, and skipped.

"It sure upset our plans; but I don't blame him none, seein' as how the sheriff used to own the bear the cage was built for. He was terribly fond of that bear.

"Seein' something in that cage again brought back so many memories that he had to take a drink every few minutes to keep from cryin'. He was as careful of him as if he was a real bear, givin' him water in the trough, the leg of a cow to chew on, and beddin' him down with straw. We were havin' pretty cold nights, and I reckon he didn't give him overmuch straw, and one morning he was gone.

"Since then we haven't had a chance to try the new jail, until my case came along. One of my steers got frightened at an aute-mobile that blundered into the town and broke down Hank Fosdick's spiked fence to his yard, scared a turkey through his front window, smashed his new lamp, and knocked down and broke two framed mottos that his wife's second husband had sent him from Kentucky — damage, fifty dollars.

"Of course, I claimed that the feller who owned the aute-mobile was to blame, and refused to pay a cent. But Hank kept the steer in his yard and guarded him with a gun till the damage was paid. This made me a little mad, and things looked like trouble.

"Then somebody suggested that this was the sort of thing we had elected the judge for, and we agreed to have a trial. It was only the second time court had been held, and the whole town turned out.

"First Hank stated his case, and set up the drinks. Then I spoke for my side, and did likewise. Then the judge called for opinions from the rest of the crowd, and quite a few of them spoke, in spite of the fact that most of the orators of the town had been put on the jury.

"I could see how things were going from the speeches, and that there was a big sentiment to give the new jail a trial. So I got as near the door as I could without attracting attention.

"Sure enough, that fool jury brought in a verdict of guilty in the first degree, and that I should be jailed for one week, with plenty to eat and drink. They also found the feller who ran the aute-mobile guilty, whom they hadn't caught, and sentenced him to a month in jail if he could be found and brought back, which happy circumstance would let me out.

"Now, ordinarily I wouldn't mind being obligin', and I was kind of curious to see how that jail worked myself. But I've got a mother back in Missouri, and the last thing I promised her was that I'd stay out of jail; and it's a promise I'm going to keep, if I have to shoot up the whole State.

"So as soon as I saw they were in earnest I knocked down a couple of men near the door, tipped over a bench full of spectators, and lit out. El Toro won't see me till they have had a chance to test that jail on some one and their enthusiasm has cooled off."

"And now I reckon you cal'late," said Sleepy slowly, "that when they catch me in your duds, with your lame horse, the chances of havin' that jail tested within the next few hours is pretty good?"

"That's it. I hope you ain't made no such promise as I did to any of your folks. If you did, like as not they'll let you off at the trial. And if you should get off, you'll find me at El Toro any time you want to swap back."

"Well, ain't this the limit?" said Sweeny to himself after Shorty had ridden off. "Like as not that cracked culture crowd will keep me testin' that new jail for a month. It beats all that a man can't own a piece of property in this country without it getting him into all kinds of trouble.

"Most anything is liable to happen next. I reckon Mex doesn't understand it much more than I do, and I'll have to explain it all when I get him back."

Then he turned to the horse.

"Come along, One Foot. They haven't got us yet. Even if there will be plenty to eat and drink, the way to keep out of trouble is to keep out of trouble."

Leading the lame horse, he started up one of the ravines that wound in among the mountains, careful to cover his tracks where he left the trail.

It was hot, and hard traveling through the thick mountain growth that concealed the rocks. Both man and horse showed plenty of grit, and after two hours' climbing Sweeny felt that he need have no further fear of pursuit.

Water was his principal worry now; and after that, food. But before they had reached the stage when a man's tongue begins to swell in his mouth they stumbled on a rough cabin hidden on the mountainside.

They were sliding down the gravel embankment almost to the door before they saw it. Sleepy picked himself up, brushed a little of the dust from his clothes, and knocked.

The door was opened by a young girl of perhaps sixteen.

"Good evenin', my dear," began Sleepy, pulling off his hat. "Is your pa in?"

"Don't you 'my dear' me, whether pa's in or out. I've seen fresh guys like you before."

"Did you ever see one before din-

ner? If you never did, now's your chance. Me and little Rollo here have been traveling since breakfast with nothin' to eat or drink 'cept a few oak-leaves, and I can scratch my backbone just as well from my front as I can from behind."

The girl studied the pair in silence for a few moments, much to the embarrassment of Sweeny, who tried to assume a careless, graceful attitude, with the usual results.

Then she sent them to the shed, where they would find hay and water, and went inside to see about something to eat.

Ten minutes later Sweeny was giving a plate of beans and half a loaf of bread his whole attention. He scarcely noticed that the girl left the room.

When he did look up, after chasing the last bean round the plate with his knife until it eluded him for the floor, he found himself gazing into the muzzle of a double-barreled shotgun, which the girl was balancing on the back of a chair.

"Just as I expected!" thought Sweeny.

"Ain't you afraid that thing may be loaded?" he asked.

"Ain't you?" returned the girl.

"Well, yes, I am. But it's getting to be a habit with me, watching those things. I was watching one for half an hour this morning."

"You're going to watch this one till pa comes in from the mine. That is, you are if you keep still. If you move—"

"Oh, I'll keep still, all right. You don't happen to be wanting to swap anything, do you?"

"Now, see here, don't you get funny. You know why I'm pointing this gun at you, and you know I'd just as lief as not shoot."

"Sweet girl!" murmured Sweeny. "But I must say, I don't know your object. Perhaps you'll tell me?"

"Isn't that Sam Short's horse in my shed?"

"Well, it was, but it's mine now."

"How'd you get it?"

"We swapped. I give him mine, and he gave me his, and threw in a couple of mountains, to make the trade even."

"That's likely. I know Sam thinks more of that horse than he does of anybody, and it ain't natural he'd swap. I suppose he swapped you that suit of his clothes you're wearin', too?"

"Well, yes, he did. And they ain't a bad fit, either. Latest thing, right from a Sunday supplement."

"I thought so," sneered the girl. "Where's Sam Short now?"

"I don't know. But I wish I did. He's ridin' my horse, dressed in my clothes. And I'd be a good deal happier if you'd put that young cannon in the corner."

"Huh!" said the girl, without moving.

"I've told you the truth," said Sleepy, getting angry. "He wanted to swap so he could get away from a locoed crowd that wanted to lock him up in the El Toro jail."

"Lock Sam Short up in jail? Now I know you're lying. There ain't a straighter man in these parts than Sam Short. You sit still till pa comes in. He'll fix you."

Pa didn't come in for an hour. Sleepy, seeing no means of immediate escape, passed the time smoking, telling stories, and singing songs.

But his efforts at entertainment fell on unresponsive ears. The girl refused to answer his questions or laugh at his jokes, and watched him like a machine.

But the girl was a lamb compared to her father. He came in from the mine with his pickax, and for a few moments Sleepy thought he was going to drive it through him.

When he learned the suspicions of his daughter, they immediately became facts in his mind.

But how to treat the murderer was a problem. His first suggestion was to shoot him dead, before his lying tongue could have a chance to interrupt justice.

But his daughter reasoned that a trip to El Toro would make them confident, and it would be best to do this rather than run the chance of shooting an innocent man. Even years of living alone in a mountain cabin develop some ideas of right and wrong.

How to keep him in the cabin till they returned was a problem. They finally agreed between them that they would tie him up, and shoot him in the legs as an additional precaution.

Before they could carry out this threat, the door opened, and in walked Samuel Short.

Their acquaintance had begun with black anger on the part of Sweeny—the anger that makes men kill. This anger had formed itself into a fixed purpose during the hot, hard walk over the mountains.

But later events had crowded this purpose out.

Now Sweeny fell on Shorty's neck like a long-lost brother.

"Shorty—praises be!" he exclaimed. "Call off your cold-blooded friends, Shorty. Shoot me in the legs, would they? In another minute I'd have had to hurt them.

"Shorty, you've caused me more trouble than any man in my life, and I love you. And I'm ready to go back and spend that week in jail. Call off your friends, and we'll start."

"It's no use," said Shorty. "They've tried the jail. The auto feller got stuck in the mud down where Cow Sloper had irrigated the road, and they found him."

"And he's in for a month! Glory, glory!"

"You're wrong," said Shorty. "He went in for a month, but he broke down the jail in fifteen minutes, so they let him go. And now come back with me, Sleepy, and we'll help build the new jail."

But Sleepy was outside, explaining things to Mex.

A SONG OF AGE.

By Blakeney Gray.

WHEN I was young I hoped to be
A man of value to the State.
I prayed the fates to grant to me
The laurels of the good and great—
When I was young.

When I was young I dreamed of hours
In that then seeming distant time
When I should wield God-given powers,
Rejoicing in my manhood's prime—
When I was young.

When I was young ambition stirred
My pulses, filled my boyish heart;
In all my actions ever spurred
Me on to my allotted part—
When I was young.

But now when age creeps on apace
And won are all those cherished bays,
A victor in life's frenzied race,
I'd give them all for those dear days
When I was young!

The Living Past

by Richard Duffy

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

AT a dinner-dance given by the rather spectacular Mrs. Compton-Snead of New York City, a peculiar looking waiter appears and, apparently, causes the lady much perturbation. Her social position being not entirely definite, she is scheming, with considerable success, to marry Henderson Ives, the magnate, who is a widower with one daughter, Marjorie. Mrs. Compton-Snead discusses the waiter with her confidential friend, George Westerholt, from whom she learns that a person, of whom they heard only as F. S., has escaped from prison in Russia. The waiter, who calls himself Beaudry, rescues Marjorie Ives from the attack of a drunken German, and the girl, much engaged in charitable work, takes an interest in her savior, who is apparently in the poorest circumstances. Meanwhile Henderson Ives receives a telephone message which says: "Do not marry that woman."

Mrs. Compton-Snead and Westerholt discuss ways and means to get Beaudry out of the way. It is clear both fear him. An attempt is made by Mandruss, Westerholt's man, to have the alleged waiter murdered by thugs. But Prince Irskhoff, a Russian of prominence, who is visiting New York, happens to be able to save the badly beaten man from death and has him taken to a hospital. He prevails upon Marjorie Ives to keep an eye on the invalid, impressing her with the importance of the trust, though giving her no reasons. Mrs. Compton-Snead, learning that Beaudry is still in the way, becomes more friendly than ever with Marjorie; visits her at the settlement, procures some of the settlement stationery, and immediately locks himself in her boudoir for the rest of the afternoon.

CHAPTER VII.

IN HOSPITAL.

THE last call Marjorie Ives made that afternoon was at the Spencer Hospital.

She wished to have a report of Arthur Beaudry's condition as late in the day as possible. Moreover, it was a visit that loomed before her with a menace ominous and undefined.

She tried to attribute her feelings to the mysterious manner in which Prince Irskhoff had interested himself in the case. Was Beaudry some sort of political conspirator known to the prince?

Marjorie had read of such persons being at large, though under surveillance more or less effective. If so, why should Irskhoff be so anxious that the man regain his health and strength? The prince was unsentimental enough to realize that a dead conspirator would be of much less concern and expense than one living.

The prince also, Marjorie suspected, was of a mind with her on this point: Beaudry was a waiter, only either in

masquerade or, what was more probable, because he could find no other way to earn his living.

At the door of his room, the nurse welcomed her with a smile.

"How is he?" asked Marjorie, rather tremulous of voice for a courageous young woman used to the sight of poverty, squalor, and suffering.

"He's resting, and the doctor has said he's gaining lost ground rapidly," the nurse stated impersonally. "You will see, of course, Miss Ives, that his mind wanders; but that's to be expected, the doctor said."

His head bound in bandages, white as the skin of his fine-drawn face, Arthur Beaudry's glazed eyes considered Marjorie's kindly expression with painful effort.

"I've been looking so long at you," he murmured, turning his head to one side on the pillow, "and this is the first time you recognize me."

Stepping back quickly from the bedside, Marjorie glanced about her, startled.

"Please don't be alarmed, Miss Ives," the nurse told her; "whenever he talks in his delirium, he talks very kindly about some woman he sees. When I try to work his mind back the way it should be, he always says: 'Why doesn't she speak to me?'"

"Oh, yes," Marjorie returned. "I've seen people act like that in fever. But the doctor is sure, isn't he, that this man will get better?"

"Unless he should develop some unexpected point of weakness," the nurse commented, as if she were repeating the doctor's very words.

"Thank you, I'll try to come in again to-morrow; but if it should go ill with him, please let me leave my house telephone-call. I shall be there all the evening, and I'll call up the office in the morning."

As she went out of the room, Marjorie looked at the two chairs it contained. On neither were the waiter's clothes of Arthur Beaudry nor his overcoat.

And she went down-stairs, thinking of the instructions in the envelope given to her by Prince Irskhoff.

One of these items requested her to have bought for the patient two suits of clothes and linen to be measured according to the size of the garments he wore when admitted to the hospital. Also, two overcoats, of light and of heavy weight respectively.

These things should be ready for him against the time he was able to leave his bed. The money to be expended was included in the amount with which the Vesper Settlement House was credited in cash for A. B., under the name of Marjorie Ives. An orderly of the hospital could make these purchases.

Further, Marjorie was required to communicate with Prince Irskhoff, at the Universe Club in Washington or at the Russian Embassy by telephone, telegraph, or letter only in case of necessity.

By necessity was implied merely the death of the patient or his proximate ability to leave the hospital; and he was always to be referred to as No. 28, which was the number of Arthur Beaudry's room.

Obviously no message need be sent to the prince to-day; and Marjorie went home troubled with the memory of a face that became more and more poignant and haunting each time she studied it.

Surely the man could not put any expression into his features in his present condition; and yet, for all his delirium and the stigma of sorrow in his white bed in hospital, he had sent some message to her, just as he did when he looked into her eyes for the first time when he intercepted the crazed and murderous Wunsch in his onslaught with the butcher's knife.

He had saved her life, she told herself, under conditions almost miraculous. Why should she not be nervous and exaggerated in her ideas about him, meeting him again so strangely?

Day after day she inquired about

Arthur Beaudry, over the telephone in the morning and by calling in person in the afternoon. As the doctor had predicted, he mended rapidly under the influence of care and proper and sufficient food.

Ten days later he was able to sit up; and the nurse had him placed in a wheel-chair by the sunny window, whence he could see Marjorie Ives from the moment she crossed the threshold of his room.

She stood still, amazed at sight of him seated there in golden sunlight, well-clothed, well-groomed, and well-fed. The hard, drawn smile had left his face, and his dark eyes kindled with pleasure at sight of Marjorie.

The nurse stepped softly out as Marjorie took a chair and carried it to the window where Beaudry was seated.

"To see you up," said Marjorie, "makes me feel absolutely sure you are going to be better and stronger than—"

"Than when you picked me out of the street, you mean, Miss Ives," he interrupted.

"Ah, don't let me hurt you," he added quickly, noticing a flush of color in her cheeks, "by referring to that night. When you found me, how and what you had to go through to get me here I don't know, nor care to know; but I should like to know why you have done it all, why you continue to treat me so —well—so amazingly decently?"

He laughed softly.

"I'm not in the least accustomed to it, you know."

She smiled at him quite frankly, saying: "You saved me from that crazy man Wunsch—don't you remember?"

"And you smiled at me afterward. Oh, I couldn't forget Miss Ives. You are the first person who gave me a smile in five years. Can you imagine what that means?"

Her lips parted, and into Marjorie's serene eyes came the shadow of pain. Beaudry turned his head and looked straight into the sunlight, though it made his eyelids blink.

"You must permit me, Miss Ives," he said, after a few moments, turning toward her, "as a—well, as a man, to remind you of certain things.

"A great deal of money must have been spent on me here; clothes have been provided for me; you have stood sponsor for me. While the mere money would no doubt be of no consequence to your father—"

"But my father knows nothing whatever about you," she protested hurriedly. "He has never even heard of you."

"Then where does the money come from?" Beaudry asked.

Before her mind's eye Marjorie could see again as plainly as when she read it, a letter Prince Irskhoff sent to her the day of his arrival in Washington, in which he had cautioned her not for any cause to permit Beaudry to know anything of the prince until the latter could return to New York.

"Why," said Marjorie, "I have discretion over a sick fund at the settlement house, which is maintained by private subscription, to be used for any one person or more, as far as the money will go."

"But I don't think I could ever pay it back, you know, Miss Ives."

"There's no question of that," she returned. "You needed the care and were deserving—"

"Are you sure of that?" he asked quickly.

"It never came into my head to question it," she answered shyly. "I'll be candid. I thought there was something unusual about you—that you had suffered some great trial—but—"

He looked about the room cautiously and at the closed door.

"Miss Ives"—he leaned forward, almost whispering—"I tell this for you yourself, because you must know, considering how unspeakably good you have been to me.

"You see my hands? They have received great care lately, but for a long time they did cruel work. On my back are shameful scars made by a

whip. I have been in prison five years, Miss Ives, in Russia."

Marjorie covered her face with her hands, and burning tears started in her eyes.

"Why did you tell me that?" she murmured. "I can't say how sorry I am. It wasn't really necessary."

"A man freed from a grave for the living," he told her quietly, "I entered the world of my kind with no more claim of kinship than if I were a stray dog. You were good to me from the very first.

"I am sure you would have been good to me, no matter how we met. When I was hurt that night, I felt you were near. All the time I lay in delirium I saw you standing at my bedside, watchful, confident, kind.

"Do you recall the first time I really saw you, I could not believe my eyes?" He looked out the window far away. "It's hard to realize that I am talking this way to you now."

Marjorie wiped her eyes, and with an effort said in her best settlement voice: "It does no good to live over those things, you know. You're making a fresh start, and you have a great chance in a new country like this."

Her tones became suddenly hoarse as she finished talking, for the huge black figure of Prince Irskhoff suddenly stalked into her mind. What if he should want to take this man back to prison?

The muscles in her throat tightened with a choking sensation. She stared at Beaudry's handsome profile and wondered.

Abruptly he turned to her, asking: "Do you think, Miss Ives, I might meet your father?"

"Why, yes, some time," she responded, thinking nervously of Prince Irskhoff, "but it wouldn't be convenient just now."

Then she went on to tell him of the pageant dance and supper which she and her father were to give in honor of Mrs. Compton-Snead within the next few days. He listened intently, and Marjorie, divining that such conversation was much better for a man invalided, gave him a full account of the elaborate preparations that were under way.

"Your father is going to marry Mrs. Compton-Snead, I saw in a newspaper just before I was hurt," Beaudry observed at length.

"Oh, yes," Marjorie admitted, not deeply interested.

"Are they to be married soon?" he inquired.

"Why," Marjorie returned, smiling, "so far as I know the date is still undecided."

"You'll forgive me, please, for presuming to talk about your family," he said, "but you're so kind, I'm afraid you lead me to take liberties."

"Oh, no," Marjorie returned, in her quick, definite way. "It's good for you to talk about such things."

The nurse knocked on the door and opened it.

Marjorie said she would be going, and Beaudry, taking her proffered hand, raised it to his lips reverently.

"Bless you," he murmured, and turned his head sharply toward the sunny window, shutting his eyes.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VANISHING.

For two days thereafter Arthur Beaudry did not see Miss Ives. She made her usual inquiry over the telephone, and on each afternoon sent him magazines and some fruit, accompanied by a note.

The note was to explain that she could not come to the hospital because she was overwhelmed with work, and she hoped he would keep on fighting upward to all health and strength.

At this time Marjorie wrote also to Prince Irskhoff, giving a report on No. 28, and saying she would be very glad to have the prince return soon, as the patient was so far advanced on the way to recovery.

To her dismay, Prince Irskhoff, in a prompt reply, said that he did not know when he should be able to leave Washington; and was writing to her father to express his deep regret at being unable to attend the pageant dance on the twentieth.

As soon as Beaudry was able to leave the hospital, would Marjorie take him to the settlement house and find work and a room for him there? Whether he was able to come to New York next week or not, the prince promised to have Beaudry off her hands within five days. Until this time had elapsed he was obliged to impose further on her great charity and good-will for her fellow creatures.

When the third day came with a letter, but no book or fruit from Miss Ives, a great look of longing and of weariness showed in Arthur Beaudry's face. He began the letter disappointedly, yet soon his expression changed.

DEAR MR. BEAUDRY:

I am very sorry I cannot call in person, but I am sending a taxicab for you so that you may have a drive in the park or wherever you prefer to go.

Yours sincerely,

MARJORIE IVES.

"Isn't that splendid of her?" Beaudry cried, showing the nurse the letter. "Of course they'll let me go, won't they?"

The nurse assured him that the permission would be granted, knowing that he was now rid of all danger from his worst complaint, slow starvation.

The letter was written on paper from the settlement house, and Beaudry put it away in a discarded stationery-box in which he kept the other notes received from Miss Ives.

The nurse held his overcoat for him and would have assisted down the stairs had he not declared he was full able to walk alone.

"Besides, I have a cane," he added, smiling, and flourished the stick of partiridge-wood that Miss Ives had provided.

Two men sat in front of the taxicab as the distinguished figure of Arthur Beaudry appeared at the hospital door.

One of the men, stocky and strong, with blond hair and shifty, brown eyes, jumped down as soon as he saw Beaudry.

"Miss Ives sent me along in case, sir, you might need some help, having been sick."

"I'm all right, thank you," said Beaudry, and the blond man opened the cab door.

"Shall we go through the park?" the man asked.

"Yes, the park," Beaudry replied, and sat back in luxurious ease.

The blond man slammed the door and jumped back to his seat beside the chauffeur.

The car glided smoothly over toward Fifth Avenue, while through the windows let down in front a freshening breeze blew on Beaudry with the delicious aroma of freedom from all that is ugly and cruel in life.

Soon they darted into a park entrance and swung out upon the east drive. The chauffeur slowed down his pace a bit because the drive was crowded with vehicles.

It was all like a stage show to the man who had come from five years of prison into the depths of poverty and isolation. A wonderful, only half-believable show to Arthur Beaudry.

Away even from the pungent, strange odors of the hospital, he was reflecting as he drew a deeper breath, when suddenly a frightful fancy blazed in his brain. It was not all the open air of outdoors that had wrought on his senses like magic.

It was a faint perfumed smell in the taxicab. In a flash came back to him a scene of years ago in a tiny, exquisite salon in St. Petersburg.

Vera had made the arrangements, and enjoined upon him that the windows must be kept open or the perfume —an impalpable powder sifted thickly yet invisibly on the armchair in which the visitor was to be seated — would

fail to spread. He had done her bidding, laughing at the idea as at many of her little manias for the exotic and the bizarre.

By the time he had awakened, several hours later, Vera had secured the signature of their visitor, a high official of the Court Museum, and begun to spin the web that snared the Hon. Francis Symington into prison chains for thirty years.

This taxicab was full of the potent brain-numbing perfume now. The honorable gentleman, known to the few that knew him as Arthur Beaudry, leaped to his feet and prodded the chauffeur in the back with his cane just as the cab shot swiftly from the park into a side street.

"Let me out! Stop, driver! Stop!" the man inside cried desperately.

"Drive like the devil!" the blond man beside the chauffeur growled under his breath.

"Take his stick away, or he'll hurt me!" the chauffeur cried back, and swung round a corner into an avenue, where a train roaring on the elevated road drowned every sound in the street below.

The blond man made a grab at the stick and missed it because Arthur Beaudry fell back at that instant and sank a moaning, restless, helpless heap on the floor of the cab.

"He won't bother us no more," said the blond man to the chauffeur.

The chauffeur glanced back as if to make sure.

"The last time I take a crazy man as passenger," the chauffeur declared, "even if I am willing to take chances on other games. What did you say your name is?" he asked then. "I'm not going to get in no trouble over this."

"You won't get into trouble and you've got a hundred coming to you. Beat it now for the Queensboro Bridge. We want to get down to the docks in South Brooklyn at a jump."

"I'm beating it and I know how to go, kid. Now, what's your name?"

"Mandruss," the blond man answered. "You can always get me at the Valets' Association. But you won't need to. This man is being taken care of by his family."

It was almost five o'clock when Marjorie arrived at the Spencer Hospital that afternoon.

The clerk at the office glanced over his memo pad, and, after greeting her, said:

"Mr. Beaudry hasn't returned from his drive yet."

"Oh," Marjorie exclaimed softly. "I didn't know—that is, I should like to see the nurse."

Following the clerk's suggestion, Marjorie went up to the second floor. On inquiry she learned that Beaudry's nurse had been allowed to have an afternoon off. The nurse on duty said also that Mr. Beaudry had not yet returned from his drive.

"Who took him for a drive?" Marjorie asked.

"Why, the regular nurse—Miss Hand—said that you sent the taxicab with a letter for him. As he was well enough, of course permission was given to him to go."

"Thank you, thank you," Marjorie returned nervously. "As soon as he comes back, will you ask him to call me up or have me called up at my house?"

This the nurse agreed to do, making a note of the order.

Astonished and not a little fearful of something she knew not what, Marjorie went home and waited patiently as she could for word from the hospital.

At a quarter before seven, while she was dressing for dinner, she was rung up at the telephone extension in her room.

"This is Miss Hand talking, Mr. Beaudry's nurse at the Spencer," said a voice at the other end of the line. "Is this Miss Ives?"

"Yes; how are you, Miss Hand?"

"Oh, Miss Ives," the nurse gasped. "He hasn't come back!"

"You mean Mr. Beaudry, of course," said Marjorie, trying to maintain her poise. "I think there's been a mistake here somehow, Miss Hand, but, if you please, don't make any fuss about his absence until I can communicate with some of his friends."

"I know, I know," the nurse cried dolefully, "but I am in so much trouble, you see. And yet he was allowed to go out on your written order."

Marjorie bit her lip to save herself from saying what was on the tip of her tongue.

"You're still there, aren't you?" the nurse demanded fretfully.

"Yes," Marjorie answered thoughtfully, "and I'll see that you are not blamed for anything that you shouldn't be blamed for."

The nurse thanked her tearfully as she hung up the receiver.

Henderson Ives was dining with some men at the club, and, having the house to herself, it was possible for Marjorie to try to find Prince Irskhoff by telephone in Washington. She tried six or seven times in the course of the evening; and not only failed to get him, but was annoyed and perplexed by the indefinite statements of the persons who answered her inquiries.

Further, she sent two night-letters and two telegrams to the addresses in the capital with which he had furnished her.

Tired of body and disgusted with such harrying secretive work, she would have been glad to wash her hands of the whole affair, if she could have blotted from her memory the picture of Arthur Beaudry sitting there in the sunlight of his hospital room, confiding the tragedy of his life, and yet radiating in an inexplicable fashion, hope, and earnest of a future finer and triumphant.

She ate scarcely any dinner, and made futile attempts afterward to read, sitting up half the night, wishing for word from Prince Irskhoff.

The next morning, her heart leaped with gladness at sight of a telegram on the breakfast-trav brought to her room by a maid.

> Various messages duly received and kept awaiting Prince Irskhoff's return from a visit out of town.

Again and again she read the inadequate words, signed "Lussner, secretary," paying no heed to the maid that stood by mutely waiting.

"If you please, Miss Ives," the girl ventured finally, "Mr. Ives would like to see you presently. He is going down-town earlier this morning."

Marjorie knew perfectly that her father wished to talk further about the entertainment taking place the night of this day. The mere idea of it now so fretted her unstrung nerves that she felt like flying to the uttermost ends of the earth.

As she was going down-stairs later, she wondered why, after all, she should be so concerned about Arthur Beaudry. She was under no obligation to share the worries or interests of Prince Irskhoff or of the people he knew.

As for Beaudry himself? She stood still breathless on the stairs, holding her hands tight against her heart. All her plans and notions of life seemed of a sudden the merest dreams, that were gradually fading from memory.

She closed her eyes and felt her way along the rail, descending the remaining steps very slowly. Vera, the prince, the guests who would be at the house to-night, even her father, all loomed in her mind as figures unreal compared to Beaudry.

What was the strange influence this man exerted on her? It was for himself, not because of Irskhoff or for any other reason that she was concerned about Arthur Beaudry.

She had struggled against this admission for long. She had remained away from the hospital because she felt she could escape it, if she did not see the man.

Now he was gone—vanished in a way suggestive of the air of mystery

that seemed always to envelop him; and the world was a place vast and desolate.

CHAPTER IX.

THE REVIVAL.

A LONG line of limousines, cabs, broughams, and coaches of various character began to form in front of the Henderson Ives house as early as half past nine that night. The people who alighted from them were a strangely gorgeous lot that fled hurriedly within doors to escape the stares of wondering bystanders who chanced into the street.

Kings, queens, courtiers, clowns, and solemn Dutch burgomasters passed through the bronze portal as much to the amazement of the wooden-faced servants as to their own delight. The rooms on either side the main hall were allotted to the men and women respectively to lay aside coat and cloak. Thence the guests mounted the long, curving stairway to the vast ballroom on the next floor.

"It is like the history of the world in a puzzle-picture," said a tall, heavy-set man, who looked of enormous proportions in court-dress of Queen Elizabeth's time.

He wore a black mask across his eyes and nose, and had been watching the motley, if magnificent crowd, swarm up the stairway for a long while.

A woman, masked and garbed as Cleopatra, stepped to his side as he made this self-addressed remark.

"We may talk now, George," she whispered, passing on, as if she were quite unconscious of him.

The Elizabethan turned and studied the beautiful creature spreading in her path an effulgence of silk, diamonds, and pearls.

Not with apparent intention, but with swift steps, he followed her to a seat in an alcove. In true courtier fashion he made a stately bow and took his seat at her side. She plied her fan languishingly, saying behind it:

"We may be interrupted at any moment. Be alert."

"I tried to get in touch with you to-day," he began.

"I haven't had a minute away from making myself ready for to-night except with Henderson. What news?"

"Safe," he answered.

"The perfume?"

"Worked as you said."

"I was afraid he might have remembered it too soon. He did know about it; but not about the way it's made. That's my secret."

"Who told it to you?" Westerholt asked.

"A man who made me promise not to tell," and she laughed delighted, while some dancers passed.

"Mandruss?" she queried softly.

"Has enough money to keep him going for a year or two. He'll stick to me and is reliable."

"And F. S. is in the boat, in his cabin?" Vera asked tremulously.

"Well cared for and said to be sleeping off the effects of prolonged dissipation."

"They do not mention those boats in the sailing lists, do they?"

"She'll be reported in to-morrow's paper," Westerholt answered, "as bound out for Montevideo. When he gets there without a cent he can go to work."

"But has she really sailed?"

"She was to sail some time to-day," Westerholt muttered, "dependent on how long it took to load the last of her cargo."

"See Joan of Arc," Vera whispered as a young woman went by in the martial panoply of the Maid of Orleans.

Westerholt grunted, not much interested.

"That's Marjorie," Vera added.

"The stuff will surely keep him asleep for forty-eight hours, you said, didn't you?" Westerholt asked.

"At least that long, George. I was

most particular in making it." She leaned toward him, waving her fan slowly and with perfect grace. "It may be that he will never awaken."

Westerholt stared at the woman with a shrinking feeling of horror. Her face was poised upward bewitchingly. Her red lips smiled faintly and he could see behind her mask the gleam of strangely brilliant eyes.

"Don't be nervous, George," she murmured. "It would happen at sea."

"I'd rather it didn't happen at all," Westerholt returned, shuddering. "To get rid of him is enough. You don't need to go any further."

Vera laughed and called him "a big baby" and forced him to give his attention to other matters by commenting on the costumes of the people who passed and repassed before them.

But Westerholt soon harked back to the things that weighed on his mind.

Was Vera sure that Prince Irskhoff would not be at the dance to-night? Vera assured him that Henderson Ives had tried in every way to persuade the prince to attend; but it was impossible for him to leave Washington.

"For my part I'm glad he isn't going to be here," Vera added. "He bores me utterly, and besides if he were here —well the big surprise of the pageant, my dear George, would hardly have been included in the evening's entertainment." She laughed merrily and asked: "Now, what do you think I mean by that?"

"I give it up. What do you mean?"

"Do you remember reading, in a little clipping I showed you once, about some church vestments and some laces belonging originally to a famous collection?"

"Apropos of F. S.?" he queried.

"Stop thinking of him," she retorted pettishly. "We are finished with him. You will see the vestments and the laces in the pageant to-night, and you would not have seen them if the prince had come."

"Have you sold them to Ives?" he inquired.

"No foolish questions, George," she replied, shaking her fan at him playfully.

"Nevertheless," said Westerholt, "I'd give a good deal to know if Irskhoff went to Washington on my account."

"Of course not," she declared. "But as soon as I found out he was in Washington I let you know. Besides, I needed you up here to manage Mandruss. And I must give Mandruss credit for a great deal of intelligence.

"He found out how often Marjorie called at the hospital and when she stopped calling; and he delivered the letter to Beaudry just at the right time."

"Has Marjorie seemed at all affected by the fact that he's gone from the hospital?" asked Westerholt.

"I have not seen her often and you know what a clam she is about feeling," Vera replied. "I'm sure, however, that Henderson knows no more about the man than he does about Marjorie's other settlement pets.

"Cease worrying now about him or Irskhoff or anybody, and take me in for a dance. Henderson is in there now I suppose looking for me. He's posing as Charles the First, and a very handsome king he is, as you shall see."

Westerholt rose, bowed with great dignity. Vera, rising, linked her arm in his.

Marjorie, as Joan of Arc, came running from the ballroom as they were about to enter. Vera looked back to see her go hurriedly down the marble staircase; but gave no further thought to her, as Vera was presently surrounded by a group of richly and variously clothed gentlemen, who saluted her and her escort by bowing as if they meant to touch their heads to the floor.

Few, if any of them, recognized George Westerholt; but all of them saw Vera Compton-Snead as Cleopatra. Early in the evening some one had recognized her by certain jewels she wore, and the word had passed from

this one to that like an electric current. Everybody was only too anxious to make obeisance to the future wife of Henderson Ives.

The majestic figure of Charles the First stood out presently in the enlarging group about Cleopatra. Vera murmured a word to George Westerholt, who at once handed her to Charles with a courtly air.

"Thou art truly my king," Vera sighed almost against his cheek as Henderson Ives led her off to dance amid the muffled plaudits of those who had watched the graceful bit of comedy.

"Vera," murmured Henderson Ives hoarsely, putting his arms about her.

They swung away lightly to the languorous rhythm of a waltz.

"You are more beautiful than ever before."

"Because I love you more than ever," she whispered in response; and felt certain she might—as she had planned—fix the date for their marriage before the ball was over.

Downstairs on the first floor, in a small room, at the rear of the house, which Henderson Ives maintained as an office at home, Marjorie sat talking with Prince Irskhoff, who was attired as a Mohammedan sheik.

"Oh, I can't tell you," she was saying, "what a joy it is to see you again."

The same thing in different words she had told him more than once as she related what she knew of the disappearance of Arthur Beaudry.

"I had to come when I received your message, Miss Ives; and it was safer to come in costume so that no one should think I was here except to amuse myself."

"And you just have to come upstairs now you are here and see what a wonderful party we have," Marjorie declared.

"May I ask a question?" the prince inquired.

"Of course," said Marjorie.

"It is a confidential question, Miss Ives. Soon I hope I shall release you from all these stupid confidences in which you can have little interest. Meanwhile, I am grateful and you shall one day have evidence of my appreciation."

"I'll answer it if I can, and without any claim for appreciation," Marjorie returned.

"Do you know whether Mr. George Westerholt is here to-night or whether he is likely to come?"

"I know he has promised to come," Marjorie replied. "He may be here; but there are many in costume and mask whom I as yet have not found out. He's pretty sure to be here because father asked him especially, knowing you said you wished to meet him."

"That is very kind of your father," the prince said. "I will stay a little while then, if only to show how I value your father's thoughtfulness."

Marjorie rose, and as the prince started to follow her from the room, she turned and said timidly:

"Prince Irskhoff, I have a question, too."

"My dear Miss Ives, I am wholly at your service."

Her voice trembled and her eyes were downcast as she spoke.

"Mr. Beaudry is not a really bad man, is he, even if he has been in prison?"

The prince's beady black eyes flamed as they searched her face suddenly uplifted once the question was uttered.

"My dear Miss Ives," Irskhoff replied gently as her father might have spoken, "he is no more a bad man than he is a waiter. More, it is not for me to say now."

"And you will find out where he is, won't you? You know we could send an alarm—"

"Not one word of that kind of business," Irskhoff cut in, "it will spoil everything. It may take a week, a month, a year even; but I shall find him."

"Thank you so much," Marjorie was saying when a servant came to-

ward them hurriedly to say that some one was calling her on the telephone.

"I shall go up-stairs at once, Miss Ives," said Irskhoff.

The gaiety and frolicking at Henderson Ives's pageant dance only increased with the waning hours of the night.

Meanwhile, the steamship Patria, outward bound for Montevideo, had long since passed Sandy Hook, and was ambling ahead on the first stages of her voyage under a sky dazzling with stars. The captain and the second officer stood on the bridge and talked in no pleasant manner to each other as they kept the ship right on her way.

Instead of sailing from South Brooklyn early in the afternoon they had been held up by a strike of the longshoremen who were putting the cargo aboard so that the Patria did not steam out from the pier until six in the evening.

The captain blamed the hold-up of the longshoremen on the stupidity of the second officer; but another trouble harassed him for which only he himself was responsible.

His supposedly dissipated passenger, whose friends had given the captain a fat sum of money to transport him to South America, had suddenly come to life from his sleep of stupor just as the Patria got under way.

"If you hadn't held us up with those robbers," the captain growled at length, "we would have got so far out, he could not have jumped."

"He would have made trouble for you anyway, sir," the officer replied, "and you're in his passage money without having a freak like him round. There was something wrong with that fellow."

"The money's worth while," the captain said, "and you'll have your share. We'll bury the whole affair; and if the man was drowned it's not our fault. He wouldn't take a line though we threw it right away, and the men in the boat we let down could find no trace of him."

Thus ended the Patria's concern with Arthur Beaudry, to whom little or no thought had been given until the moment when he rushed wildly from his cabin to the deck, carrying his coat on his arm and demanding that he be sent ashore.

All the night previous and all this day he remained in a dead sleep from which he roused himself at intervals only to suffer excruciating attacks of nausea.

Even at these times his consciousness was vague and dim. He fancied he was in the hospital and that he had developed some horrible sickness.

This delusion left him only to be replaced by the worse reality that he was aboard ship and on his way out to sea. They laughed at him and gibed in response to his excited statements that he was being shanghaied and they must send him ashore.

The second officer called him "a crazy loon," accused him of having been drinking, and threatened unless he conducted himself as a passenger should, he would be put under arrest.

Beaudry shuddered and moaned: "Not that! Not that!"

The man was about to force him to go down to his cabin. Beaudry saw his move; and with a quick backward run to the rail, turned swiftly and vaulted overboard, still clutching his overcoat under his arm.

He swam slowly but steadily in the direction of the shore lights and all unheeding the cries that the Patria's men yelled after him.

Death in the dark waters was preferable to being in the hands of such people as they. What power of a sorceress did Vera exercise in this world?

The memory of the poisoned perfume and Vera nerved his heart to greater courage. He swam faster now; and gradually his restored consciousness began to comprehend more clearly the nightmare he had lived through in twenty-four hours.

He had been swimming for about half an hour. His spurt of strength,

due solely to the tremendous nerve tension of the moment, was played out. He rolled over on his back to float at the mercy of the waves; and he began to mutter half hysterically.

The shore was not a thousand feet away. In a little while he turned back on his side to try to swim again.

Coming straight across the line on which he was aiming for shore, he saw a tugboat's lights. With an effort he stood up and trod water, yelling at the same time with all the force his weakened lungs could muster.

Rapidly the tug forged her way ahead, but apparently no one heard his repeated cries.

He screamed in frenzy until he found there was no more voice left in his throat, and he was merely uttering faint, raucous noises.

He had not seen the boat wheel about and bear down upon him; and knew that it had done so only when he felt himself being lifted aboard by a man who was held alongside the tug in a tender.

One of the crew provided him with a discarded suit of clothes and the captain gave orders that he should have hot coffee. When the tug put up for the night at her dock, Beaudry was weak and chilled, but his mind was quite clear and vigorous.

The captain was not an inquisitive man and was satisfied with Beaudry's story that he was on a boat bound out and had fallen overboard.

"I'll leave my clothes here, sir," he said, "as a promise that I'll come back to-morrow or next day and repay you if—"

"Ah, shucks," said the captain, "we were only to glad to do it. Take 'em with you and forget it."

Beaudry, however, insisted on having the captain's card and, after thanking him and his men excitedly, asked to be directed on his way to New York.

Though he was fully aware he had no money, he did not feel he could ask the captain to lend him any, as it might involve explanations. When he had walked, therefore, upward of an hour, he managed to find a second-hand clothing store where he sold his wet suit for a dollar.

Thirty minutes later he was telephoning to the Vesper Settlement House for Miss Ives.

They informed him that she was at her home; and after a long wait while the servants searched for her, he heard her voice tremble over the wire, saying:

"You, Mr. Beaudry, you? I want to see you, that is—" she paused as if not knowing what to say. "Will you come to the house to see me right away? Where are you?"

She meant to judge from the location in which he was how long it would take him to reach the house. In all the pleasant tumult of the evening, if he came soon, she could absent herself from her guests without being remarked.

At his end of the telephone Beaudry looked about the cigar-store into which he had come to telephone. In truth he did not know just where he was, except that he was on upper Madison Avenue, which he had judged to be remote enough from the neighborhood of Wunsch, his former janitor-landlord, so that he would be in no danger of being again waylaid.

At the forward end of the store, behind the show-window, a group of youngish men stood chatting with animation about a poster one of them had just nailed on the wall. Beaudry surveyed their faces quickly, and glanced at the poster which they were discussing.

"Wait just a moment," he said through the telephone to Marjorie Ives.

The poster announced the ball of the Valets' Association, and a second look at the men convinced Beaudry that they were servants from various houses in millionaires' row, one block to the west.

"I beg your pardon," Beaudry inquired in his dignified semiforeign

English accent, "but will some one of you please tell me what street this is?"

A valet off duty has as much contempt for an ordinary human being as he has of groveling servitude before his master.

The man who asked this question looked so much like a laborer out of a job in his faded overalls and jumper that all the men snickered.

All except one, to be accurate; and that one had brown, shifty eyes and blond hair. He stared at the white-faced, ill-clad figure telephoning, as though he was seing a ghost.

"Fifty-Ninth Street, you boob dago!" shouted another of the group.

Everybody roared at the witticism except the man with the shifty brown eyes and blond hair.

Beaudry cried, "I thank you," and the next instant into the transmitter to Miss Ives, "I'm coming right up. Expect me."

He dashed the receiver into the hook—it was a slot telephone—and ran out the side-door of the store.

In the blond-haired man with shifty eyes he had recognized the fellow who sat in front of the taxicab with the chauffeur who had taken him from the Spencer Hospital for a drive in the park.

CHAPTER X.

BEAUDRY MEETS VERA.

THOUGH it was the most natural chance that Arthur Beaudry, knowing certain people of wealth, or even just one such person, should meet again Mandruss, George Westerholt's valet, when he strayed to a telephone-box in a favorite haunt of valets, Beaudry could not help but be again terrified by the enchanted snare which Vera seemed to have been able to cast about his every possible move.

He fairly ran to Fifth Avenue. He wanted simply to reach the haven of the home of Miss Ives. Away from her he was at the world's mercy.

On the avenue he saw the uniform of a policeman shining in the glare of an electric light. With shameful remembrance of his experience as a convict, he felt he must not run. An officer seeing a man run, goes for him as a hunter goes for his quarry.

He settled down for a brisk walk.

Three policemen he passed and, though each one stared at his shabby laborer's clothes at this time of night on Fifth Avenue, none intercepted him.

The door servants at the house of Henderson Ives had seen many queer costumes slip into the vast hall flanked by the marble staircase.

But the appearance of Arthur Beaudry was preposterous beyond belief. They told him quietly to go away.

"I am Arthur Beaudry," the thin, wild-eyed man cried, and stalked into the hall with an air of dignity and of command before which even these practised menials were abashed. "Miss Ives is expecting me."

The man's tones were piercing and determined. They struck on the ears of Marjorie, waiting in one of the cloak-rooms, with presage of some disaster.

"What is there so frightening about this man?" she asked herself and ran out to greet him.

She fell back timidly at sight of him.

His hair was awry, his clothes a horrible grotesque frame for his upright and noble figure.

His dark eyes burned deep in their sockets with a fire that awed her.

Yet her heart kept beating in rhythm with each pulse the thought: "I know he is not this he seems to be!"

"I don't wonder I frighten you, Miss Ives," Beaudry announced, "but you must forgive me. Please do not ask me to talk, but take me to your father at once. I cannot wait.

"I have waited because I knew people would say I was crazy if I sprang out of the mud of the streets and tried to say what I have to say. They would take my record. They would send me

off somewhere—shut me up for always by some hook or crook.

"It has been tried with too great success already. I wait no more. I must see your father."

His voice suddenly sank into that low vibrating tone in which he used to talk to her in the hospital, making his pale pure image in the sunshine glow with a light of transfiguration.

She stammered in reply: "But, my dear Mr. Beaudry, you cannot see him just this minute. We are having a lot of people—"

Abruptly Marjorie became silent.

Before them appeared Prince Irskhoff, in garb of a sheik, who had been notified by Marjorie of the strange telephone message she had received from Beaudry.

"Your pardon, Miss Ives," he began, and then said a few words in Russian to Beaudry.

A name was mentioned, an English name, that Marjorie did not quite hear. The rest of their fluent interchange of sentences was mere sound to her.

She waited patiently, amazed, awaking from her bewilderment, when Prince Irskhoff said softly:

"We shall go up-stairs now. They are having the *pièce de résistance* of the night. A procession of ladies in lace, signifying the world, and a chant by clergy in vestments to signify religion.

"Your father is the only one, I believe, who knows I'm here, Miss Ives, and I'm not sure that he does know it was I to whom he talked. In any event, it was he who told me about the laces and the vestments which he says have great historical value."

"Everybody will know everybody soon," Marjorie said, "I'm sure it's nearly midnight."

The prince allowed her to pass. She turned as if to see what was to become of Arthur Beaudry.

"The gentleman accompanies me," said Irskhoff in his best diplomatic manner and with corresponding firmness, as he read her glance. "Even this you must do for me, Miss Ives, in addition to all you have done."

"But it will be so embarrassing for Mr. Beaudry," Marjorie protested.

"I am taking a dangerous but warranted liberty with your house, Miss Ives," Irskhoff replied, "which I am obliged to do in the name of the government I represent."

"You have no warrant whatever," Marjorie retorted in rising anger. "This is my father's house. I have done much for you as you say. But I am first of all my father's daughter. I forbid you to—"

"And I work in your father's interest," the prince interposed quietly, "though he does not yet know it."

"You, you, Mr. Beaudry," Marjorie pleaded, "you seemed grateful to me. What does this all mean?"

"I am grateful," Beaudry replied, "so grateful that there is nothing in the world I would not do for you. And this will be of service more important to you even than it is to me, although it may mean my life if it is not done. Will you understand me, Miss Marjorie, though you do not know?"

He held out his hand to her, gazing steadfastly into her eyes. He kissed hers when she gave it.

A clock in the lower hall struck midnight. The chimes of another on the next floor began to ring, but were soon drowned in the laughter and the shouts of the guests in the ballroom and outside of it that all must now unmask.

"We go up-stairs," said Prince Irskhoff, tearing off his mask and starting forward with Arthur Beaudry. He paid no more attention to Marjorie, who slunk back at first and then sank on a divan at the foot of the stairs, a pitiful Joan of Arc leaning her head on her hands while tears streamed down her face.

There was a rush of people and a clamor of voices she could hear as Irskhoff arrived at the landing with his nondescript guest. She heard him call for Mr. Henderson Ives.

A servant came to her and announced that a man of Mr. George Westerholt's wanted to talk with him on the telephone on important business.

"Go and find out what man he is," Marjorie ordered listlessly.

The man returned in a moment to inform her that the servant's name was Mandruss.

"He can't talk to him now," said Marjorie, sitting up erect and listening with staring eyes before her to the words of Prince Irskhoff at the head of the stairs.

The servant disappeared and she remained alone in the hall. Supper preparations were under way, and everybody's hands were needed.

"I beg to introduce," Prince Irskhoff had said, "a man known as Arthur Beaudry, who is in reality the Hon. Francis Symington of England. He has served five years of a thirty-year term in a Russian prison for a crime which he never committed.

"He took the blame of it because he was infatuated with a woman whom he married against the wishes of his family, and so lost all position in his own country. Having money of his own he went to St. Petersburg, where he became attached, in a humble capacity, to the British embassy. His wife, a brilliant woman, never guilty of the usual infraction of law that makes a woman a criminal, but a model on this score, had an insatiable mania for treasures of art as a basis of social station.

"She bribed a trusted person to sell her at an enormous price certain objects that he had in custody as an official of the government. When the transaction became known this trusted official killed himself, and the husband of the woman in question went to prison rather than allow her guilt to become known."

Murmurs rose from the guests who found this very boresome talking. The apparent speech of the prince on the other hand had gathered the company close to the head of the staircase.

On the edge of the crowd George Westerholt, pallid as death, grinned and haw-hawed softly, muttering words of disapproval in order to get the others going. And he did it all as a matter of jesting at the loquacious foreigner, as he whispered to those about him.

"In the name of common sense, my dear Prince Irskhoff," Henderson Ives inquired, "what new masquerade are you springing on us?"

Hidden behind George Westerholt's huge form stood Vera, urging him to break up the scene in laughter, the while she trembled in every fiber of her beautiful body.

"The glorious wife I speak of," Irskhoff continued undismayed and determined, "wrote charmingly loving letters to her husband, which she managed to have smuggled to him into prison.

"They were in one strain always—assuring him of her loyalty and of her gratitude for what he had done to save her in the eyes of the world. A year later she slips out of Russia with all his possessions, divorces him in France and—"

"You must pardon me, my dear Irskhoff," Henderson Ives interrupted, as the murmurs of his guests broke into suppressed laughter.

Ives actually began to think that the prince was indulging in some wild freak of a quality appreciable in Russia perhaps, but not in New York.

"You must pardon me," he repeated, "but we must go on—"

"Into the next room," snapped Irskhoff. "I want the Hon. Francis Symington to identify those laces and church vestments you have. I am familiar with them, but his testimony is even of greater value, because it was on account of them he went to prison."

While the prince spoke the Hon. Francis Symington stood mute and motionless as a statue beside him. At first people stared at him a moment, and then fixed their gaze on the prince.

Now all eyes were turned on Symington, who, himself, had been searching every face in the assemblage until at last he caught a glimpse of Cleopatra, shuddering half concealed behind George Westerholt.

"Come in, then, and look at the vestments and laces," said Henderson Ives, "and let's be done with it. If they are not mine, though I bought them, I'll give them up willingly to the proper owners."

At the foot of the marble stairway Marjorie sat on the divan listening with distended eyes, ears acute, and a loud-beating heart. Now and again she looked up, but at once turned her face away again.

On her father's hearty invitation, though it bore a shade of impatience, she heard the shuffle of feet as the crowd began to move toward the ballroom.

A second or two later the man she knew as Beaudry cried in a commanding voice:

"Don't let that woman out of here for a moment!"

All other voices above stairs were hushed. Marjorie glanced upward.

She saw Vera struggling to descend the stairs while Symington held her by the arm.

"I swore, my friend," he said bitterly, "that I should find thee!"

Vera, blazing with jewels from head to foot, glared at the man, and then turned away her head with regal disdain.

Henderson Ives made an attempt to force Francis Symington apart from Vera, muttering at the same time some unintelligible words. Ives seemed suddenly to have become twenty years older.

"What is all this mad business in my house?" he cried then petulantly. "Vera, speak—"

"Yes, Vera, speak," said Symington, releasing his hold on her arm. "Tell Mr. Ives of the woman in Prince Irskhoff's story who wrote letters of love and loyalty to her husband in prison and why that former husband cannot produce those letters.

"Or shall I tell him that they were written with ink that faded absolutely away within a fortnight, so that the paper remained as if it had never been written on. Tell him that this matter of the laces and vestments was only one of a number in your curious manner of adding to your art collections, which affairs I always did my best to cover by lavish use of money."

Vera remained standing on one spot as if made of stone. Her beautiful arms and breast had lost their glow of life and showed unhealthily pale against the brilliance of her jewels. Only occasionally she raised her eyelids to glance about her slowly while Symington was speaking.

She knew that Henderson Ives wished her to look into his eyes; but she would not do this. Erect, inflexible, there she stood under the attack of this man, as a martyr at the mercy of persecutors.

So she appeared to Henderson Ives, although the man's heart was breaking, as he gradually realized the difference between Vera in appearance and in fact.

He suffered the more agonizingly because he was so utterly powerless to help her. Not the Vera that stood here now, a being strangely metamorphosed, but the Vera he had known, and who existed no more.

"Shall I tell you yourself something, Vera?" Symington was saying. "When you tricked me away from the hospital and had me taken in the cab in which you had carefully distributed *la poudre Persienne,* you made two mistakes.

"You did not put enough of the poison in the cab to kill me, and you put too much to keep me soundly drugged. I grieve to say that it caused me excessive nausea, which accounts for my being here to-night. Next time you are using your secret powder—"

"Blackmailer! Scoundrel!" Vera

whispered toward him, and struck him across the face with her fan. "Out of my way!"

From below Marjorie saw Vera start to run down the steps, and simultaneously heard Prince Irskhoff calling for her, as if he were issuing from the ballroom.

The sound of his voice halted Vera for a moment, who turned her head to look back, Marjorie thought.

The next instant Marjorie realized that she had been mistaken.

Vera was twisting about on the seventh or eighth step from the top, her arms upraised in a convulsive gesture, while from her throat came horrid gurgling noises as of maniac laughter.

"Catch her, somebody! She will fall!" Marjorie cried, beginning to run up the stairs.

And then with a long piercing scream that smote the heart of everybody in the house, Vera crumpled into a heap and rolled down the marble stairway, a grotesque bundle of shimmering silk and diamonds, scattering pearls from her broken necklace in all directions.

Marjorie was thrown back by the weight of the swiftly rolling body, but managed to maintain her balance as she caught Vera in her arms.

At once she sat her up on the steps.

Vera's eyes were wide open, staring, unseeing.

From her nostrils and her mouth blood trickled down on her neck and breast.

"Make everybody go away from here," Marjorie cried excitedly to Francis Symington, who had come running down to aid her. "She has a hemorrhage, I think, and we must have a doctor right away."

The newspapers of the next day related the tragic ending of the Henderson Ives pageant dance.

Mrs. Compton-Snead, who was engaged to be married to the famous banker, and in whose honor the entertainment had been arranged, died suddenly of cerebral hemorrhage just as the guests were about to sit down to supper. Everybody went home immediately, and the supper that had been prepared for three hundred was left untouched.

It was understood that Henderson Ives was completely prostrated, and that his physician was taking him South immediately, believing that it would be imprudent for him to attend the funeral of Mrs. Compton-Snead in his condition.

While apparently in vigorous condition it was known by some of her friends that Mrs. Compton-Snead had been suffering seriously from nervous strain during the past few weeks, and had continued her social activities against medical counsel.

In due time her will was probated, and the world was not a little surprised to learn from the appraisal of her estate that Mrs. Compton-Snead had lived up to the limit of her means, and that her only wealth practically consisted of her art collections, which were bequeathed unreservedly to Henderson Ives.

As Mr. Ives had sold his town house and its contents, because he was going abroad for a year's rest, he devised the Compton-Snead collections to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, with instructions that they were to be disposed of as the curator saw fit, and not to be grouped under any special name. . . .

Late in the ensuing summer Marjorie Ives sat in her room in the settlement house, which overlooked the East River. One of the older girls came to her door, saying she had a card for her.

"It's from Mr. Francis Symington," the girl said naively, reading the card as she gave it to Marjorie.

"I'll go right down with you, my dear," said Marjorie, quickly putting on her hat, and slipping her fingers into gloves as they descended the stairs.

Francis Symington's face was radiant as he caught sight of her, and he stepped forward impatient to take her hand.

"I'm glad to see you," Marjorie said looking straight across his shoulder, though she was aware of the expression in his face which she dared not meet squarely.

"Are you ready for a beautiful dinner?" he asked lightly. "Prince Irskhoff told me to warn you he had drilled the hotel management for a week to have this dinner properly served."

"I don't feel hungry to tell the truth," Marjorie said, as they got into the taxicab waiting at the door.

It sped rapidly westward. Marjorie kept her eyes toward the window.

"You haven't stopped me from writing to you all these long months I've been with Irskhoff in Washington," said Symington. "So I've thought maybe you didn't mind, and then maybe you might, just a little."

"I've always answered, haven't I?"

"Because you really wanted to, or because you wished merely to be kind? You know you are kind to everybody."

She was silent for a moment, and he leaned over toward her, trying to see her face. She turned quickly.

"Before we get to the dinner," she said abruptly, "tell me this, please: Is it all settled about the vestments and the laces? They have been sent back so long now, it will never come out in the papers, will it?"

"Prince Irskhoff promised to save your father that unnecessary publicity, and he has been able to keep his promise. It will never come out now.

"And before we get to the dinner, Marjorie, will you tell me this, please?" he asked, imitating her manner of putting a question with all the seriousness of her big gray eyes.

She laid her hand in his for answer, and as he drew her close to him she murmured: "But I shall always be a little afraid because life seems so perilous, no matter what one does."

"I've asked you fifty times in my letters," he returned, "wouldn't you be more afraid of life without me? Forget the dead past; and let us enter on the new life together."

"If you are always near me," she sighed, letting her shoulder lean against his, "I sha'n't be so much afraid, Frank."

He held her hand in a firm grasp, as the taxicab turned into Fifth Avenue.

"We two, always together," he whispered. "Let our hearts record it now unto the end."

(The End.)

A SIGH.

By Harriet Prescott Spofford.

IT was nothing but a rose I gave her—
  Nothing but a rose
Any wind might rob of half its savor,
  Any wind that blows.

When she took it from my trembling fingers
  With a hand as chill—
Ah, the flying touch upon them lingers,
  Stays, and thrills them still!

Withered, faded, pressed between the pages,
  Crumpled fold on fold—
Once it lay upon her breast, and ages
  Cannot make it old!

Crossed Wires

by R A Ellis

JIMSIE stepped from the railroad station out into a chilling drizzle of rain. He hesitated a moment, considered, and dismissed the idea of a taxicab. Only three blocks distant was the corner at which he could take the Lawnwood car for home.

He had not had a drink for fifty-one days. Not since the conclusion of the big spree that had brought such an appalling reprimand from the firm.

His wife had stood by him. She had nursed him through the period of nausea, shakiness, and depression without a word of reproof. She had not even asked that he quit drinking.

But how her face had lighted up when he had promised of his own accord! He had told her that he would not drink again until he felt certain that he—not the liquor—was master.

She had cried a bit then, he remembered; but they had been happy tears. She had said that she was proud of him; that she believed in him wholly; that she knew he would never hurt her that way again.

Jimsie Dale was thinking of these things as, grip in hand, he swung along the sloppy street. He was thinking of them with peculiar intensity. He was trying to silence an insistent voice that whispered a familiar plea.

The drizzle had developed into a steady downpour of rain. He had neither raincoat nor umbrella, and his thin summer suit was drenched.

At the corner, which in half an hour his car would pass, was Marty Hogan's saloon — not a low groggery, but a "respectable" place that a gentleman could enter. He would have to wait there until his car came.

Ninety-nine men out of a hundred would buy a drink, Jimsie decided. One—perhaps two. Something to keep off a cold. That was the way to use whisky. To drink when one needed it and let it alone when one didn't. Surely the fifty-one days had proven that he could do that!

Jimsie turned into the brilliantly lighted doorway. It was good to be out of the rain. He hesitated in front of the swinging doors that divided the cigar-counter at the entrance from the barroom beyond. Two slightly exhilarated youths were shaking dice with the clerk.

Jimsie bought a cigar, and stood

watching the game. He thought he was postponing a decision. He was merely postponing action. The decision had been made when he turned into the saloon.

He had been out of town for four days—one day longer than he had anticipated. The trip had been successful. He thought, with a glow of pride, of the signed contract in his grip. Old "Steel" Pierson himself, the head of the firm, had tried for it and failed.

They had sent out Jimsie on a long chance as a forlorn hope. And he had made good. It was worth a little celebration.

It was annoying to remember that the events of two months before had started with a self-gratulatory drink. But, of course, things were different now. He had learned self-control.

From the bar came a cozy clinking of glasses and a medley of voices. Scraps of conversation floated in:

"And I looked Graney square in the eye, and I says to him—"

"Listen, Joe. This is a new one. An Irishman—"

"Well, I tell my wife that so long as I keep her provided for, she had no right to interfere with my pleasures. If I want to—"

An automobile stopped in front of the door and a man whom Jimsie knew hurried in.

It was Brinton, chief engineer of consolidated power, and a former neighbor. He passed through the swinging doors, and was greeted with acclaim by the group at the upper end of the bar.

"Strike up the band," chanted a jovial voice; "here comes a trailer. What will the little lady have? Jerry, give Mr. Brinton a drink."

"Let's all-ll-ll have a drink," suggested another voice. "I'm about to buy."

"Extra! Extra! Johnny Tracy is buying a drink!"

Jimsie stepped into the barroom. Yes, he knew all that crowd.

There were Halley and Garford, both successful brokers; Dent, of the *Morning Call,* and little Johnny Tracy, over whose cartoons the whole city was laughing. It would be a merry party. He knew they would welcome him.

Brinton was laughingly struggling in the grip of Dent and Garford. They were trying to force him up to the long mahogany bar.

Little Tracy pushed behind with the exaggerated effort of a Marceline. Brinton's huge body swayed this way and that, like a beetle assaulted by ants. It was ludicrous.

Screening the private drinking-booths which lined one side of the room was a series of potted palms.

One of these Jimsie interposed between himself and the crowd. His throat ached. His hands were twitching. He had a feverish thirst. A glass had been overturned at a table behind him, and the reek of the liquor made him sick with longing.

Brinton had broken away from his tormentors, and was heading for the telephone-booth, near which Jimsie stood.

"Wait until I phone my wife," he protested to Dent, who was following to renew the attack. "I'll tell her that I've had a breakdown and can't get home. Then I'll make you Indians go some!"

That was the thing to do, thought Jimsie Dale. He must telephone his wife. She would be expecting him. Worrying about the delay. Fearful of accident. He must stop that.

He must tell her something. Lie to her. And then he would drown that ache in his throat and soothe those twitching nerves.

Brinton was coming out of the booth, a disgusted expression on his fat face. Jimsie hurried forward, grudging every minute. Brinton grunted recognition.

"Rotten service!" he complained. "Something wrong with the line. I guess this storm has put the whole system on the blink. This is the first time

I've seen you, Dale, in six months. Have a smile?"

"In a minute," panted Jimsie, and slipped into the booth.

Central answered promptly.

"Lawnwood 634," Jimsie enunciated with painful precision. It would not do to get the wrong number. His taut nerves cried out against delay. He would have a Scotch high-ball first, and then—

Br-r-r-r—un — br-r-r-r — un — br-r-r-r! sounded in his ear. It was the busy signal. Before he could lower the receiver the buzzing noise ceased, and he heard his wife's voice on the line.

"Hello!" sounded the clear tones. "Hello!"

"Hello, Amy!" Jimsie answered eagerly. His voice rebounded flatly from the mouthpiece of the telephone. There was something wrong with the connection. He could hear, but could not be heard.

"Hello!" he shouted in impotent wrath, and stopped rigidly, midway in a movement to signal Central. Another voice had spoken over the wire.

"Hello, Mrs. Dale!" boomed the voice of his chief. "This is Mr. Pierson. Has Mr. Dale come in yet?"

Jimsie Dale listened breathlessly.

"Not yet, Mr. Pierson. I am just a little worried. It's foolish, I know; but I have had a feeling for the past half-hour that he needed me terribly, somehow."

There was an anxious catch in the familiar voice.

"Do you suppose there could possibly have been an—an accident?"

"Nothing reported. No; the trains are running all right. I've been wondering if it isn't something else. Dale should have been in the office this morning, and we have heard nothing from him.

"It's the first time we've sent him out since that affair—you know what I mean. Do you suppose he has made another slip—lost his grip of himself? I dislike to worry you with such a question, but I must know. Has he seemed to be weakening lately?"

Even over the miles of rain-washed wire Jimsie could feel the certainty and perfect confidence of the voice that answered.

"Oh, no!" she laughed. "That isn't even to be thought of. Mr. Dale promised me. And he never broke a promise in his life!"

Very quietly, very thoughtfully, Jimsie Dale hung up the receiver and stepped outside the booth.

He picked up his grip. He moved toward the door.

Brinton barred the way.

"Hey!" he reminded him. "You've got a drink coming to you."

Jimsie pushed past.

"Sorry, old man," he called over his shoulder. "I haven't time. I've got to catch a car!"

THE POET.

By Cornelius Mathews.

GATHER all kindreds of this boundless realm
To speak a common tongue in thee! Be thou—
Heart, pulse, and voice, whether pent hate o'erwhelm
The stormy speech or young love whisper low.
Cheer them, immitigable battle-drum!
Forth, truth-mailed, to the old unconquered field,
And lure them gently to a laureled home,
In notes more soft than lutes or viols yield.
Fill all the stops of life with tuneful breath;
Closing their lids, bestow a dirgelike death!

The Wreck of the Lauderdale

By William Patterson White

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

SANDY CAMERON, the son of a New York millionaire, having tired of the well-known actress Nan Crawford, whom he believes is not treating him honestly, enters into a treasure-seeking scheme with his friend Van Duzen, who has learned of a ship—the Lauderdale—sunk many years before in the Gulf of Persia. Cameron tells a good deal of his plans to Nan Crawford, who repeats the yarn to one Stephen Dow, a freebooter and pirate, who immediately endeavors to join the expedition, though he and Cameron have before this quarreled over Nan. In the end the two young New Yorkers charter the Stellaland and set to sea.

They have a rather exciting voyage, and two trimmers, Smith and Goode, are summarily put ashore in Arabia, because it is suspected that they are at the bottom of the various accidents that have occurred on the voyage. The Stellaland safely reaches the Persian Gulf and anchors off the town of El Tanar, where Cameron, wandering round in search of excitement, meets and befriends a Berber, Seydan Rahyel, who becomes his devoted servant. Also Cameron, with his old time ardor, has a series of clandestine meetings with a charming Oriental maiden named Ardelan, the daughter of Sheik Hussein, the ruler of the El Tanar. Cameron is captured during one of the meetings, imprsioned, and next morning is about to be executed, when Ardelan runs into the court-room, where her father is judge, and whispering something in the old Arab's ear, causes Cameron to be freed and sent back to the ship, where Van Duzen and the rest of the crew are seeking to locate the wreck, so far unsuccessfully. Hardly does he get aboard when a spick and span yacht sails up and anchors not far away.

They are suspicious of her, and despite her captain's statement that she belongs to a rich Irish widow traveling for her health, keep a lookout. The sunken Lauderdale is located and work in raising the treasure commences; all the time a series of harassing interruptions occur, culminating in the treasure-seekers being fired on from the shore. Cameron undertakes to find their enemies, and with the Berber does so. They are Goode and Smith. Just as Cameron is about to administer justice, Sheik Selim Mohammed with a troop gallops up about to attack El Tanar. Smith and Goode are barbarously murdered, while Cameron and the Berber rush to warn the town. They arrive just in time, and also to find Ardelan in danger.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SHEIK IS GRATEFUL.

HE broke through the fringe of shrubbery, and dashed up the steps leading to the platform. An Arab was straddling the parapet, and he was busily lowering something to the ground below. On the other side of the wall sounded shriek upon shriek.

The Arab straightened up as Cameron reached the platform. He whipped out a long pistol and pulled trigger. The gun missed fire, and Cameron clipped the fellow under the ear with the heavy barrel of the automatic.

The Arab toppled sideways and fell headlong over the parapet. On the ground below were eight Arab horsemen.

Two of them were endeavoring to hoist Ardelan into a saddle. But Ardelan was a handful, and she was giving them all the work they wanted.

Cameron leaped outward from the parapet and landed squarely on the shoulders of one of the men holding Ardelan. The Arab fell in a huddle, with Cameron on top of him.

The other Arab loosed his grip on the girl, and dragged out a sword. He swung a vicious cut at Cameron's head, but Ardelan threw her arms round the fellow's neck and dug her fingers into his eyes.

The blow missed, and the Arab, mad with pain, twisted about to strike her. Cameron put two bullets into him, and dragged Ardelan to one side just as two of the horsemen drove at him with their long lances.

The automatic spat like a cat, and one of them fell forward over his horse's neck. The other horsemen fired their pistols.

Ardelan sank to the ground in a heap, blood staining her forehead.

Then Cameron went insane.

He dropped his empty automatic, snatched up a dead man's sword, and rushed in among the horsemen. Behind him Seydan Rahyel was swinging himself over the wall, and along the sand from the western gate came a few guards.

Cameron does not remember clearly what happened after he saw the blood on Ardelan's face. He only knows that when his brain cleared there were six dead men lying on the trampled sand, and the guards were firing their guns at the others galloping away in the distance.

Three of the dead bodies bore deep swordcuts, and two numerous slits from the Berber's knife. Seydan Rahyel had gone berserk-mad himself when he saw his master fighting against such odds.

Cameron dropped his sword and knelt beside Ardelan. She was unconscious, but breathing. Sick with fear, he pushed back her black hair.

A bullet had grazed the top of her head. It was no more than a graze, but the shock had stunned her. Cameron took heart anew and stanched the flow of blood with his handkerchief.

One of the guards ran quickly and brought a full *girby* from the guardroom at the gate. Cameron bathed the graze, and soon Ardelan moaned a little and opened her eyes.

"*Aie*," she murmured, seeing Cameron's face close to hers. "Thou art here."

She endeavored to sit up, but she was still weak from her faint, and she fell back into his arms.

"Bring a ladder," said Cameron to the Berber.

But the guards, anxious to do all they could for the daughter of their sheik, brought one from the gate. They set it against the wall.

Cameron gathered Ardelan into his arms. She put her arms about his neck and dropped her head on his shoulders with a contented little sigh.

He mounted the ladder and carried her through the garden and into the house. The men from the gate spread out along the wall in readiness for any more surprises.

Cameron laid Ardelan on a bed, washed the wound afresh and bandaged it. Ardelan lay with closed eyes, one hand in his. Very quietly he knelt beside the bed, leaned over, and kissed her.

The Berber looked at them, a little smile playing over his dark features. His blue eyes lit up, and he squatted down in the doorway, back to them, and his brass-strapped gun across his knees. He knew love when he saw it, did Seydan Rahyel.

The beautiful daughter of the *tajir* had taught him. Then he thought of his dead *thelûl,* scowled, and whetted his long knife on the sole of his foot.

Faintly through the window drifted the sounds of battle from the direction of the gate of the north. Occasionally the deep roar of a heavy gun punctuated the minor rattle and crack of the small arms. The firing did not seem to be so heavy now. But Cameron and Ardelan were interested solely in themselves.

Clinging tightly to his hand, as if for protection, Ardelan told him how the kidnaping Arabs had entered the house a few minutes after Sheik Hussein left; how the servants had all fled except Imbarak, who gave his life in her defense.

"*Aie,* if thou hadst not come to my rescue," she said.

"Without the Berber I could have done little."

"So thou sayest, but—I know."

The girl reached a hand into the breast of her jacket and pulled out some folded pieces of paper.

"See," she said, "thy letters to me. I have kept them always next my heart. The last came yesterday in the afternoon. How glad I was! The noise of the explosion the night before made me afraid for thee. I thought thou hadst been wounded perhaps. What caused the explosion?"

Cameron told her about the mysterious boat, and she said that men from Abu Bebi had probably been endeavoring to avenge their sheik's death. She took no stock at all in Captain Magruder's beach-combers from the Persian shore, but the lawlessness of the Abu Bebi citizens was proverbial, and they were liable to perform almost any outrage.

He had finished telling her of the sharpshooting of Goode and Smith, and their deaths at the hands of Sheik Selim's men, when the tramp of feet sounded below stairs.

"Ahmed! Said! Tollog!" bellowed the voice of the sheik. "*Billah!* Where are the dogs? Show thyselves! What! Blood on the stairs!"

The feet padded up the steps, and Cameron went into the hall. There stood Sheik Hussein, sword in hand, looking from the body of Imbarak to the Berber and back again. Behind him his men came crowding.

"The *N'zaranee!*" exclaimed the shiek, catching sight of Cameron. "What—"

"Thy daughter," interrupted Cameron, "hath met with an accident. She must have quiet. The noise of thy soldiers disturbeth her."

The sheik looked into the room and saw Ardelan. He turned to his men.

"Go back, and quietly. Make no noise, or thou wilt greet sorrow and the camel-stick."

The men trooped softly down the stairs, and the sheik entered the room. He stood quietly beside the bed while Ardelan told him of the kidnapers and Cameron's rescue. He looked at the bullet-graze and said that it would heal in a very short time.

Wounds were a specialty of Sheik Hussein Ben Ali. He himself had received a few during his lifetime, and he had given a great many more.

"Thou art a man," said the sheik to Cameron. "No, I forget not the Berber. Both of thee shall be rewarded."

Cameron opened his mouth to speak, but Ardelan shook her head at him violently. She had guessed what was passing in his mind. The sheik did not notice the by-play, and continued:

"Two debts I owe thee. The guards at the northern gate say thou and the Berber rode through the gate ahead of the enemy, shouting a warning, and later, fought well in the street. For that and the saving of my daughter I am thy two-times debtor."

Sheik Hussein took a thick gold chain from about his neck and presented it to Cameron. From his waistcloth he drew the pair of silver-mounted pistols he had used that day, and gave them to the Berber.

"No, do not give me thanks," said the sheik deprecatingly. "These are small things to those I shall give thee some day."

He stretched his arms above his head, and dropped them with a great sigh.

"Sheik Selim Mohammed is dead," he went on. "I killed him. One-third of his men lie dead in the streets of El Tanar. Those that are alive are hastening back to their homes in the desert.

"They will think twice before they attack me again. As I have said, I shall take Abu Bebi, and then some day I shall beat the Emir himself. He is fearful of me now. I will give him cause to fear me more."

A frightened woman crept into the room. The sheik regarded her balefully.

"So, Hirfa," he said menacingly, "thou didst run away and leave thy mistress to be carried off. The skin shall be flayed from thy back to-morrow."

The woman cowered, and commenced to whimper. Ardelan stretched out a protecting hand.

"Blame her not," said Ardelan. "She was not in the house when they came. I had sent her on an errand."

"Well for her then," grunted the sheik. "Otherwise a raw back would be her portion. I am hungry. We will leave thee now. Hirfa will attend to thy wants."

"Go, then," said Ardelan. "I would thank the *N'zaranee* for what he hath done. He will come later."

Sheik Hussein favored them both with a crooked smile, and departed. They listened till he went down the stairs. Ardelan beckoned Cameron closer to the bed. He glanced hesitatingly at Hirfa.

"She will not talk," said Ardelan. "She is devoted to me. Listen to me, beloved. When my father spoke of rewards, thou wouldst have asked him for me. Do I not guess aright? Yes, I knew it. And I have forbidden thy speaking.

"*Aie*, it is difficult for thee to obey a woman, but in this case thou must. When we are married I will obey thee in all things, but now I must be obeyed. Thy speaking would spoil everything. Thou knowest I have spoken of a task I have to do. Let me finish it in my own way."

"But I shall be ready to leave for my land in a few days."

"Then thou canst wait till then. Thou impatient one! What matter a few days to our whole long life together?"

She stretched out her arms and held him tightly for a space.

"In three days," she murmured, "come to me again. I want to see thee sooner, but the day I know thou art coming I can think of nothing else but thee. I love thee so.

"I am content in thy arms, and thine only. In three days come, and perhaps I can tell thee of the finish of my task."

Cameron and Seydan Rahyel went down-stairs and ate with Sheik Hussein Ben Ali and his principal fighting men. The Arabs were highly elated over their victory, and talked of little else.

The sheik praised Cameron and the Berber, and would have it that they had been largely responsible for the winning of the battle. Like most Arabs, the sheik had no notion of the finer forms of flattery. He always used a shovel.

"The sheik was generous," said Cameron, looking at his gold chain as he and the Berber were walking toward the Gate of the Sun.

"Master," said the Berber seriously, "I do not trust the sheik. I have never trusted him. I have traveled far, and I have learned that only in a man's eyes can truth be found. The eyes cannot lie. They speak truly a man's thoughts.

"Master, Sheik Hussein Ben Ali smiles with his mouth when he talks with thee, but his eyes do not smile. They look as the eyes of *Dab*, the snake, look at a bird of which *Dab* seeketh to make a meal."

"The sheik sayeth ever that he is my friend. I do not believe he would do me any injury. Had he so wished,

he would have made a meal of me before now."

The Berber shook his head.

"He hath some purpose, master. Sheik Hussein does not say he is a man's friend for nothing. He speaks of his friendship too much. A true friend is silent, and does not talk always of his love for thee. I say, beware of the sheik."

"Seydan, thou art dreaming."

"It may be, master. Thou art a *N'zarance,* and so cannot know all the customs of the *Aarab* of this land. But I know them, and I have watched the sheik.

"I did not speak before, because I was not sure till to-day when we sat at meat with him. Now I am sure. I watched his eyes, and they bore thee no good-will. I say beware."

But Cameron was reluctant to believe that he was in any peril from Sheik Hussein.

The Berber dropped the subject. His master could not be made to see his danger.

At the Gate of the Sun they found the guards barring the way to Van Duzen, Mr. Allis, and sixteen of the Stellaland's deck-hands, all armed with Mausers. They arrived barely in time to avert hostilities. For Mr. Allis had lost his never too equable temper and was preparing to force his way into the town.

"There ye are, sir," shouted Mr. Allis, when they pushed through the crowd. "We misdoubted you'd been killed. Man dear! What a time we've had of it!"

Cameron left the Berber at the gate with orders to meet him on the beach in three days, and went down to the shore with the others. Two life-boats were drawn up on the sand, men with rifles in the hollows of their arms leaning against the bows.

About a mile offshore lay the Stellaland.

"The skipper got up steam," explained Van Duzen, "and moved in closer to town when the racket started ashore. I was scared stiff. Thought you'd be wiped out sure. What started the riot?"

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SURPRISE.

"AND the sharpshooters, sir," said Captain Magruder, when the Stellaland had returned to her former anchorage and Cameron had retold the tale of the fight to the afterguard. "I suppose ye'd no time to find 'em?"

"I was coming to that," said Cameron, whose sense of the dramatic had prompted the withholding till the last of that bit of news. "I found them. They were Goode and Smith."

Captain Magruder's long jaw dropped. Then his mouth closed with a click, he removed his cap, and solemnly scratched his head.

"Goode and Smith!" exclaimed Van Duzen. "Why—"

"I know it sounds improbable, but there they both were in a beautiful little natural fort. They had a Krag-Jorgensen with a telescope sight.

"Smith had a pair of binoculars, and was watching the target for all the world like a naval officer. The rifle was fitted with a Maxim silencer, and used smokeless powder."

"Did ye kill 'em, sir?" asked the skipper.

"They were both killed by Sheik Selim's men. Oh, yes, Bert Smith answered me in Arabic when I called on them to surrender. You see I had a little mixup with the pair before the enemy came."

"Then Goode and Smith did come across the Arabian desert?" put in Van Duzen.

"Certainly," said Cameron with an air of great satisfaction. "I was sure of it from the time I found that knife near the body of the *Koreysh rafik.* Smith killed him—so that the fellow wouldn't talk, I suppose. He practically admitted his guilt while he and I were shooting at each other."

"But what does it all mean?" said Van Duzen. "Those fellows didn't cross the Arabian desert merely to get even with Captain Magruder for putting them ashore."

"Right," said the skipper. "And the rifle, now. Fitted with a telescope sight too. Where did they get it?"

Mr. Kenderdine rose, and ostentatiously leaned over the bridge rail, his eyes fixed on the lights of the Undine gleaming over a low-lying part of Sanjarok Island.

"It ain't possible," muttered the skipper, voicing the thoughts of the others.

"May I speak, sir?" asked the chief engineer.

"Ye may that, mister."

"Well, sir, 'tis just this way. Ye'll mind a rifle like Mr. Cameron speaks of cannot be come by in Arabia. 'Tis a civilized firearm, that. The only civilized object about, besides us, is the Undine."

Mr. Allis paused suggestively.

"I heard Smith talking to Goode," said Cameron, "before they saw me, and Smith's language didn't sound like that of an ordinary trimmer."

"They had discharge books all regular," said the skipper.

"I know, but — well, as Mr. Allis says, where did they obtain that Krag-Jörgensen?"

The skipper hesitated, then made his decision.

"I'll send a boat over to the Undine to-night," he said. "The nights come on cloudy, and 'twill be dark. If the boat can get in close without being seen we'll hear something, maybe."

The skipper rose briskly. A chill breath of moisture drifted across the bridge.

"Blast it all!" he exclaimed. "A bit of a fog's coming up. Ye can't see the lights of the Undine."

It was true. A light fog was blowing down from the north. Captain Magruder decided to wait till it lifted. He didn't care to risk losing a boat and its crew.

Toward midnight the fog lightened. A star or two showed overhead, and then out of the mist lifted the white shape of the Undine.

A startled bawl from a deck-hand, the report of his Mauser, and then—*crash!*

The Undine smashed into the Stellaland's port quarter.

Captain Magruder sprang out of his room, revolver in hand.

"Tumble up! All hands!" he roared. "Forrard there! Slip the cable!"

He leaped up the bridge-ladder and shoved the telegraph pointer to full ahead. The Undine had fallen away after the collision, and from the sound of the clanging gong in her engine-room, her commander was calling for stop and reverse.

There was no mistaking her purpose now. A rapid-fire gun barked on her after-deck, and a six-pounder shell struck and blew up against the Stellaland's superstructure.

In two minutes every man of the Stellaland's crew, except the black gang were lining the rail and firing into the fog.

The Gatlings drummed like mad, spitting three hundred bullets a minute in the direction of the Undine.

A man at a Gatling dropped with a bullet through his lungs, and Cameron seized the handle. Van Duzen, with a Mauser, was lying on his stomach on the bridge deck working the bolt action for all he was worth. Slowly the Stellaland gathered way.

The skipper took the wheel and turned her bow round. He could not see the Undine, but he could hear her rapid fires plainly enough.

Round and round through the fog charged the two vessels. The crews could not see each other, and loosed off blindly into the darkness. A shell struck one of the Stellaland's life-boats and knocked it into splinters.

One ripped into the chart-house and shattered every article of furniture in it. Two more went through the fun-

nel, and another smashed the engine-room skylight.

Suddenly there came the roar of steam on the starboard bow, followed by screams of agony.

"A hole in her teakettle," gritted Captain Magruder. "I've got her now —the blasted pirate!"

He turned the spokes ever so slightly, and swung the Stellaland toward the sound of escaping steam. The Stellaland was doing a good twelve knots. Her high bow struck the Undine abaft the bridge. The yacht's plates gave way like paper.

Grinding and scraping, the Stellaland plowed her way into the yacht's side. The Undine reeled, rolled halfway over, checked an instant, then turned bottom up and slid under the cargo steamer's keel.

"And that's the last o' her," said Captain Magruder, shoving the pointer to stop. "Lord knows where we are, Mr. Kenderdine, so ye'll just cast anchor in a hurry. Quick, man! I've been expecting the old hooker to take the ground any minute."

The mate vanished down the bridge-ladder, and the skipper followed him bawling for men to stand by and lower away the starboard quarterboat. The port quarterboat had been stove in by the Undine's bowsprit.

The boat picked up three survivors—three crushed and scalded wrecks of humanity. Two were evidently seamen, but the third was Reilly, the brisk and dapper master of the yacht.

He was dapper no longer. His uniform was ripped and blackened, his ear was scarred by a bullet, one arm was broken, one eye was completely closed, and his forehead bruised.

All three were unconscious when they were dragged into the quarterboat. They were put to bed in the Stellaland, and everything possible was done for them.

The two sailors never came to. They died before morning. Reilly opened his eyes in less than an hour after he was bandaged and laid on the sheets. He grinned cheerfully at the serious faces surrounding him and demanded a drink.

"You're a cool one, *Desperate Desmond*," chuckled Van Duzen, who always admired a cast-iron nerve. "I suppose you'll have King's Peg?"

"Whisky will do," said Reilly. "No water."

"I'll have ye hung!" grunted Captain Magruder. "If there's a law for piracy you'll swing, my lad."

Reilly smiled, and his one good eye twinkled out from under the bandages on his head. He was quite unafraid.

"Ye've no sense of humor, man," he said. "How I fooled ye with my Mrs. Nesbitt and my Dr. O'Sullivan and all. And ye never tumbled! 'Tis comical. Well, well, if I stretch I stretch, but I'll go knowing I've put over the joke of the century on ye."

He stopped and laughed silently.

"Go on," said Cameron. "The Undine was really Dow's yacht, the Dower Right, wasn't she?"

Reilly winked his eye at him.

"What would ye give to know?" he asked.

"I know she was," said Cameron. "Did Goode and Smith have any connection with you?"

"You're too curious, Mr. Cameron. It does not become ye. I mind a saying once—something to do with a cat it was."

"You'll gain nothing by this foolery," said Cameron. "You might as well tell. You'll be hung anyway."

"And that's the rub. I've no wish to be hung, none at all. I've seen men hung before now, and they were not handsome. I'll make a bargain with ye. There are a lot o' matters ye'd like cleared up. Ye would now, I know it.

"I'm the answer. Turn me over to the bobbies and ye'll never know anything. Give me your word that you'll set me ashore at Port Said with the money-belt I notice you've taken from my waist, and I'll tell you a story that'll interest ye."

"Not for a minute," growled Captain Magruder stubbornly. "I want the lad hung. He's a pirate, no less, and ripe for the rope."

"I'd like to know a few things," said Cameron frankly.

"So would I," chimed in Van Duzen.

"'Tis setting a premium on piracy," said the skipper. "My steamer's scarred up, and a wonder it is no plates were started in the bow. But that was luck, and no thanks to the pirates.

"Seven of my crew are dead and fourteen of 'em wounded. Who's to pay for all this? A proper hanging would ease my feelings amazing."

"Van Duzen and I will stand for the damage," said Cameron. "How about it, Ted?"

"Count me in on that. A bonus for every man that fought in the fight tonight, and a double bonus for the wounded. How's that skipper?"

"Very fine, sir. But—hanging's too good for him."

"Oh, let it go!" urged Cameron. "We all want matters explained. So do you. Remember, we pay for all the damage. I think you'll find the bill rather heavy, too. Better let us foot it. Come, come, captain. You've won a sea-fight. Be generous."

"Generous! Generous! Naught can pay me for the strain of that same turn-up! Me expecting the steamer to pile up on Sanjarok or Marwa, or maybe a reef, any time! 'Tis a wonder my hair's not white!"

The skipper glared balefully at Reilly, who lay in the berth watching the discussion with interest.

"Have it your own way," said the skipper at last.

Mr. Kenderdine put his hand over his mouth to hide a smile. He had the laugh on them all. For he had always mistrusted the Undine. But he knew on which side his bread was buttered, and he maintained a discreet silence.

"Good," said Cameron, when the skipper gave his consent. "Go ahead, Reilly. We'll put you ashore at Port Said. Yes, your money-belt, too."

"That's a promise, then."

"A promise. Our word's good."

"I believe ye, sir. You're a gentleman. I'll tell ye all. Ask me any questions ye like. I'll give ye straight answers. First off, the Undine was the Dower Right, Steve Dow's gun-running yacht. I'm Dow's mate, Luke O'Connor."

"Who was Mrs. Nesbitt?" demanded Cameron.

"Miss Nan Crawford."

"Nan Crawford!" exclaimed Cameron and Van Duzen together.

"Nan Crawford, the play actress," affirmed O'Connor. "She and Dow were sweet on each other, and she came along when we left New York. She was the lady ye saw under the stern-awning that afternoon, Mr. Cameron. 'Tis wonderful what make-up will do."

"Nan Crawford!" repeated Cameron dazedly.

He could not quite grasp it.

That the girl he had once loved should have been party to such an act! She had practically endeavored to bring about his death. He shook his head and stared at the floor.

"Then she's drowned," said Van Duzen.

"She went down with the yacht," said O'Connor. "Dow put her in the after-port bunker, where he thought she'd be safe from stray shots.

"Our plan was to board ye, but the yacht had too much way on, and she slid away too quick. Yes, Steve Dow's gone to Hades, too. Your bow jammed him half through his own cabin. I'm lucky."

"Ye are," said the skipper. "Goode and Smith, now, with their dynamite and fire in the bunker and all—were they in your gang?"

"Smith was my third mate, and Goode was the fourth engineer. Dow picked them to ship with you because Smith spoke Arabic and Goode was a fit mate for him. But Dow never thought you'd reach the Persian Gulf."

"But their discharge-books," said the skipper—"how'd they get 'em?"

"Dow got them. He's a rare one for odd jobs. Listen, now. The Dower Right was in dry dock in New York. Dow got wind o' your intention to raise some treasure in the Persian Gulf. He offered ye his yacht, but ye refused the offer.

"He wanted to beat ye to the treasure, but he couldn't. The yacht was in dry dock for repairs. So Dow filled two of your black gang with knock-out drops, and packed off Goode and Smith to ship with ye.

"Goode was to raise a scare with his dynamite, and make ye put back if he could. Failing that, he was to blow ye up in the Persian Gulf, where no questions would be asked.

"Ye found the dynamite on him, and fixed that plan by putting him in irons. Smith tried to lay out Mr. Cameron and Mr. Van Duzen by heaving knives and coal, but that didn't work, and he was near caught at it. The fire in the bunker was Smith's own idea. He knew it was up to him, and he did the only thing he could. Nine out o' ten skippers would 'a' put back to New York then; but you didn't, captain. You kept on, and put out the fire."

"Fayal reported ye bound east and on fire. Gibraltar reported ye passed through, and the fire almost out. Port Said reported ye in the canal. But Dow didn't worry. He had faith in Goode and Smith.

"The Dower Right had been repainted in Honduras. Dow was always a great hand for looks in his boat, and while she was in dry dock he fitted her out more like a yacht than ever. For Miss Crawford's sake, I suppose.

"He had the guns taken below, and she looked like a gentleman's boat when she took the water again.

"We cleared for Gibraltar then and followed ye here. We raised the lights of El Tanar one morning early, and 'twas a great surprise to us all to see a steamer's riding lights offshore.

"I said 'twas some cargo-boat, but Dow wasn't for taking chances. He turned the yacht about, steamed into a bay down the coast, had the letters of the name unscrewed, and tacked on 'Undine, of Dublin.'

"Two days later we dropped our hook off El Tanar. We made ye out as the Stellaland, and Dow was in a sweat. He could not think what had become of Goode and Smith.

"No, he didn't count on your recognizing his boat. He was fairly certain none o' ye had ever seen her. And when he saw a life-boat row over toward us he was sure of it. Ye'd have come in the steamer else.

"Well, Dow and I thought up the story about the rich widow lady and Dr. O'Sullivan and all, and he had Miss Crawford fix herself up with powder on her hair and deep lines in her face till her own mother wouldn't have known her. And ye believed the tale."

Captain Magruder looked at Mr. Kenderdine, then turned his gaze away hastily. O'Connor asked for another drink, and continued:

"Well, your being on the job changed all our plans. Dow was for waiting till ye did all the work and got the treasure up, and then attacking you. That was all right.

"Then came Goode and Smith. They'd come all the way across the Arabian desert on camels, and they were wild. 'Twas the only way to reach El Tanar. They knew the Undine wouldn't put in at El Lith. They had it in for ye proper for locking 'em up and marooning 'em at El Lith.

"They had to kill more than one man on the way across, and finally had to knife their guide so that he wouldn't give 'em away. Oh, they'd had an awful time! The Arabian desert is the middle kettle o' Hades at this time o' year.

"They were all for blowing you to bits. Dow wouldn't agree to it till ye'd got the treasure up. Finally they talked him into it, and he sent out the second mate in a boat with a guncotton bomb. Ye know what happened.

"Ye chased off the boat the first night, and the second night ye blew her and the second mate and the boat's crew into eternity. He knew, did Dow, that ye might begin to suspect the Undine, so he sent me over quick the morning after to set your minds at rest.

"If I do say it, ye were easier than I'd thought. After that, Dow landed men on Marwa and Sanjarok Islands with orders to pot at ye. But the islands had too many snakes crawling about, and, not being Arabs, and so afraid of 'em, the men balked.

"So Dow landed Goode and Smith one night on the beach. Goode, for all his cro'jack eyes, was a marksman, and he'd a fine Krag with a telescope on the barrel and a silencer he was achin' to try on ye.

"Dow figured if Goode killed one or two o' ye, ye'd go piling off to find a cruiser to protect ye from the sharp-shooting Arabs. While ye were gone, he'd raise the treasure himself.

"He did not like the plan. He wanted to wait till ye'd done all the work; but Goode and Smith and Miss Crawford, who was very anxious to go back to New York and blow in the money, argued him into it.

"Yesterday morning we heard heavy firing in El Tanar, and the Arabs were thick as fleas on the hills to the north of the town. We thought Goode and Smith might have got theirs; and sure enough, when Dow sent a boat early last night, the crew found the two men chopped to ribbons.

"Soon as Dow heard the news he decided to board ye at once. We left a couple of lanterns lashed fast to cases at our anchorage, so ye'd see 'em, and mistake 'em for our riding-lights. We doused every light aboard and bore down on ye.

"The fog shut down, but Dow wouldn't turn back. He was bound to carry it through. We'd a job finding ye; and when we did, well—ye know the rest."

Captain Magruder murmured over and over the name of his Maker, his eyes staring at O'Connor as if the man were a sea-serpent.

Cameron rose like a man in a dream and went on deck. Van Duzen followed him. Silently they leaned over the rail together.

The fog had lifted, and far over the water twinkled the lights of El Tanar.

"It's all true, of course," said Cameron in a low voice. "Everything fits in perfectly, but I can't get over it. I thought I loved Nan Crawford once."

"But you didn't," said the other cheerfully. "Forget it — the whole dirty business. They all had it coming to them. We'll raise the treasure in no time now. Cheer up, old top. Look! The fog's lifted, and the east is lightening. Let's turn in."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TREASURE.

DAY broke, and showed the Stellaland half-way between Marwa Island sand-spit and the mainland.

Captain Magruder brought her back to the old anchorage, and the life-boats went out once more to the wreck. The regular divers were burningly anxious to get the job over with.

They worked a little too fast. A crowbar slipped from under a case, and broke three fingers of a diver's hand. The injury rendered the man useless, and Mr. Allis took his place.

Later in the day the other diver made a false swing with a hatchet, and the sharp edge cut through his rubber trouser leg and into the flesh. He managed to give the hoist-away signal, and the boat's crew drew him up before his dress filled with water.

Some one had to help Mr. Allis. The third mate and several men of the crew volunteered, but Cameron and Van Duzen wanted a try at it themselves. Neither would give the other first chance, so they tossed up.

Van Duzen won the toss. He climbed into a spare diving dress and went down.

About two o'clock in the afternoon the divers signaled for a rope. Ten minutes after the rope was sent down came the signal to hoist away. The boat's crew hauled, and, green and dripping, an iron-bound box bumped over the gunwale.

Cameron looked at it with wide eyes. It was the first instalment of the treasure.

Three boxes more were sent up to the boat Cameron was in, and four to the other.

The heavy load sank the life-boats' gunwales within six inches of the water. So they called it a day, and twitched the life-lines for the divers to come up.

With chisel and screw-drivers, the boxes were opened in Captain Magruder's cabin. In each box were twenty thousand English sovereigns. Van Duzen picked up a handful of gold pieces and trickled them through his fingers.

"Forty thousand a year apiece," he said. "That's the prevailing rate of interest on a million and a quarter. Me for two more racing-cars. Eh, old top?"

Cameron did not reply.

He was thinking of Ardelan. The treasure had been found at last, and once it was all aboard he could claim her. Whatever the task was that she wanted to finish would have to be dropped.

He had waited long enough for her as it was. The divers had said, on coming up, that every last crate had been moved to one side, and the disordered pile of treasure-boxes was completely uncovered in the lower hold. It would not take long now.

That evening the deck-hands who died in defense of the Stellaland and the two members of the Undine's crew were buried. Each body was sewed up in sail-cloth, weighted with a fire-bar, and slid overside into the dark water.

Neither Cameron nor Van Duzen will ever forget that scene in the glare of the bunch-lights: the shot-dented plates, the quiet crowd of seamen, the long bundle on the grating, and the solemn voice of the skipper reading the service for the burial of the dead at sea.

In the morning Cameron took his turn at the diving. He and the second mate went down together. Cameron landed in a patch of weed alongside the bow.

The streamers of kelp waved uncannily as he pushed through them. A whiskered, flat-bellied fish butted into his face-plate, then backed away, goggling at him with great eyes.

The second mate had landed near the bridge. He was already in the captain's room when Cameron climbed over the shoring of the excavation.

Cameron found that the raising of the boxes was no easy job. Each box had to be hauled through the trap-door by a rope, carried on deck, a sling slipped round it, and the sling hooked on to a rope leading to the surface.

There were four boats out that morning — two for the divers and two to ferry the treasure across to the steamer. Each boat carried five boxes. In the middle of the morning a sling slipped off a down-coming hook. The second mate went up to have another sent across from the Stellaland.

Cameron could not work alone. He thought he might as well explore a little.

The other divers, keeping strictly after the treasure, had not explored the Lauderdale at all. The treasure was what they were paid to find, not to satisfy their curiosity in the cabins of a sunken steamer.

But Cameron found that there was no getting into the cabins. Every door leading below was rusted, swelled tight, and blocked with sand. He walked aft, rounded the deck-house, where there was no sand, and came across a skeleton, caught under a bent and twisted piece of the rail.

Some brass buttons near by proclaimed its identity—that of a ship's officer. Further on, where a heavy

davit had snapped and fallen across the deck, were two more skeletons—under the davit.

One skeleton was that of a tall man; the other, smaller and slighter, a woman's. Cameron could read, by their positions, the manner of their deaths in the storm of twenty years before.

The man had thrown his arm round the woman's waist. She had clasped him round the neck.

Cameron turned about. It was too gruesome for him. But as he turned, a little round circlet on the deck under the woman's clasped hands caught his eye. He stooped and picked up the circlet. What it was he didn't know.

While he was looking at it he saw a round object not two feet from where he had picked up the circlet. He picked this up, too. Depending from the round object was a long chain. The round object was evidently a watch, but whether it was gold or not Cameron was unable to tell.

He decided to take both circlet and watch back to the Stellaland. Perhaps the watch had initials or something inside. In that case he could consult the old passenger-list of the Lauderdale and advertise for the heirs.

He ran the chain through the circlet and stuck the watch into his belt, winding the chain about the belt for safe-keeping.

He went back then to the captain's room, and found the second mate comfortably sitting on a treasure-box anxiously awaiting him. Cameron had stayed away much longer than he intended.

By twelve o'clock, when the helpers signaled them to come up, they had sent up twenty boxes, and Cameron's hands were raw and bleeding. His skin, untoughened by manual labor, could not stand the salt water and rough box corners as could that of the others.

It was out of the question for him to do any more diving that day. He went back to the Stellaland, and after dinner cleaned the watch and circlet.

The circlet he found to be a wedding-ring. Now, Cameron knew that wedding-rings bear engraved initials on the inside.

He scrubbed the inside. Finally he deciphered a date, "June 17, 1887"; then the initials, "D. R. B. to M. L. R."

"And the Lauderdale," he mused, "foundered on January 7, 1891. Married less than four years. Missionaries probably."

He laid down the wedding-ring and picked up the watch. It was a heavy, old-fashioned affair of gold, thick and fat, and the covers were jammed tight. He pried open the back first.

Inside was engraved "D. R. Bowman."

Then he opened the front cover, looked at what was inside the cover, and reversed his decision respecting the identity of the jewelry's owners, for inside the cover was painted an ivory miniature of a very beautiful woman.

She was dressed in a black evening gown, and her shoulders and arms were exquisite. Her hair was golden, but her eyes and brows were black, a striking contrast.

The effect was startling, but remarkably fetching. The eyes looked straight into Cameron's, and the lips were parted in a little smile. There was something vaguely reminiscent about the pictured face.

"I've seen her somewhere," muttered Cameron to himself. "New York, probably. She looks like a New Yorker."

Just then Van Duzen entered.

"Five more boxes just came," he said; then, catching sight of the miniature: "Gad, who's the queen?"

"Picked up the watch and this wedding-ring on the after-deck of the Lauderdale. Initials 'D. R. B. to M. L. R.' in the wedding-ring. 'D. R. Bowman' inside the watch-case.

"I'm going to look up the Bowmans in the Lauderdale's list and advertise for the heirs. They'll be glad to get these two things."

"I guess they will. Isn't she a beauty? No use talking, women like that one don't grow any more. Look at that hair and those eyebrows—yellow and black!"

"There's something oddly familiar about that face."

"Forget it. How could there be? Why, man, the Lauderdale went down in ninety-one. You were a grubby-nosed kid, yowling for bread and milk. You weren't taking notice of pretty faces in those days. Not by a jugful."

"I've seen some one that looks very much like her, then. The more I look at her features the more familiar she seems. I can't tell exactly what it is, but she reminds me of some one I know."

"Doesn't remind me of anybody. Put 'em away. Let's celebrate. We'll be homeward bound by to-morrow night. Counting the boxes we brought aboard yesterday, we'll have nearly forty by this evening. And everything done without Paul Kelly, of El Tanar, lifting a hand."

"No, nor he won't, either. He'd have done something before this. Still, what was the object of those spies on Marwa Island? They weren't any of the Undine's crew. You remember what Reilly said about snakes."

"Oh, that was just an example of Arabian curiosity. Piping us off for the fun of the thing. They didn't try to fight the guards we put on the beach, so they couldn't have intended anything serious.

"The skipper is surprised. He says he expected the old sheik would have started something right off the bat. Of course, you had a run-in with him; but he turned out friendly as a pet cat afterward."

"The sheik's all right. I think that I'll go ashore to-night and tell Ardelan the steamer's ready to leave. We'll be married in Bushire."

"Does the sheik know of your matrimonial plans?"

"I haven't told him. He may kick. If he does, I'll run off with her. I'm going to marry her. Nothing is going to stop me."

CHAPTER XXIV.

A SHEIK'S TREACHERY.

CAMERON put on his Arab clothes that evening. He had worn them when he first told Ardelan of his love for her, and he would wear them when he went to claim her.

For the same reason he had the boat put him ashore at the place of many rocks, where he had first met Seydan Rahyel. He had a fancy for a last walk along the beach under the walls of El Tanar.

He passed under the archway of the seaward gate and entered the town. The guards hardly looked at him. With his hood pulled over his head Cameron looked precisely like an Arab, for the walnut stain on his face and legs would still take some time to wear off.

Cameron headed for the house of the *tajir* with the beautiful daughter. He knew the Berber would not come to the beach till the time he had set, and the house of the *tajir* was the one place where he could be sure of finding him.

On the way he heard a heavy shuffling of feet far up the street. Soon a great crowd of men came marching by. They laughed and jested among themselves, and each man carried a long gun.

A man standing near Cameron muttered to an acquaintance: "Mark thou these swaggerers of Abu Bebi! Ill-conditioned rascals the lot! Why did our sheik call on them? Are not his own men sufficient?"

"*Billah!*" replied his friend. "The dogs will endeavor to take the best. But — the fate of each man is writ large upon his forehead. My knife is sharp."

"Mine also. We shall know how to guard that which is our own."

Cameron passed on, wondering.

What had the town men been talking about? Why were the Abu Bebi men in El Tanar?

At any rate, their arrival was not viewed with approval by El Tanar. There seemed also to be a spirit of general unrest in the town. Men with guns were strolling about, now and then a horseman clattered by, or a camel padded past, long neck bobbing and legs swinging. What did it all mean?

He reached the house of the *tajir* and knocked upon the door. A girl's frightened face looked out through the little barred window. Quickly she opened the door.

It was the girl he had seen when he went to the house the first time.

"Enter, lord," she said in a low voice.

"Where is Seydan Rahyel?" asked Cameron, when he was inside and the door shut.

"He went out into the street a short time since. He says Sheik Hussein Ben Ali intendeth some evil. I do not know. I am only a woman."

"Will he return shortly?"

"When he hath obtained news."

"What evil doth the sheik intend? Evil toward me or my vessel?"

"I do not know. Seydan did not tell me his thoughts. He said there was danger, and he went out. I am in fear for him. I love Seydan."

She put her hand to her mouth and began to sob. A soft knock sounded on the door. The girl sprang to the little window.

"It is Seydan!" she said joyfully, and flung open the door.

"Why didst thou come, master?" exclaimed the Berber, recognizing Cameron's tall figure.

Seydan Rahyel closed the door and put his back against it.

"Master," he continued, without waiting for an answer to his question, it is as I have said—the sheik is a man of no honor. Even now he planneth to capture thy vessel. Men of Abu Bebi are in the town to help him.

"It is rumored in the town that thou hast found a great treasure in a sunken ship. Spies on the island of Marwa saw the boxes taken out of the water. The sheik sent men to the island to watch the work. This I have just found out.

"To-night he will attack thy vessel, kill and burn, and steal the treasure. And that is not all, master. He hath locked the maid Ardelan in a room of his house. Why, I know not."

Cameron made his decision at once. If he could reach the steamer in time, Sheik Hussein would never capture her, and then he could take steps for Ardelan's release.

Turning the Gatlings on the town would be as decisive a step as any other. He had not the slightest doubt but that Sheik Hussein would come to time. What a diplomat the sheik was! His friendly manner had imposed on Cameron to the last.

"I must warn the vessel," he said. "We must reach the vessel before the sheik. Come!"

"Lord, we shall be recognized if we depart by the gates. Thou didst come in, but I do not think thou canst leave unseen."

"Then we must climb the wall."

"What then? Every boat is taken for the attack. We could not obtain one."

"My boat awaits me at the place of many rocks. Where shall we climb the wall? Thou knowest them better than I."

"The eastern wall hath the fewest sentries."

"Get thou a rope. We will climb the eastern wall."

The *tajir's* daughter, whom the Berber called Zuleika, brought them a strong rope from her father's stores. This Seydan wound round his waist under his mantle. The girl clung to him as they made ready to leave.

"Thou wilt come back," she whispered.

"I will, Light of Heaven," replied the Berber.

"I will be waiting," she sobbed, and sank down weeping on the stones as they started for the door.

"Men of Abu Bebi," said the Berber, "are in the street without. Do not speak till we are past them. Thy speech might betray thee."

An idea struck Cameron.

"Wait," he commanded. "I passed men from Abu Bebi as I came here. Their coming is not pleasing to El Tanar."

"This is another band, and, as thou sayest, the folk of El Tanar are angry with them."

"It would take but little to start them fighting."

"True, master."

"Come to the roof. We shall see what we can do."

The sobbing Zuleika followed them to the roof, but stilled her sobs when Cameron demanded something with which to pry loose a few stones. She went down-stairs and returned quickly with a short Arabian chisel and a hammer.

Cameron looked over the edge of the parapet. The street below was filled with white mantles. A voice rose in anger.

A townsman was calling down the wrath of Heaven on Abu Bebi. The men from that town replied in kind. Cameron grinned to himself and pried out half a dozen stones.

These he threw into the street, taking good care that they struck far enough away so that the Abu Bebi men would not suspect the house of the *tajir*.

On the landing of the first stone a man yelled angrily. When the sixth fell hoarse voices were accusing the El Tanar citizens of bad faith and other worse things.

A blow was struck with a gun-stock. A sword flashed in the light of a lantern.

In an instant a fair-sized riot was in progress. Cameron hoped it would spread and thus delay the attack if it didn't postpone it indefinitely.

"We cannot leave by the street door," said Seydan Rahyel. "We must go from the rear."

This entailed the invasion of another man's house, but Cameron was used to that. They hurried through it, to the scandal of the inmates, and into another street.

In twenty minutes they reached the eastern wall. Strung along the top, the figures of the sentries slouched back and forth against the stars.

"*Billah!*" exclaimed the Berber. "There are more than I had thought. It is a new custom — doubtless since the *ghrazzu* of Sheik Selim Mahommed."

"We must cross the wall," said Cameron, a sudden chill of fear striking his breast.

He knew there would be men watching aboard the Stellaland, but since the Undine affair they would probably not be quite so vigilant. If that horde of fierce Arabs ever boarded the Stellaland!

He shuddered. He had seen what they had done to some prisoners taken from Sheik Selim's tribe.

They hurried along under the wall. There were sentries everywhere. Cameron was in despair. He had almost decided to risk the passage of the eastern gate when the Berber seized him by the arm.

"I have thought of a plan," he said swiftly. "We will ride through the western gate as couriers for Abu Bebi."

"But the horses, Seydan! How—"

The Berber pointed down a side street. Far down it, under a lantern, were two of the sheik's cavalrymen. The horses were standing still.

"See, lord," continued the Berber. "We will take their horses. The street is dark, and do thou lie down in it as if wounded. I will run swiftly to the two horsemen, saying that I have found one lying in the street. They will come to see. I will make them dismount, and then we will kill them and take their horses."

"They may not dismount," said Cameron, following the Berber into the street.

"It is the only way, master. Be not afraid, they will dismount. I shall make them."

A hundred yards from the cavalrymen Cameron, with many misgivings, lay down in the street.

It seemed an idiotic plan, but he trusted the Berber.

Seydan Rahyel ran on. Cameron raised his head and saw him in conversation with the two men. Then the three started toward him.

He dropped his head and lay quietly, one hand gripping the butt of his automatic. The cavalrymen halted their horses, and the Berber bent down over Cameron.

"*Wellah!*" exclaimed the Berber. "He hath been killed by night prowlers."

"Who is he?" asked one of the cavalrymen, peering down. It was very dark in the street.

"I do not know. I found him here. *Billah!* there is money on him. A bag of it."

"Back, *kelb!*" exclaimed one of the cavalrymen. "This is a matter for our master, the sheik. Give us the money."

He swung to the ground followed by his comrade. Greedily he bent over Cameron. The Berber moved to the side of the other, in a frightened voice asking protection.

Lower and lower bent the cavalryman. Suddenly Cameron's arm licked up and sideways. The heavy barrel of the automatic caught the man on the temple.

Without a sound he fell across Cameron's breast. Cameron heaved him to one side and leaped to his feet. The Berber was standing, a prostrate body before him.

"I killed him, lord," he said briefly. "Covetous dogs! I knew that the mention of money would bring them to the ground."

He wiped his knife on the dead man's trousers and stripped off the fellow's mantle.

"Take the mantle of the other," he said, "and his lance. We will ride to the western gate, and I will do all the talking. We will go through."

They put on the mantles of the horsemen, pulled up the hoods, and mounted the horses, which had stood quietly gazing at the scene. Trailing the long lances, they galloped through the streets to the western gate. Sleepy guards sat before the closed barrier.

"Open the gates!" bawled Seydan Rahyel roughly. "Swiftly, lazy ones! We are couriers for Abu Bebi!"

"Thy order," said one, while the others pulled back the heavy bars.

With one eye on the gate, Seydan Rahyel fumbled in his clothes. One-half of the gate swung back.

"Wait, I have it," said the Berber, and reached far into his waist-cloth.

The other half of the gate opened.

"Here it is," said Seydan, and kicked his horse in the ribs.

The animal leaped ahead, and Seydan's fingers twisted into the guard's beard and he pulled strongly. The guard tumbled backward, and both horses clattered under the archway and out on to the Zabara road.

Shouts rose behind them, then shots, and slugs sang by. None hit, and in one minute they were out of range. The horses were fairly fresh, and they laid hoof to the ground willingly.

They galloped up the road some distance, then turned and headed for the place of many rocks on the shore. The Berber took a shorter way than that they had taken on the white *thclûl*, and in a little over an hour they halted the now badly blown horses in front of the great boulders. They leaped to the ground and ran through to the beach. There was the dark shape of the boat drawn up on the sand, pipes like glow-worms twinkling round it.

"Quick!" shouted Cameron before he reached it. "Get ready to shove off. The Arabs are going to attack the steamer."

He tumbled over the gunwale, followed by the Berber. The third mate bawled orders frantically.

The crew shoved desperately. The boat took the water, and danced seaward as fast as eight oars could drive it.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE WOODEN BOX.

CAMERON did not know how long the riot between the factions in El Tanar would delay the sheik's attack. He was in a cold perspiration by the time the boat rounded Marwa and raised the steamer's lights.

There was not a sound on the water beyond the dip and splash of the swinging oars. But the Arabs had shown before that they could move their dhows about without any clamor.

The ride by way of the western gate had taken a good deal of time. The sheik's men might be close to the steamer at that moment.

Cameron did not draw a full breath till the boat reached the foot of the side-ladder, and there was no sign of any hostile flotilla. He bounded up the steps, shouting a warning.

"Another turn-up," said Captain Magruder wearily when Cameron had breathlessly outlined what the Berber had discovered. "Those sneaking Arabs this trip. I told ye we'd have trouble with 'em, sir.

"But I'd an idea as they'd let it go so long they'd do naught after all. I'll be ready for 'em. Break the anchor free, Mr. Kenderdine. There's no buoy bent on and I've no mind to lose it. Mr. Allis, how's the steam?"

"The gages show a working head, sir. I've kept steam up the last day or two."

"Then get away below with you. Stand by for the full ahead any time now."

Mr. Allis went below, and the skipper turned out all the deck-hands and the black gang off watch. The mates served out the Mausers. From forward came the jarring of the windlass.

"Anchor's apeak, sir!" bawled Mr. Kenderdine.

The skipper ran up the bridge ladder and shoved the telegraph pointer to slow ahead. Cameron besought him to hurry.

"I misdoubt if there's any special hurry," replied the skipper. "Ye came as soon as ye got the news, didn't ye, sir?"

"Good Heavens, no! It took us an hour and a half to reach the boat."

The skipper hastily shoved the pointer to full ahead.

"I'd an idea ye came at once. We'll just get out of these islands quick. There's naught to keep us now, anyway. The last box of gold came aboard at sunset."

The steamer gathered way slowly.

Cameron looked aft from the wing of the bridge and saw a sight that made the hair raise on his head.

White-clad forms were climbing over the rail by the flagstaff. The deck-hands clustered forward saw them at the same instant and raised a shout. The deck-lights had all been switched off, and the crew could not be seen in the darkness under the bridge-deck.

The Mausers began to rattle deliriously. A Gatling on the port side of the main-deck spat a steady stream of fire. The one on the other side joined in. A hail of bullets swept the length of the main-deck.

Dhows crammed with Arabs thumped and ground against the side of the now rapidly moving Stellaland. A sputter of gun-fire rippled out from the dhows as they dropped astern. Cameron and Van Duzen picked up a Mauser each and ran aft on the bridge-deck, followed by Seydan Rahyel and the second and third mates.

A head or two had showed above the break of the bridge-deck, and if the Arabs ever gained a foothold on the bridge-deck the Stellaland was as good as lost. A bare half-dozen opposed the four white men as they charged aft.

Swinging their Mausers, Cameron and Van Duzen beat two over the head and knocked them spinning to the deck below. The mates went into action with their six-shooters.

All but one of the remaining Arabs turned tail and leaped headlong to the maindeck. This one man, calling aloud on Allah, sprang at Cameron with a sword.

Cameron smashed down with his Mauser and snapped the sword-blade to bits. Before he could raise the Mauser again the man caught him by the throat with one hand and essayed to draw a knife with the other.

Cameron seized his wrist and writhed backward. Over and over they rolled on the plating, the man striving with all his strength to draw his knife. But he could not shake Cameron's grip.

The fingers at Cameron's throat were fast choking him when he contrived to drive his knee into the man's stomach and knock the wind out of him. One of the mates, who had been afraid to shoot for fear of hitting Cameron, knelt down to finish him, but Cameron knocked up the revolver.

For the man was Sheik Hussein Ben Ali himself. His capture would simplify the future amazingly.

Cameron scrambled up and ordered the Berber to sit on the sheik and hold him down. He looked over the break of the bridge-deck, and saw that the fight was finished.

The Arabs were piling over the stern and dropping into the water. They preferred taking their chances in the water than to stand up any longer against that terrific blast of lead.

When the smoke cleared away there were two killed and eight wounded among the Stellaland's crew. Thirty-three Arab dead were found on the stern and lying round the main-mast.

The bodies were promptly pitched overboard. There were only nine found wounded, for most of the wounded had dragged themselves to the rail and thrown themselves overboard.

The nine were attended to. The crew wanted to heave them overboard after the rest, but the skipper would not hear of it.

The skipper was not at all pleased when Cameron told him that the Stellaland could not leave the vicinity of El Tanar till a passenger had been taken aboard.

Captain Magruder, now that all the treasure was in the Stellaland, wished to put as many miles as possible between the stern of his vessel and those piratical Arabs. But Cameron had chartered the steamer, so the skipper cast anchor ten miles up the coast and waited for the dawn.

Sheik Hussein, carefully bound, was taken into the mess-room. Two quartermasters and the Berber, who would have been only too pleased to kill him, stood him up in front of the mess-table and ranged themselves at his back.

Cameron, Van Duzen, and the after-guard, with the exception of Mr. Kenderdine, who had the watch on deck, sat down in the swivel chairs. Cameron, still in his Arab dress, pushed back his long sleeves, and spoke:

"Hussein Ben Ali, thou hast been false to thy bread and salt. With thy mouth thou didst profess friendship, while thy brain planned treachery. And to what end? Many of thy men are dead, and thou art a prisoner."

"True," said the sheik quietly, and with a certain dignity; "true. Kill me then, as I would have killed thee."

"Thy life is ours to take. It is also thine to purchase—at a price, O sheik, at a price. It hath come to mine ears that thou hast put thy daughter under lock and key. Why?"

"She disobeyed," said the sheik with a sudden flash of anger.

"She hath disobeyed thee before. Witness my trial. She defied thy anger, and saved my life. Thou didst not lock her up then."

"This is another matter. I thought to lose her—that she would go away with thee."

"Thou didst endeavor to strike a bargain for her. Five hundred rifles was the price. I begin to understand. Thou didst expect to regain her when my vessel should be captured. Thou art indeed sly."

"She hath always brought me luck," muttered the sheik thickly.

"Prepare then to lose thy luck. Ardelan and I love each other. Give up the maid, and thou art free to go where thou wilt. Refuse, and thou shalt hang.

"Furthermore, with our guns we will fire on the town till Ardelan is released. I will have her. Thy death would make no difference, but thy acceptance of my offer will avert further bloodshed in El Tanar."

Sheik Hussein stared straight into Cameron's eyes, but made no answer.

"Think, O sheik," continued Cameron; "thou art supreme in El Tanar. Thou hast plans for ruling over Abu Bebi as well. If thou diest—"

Cameron did not finish the sentence. The sheik dropped his eyes and looked at the floor.

"Dost thou remember," said Cameron suddenly, "the words whispered by Ardelan in thy ear at my trial?"

The sheik raised his eyes quickly, an expression exceedingly like fear on his swarthy features.

"I had decided to accept thy offer," he said, "but if those words were spread abroad in El Tanar of what avail to accept?"

"True," assented Cameron, who did not know what the words were, but kept on with his bluff. "Be not afraid. The words will not be spoken."

"Then will I accept," said Sheik Hussein. "In the morning anchor thy vessel near El Tanar, and I will send a message. Didst thou capture any wounded?"

"We captured several. They can go ashore with thee."

"Good. Thou art generous."

"More generous than thee in the giving of the gold chain and the pistols. I keep faith."

The sheik made no reply. Cameron could not tell whether he felt his dishonor very deeply. Probably he did not, for some Arabs there are who hold friendship with the *N'zara* but lightly, and to be broken at will.

In the morning the Stellaland broke her anchor free, steamed down the coast, and cast it again off El Tanar.

Not a sail appeared on the beach, but on the walls the people were clustered thickly. The sheik wrote a message to one of his head men and gave it to Cameron.

The Berber, paddling the dingey, took the message ashore. Cameron had meant to go himself, but the Berber said that he was the only one who could go and come safely.

"No man will lay the weight of his hand on me," he had said. "I can explain the matter better than thou canst, master."

So he went, and they watched him land, walk steadily up the beach, and into the town. In less than an hour a large party issued from the seaward gate, embarked in a small dhow, and came out to the Stellaland.

Sheik Hussein wanted to be set ashore as soon as he saw the dhow rowing out. Cameron very properly denied the outrageous request.

The dhow, twelve sullen Arabs at the sweeps, swashed alongside and bumped into the lowered side-ladder.

Ardelan, the Berber, and Zuleika were in the stern.

The wise Berber, by judicious use of threats and forceful language, had contrived to include his loved one in the exchange.

Cameron saw Ardelan only. He took her in his arms and kissed her before them all. A strange new light shone in Ardelan's eyes.

"Beloved," she said, "my task is finished. Thou hast not yet allowed Sheik Hussein to depart?"

"No, but—"

"I must see him alone—with thee. Take thou this box. It is heavy."

She pointed to a wooden box on the

bottom-boards. He picked it up, and she followed him up the steps.

He took her into the mess-room, placed the box on the table, and then ordered the sheik brought in. He was still bound.

Cameron asked Van Duzen to see that no one else entered, and closed all the doors.

Ardelan did not sit down. She stood by the table, her hands on the wooden box. Cameron hooked his thumbs in his belt and waited for her to speak.

"Beloved," she said, "for many days I have thought strange thoughts. Thy visits to me started these thoughts. I knew that I was not as other women of the *Aarab* of this land, but how different I did not understand till thy coming.

"When thou didst tell me of thy people and their customs, those people and those customs did not seem strange to me. I grasped thy hand in friendship. I had never done that before.

"One day thou didst whistle a tune common to thy land. That tune brought a memory of certain men in blue coats playing it on instruments of brass. Also there was a gun fired. Thou dost remember?"

"I remember," said Cameron, beginning to breathe a little quicker.

"These things made me think. Perhaps I was not a maid of the *Moslemin*. Perhaps—I hardly dared think it—perhaps I was even as thee, one of the *N'zara*. But I could not tell thee of my thoughts till I was sure. I wanted proof.

"I did not ask Sheik Hussein. I knew he would not speak the truth. I searched the house, hoping to find some proof of my descent. Long I searched, for I had to be wary lest the sheik guess my purpose. At last I found this box."

She tapped the box with a slim forefinger and continued:

"The sheik came upon me while I was examining what lay therein. He flew into a passion, snatched the box from me, and locked me in a room, there to stay, he said, till he had killed thee and thy friends. I threatened him with the threat I used upon him at thy trial.

"He said then I should end my life in that room. *Aie*, beloved, the time I spent in that room! Thinking always of thee and thy great danger!

"I could not warn thee, for my food was brought by a mute, a cruel woman who would take no written message. My beloved, thou wilt never know the torture of those day-long hours in that room."

Cameron eyed the sheik grimly. He would have liked to make the treacherous old Arab pay for his treatment of Ardelan. But he had passed his word to set him free.

"Cometh now the end of my story. This morning men came and set me free, saying that the sheik was a prisoner, and would be given up in exchange for me.

"I prevailed upon the men to allow me to take some things of my own. I went to the room where the sheik always sleeps, and in it I found, as I had thought to find, the box he had taken from me. Here is what is in it."

She opened the box and took therefrom several bracelets, necklaces, rings, and a miniature. The latter she handed to Cameron. He very nearly dropped it. For the miniature was of a woman and a black-haired child. The woman was the woman of the miniature in the watch-case, and round the neck of the child was a slender gold chain from which depended a star and crescent. Ardelan held out before his eyes the gold chain with the star and crescent that he had seen during the night of the hurricane.

"Wait," he said, his senses whirling.

He ran to the door, opened it, and asked Van Duzen to bring him the watch and the gold wedding-ring he had found in the Lauderdale. Van Duzen brought them quickly. Cameron took the articles, and kicked the door shut, which displeased Van Duzen, who was dying of curiosity.

Cameron snapped open the watch-case and displayed two miniatures.

"Thy mother," he said. "I found the watch upon the deck of a sunken vessel."

Ardelan buried her face against his shoulder. He put his arm round her waist.

"Sheik Hussein," said Cameron. "where and when didst thou take Ardelan into thy house?"

The sheik looked anxiously at Ardelan.

"Hast thou," he asked, "spoken of —of what thou didst threaten to speak to any man in El Tanar?"

She shook her head.

"Good. Thou wouldst not lie. Now I will speak truth. Allah is my witness in the matter.

"Many years ago a vessel sank near the island of Marwa—yes, the vessel from which thou didst obtain the boxes that I knew contained treasure, for the *N'zara* are all mad for gold. I saw the vessel sink, but I did not know then of the treasure.

"Yes, I will hurry. Do not be offended. I am an old man.

"Many dead bodies were cast upon the beach. Upon some planks I myself found a dead woman. An old woman with white hair. In her arms was a leather box and a living child, a maid some two years of age.

"I took the box, which contained bracelets and necklaces and a picture, and the child. The child I brought up as my daughter.

"As thou sayest, I am sly, and all men believed she was my daughter. The leather box I threw away, and the bracelets and necklaces and picture I put in this wooden box. There Ardelan found them."

The sheik sighed deeply.

"I am sorry to lose her," he added heavily. "Had she been born a man she would have led armies to victory. In strategy she had no equal among the *Aarab* of this land."

"She hath come into her own at last," said Cameron.

He took out his knife and cut the ropes that bound Sheik Hussein.

"The dhow is waiting," he said. "Go in peace."

Ardelan turned her head away as the Arab went out.

"I loved him as a daughter once," she whispered, when the door slammed. "But his treatment of thee and me hath killed it. *Aie,* is it not wonderful? O my beloved — I am one of the *N'zara!*"

"As wonderful as thy love for me, O Light of Heaven," he said, his arm around her waist. "See, this bracelet, and this, and this, bear the same markings as this marking."

He touched the letters *M. L. R.* in the wedding-ring.

"The bracelets and necklaces were thy mother's also," he said.

"Who, then, was the white-haired woman who held me in her arms when he found me?"

"Thy nurse, I think. We will find all that out when we reach my land. Tell me, *Noor-al-a-noor,* what was the threat thou didst speak of to the sheik."

"That? *Aie,* one day when he was sick and I tended him he spoke of strange things. Among others that he was not the rightful Sheik Hussein Ben Ali, but an *Ajamy,* a Persian of Bushire.

"His father had died, and Sheik Ali married his mother when the son was two months old. She was his first wife, and Sheik Ali brought up the boy as his eldest son and heir.

"When Sheik Hussein was recovered I told him of what he had spoken, and he admitted that it was true. He ordered me to say nothing of it in El Tanar, for if the town knew it, they would arise and slay him and put in his place one of Sheik Ali's other sons, all of whom live in the desert. This knowledge I threatened to use in order to save thy life."

"I would like to tell the townsfolk now. He deserves death. But I will keep silence. The work here is over,

and to-day we start for Bushire, where thou and I shall be married."

"Bushire lies to the north and east. Why can we not be married in Maskat? I do so greatly wish to reach thy land and mine quickly, beloved."

"We must go to Bushire to divide a certain treasure which we raised from the wreck of the vessel which brought thee here. Thou didst never ask my reason for coming here, but that was the reason—to find the treasure, and the whole of it is not one-tenth the value of thee, the living treasure of the Lauderdale."

On his return to New York with his wife, Cameron looked up the old passenger-list of the Lauderdale.

In it he discovered the name of Colonel Daniel Rutherford Bowman, U.S.A., traveling with his wife, infant daughter, and nurse. The rest was simple, for the colonel had many relatives and friends who remembered him well and knew of his trip to Persia.

They identified the miniatures as those of his wife and baby. The name of the colonel's wife was Marie Louise, and the daughter had been given her name. For a year and a half after the birth of his daughter, the colonel had been stationed at Fort Snelling, where the child had seen and heard the band play the national anthem every evening at retreat. It was from her father that she inherited her strategical ability—the ability of which Sheik Hussein made such good use in his campaigns.

Sandy Cameron and his wife are now living among the rolling hills of Long Island. Van Duzen, who still abhors girls, visits them frequently. He vows, upon occasion, that he always knew Ardelan was not an Arabian. They do not believe him.

Zuleika and her husband, Seydan Rahyel, live with the Camerons. The faithful Berber could not be persuaded to leave his master, despite the great scarcity of dromedaries on Long Island. He is happiest when the circus comes to town, for then he can see camels. When it comes he goes and takes with him young Alexander Scott, Jr., to whom he has taught Arabic.

"See, small master," says the Berber, "see! There are camels—strong camels. But not one of them is like unto my *thelûl*—my white *thelûl* that was killed in the street of El Tanar."

(The End.)

EBB AND FLOW.

By George William Curtis.

I WALKED beside the evening sea,
And dreamed a dream that could not be;
The waves that plunged along the shore
Said only—"Dreamer, dream no more!"

But still the legions charged the beach;
Loud rang their battle-cry, like speech;
But changed was the imperial strain:
It murmured—"Dreamer, dream again!"

I homeward turned from out the gloom,
That sound I heard not in my room;
But suddenly a sound, that stirred
Within my very breast, I heard.

It was my heart, that like a sea
Within my breast beat ceaselessly:
But like the waves along the shore,
It said—"Dream on!" and "Dream no more!"

On the Zodiac Turnpike

by Ella B. Argo

THE stillness was so tense that when an orange fell with a little rustle of the leaves she started as though it had struck her.

Then she laughed at herself even while she picked up the fruit as an assurance that it was something real that had made the noise. It was more than absurd for her to be so nervous that in the moss draping the cypresses she could see gray specters waving threatening arms at her.

She had never before been afraid of the dark, but then the dark had never before found her alone on the edge of an orange-grove apparently tenantless and countless miles from anywhere.

It must have been an hour ago that the horse got away while she had been trying to reach a high-climbing spray of yellow jasmine, and her steady walk down the winding road all that time seemed to be bringing her no nearer civilization than when she had started.

Now, clear in the twilight hush came the sound of horses' hoofs. They were following her at last.

With the comfort the knowledge gave her was restored something of her confidence, and a little of impatient anger at John and the others for insisting that the river road was the better of the two and the safer in the growing darkness.

She would, of course, have given in to the wishes of the greater number had not John been so masterful about the whole thing. It was to teach him that he did not yet have the right to dictate her movements that she had ridden rapidly away from them and almost immediately lost her way.

The graceful head was held defiantly erect, and the eyes that many had called soulful flashed a forbidding light as the horses came nearer; and then the whole figure drooped dejectedly, and the eyes held a frightened look when the turn in the road showed not a gay party of horseback riders, but a strange man driving a beautiful pair of blacks in a high road-cart.

The girl in her light habit was outlined sharply against the dusky trees, and the man had evidently seen her from some distance, for it was with no sudden jerk that the horses were brought to a standstill before her.

"They told me I should find you here," said a low and very musical voice; and a tall, slender figure jumped down beside her.

So John had sent a stranger for her!

Her anger flared anew, but only to be swallowed up in amazement at the

wonderful beauty of the face she saw in the twilight. It was dark and clear-cut, marvelously perfect in every feature, but its real wonder lay in the luminous glow of the eyes looking intently down into hers.

He offered no further explanation of his sudden appearing, but silently held out his hand to help her into the cart. Just as silently she obeyed the gesture.

"Where are the others?" she asked, as he sprang in beside her and gathered up the reins.

"Just ahead of us."

"The many turns confused me, but I thought this was the road to Wistaria."

"It leads to Olympus."

She did not know the town, but then most of Florida was a sealed book to her.

The moon had risen, and in its strong white light she could see John's messenger more distinctly.

His figure was as exceptional as his face, and his collarless shirt, turned low in the neck, revealed a throat reminiscent of "The Wrestler," a bronze replica of which she had in her own room at home.

His arms were bare to the elbow, and they, too, were strong and white. It was impossible to deduce anything from his dress; but his hands, his voice, his manner, were all those of a gentleman. John, of course, would not have sent anybody but a gentleman; but why hadn't he come himself?

She was about to ask this when the man's glance fell on the orange she still unconsciously held; and he interrupted her thought with: "It is as gold as the apple in the judgment of Paris."

Evidently he was fond of classic allusion. She hated pedantry, and would have dismissed as a bore a man making such a remark to her in a drawing-room; but this melody-filled voice made everything sound different, and his next words seemed thoroughly in keeping with the moonlight, the stillness, and the heavenly perfume of the orange-blossoms.

"The gods are close to us to-night."

How like a god he looked himself as he said it.

She was not susceptible; her friends would have laughed at the idea of Helen Hood being sentimental; but she had a strong vein of romanticism, of which only one man had been given a glimpse, and this magic Florida night was bringing it to the surface in a way that would have surprised even herself had she had time to think about it.

"You see," he went on, pointing to the moon, "how Diana smiles upon us; and listen—there are the pipes of Pan."

She recognized the sound as the reedlike, half-tuneful cry of one of the strange birds of the semitropical forest; but suddenly she found herself ready to meet the mood of this man whom her *fiancé* had so unaccountably sent on his own errand.

Her face, too, was beautiful with a dreamy wonder as she listened for a moment; and then, as the piping came nearer, she whispered: "Hurry; for to look on Pan is to die."

"No, to live," she was gravely corrected.

The horses were going very slowly, but she did not repeat her request that they go faster.

The flower-hung tropical growth on both sides of the road were fairy walls that held them in a land of enchantment, and the palms high against the sky were sentinels watching lest they escape. Holding them to the real world was only that long white ribbon ahead—that and the stars that pressed closely above them. So close were those heavenly lights that they seemed part of the road—the Zodiac Turnpike.

Where had she heard the expression? Then she remembered that it was in a poem she had recited in school, ages before.

It was the story of Phaethon and his daring attempt to drive the chariot of the sun. She had forgotten all of it except these few lines that told of

Apollo's dismay when he realized his son's immovable determination to drive the immortal steeds through the heavens.

His anxious father took a deal of pains
To teach him how to hold them, how to keep
The broad highway, how dangerous and steep
It was; how to avoid the asteroids and comets red,
"Follow the zodiac turnpike straight ahead!"

"But it was all in vain. Poor Apollo! Poor Phaethon!" she said aloud.

The man laughed softly. "I thought you would know me soon."

She looked a startled question, but his smile reassured her.

"It was a long, long time ago I took that ride," he went on, "and no one has remembered but you."

Now she understood.

He had entered the Land of Make-believe, and was drawing her in with him. No one had ever before recognized so completely her delight in the fanciful, her desire for the unreal.

Even John could never understand why she wanted to meet him in dreams when they saw each other every day in reality. Nor could he ever agree with her that "The Brushwood Boy" immortalized a love-story more perfect than their own.

He thought it infinitely preferable that they had grown up together and fallen in love in the good old-fashioned way under the approving eyes of their parents than to have met only in shadow-land, with *Policeman Day* an ever-feared chaperon.

Here, at last, though, was a man to whom these things did not have to be explained.

She felt half tempted to talk to him of "The Brushwood Boy," but Kipling did not fit in with the classic atmosphere he had introduced.

He had chosen to be Phaethon. To her he should be Phaethon. She searched her schoolgirl recollections of mythology for the part assigned her, but she could not remember any woman in connection with Phaethon except his mother—one of the many loves of Phœbus Apollo.

It was of this mother he was now speaking.

"It was her ambition that sent me to Olympus with the demand of Apollo that I be permitted to drive the chariot of the sun for one day. She would have no one dispute my godhead, and so—"

He broke off as she gave an involuntary shudder at the weird cry of a screech-owl near at hand.

"Minerva's bird. You are not afraid of it?" he asked wonderingly.

"No-o, not exactly; but don't you hate the sound?"

She thought of Mammy Jane's superstition that a poker in the red-hot coals would drive away the bird of ill omen; and for the first time she began to wish herself nearer her father's comfortable bungalow at Wistaria, where Mammy Jane was waiting now with a big fire and hot coffee.

The February night, with all its languors of midsummer, had a certain chill in its heart, and again she shivered. With a quickly murmured word of concern, he folded a lap-robe about her shoulders, his face coming close to hers as he made sure of her comfort.

Again she almost gasped at its matchless perfection. In his beauty, at least, he was a veritable son of Apollo.

Browning's "Be a god and hold me with thy charm," sprang into her mind. Then she felt herself uncomfortably flush as she remembered that the next line was "Be a man and fold me with thine arm."

Drawing back a little further in her corner of the seat, she asked in a voice determinedly matter-of-fact:

"Are we almost there?"

"Are you very tired?" he asked by way of reply.

His voice was more melodious than ever, with its note of tenderness.

"You were never the first to rest when we played our games beyond the city gates. Do you remember, they were orange-blossoms, such as grew here that you wore in your hair?"

His voice, his eyes spoke adoration, but there was no hint of familiarity in intonation or gesture. The nameless thing that held them in its spell was as cold and pure as the moonlight through which they followed that endless road.

She was glad that he said nothing more, but sat watching the stars with an absorption that changed to a startling alertness as one star left its sister group and shot across the heavens.

"The signal!" he exclaimed. "It is time for us to start."

The splendid horses, heretofore making their own gait, were sharply urged to a new speed.

"The comet has passed, and the way is clear. On—on, my beauties!"

This was quite as it should be.

She loved rapid movement, and it was growing alarmingly late. Rather more alarming, though, was her companion's growing excitement.

He seemed to have forgotten her, and to concentrate his whole thought upon increasing their speed until they fairly flew along, the horses responding quickly to the golden voice and the skilful handling of the reins.

They were going at a lightning pace now, the man standing erect like the driver of a chariot.

Great waves of white dust arose and engulfed them, and through their stifling thickness she heard his voice half singing:

"Faster, yet faster, let the gods follow after."

Her first exhilaration was giving place to fear, not of the rapid movement, but of the inexplicable creature who was playing his game of the immortals so consistently.

Would the parallel be drawn too finely, and this Phaethon, like his predecessor, lose entire control of his horses? No, he was superbly strong, capable of anything.

The dust clouds grew thicker, blotting out everything but the stars, and it was among these that they seemed to be hurled with an ever-increasing rapidity.

Now her whole thought was intent upon keeping her seat while the light vehicle rocked to the rhythm of the chant with unintelligible words sung by the driver.

"Faster, faster," urged the voice of music.

Now the stars themselves reeled.

There was an unusually sharp turn, and the wheels crunched on gravel. The sudden darkness showed they had entered an avenue where the trees met overhead.

Still the mad pace, and now a blind terror.

Then a flash of light, a great jar and a tearing sound, and she felt herself falling, falling—falling.

She did not know how long after this it was that she stood, swaying somewhat dizzily, looking down upon the deathly white face of Phaethon, who lay in terrible stillness at the foot of a wide flight of steps.

Down these steps some people were hurrying.

The moon had set and day was breaking, when up the avenue, to the house of the Greek columns, rode a young man, who with the girl's brother and others had, since early evening, been searching the winding Florida roads. As he came into the radius of light from the open door, a much older man came forward to meet him.

"She is safe and sound, as I phoned you," he hastened to say reassuringly, "and eager to be taken home, but I could not leave my patient."

The young man sank gratefully into the offered chair on the porch.

"For Heaven's sake, doctor, what does it all mean?"

"I don't know why Miss Hood left the picnic party, but her horses got

away when she stopped to pick some flowers, the winding roads confused her, and she felt completely lost when Eugene Lorimer drove by and picked her up. "Yes—the Eugene Lorimer," in response to the other's exclamation.

"Very few knew what became of him after the accident. That automobile race was about two years ago, and ever since then his people have kept him here in this old place, where the family lived before the war. He was never violent, nor even remotely dangerous, but was possessed of an hallucination that he was some kind of heathen god who must always drive at breakneck speed.

"He has his splendid horses, and it has been thought well to let him drive when he would, but his attendant has always gone with him until to-day, when he somehow eluded him. He seems to have driven skilfully enough until he tried to urge his team up the steps there."

The young man's face was as white as that which had been so still at the foot of those steps earlier in the night.

"And Miss Hood was alone with this madman for—"

"No, I shouldn't use that word. At any rate, he is sane enough now. A blow on his head deranged his reason, another blow to-night has restored it.

"He is as mentally sound as you or I, except that he remembers nothing that has happened since the automobile race. But Miss Hood herself will reassure you."

The birds were singing happily in all the trees, the flowers were waking up, and there was no suggestion of mystery or stillness anywhere as the rising sun began to warm a wholesome, normal every-day world.

And the soul of the day's beauty lay in the smile of the girl who, with both hands outstretched, came to meet a sturdy, dependable, sometimes awkward figure, and to treasure in her heart forever the answering smile on a face that had always seemed homely until now.

"Oh, John," she cried, "I am so glad you are just a man!"

A WEDDING-SONG

By John White Chadwick.

I SAID: "My heart, now let us sing a song
For a fair lady on her wedding-day;
Some solemn hymn or pretty roundelay,
That shall be with her as she goes along
To meet her joy, and for her happy feet
Shall make a pleasant music, low and sweet."

Then said my heart: "It is right bold of thee
To think that any song that we could sing
Would for this lady be an offering
Meet for such gladness as hers needs must be,
What time she goes to don her bridal-ring,
And her own heart makes sweetest caroling."

And so it is that with my lute unstrung,
Lady, I come to greet thy wedding-day;
But once, methinks, I heard a poet say,
The sweetest songs remain for ay unsung.
So mine, unsung, at thy dear feet I lay,
And with a "Peace be with you!" go my way.

All-Story Table-Talk

LITERATURE LOOKING UP

WHEN one of our contributors—it would spoil the fun if I told you his name—goes away on his vacation, he vacates; back to nature and so forth. His address during the warm weather is the Catskill Mountains, and the only company he has is the spirit of the late-lamented Rip Van Winkle.

He was plodding along a dusty mountain road this summer, with head bowed in thought, when he was accosted by an automobilist in a fine touring-car with two beautiful young ladies on the back seat.

"Hey, son," the scion of predatory wealth in the car called out, "can you tell me which way I turn to reach the Catskill Ferry?"

"Second road to the right," returned our contributor, just as sparing of his words as when he gets paid for them.

"Back on the road a ways they told me to turn to the left," the automobilist replied in a troubled voice. "How far would it be if I turned to the left?"

"Twenty-five thousand miles," answered our author seriously, "because you would have to go all the way around the world to get there."

The automobilist pondered over this, scratching his head in deep thought, the young ladies tittered, and the upshot of it all was that the man in the car insisted on taking the ostensible farmer-lad with him to the crossroads, where he dismissed him, giving him a quarter in real money.

Now the point is this:

If our contributors are to be lured by promiscuous tipping we will have to pay the authors more and more money until there will be no end to their demands. To have the tipping evil to contend with in addition to other multitudinous editorial troubles is what Artemus Ward used to call "2 mutch."

BEATING IT

Still we expect to be free for a short time anyway, because we are about to go on our vacation. Imagine us waving our good-by from the tail-end of the train, hiking it Westward. In the course of our peregrinations we shall doubtless hit Chicago.

In fact, by the time you are reading this we shall have given our seal to the new convention and have allowed the new party to be born. After having got that off our chest, we shall have gone grubbing around by Lake Michigan on the still hunt for authors.

Let us now get back to the simple future tense.

Edgar Rice Burroughs and Edwin Baird both live in Chicago, and we shall have to see them and fix up great plans for winter reading.

We have Baird hard at work now on a story that we hope will turn out to be as engrossing a yarn as was his "Real Stuff." We are going to do our very level best to buck him up to the top notch of his ability.

In the time that Burroughs has been writing for us we have never seen him. Naturally we have had much correspondence. For the first time we are going out to shake him by the hand and tell him what a great author we think he is and jolly him along so that he will ultimately become very much greater.

We believe that it goes without saying that "Tarzan of the Apes" is

about as original a yarn as has been seen in a long while, and we shall be very much disappointed if we don't hear the same from some of our friendly readers.

Every time a letter comes that seems to back up some choice or other which we have made, we are a great deal more than pleased.

For instance, take this letter from W. A. E.:

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, July 8, 1912.

ALL-STORY TABLE-TALK.

DEAR SIR:

I have been a reader of the ALL-STORY for the past three years, and believe it to be the best of all fiction magazines.

I read "The Red Book of Mystery" in July and enjoyed it immensely. I have just finished "Under the Moons of Mars," which was fine, and I am patiently waiting for the next instalment of "At Close Range."

Of all the stories I have ever read in any magazine or book, the one that stands first in my esteem is one I read in the ALL-STORY about three years ago, called "Shanty House." I cannot express in fitting terms my opinion of appreciation of it, but doubtless you will remember it and agree with me that it was "some" story.

One moment more—please don't print any more stories like "The Bustle."

W. A. E.

We always had a sneaking fondness for "Shanty House," and we always had hoped that we would get another story by William Laurens Curtis, and some day doubtless we shall. There is a kind of humanity about him which gives his stories an extraordinary charm.

STYLES IN FALL READING

We have a very human story for the complete book for next month. It is a yarn told from a girl's point of view, and is called

THE TORMENTOR

William Tillinghast Eldridge wrote it.

Although it is a girl who spins the yarn, in reality it is a favorite young cousin of hers around whom the story centers.

This young man of a rather more than usually gilded type, cuts up a series of didoes that apparently ensnare him beyond deliverance. There is another girl in the story whom most every one thinks is a bad sort. Whether or not she is we won't say here, but at least she is very much alive, and so is the gilded youth and the lady who tells the story. And so, in fact, are all the characters who hasten through the story.

We are pretty sure that this yarn ought to please both men and women.

There are going to be two new serials, which certainly is some treat.

The first is:

STAR-DUST

by Stephen Chalmers. Chalmers and his wife live away up somewhere in the North, in the middle of a lot of woods, and I suppose it is the fact that much of the time he sleeps out of doors and watches the stars blinking at him that this unusual idea came to him.

Here is a "consummation devoutly to be wished," and if all of us poor, hard-working dubs could but have the advantages which Mr. Chalmers's star-dust would give us, we should all be having a very much better time than we are.

Very likely all we would have to do then would be to sit around and read the ALL-STORY.

The other new serial is by George Folsom.

It is a real snappy, rather boyish sleuth yarn, with a very engaging and apparently over-self-confident youth, who emerges from the classic shades of the university and gets himself very much balled up in

WATCH MOVEMENT NUMBER 333

There is a lot of humor in this story as well as good excitement, and most every one who has a fondness for the genial undergraduate will like that very competent youth, Earl Condit. 'Nuff said.

HANDS ACROSS THE TABLE

Of course there will be the usual list of our A-No. 1 short stories. There is not very much use in telling you what they are going to be like, because you know that about as well as we do, especially if you are a gentleman (or a lady) like H. M. K., who lives in Louisville, Kentucky.

EDITOR OF THE ALL-STORY.
DEAR SIR:

I have just finished reading "The Trap" in the August ALL-STORY. In fact, I have read every story in the magazine this month. I read them all pretty near every month. I want to tell you how much I appreciate your magazine—it is the best one on the market in my opinion.

Letters like this cause a smile of contentment to illumine our countenance and separate our features in two distinct parts, each beginning at one ear and ending at the other.

Here is a man (or a lady) worthy of the admiration of us all. He finishes what he starts. He reads the ALL-STORY clear through.

If you don't—do it now and from now on. If you don't happen to fancy the title of a story (and you have no idea how difficult it is at times to find a title that fits), go to it anyway, and before you know it you will be so deep in a story that you cannot be blasted out.

And if you like or don't like a story—write to us about it, and tell us your joys and sorrows.

Here we are, day after day, wrestling with the problem of turning out a magazine that will please, entertain, and instruct you, and there you are, away off somewheres, with your feet on the radiator, or on the railing of the stove, or—or wherever you stick up your feet when you read (this is not for ladies), and how in thunder are we to know what most tickles your fancy unless you tell us? And don't be afraid to roast if it's coming to us—you're the boss and we are your humble, obedient servant.

This all may sound very much like repetition. If we are not mistaken we have said something very similar not so very long ago. However, let us impress our friendliness upon you, and don't get bored if we do go on repeating ourselves.

And now before we hasten home to scrape the ink off our fingers and pack our suit-case and beat it, let us show you a letter that we like very much.

Young "Joseph Y." makes us feel very friendly indeed.

His theory about stories ending too soon is interesting, but we are not very sure whether the plan he outlines would really be feasible.

After all there would be no particular point at which the author could stop,

and the first thing we knew we would have serials that went on everlastingly until they became as interminable as those peculiar Chinese plays, some of which, we understand, take about fourteen years to play, and this with a performance every night lasting from four to five hours.

I am afraid that a lot of our readers might begin to yawn after they had had, say, a couple of years of vicissitudes of any young man and young woman.

What do you think?

Anyway, here is the letter in question:

JOLIET, ILLINOIS, July 2, 1912.

EDITOR OF THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE.
DEAR SIR:

After reading your publication for over a year I feel it is due time to express my gratitude.

I do not mind the price, whether it is fifteen or fifty cents (so long as I've got the price), and I think that many are of the same opinion.

I have just finished reading "The Skeleton," and I think it is one of the best to be had for the money.

But there is one point I should like to put to the authors, and that is this:

After following a story from one end to the other and reading of fortunes and misfortunes, the hero probably meets some sort of a charming girl; they fall in love, and the result is marriage. That is all the reader knows or probably ever hears of them. Now, why doesn't the author draw on his imagination for a few chapters of their married life?

I am strongly in favor of what A. M., of Hamilton, Ohio, says. The Scotch yarns certainly are entrancing, and so are such stories as "The Wreck of the Lauderdale," "Children of Islam," "The Red Book of Mystery."

I hope you won't treat this letter harshly, and I wish you would answer it, or better still, print it in the Table-Talk, where I suppose you can best voice your opinions and those of your readers.

Hoping that I haven't taken up too much time, and that my letter escapes the wastebasket, I am

Your booster,

JOSEPH Y.

There is only one thing the matter with this letter—Joseph Y. should not have worried about the length of it. Speak right out in meetin' even if it hurts us.

We were a long time in making up our mind to start "Table-Talk," but my, we're glad we did it after all!

Here is how our new department hits one of the family:

EDITOR OF THE ALL-STORY. JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA, June 29, 1912.
DEAR SIR:

I bought my first copy of your magazine about three years ago. The best proof of how I liked it seems to me to be the fact that I haven't missed a single number since. I like your magazine because, of all the fiction publications on the market, yours has struck a really different note.

I have often wondered during the years I have read your magazine why you did not start a corner for us like "Table-Talk." There is nothing that means so much to a serious reader of a magazine as to come into personal touch, no matter how slight, with the editor. When a man likes a magazine he wants to know what is coming in the next number.

Keep up telling us all about it. It whets the appetite.

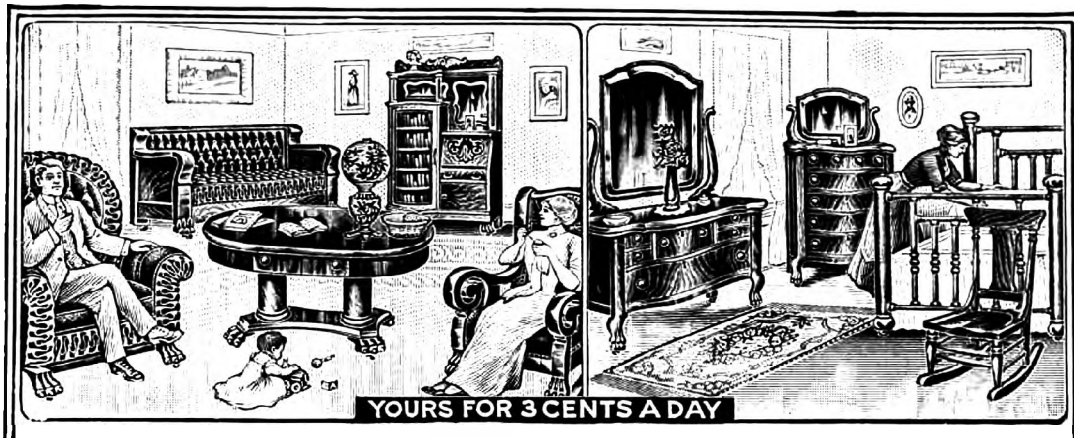
Sincerely,

G. McK.

G. McK. has cleared the bases. That's just how we feel about it. We've always felt that the small announcements we print on the contents-page were not sufficient to let you in on the really good things that were coming to you.

And now for the annual loaf.

So-long!



Good for One Dollar

Here is an offer which means a dollar to you, if you simply write at once.

Simply send us the coupon for the splendid Fall Issue of our Home Lovers' Bargain Book.

The book is entirely free. It is a mammoth book, picturing 4,528 of our latest bargains in everything for the home.

Many of the pictures are in actual colors—all are big and clear. They show all the new ideas in

Furniture	**Silverware**
Stoves	**Chinaware**
Carpets	**Kitchen Cabinets**
Rugs	**Sewing Machines**
Draperies	**Washing Machines**
Lamps	**Baby Cabs, etc.**

Here are thousands of such things, in every style, shown in a single book.

We want you to see it before you do any fall buying, so we make this remarkable offer:

Write for the book before October 1, and we will send with it a Dollar Certificate.

It will be good as the cash for $1 as part of the first payment on any order for $20 or over.

It will be good for 50 cents as part of the first payment on any $10 to $19.99 order.

We will pay this much toward anything you buy, just to get a prompt reply.

But this offer is only for immediate inquiries. It will never be made again.

All the Best Things in Life Yours for 3 Cents a Day

Long-Time Credit

We sell all these things on a new kind of credit—on open charge account.

There is no interest, no security, no red tape or publicity. We trust home lovers, poor or rich, for anything they need.

We send things on 30 days' trial. You may keep them a month before deciding to buy. Anything not wanted may be returned, and we pay freight both ways.

What you keep can be paid for a little each month, at the rate of a few cents per day. The average customer takes a year to pay.

We have furnished in this way over a million homes. Many of those homes had very small incomes. But they have beautiful things, just because we let them pay in this easy way.

You are welcome to the same arrangement.

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(241)

Your Telephone Horizon

The horizon of vision, the circle which bounds our sight, has not changed.

It is best observed at sea. Though the ships of today are larger than the ships of fifty years ago, you cannot see them until they come up over the edge of the world, fifteen or twenty miles away.

A generation ago the horizon of speech was very limited. When your grandfather was a young man, his voice could be heard on a still day for perhaps a mile. Even though he used a speaking trumpet, he could not be heard nearly so far as he could be seen.

Today all this has been changed. The telephone has vastly extended the horizon of speech.

Talking two thousand miles is an everyday occurrence, while in order to see this distance, you would need to mount your telescope on a platform approximately 560 miles high.

As a man is followed by his shadow, so is he followed by the horizon of telephone communication. When he travels across the continent his telephone horizon travels with him, and wherever he may be he is always at the center of a great circle of telephone neighbors.

What is true of one man is true of the whole public. In order to provide a telephone horizon for each member of the nation, the Bell System has been established.

AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES

Every Bell Telephone is the Center of the System.

My Boy! Here's Your Chance

It's more than a chance—you can make it a certainty because it depends entirely upon yourself. It's your opportunity to rise to one of the countless positions open to the trained man and obtain a trained man's salary.

The man who sits in his private office and "hires and fires" and lays out your work, was no more qualified to fill that position a few years ago than you are to-day. He saw **his chance** and made the most of it. He obtained his training and knowledge by study. You can do the same—the American School will help you.

You don't want to remain in the "time-clock and dinner-pail" class all your life—don't be satisfied with just a common job at small pay. Show the boys at the shop that you have it in you to advance—you owe it to yourself and to your family.

Don't be afraid to mail the coupon, you won't be bothered by agents or collectors. Like all strictly educational institutions the American School depends, for growth, upon reputation and the success of its students.

Don't let a little thing like filling in and mailing a coupon stand between you and success, congenial work and more pay. **Accept your chance to-day.**

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.....Electrical Engineer	.....Accountant
.....Elec. Light & Power Supt.	.....Cost Accountant
.....Master Mechanic	.....Cert'd Public Acc't
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—and as you sit there under the lamp just let this thought sink in: Your choice of tobacco—perhaps more than anything else—may add keen edge to your evening's enjoyment.

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Perhaps you, too, will find that you like it better than the tobacco you've been liking best. Your dealer sells Velvet.

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Convenient 1-ounce Bags, 5c.

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